

Women, Peace and Security: Vote on a Draft Resolution*

 securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2020/10/women-peace-and-security-vote-on-a-draft-resolution.php

What's In Blue

Posted Fri 30 Oct 2020

This afternoon (30 October), the Security Council president (Russia) is expected to announce the result of the voting on a draft resolution on women, peace and security, initiated by Russia. The negotiations appear to have been difficult and it is not clear whether the resolution will pass.

It seems that Russia shared the first version of the draft resolution with all Council members on 9 October. After presenting the text to members in a meeting on 13 October, a number of rounds of difficult negotiations over the zero draft and an amended version of the draft resolution followed. China and Russia then brought up the negotiations under “Any Other Business” during a closed videoconference on Syria on 27 October. That same evening, Russia put a third version of the text under silence until the next day (28 October) at 3pm. A number of members requested an extension of the silence procedure until the following day (29 October) at 9am. Silence was broken by the EU members on the Council (Belgium, Estonia, France and Germany), followed by further comments on the text from seven additional members (including, among others, Dominican Republic, Niger, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the UK and the US). During yesterday’s (29 October) annual open debate on women, peace and security on the Council, Russia put a fourth version of the draft resolution in blue. The written voting procedure started at 2pm, to be concluded today at 2pm.

In order for the Council to adopt the resolution, the result needs to meet two conditions: nine affirmative votes and no negative vote (that is, veto) by a permanent member. It seems possible that the number of likely abstentions may not make it possible to meet the first condition.

Some Council members, as well as stakeholders outside the Council, seemed to have questioned the value-added of another resolution on women, peace and security, arguing that the existing normative framework is sufficient and that its implementation should be prioritised; a concern shared with Russia. Negotiations around the adoptions of the Council’s latest resolutions on women, peace and security ([resolution 2467](#) of 23 April 2019 and [resolution 2493](#) of 29 October 2019) were also very contentious, as acknowledged by the Secretary-General in his latest annual report on women, peace and security ([S/2020/946](#)). (For background, please read our “In Hindsight” on resolutions [2467](#) and [2493](#).) The majority of Council members apparently favoured the idea of a presidential statement if the intention behind a new Council product was to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the first resolution on women, peace and security, resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000. Russia seems not to have shown flexibility in that regard, appearing to have preferred a resolution.

It appears that several Council members—the Dominican Republic, the EU countries, and the UK—shared concerns about both procedure and substance. These concerns were also expressed by other members from different regions.

A general point of criticism by these members was that the draft resolution consists almost exclusively of previously agreed language by the Council, adding to questions about the text's contribution to the agenda. They also seem to have felt that the penholder favoured proposals submitted by China, spurring a perception among some of a text not well-balanced between different aspects of the agenda and placing more emphasis on the socioeconomic aspects than the rights-based aspects, including language on human rights. (The proposals submitted by China and others were based on previously agreed language of the Council.) The dissatisfaction of several members seems to have been fundamental, and at one point during the negotiations, they argued that they would stop engaging with the text if the penholder would continue to neglect to consider their proposals, as they believed that the draft would fall below the standards needed to maintain the agenda in its entirety. (Raising the issue of these negotiations under AOB during a closed videoconference on Syria, Russia and China appear to have argued that the like-minded were not engaging in a constructive way.)

Current difficult dynamics between the permanent members China and the US in general seem to have made the negotiations even more sensitive, and the relationships between other members and China and Russia is likely to influence decisions to abstain.

***Post-script:** On 30 October, the voting results were read out by the Council president in October, Russia, on the draft resolution (S/2020/1054) that it had proposed on women, peace and security. The draft failed to be adopted, receiving 5 affirmative votes (China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Russia and South Africa) and 10 abstentions (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, UK, and US).

Tags: Insights on Women, Peace and Security