

# Monthly Forecast

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## Overview

Uruguay takes over the presidency of the Security Council in May. Early in the month, a Council visiting mission to [Colombia](#) is planned, and there will be a briefing on the visiting mission in mid-May.

There will be two open debates this month: on [protection of civilians](#) and [women, peace and security](#). The open debate on protection of civilians will be a ministerial-level meeting with Uruguayan Minister of Foreign Affairs Rodolfo Nin Novoa presiding. Secretary-General António Guterres and a high-level representative of the ICRC are expected to brief, in addition to a possible civil society member. The meeting will focus on the Secretary-General's report on the protection of civilians and on the implementation of resolution 2286 of 3 May 2016, which focused on the protection of health care in armed conflict. The second open debate will be on the Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence, focusing particularly on sexual violence in conflict as a tactic of war and terrorism with briefings from the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence and Conflict and a civil society representative.

Adoptions are planned for the renewals of the mission mandates of UNISFA in [Abyei](#) and UNMISS in [South Sudan](#); and the renewal of the authorisation of AMISOM in [Somalia](#). Prior to the AMISOM adoption there will be a briefing on the AMISOM report, including options and recommendations based on the AU-UN joint assessment of the mission.

Another African issue this month will be the semi-annual briefing from the ICC Prosecutor on [Libya](#).

Regarding Middle East issues, members are expecting [Syria](#) briefings on the humanitarian and political situations, as well as on chemical weapons.

Other Middle East issues this month include:

- [Iraq](#), on the activities of UNAMI;
- [Israel/Palestine](#), the monthly briefing;
- [Lebanon](#), the implementation of resolution 1559; and
- [Yemen](#), an update on the situation.

Regarding European situations, the Council will hold its regular meetings on UNMIK in [Kosovo](#) and on the report of the High Representative for [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). There will also be an [annual meeting with the EU](#) where Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will brief the Council.

There will be a joint briefing by the Council's three [counter-terrorism committees](#), as well as the [annual meeting with force commanders](#), this year featuring those of UNDOF, UNMIL and MINUSCA.

The chair of the [1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee](#) will provide the quarterly briefing on the work of the Committee.

Additionally, Council members will attend a retreat with the Secretary-General early in the month.

## In Hindsight: Council Dynamics and Syria Negotiations

In the first half of April, the Council was engaged in a series of contentious meetings and negotiations on Syria that culminated in Russia's eighth veto of a Syria resolution since October 2011. The Council's engagement on Syria in the lead-up to the vote once again exposed the Council's

inability to play a significant role in the Syria crisis due to ongoing divisions among the permanent members. It also highlighted the increasing frustration of elected members with being excluded from negotiations on an issue of grave concern to all members.

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## In Hindsight: Council Dynamics and Syria Negotiations

The Russian veto was cast on 12 April on a P3 draft that would have condemned the 4 April chemical weapons attacks on the Khan Shaykhun area of Idlib and set out strong demands for Syria to comply with relevant recommendations of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fact Finding Mission (FFM) and the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). In addition to the Russian veto, the draft received a negative vote from Bolivia, and abstentions from China, Ethiopia and Kazakhstan. It was the fifth Syria chemical weapons draft resolution circulated in just over a week, preceded by two earlier P3 drafts, a Russian draft, and an E10 draft.

Immediately after the 4 April chemical weapons attack on Khan Shaykhun, the P3 circulated the text of a resolution to the members of the Council with a request for comments on the draft text by 9am the next morning. However, it seems that following the circulation of this draft, the US pushed for stronger language, which required further consultations among the P3. Following amendments from the US, the P3 draft that was finally put in blue on 6 April condemned the attacks, expressed full support for the FFM, and requested the results of its investigations as soon as possible. It recalled language in previous resolutions regarding the cooperation of the Syrian government and all parties in Syria with the OPCW and the UN, including the JIM. Regarding the chemical weapons attack, it emphasised in its OP5 that the cooperation required includes the obligation of Syria to provide information on air operations (such as flight plans and flight logs), names of all individuals in command of any helicopter squadrons, and access to air bases from which the JIM or the FFM believed chemical weapons attacks may have been launched, as well as to respond to requests for meetings with generals and other officers.

On the morning of 5 April, there was a public briefing on the reports of chemical weapons use in Syria. Council members had been expecting a revised P3 draft to be circulated following the meeting, but instead a P5 meeting was held on the P3 draft at the request of Russia. It seems that Russia raised questions about the intent of the draft and the facts available regarding the chemical weapons attack. It proposed an alternative draft resolution that expressed deep concern

regarding the “alleged incident with...chemical weapons” and requested the OPCW to share with the Council the “personal composition” of the team that would investigate the incident for the Council’s consideration, calling for a full-scale investigation as soon as possible.

The competing P3 and Russian drafts were only circulated to the full Council by noon on Thursday 6 April. By the afternoon, first the P3, and then Russia, asked for their drafts to be put into blue, in anticipation of a vote that evening. That day, the elected members, who had not been included in the negotiations and were growing increasingly frustrated, met on two occasions at Sweden’s initiative: first at political coordinator-level in the morning to compare notes as rumours were circulating about P5 negotiations and why a revised P3 draft had not been circulated; and later in the afternoon at permanent representative-level, after the P3 and Russian drafts had been put in blue, and after the US, as president of the Council, had shown reluctance to have consultations on the two drafts in blue in spite of an informal request from an E10 member. During the afternoon meeting, the E10 members heard that the P5 had met and were unable to come to an agreement on the drafts. Meanwhile, Russia had officially requested consultations at 3pm on the two texts, but the US only agreed to hold them after the briefing on peacekeeping that was scheduled for mid-afternoon. In their afternoon meeting, the elected members decided to propose a text to break the P5 impasse.

The E10 draft substituted language in the P3 draft (i.e. OP5) that specified the Syrian government’s obligations regarding its activities and access (including to provide information on its air operations, individuals commanding any helicopter squadrons, and access to air bases)—a contentious matter in the P5 negotiations—with agreed language from resolution 2118 of 27 September 2013, which first required the verification and destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons stockpiles and cooperation with the OPCW and the UN. The agreed language from resolution 2118 specified Syria’s obligations to accept personnel designated by the OPCW or the UN, and to provide them with immediate and unfettered access to and the right to inspect any and all sites and individuals important to their mandate. Other language in the P3 and

Russian drafts was also discussed, but the E10 eventually agreed that it was OP5 in the P3 text that was the main stumbling block. All the E10 members subsequently agreed that the text should be circulated.

Sweden formally circulated the E10 text just prior to the briefing on UN peacekeeping, which began around 4:30pm. During the consultations on Syria following the peacekeeping briefing, the US announced that there would not be a vote that evening. It appears that the circulation of the E10 draft made it more difficult for the P3 and Russia to proceed with a vote on draft resolutions that almost certainly would not have been adopted when there was an alternative text on the table that might have had the support of most of the Council. The elected members showed unity over their draft, and expressed disappointment with the way the permanent members had managed the negotiations, excluding them from substantive discussions. China said that the E10 draft represented a good compromise that merited attention, and several members suggested that a veto would not be constructive.

Shortly after the evening consultations ended, the US carried out airstrikes on the Shayrat airbase. Bolivia asked for a briefing from the Secretariat in consultations but the US as president of the Council chose to hold a public briefing. Ahead of this meeting on Friday, 7 April, it seems that the US brought together eight elected members (not including Bolivia and Kazakhstan) and the P3 to explain its rationale for carrying out the airstrikes. During the Council meeting, the US stated that “further delay by compromising with Russia for a watered-down draft resolution would have only strengthened [Syria’s President Bashar] Al-Assad.” Among the elected members, Ethiopia called the proposal by the elected members “timely” and “wise,” saying that “the priority for now should be the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution proposed by the elected members...and for the United States and the Russian Federation to exercise greater responsibility and find a way out within their means.”

On Monday evening (10 April), the UK circulated another P3 draft, which was subsequently put into blue without negotiations among the 15 Council members. The draft expanded on the substance of the earlier P3 draft. It incorporated the agreed language

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## In Hindsight: Council Dynamics and Syria Negotiations

from resolution 2118, proposed in the E10 draft. At the same time, it retained the language from OP5 of the previous P3 draft, while adding a preambular paragraph recalling that the 6 July 2016 report of the OPCW Director General states that the OPCW Technical Secretariat was unable to resolve gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in Syria's declaration of its chemical weapons stockpiles. The draft did not make reference to the US airstrikes. Russia's immediate reaction to the draft was unfavourable, but the draft was tabled for a vote on the afternoon of 12 April, hours after Special Envoy Stefan de Mistura was to brief on the political situation. A minor change made to the draft in comparison with the one circulated on 10 April was that OP5 of the final version called

on the Syrian government to provide the JIM and the FFM with the names of individuals in command of "any aircraft" rather than "any helicopter squadron," as had been the case in the earlier version.

On 11 April, the US convened a meeting to discuss the draft that included the P3 and the same eight elected members, not including Bolivia and Kazakhstan. Concerns were expressed by some of the elected members at the informal meeting that the vote would result in a Russian veto that could undermine the hoped-for progress on the political process.

It seems that in addition to concerns about jeopardising momentum on the political front, some of the elected members felt that a veto on a draft resolution outlining the obligations of Syria to comply with the investigations of

the OPCW and UN could negatively impact the investigatory mandate already authorised by the Council. A number of elected members felt that if a compromise text were to be adopted without opposition, it would increase pressure on Syria to comply with its obligations, and therefore, should not be viewed as a weaker text.

Council divisions were on display during the morning meeting in which de Mistura briefed and during the afternoon vote on the P3 draft, which saw the eighth Russian veto on Syria. Particularly during the afternoon meeting, several of the elected members pleaded for a restoration of Council unity. China, which abstained on the vote, commended the elected members for their efforts to break the impasse with an alternative text.

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## Status Update since our April Forecast

### Terrorism

On 3 April, Council members issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attack that took place in Saint Petersburg, Russia that day, during which at least ten people were killed and dozens injured (SC/12774). In a 9 April press statement, Council members condemned the terrorist attacks against two Orthodox churches in Tanta and Alexandria in Egypt in which at least 41 people were killed and over 100 injured (SC/12787). On 10 April, Council members issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attack in Stockholm, Sweden that killed at least four people and injured over a dozen others (SC/12788). On 8 April, the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee removed an individual, reportedly deceased since 2006, from its sanctions list (SC/12786). It held informal consultations on 11 April. The 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee held a formal meeting on 27 April.

### Haiti

On 4 April, the Council organised a meeting with the troop- and police-contributing countries of MINUSTAH and on 11 April held a debate (S/PV.7920) with a briefing by Special Representative and head of MINUSTAH, Sandra Honoré, who presented the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2017/223).

On 13 April, in resolution 2350, the Council decided to extend MINUSTAH's mandate for a final six-month period until 15 October and authorised the establishment of a smaller successor peacekeeping mission, referred to as the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), composed of up to seven formed police units and 295 police officers, but no military component, and with a mandate to assist the government of Haiti in strengthening rule of law institutions, further support and develop the Haitian National Police, and engage in human rights monitoring, as recommended by the Secretary-General. After the adoption of the resolution, a number of Council members spoke in explanations of vote (S/PV.7924).

### Sudan (Darfur)

On 4 April, the Joint Special Representative for Darfur and head of UNAMID, Jeremiah Mamabolo, briefed the Council (S/PV.7912) on the quarterly report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/250). Mamabolo described Darfur as being "a very different place from what the region was in 2003", but noted that banditry and criminality continued to be widespread, and that the improving situation in Darfur had not yet resulted in significant advances in efforts to reach a long-term political resolution. On 26 April, the chair of the

1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko (Ukraine), provided the quarterly briefing to Council members in consultations.

### Central African Republic

On 4 April, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the CAR strongly condemning violence perpetrated by armed groups (S/PRST/2017/5). The statement also acknowledged the African Initiative for a Peace and Reconciliation Agreement between the government and all armed groups in the CAR.

### Mali

On 6 April, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed the Council on the situation in Mali (S/PV.7917). Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop of Mali also spoke at the meeting. Lacroix discussed challenges to the implementation of the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation outlined in the Secretary-General's 30 March report (S/2017/271).

### Peacekeeping

On 6 April, at the initiative of the US, Secretary-General António Guterres briefed the Council on peacekeeping operations (S/PV.7918). He highlighted the need for clear, realistic and up to date mandates from the

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## Status Update since our April Forecast

Council, with identified priorities, adequate sequencing, and flexibility to evolve over time. In a concept note circulated ahead of the meeting, the US stressed the important role that political foundations play in the success of peacekeeping missions (S/2017/287).

### Great Lakes Region

On 12 April, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, briefed the Council (S/PV.7923) on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement (S/2017/208).

### Human Rights

On 18 April, the US organised a meeting under the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security” focusing on “human rights and prevention of armed conflict” with a briefing by the Secretary-General. All 15 Council members took the floor during a discussion that lasted for over two hours (S/PV.7926). The meeting marked the first time that the Council discussed human rights thematically. The US had initially wanted to hold the discussion under a new agenda item titled “human rights and international peace and security”. Adding this new thematic item encountered opposition from some Council members, however, and to avoid a procedural vote (where there would be no veto and nine

“yes” vote would have been sufficient for the decision to stand), the US chose to use an existing broad agenda item with a subtitle indicating the meeting’s human rights focus. On the day of the meeting, Venezuela, on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM), transmitted to the Council president a NAM communiqué, expressing concern over the Council’s encroachment on the purview of other UN bodies (S/2017/335). The Secretary-General focused his remarks on the importance of preventing conflict rather than responding to crises and highlighted in this context the value of human rights information and action.

### Western Sahara

On 19 April, the Council held a meeting with troop- and police-contributing countries to MINURSO. On 25 April, Special Representative and head of MINURSO Kim Bolduc and Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayé-Brook Zerihoun briefed Council members in consultations on the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Western Sahara (S/2017/307). On 21 April, the Group of Friends of Western Sahara met to negotiate the resolution renewing MINURSO’s mandate, which was circulated to all Council members on 24 April. At press time, on 28 April, the Council was set to adopt a resolution renewing the mandate of MINURSO for one year.

### Israel/Palestine

On 20 April, the Security Council held its regular quarterly open debate under the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.” Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov briefed (S/PV.7929). Ahead of the meeting, on 10 April, the US circulated a concept note with potential topics that could be highlighted in lieu of focusing the debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (S/2017/305).

### Iran

On 25 April, Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi (Italy), in his capacity as facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 regarding Iran, briefed Council members under “any other business” during consultations. Cardi reported on the outcome of a so-called 2231 format meeting among Council experts held in March on the 29 January ballistic missile test conducted by Iran. The meeting in March was a follow-up to the discussion held during consultations on 31 January at the request of the US, when Council members were briefed by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča on the missile launch. It appears that Council members remain divided on the question of whether such missile launches are inconsistent with resolution 2231.

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## Protection of Civilians

### Expected Council Action

In May, the Council will hold a ministerial-level open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Uruguayan Minister of Foreign Affairs Rodolfo Nin Novoa will preside. Secretary-General António Guterres and a high-level representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are expected to brief, in addition to a possible civil society briefer. The meeting will focus on the broad array of issues in the Secretary-General’s report on the protection of civilians (expected to be released by 15 May) and on the implementation of resolution 2286 of

3 May 2016, which focused on the protection of health care in armed conflict. No formal outcome is anticipated, although Uruguay has expressed its intention to produce a chair’s summary of the debate.

### Key Recent Developments

In the past year, the situation facing civilians has deteriorated in a number of conflict-affected countries, including several on the Council’s agenda. Worldwide, more than 65 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes, the highest number ever. As the examples below illustrate, violations of international

humanitarian and human rights law continue to have an enormous impact on civilians in conflict zones in various parts of the world.

In 2016, there were 11,418 civilian casualties (3,498 people killed and 7,920 wounded) in the Afghanistan conflict, which is the highest number of casualties in Afghanistan since 2009, according to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

The security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan has continued to deteriorate as violence has spread to various parts of the country since the outbreak of hostilities in Juba in July 2016. There are now 1.9 million

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2286 (3 May 2016) condemned attacks on health care workers and facilities in armed conflict. Secretary-General’s Report S/2016/447 (13 May 2016) was the 12th report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians. Security Council Letter S/2016/722 (18 August 2016) transmitted the Secretary-General’s recommendations on the protection of health care in armed conflict. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7898 (15 March 2017) was an open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. S/PV.7779 (28 September 2016) was a debate on health care in armed conflict.

## Protection of Civilians

internally displaced persons in South Sudan, and 1.6 million refugees have fled to neighbouring countries.

In a 14 March statement, the High Commissioner for Human Rights labelled the conflict in Syria and its consequences “the worst man-made disaster the world has seen since World War II”, in which the country has become a “torture chamber” for its population.

OCHA estimates that 13.5 million people in Syria require humanitarian assistance, “including 4.6 million people in need trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, where they are exposed to grave protection threats”. Chemical weapons continue to be used in Syria, as recently evidenced by the 4 April attack in the Khan Shaykhun area of Idlib that killed at least 70 people.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has been responsible for abductions, killings, recruitment of child soldiers, and enslavement, among other violations of international law, in Iraq and elsewhere.

On 18 August 2016, then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon submitted a letter with his recommendations for the protection of health care in armed conflict to the Security Council, as requested by resolution 2286. Among other things, he called for:

- adherence to international treaties;
- reinforcement of national legislation related to the protection of medical care in armed conflict;
- guarantees that medical personnel engaged solely in medical duties could act in accordance with medical ethics without being punished for doing so;
- adoption, review, revision and implementation of operational precautionary measures, including recording and mapping the location of medical personnel, facilities and equipment; and
- improvement in data collection, analysis and reporting.

On 28 September 2016, the Council held a protection of civilians debate under the New Zealand presidency focusing on health care in armed conflict. The briefers included Ban, President of the ICRC Peter Maurer and International President of Médecins Sans Frontières Joanne Liu. Ban focused his briefing on the recommendations from his 18 August letter while calling on the Council to “take decisive steps” so that protection of health care facilities and workers “moves

from aspiration to reality”. Liu said that in the months since its adoption, resolution 2286 had “plainly failed to change anything on the ground” because of the “lack of political will among member states fighting in coalitions and those who enable them”. She said that in Syria and Yemen, “four of the five permanent members of the Council are implicated in these attacks [i.e. on health care]”. Maurer renewed the commitment of the ICRC to “build a more constructive relationship of deep operational engagement, feedback, dialogue and corrective measures with all parties to conflicts on the conduct of hostilities”.

On 5 March 2017, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate on “Trafficking in persons in conflict situations: forced labour, slavery and other similar practices”. Briefers included Secretary-General António Guterres; Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Yury Fedotov; Ilwad Elman, Mogadishu-based Somali human rights activist Ilwad Elman; and UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Kevin Hyland. Guterres said that in addition to supporting victims of human trafficking, the UN must work to incorporate “their voices and views as we develop and implement anti-trafficking interventions.” Fedotov emphasised the need to protect and support victims of trafficking and to “continue building capacities to improve criminal justice responses and action to detect, investigate and successfully prosecute cases of human trafficking.” Elman spoke about the impact of human trafficking in Somalia and maintained that “the intent, resources and the strategy for ending” this problem had not been sufficient. Hyland called for improved cross-border efforts to combat human trafficking and for “high-profile convictions of the organizers of trafficking...to serve as a deterrent to others.”

### Key Issues

The overarching key issue is whether, and how, discussions about the protection of civilians at the thematic level can be translated into concrete measures to mitigate the suffering of civilians in armed conflicts around the world. In this sense, it is important for the Council to consider how the open debate can galvanise greater attention to, and support for, addressing the needs of civilians in armed conflict.

Another issue is how much the debate will focus on broader protection-related issues

such as compliance, accountability and displacement, among others, and how much it will focus specifically on the protection of health care in armed conflict.

### Options

One option is for the Council president to produce a summary of the meeting that is circulated to the wider membership.

The Council could also consider adopting a resolution or presidential statement that:

- requests that the UN system develop a civilian casualty-tracking process to monitor violations of international law in country-specific cases of conflict;
- condemns the arbitrary refusal of humanitarian access by conflict parties; and
- requests the UN system to develop a mechanism to collect data on attacks on medical workers and facilities across conflicts in a standardised way.

### Council Dynamics

Council members are acutely aware of the devastating impact that armed conflict has had on civilians in recent years; consequently, they realise that more needs to be done to translate advances at the normative level into effective country-specific strategies. However, there are divisions among members regarding the Council’s approach to protecting civilians. Some members, including the P3 and others, tend to advocate accountability measures and sanctions as mechanisms for leveraging compliance from conflict parties to conform with international human rights and humanitarian law, whereas other members, such as China and Russia, tend to be distrustful of the effectiveness of such measures and emphasise the importance of state sovereignty. These different views—as well as the fact that many of the major powers are to varying degrees involved in some of the conflicts where civilians are suffering—have hindered the Council’s ability to protect civilians in South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen and other crises.

With regard to health care in armed conflict, Egypt, Japan, and Uruguay are three of the five members that led the drafting of resolution 2286. The other two, New Zealand and Spain, completed their Council terms in 2016.

The UK is the penholder on protection of civilians and on women, peace and security, while the US is the penholder on sexual violence.

# Women and Peace and Security

## Expected Council Action

In May, the Council expects to hold an open debate on the Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence, focusing particularly on sexual violence in conflict as a tactic of war and terrorism. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Under-Secretary-General Adama Dieng, who is currently officer-in-charge of the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, will brief, together with Mina Jaf, Executive Director of Women Refugee Route, as a civil society representative. Uruguay plans to circulate a concept note ahead of the debate, but at press time, no outcome was anticipated.

## Key Recent Developments

On 26 April, the Secretary-General submitted the most recent report on conflict-related sexual violence, which contains an overview of current trends and concerns pertaining to sexual violence in conflict as a tactic of war and terrorism. The report will provide the basis for the May open debate. According to the report, in 2016 sexual violence continued to be employed as a tactic of war, with widespread and strategic rapes, including mass rapes, allegedly committed by several parties to armed conflict, mostly in conjunction with other crimes. The strategic nature of the violence was evident in the selective targeting of victims from opposing ethnic, religious or political groups, mirroring the fault-lines of the wider conflict or crisis.

For violent extremist groups, sexual violence advances objectives such as incentivising recruitment, terrorising populations into compliance, displacing civilians from strategic areas, eliciting operational intelligence, and forcing conversions through marriage. It also entrenches an ideology based on suppressing women's rights and controlling their sexuality and reproduction. It is further used to generate revenue.

At the same time, the report noted that certain counterterrorism measures have also infringed upon women's rights and freedoms, such as the practice of detaining those released from the captivity of extremist

groups as potential affiliates or intelligence assets, rather than supporting them as victims. Furthermore, the intense stigma suffered by survivors of conflict-related sexual violence is integral to the logic of sexual violence being employed as a tactic of war or terrorism.

The report further noted that positive developments during the year under review included the activation of the Informal Experts Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security. The guiding principle of the IEG, which held its first meeting in February 2016 (on Mali), is that better information and analysis, combined with direct interaction with field missions, leads to better oversight and stronger implementation of women, peace and security norms in specific country situations. In addition to Mali, the group met in 2016 on Iraq, the Central African Republic and Afghanistan. So far this year, it has met on the Lake Chad Basin ahead of the Council's visiting mission there, and on Yemen.

On 21 December 2016, the Secretary-General submitted a special report prepared by the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict focusing on crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq and Syria, particularly their cross-border dimensions. The report presented preliminary information on the systematic use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism and its links to the sale and trade of trafficking in persons. The report contained a number of recommendations, specifically for the Council's 1267/1989/2253 Committee concerning ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals and groups.

On 20 December 2016, the Council convened a ministerial-level open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations, organised by then-elected member Spain. Then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Yury Fedotov, and then-Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura briefed. The Council heard from two Yazidi Iraqi women: Nadia Murad, who was trafficked by ISIL and is now a UN Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, and

Ameena Saeed Hasan, a human rights activist who works to free people captured by ISIL. The first Security Council resolution on trafficking in persons in conflict situations, resolution 2331, was adopted during the debate.

Resolution 2331 condemned human trafficking and stressed that the phenomenon can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity. It focused on strengthening the UN's ability to counter human trafficking and on the international community's role in responding to trafficking, such as by urging member states to ensure that domestic legislation is in place to protect victims and prosecute traffickers. As for the Council's own work, the resolution signalled an intention to consider targeted sanctions for individuals and entities involved in human trafficking and to integrate the issue of human trafficking into the work of its sanctions committees.

On 12 April, the Secretary-General appointed Pramila Patten of Mauritius as Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. She succeeds Zainab Bangura, who held the position from September 2012 to March 2017. Patten is expected to take up the post on 1 June.

## Key Issues

A key issue is ensuring that the appropriate systems for monitoring and reporting, information sharing, and judicial cooperation are developed to address the nexus of trafficking, sexual violence and terrorism which was identified in resolution 2331.

A closely related issue is establishing appropriate monitoring criteria to address such challenges as the political economy of sexual violence through the sale and trafficking of women and girls by terrorist groups.

The Council may also consider how to go beyond briefings and the submission of names of perpetrators of sexual violence by the Special Representative to the relevant sanctions committees. That could mean considering the possibility of adopting targeted measures against these individuals. A related issue is expanding designation criteria in all relevant sanctions regimes where sexual violence is persistently perpetrated.

**UN DOCUMENTS ON WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY** **Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/2331 (20 December 2016) was the first resolution on human trafficking, condemning the phenomenon and stressing how human trafficking can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity. S/RES/2272 (11 March 2016) addressed sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations, with Egypt abstaining. S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015) addressed women's roles in countering violent extremism and terrorism, improving the Council's own working methods in relation to women, peace and security and taking up gender recommendations made by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the 1325 Global Study. **Security Council Presidential Statements** S/PRST/2015/25 (16 December 2015) was on trafficking in persons in situations of conflict, with a particular focus on ISIL and the impact on women and children. S/PRST/2014/21 (28 October 2014) addressed the particular needs of displaced women, highlighted the impact of violent extremism on women, and welcomed the Secretary-General's commissioning of a global study. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2016/1090 (21 December 2016) was a special report prepared by the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, focusing on crimes committed by ISIL in the context of Iraq and Syria. S/2016/361 (20 April 2016) was the annual report on conflict-related sexual violence for 2015.

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## Women, Peace and Security

A continuing issue is ensuring that counter-insurgency efforts against extremist groups do not exacerbate the vulnerabilities that women and girls face.

A further issue, keeping in mind the Secretary-General's focus on prevention, is how to give due consideration to the identified risk factors of sexual violence as an early warning indicator that could enable the Council to better fulfil its conflict prevention role.

### Options

No outcome is anticipated. However, the Council can continue to monitor the implementation of key resolutions on this issue by following it closely and integrating it into relevant country-specific as well as cross-cutting thematic resolutions.

An option for the Council regarding sanctions committees is to call formally for the relevant sanctions committees—including the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee—to engage with the

Special Representative and consider whether perpetrators should be subject to existing sanctions or whether designation criteria should be expanded to include sexual violence and human trafficking.

Members could ensure that sanctions experts and monitoring groups have the capacity to track violations and provide systematic information by ensuring adequate expertise in these groups.

An option to facilitate implementation of resolutions on sexual violence is to encourage deployment of an adequate number of gender and women protection advisers in relevant missions.

### Council Dynamics

Council members continue to have divergent views on aspects of this thematic agenda, including how to incorporate it into the Council's sanctions regimes and how to integrate the women, peace and security agenda into strategies to counter violent extremism

and terrorism. Discussion of the Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence has been a regular feature on the Council's agenda since 2009, but members' statements may reflect some differences regarding sexual violence in conflict as a tactic of war and terrorism. Russia believes that focusing on the issue of sexual violence as a tactic in terrorism may detract from other issues related to the financing of terrorism, such as the sale of oil. It has also been particularly resistant to briefings by the Special Representative to the ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee.

Some members may choose to highlight the importance of working closely with relevant sanctions committees to list perpetrators. Others may discuss challenges related to sexual violence as a tactic of war and terrorism, particularly in relation to dealing with groups such as ISIL and Al-Qaida.

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## Visiting Mission to Colombia

### Expected Council Action

Council members will undertake a visiting mission to Colombia at the beginning of May. The mission is intended to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the peace process in Colombia and to commend the parties on bringing an end to the conflict. According to the mission's terms of reference, Council members will prioritise getting a better understanding of the aspirations and concerns of the parties and other actors, and encouraging the parties to maintain their positive cooperation and momentum in implementing the agreement.

The UK and Uruguay are co-leading the mission.

### Background and Mission

Since the January 2016 request of the government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), the Council has been united in its support for the final stages of the

peace process in Colombia and the implementation of key measures provided for by the peace agreement, namely the monitoring of the ceasefire and the laying down of weapons. The ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities, for which the UN Mission in Colombia constitutes the international component of the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM), continue to hold.

The visiting mission will be an opportunity to assess progress as the 180-day deadline established in the agreement for the laying down of weapons approaches (1 June). This process has faced several delays, particularly related to the transfer of FARC-EP combatants to the 26 Transitional Local Zones and Points for Normalisation. Even though the laying down of weapons has started in temporary camps, the government has committed to finalising the infrastructure of the remaining zones and points by the end of April. Briefing the Council on 5 April, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of

the UN Mission in Colombia, Jean Arnault, stated that the mission has nearly completed identifying, marking and registering the weapons that FARC-EP combatants brought to the camps. The mission was expected to receive and store imminently about 1,000 weapons belonging to members of the FARC-EP who will participate in tasks related to the implementation of the peace agreement, such as participation in the MVM, training for security functions, crop substitution, humanitarian demining and peace education. The Mission has also conducted planning for the collection of weapons and the destruction of unstable armaments in a considerable number of caches spread throughout vast, difficult-to-access areas. A high-level meeting of the parties on 25-26 March in Cartagena resulted in the recommitment of the FARC-EP to move forward with the laying down of weapons in parallel with progress in improving the living conditions in the camps, and in implementing specific commitments of the government,

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**UN DOCUMENTS** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2307 (13 September 2016) approved the Secretary-General's recommendations on the size, operational aspects, and mandate of the UN Mission in Colombia. S/RES/2261 (25 January 2016) established a political mission to monitor and verify the laying down of arms and the bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/252** (24 March 2017) was the most recent report on Colombia. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7916** (5 April 2017) was a briefing by Arnault. **Security Council Letter S/2016/53** (19 January 2016) included the Joint Communiqué issued by the government and FARC-EP in Havana on 19 January 2016.

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## Visiting Mission to Colombia

including legal and security guarantees for FARC-EP members and plans for their socio-economic reintegration.

The human rights situation in Colombia is expected to be addressed during the visit. The UN and NGOs have condemned the recent trend of deadly attacks against community leaders and human rights defenders in rural areas. Of particular interest to Council members will be the implications of the presence of non-state armed groups (including FARC-EP dissidents, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional guerrilla, successors of former paramilitary groups, and other groups linked to organised crime) in the areas vacated by the FARC-EP.

Given the recent adoption by the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict of its conclusions on Colombia, issues related to child protection are expected to be raised during the visit. As of April, 60 children arriving with the FARC-EP to the zones and points were demobilised and transported by the International Committee of the Red Cross to transitional accommodation.

During the visiting mission, Council members might be interested in other measures taken to implement the agreement that, although not the responsibility of the UN mission, frame the environment in which it operates. These include the implementation of the amnesty law, the work of the special peace jurisdiction in adjudicating crimes committed during the conflict, the operationalisation of the Truth Commission, the transformation of the FARC-EP into a political party, and assurances that the civilian population in remote areas benefits from the dividends of peace. Council members are expected to reiterate that, despite the upcoming legislative elections in May 2018, progress in the implementation of the agreement must continue.

While in Colombia, Council members are likely to be interested in discussing the sequencing for a second UN mission. In the agreement, the parties decided to ask the UN, through the General Assembly, to deploy a second political mission with a mandate to verify the reintegration of ex-combatants and their protection, including from paramilitary

groups. According to the agreement, this mission, which would be deployed after the current mandate ends, would have a three-year duration.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

At its 34th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) considered the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Colombia (A/HRC/34/3/Add.3). The report—which was the first by Office of the High Commissioner since the peace agreement requested it to report on the implementation of the agreement's extensive human rights aspects—welcomed the signing of the agreement, noting that it “generally complies with the international human rights obligations of Colombia” and, if “implemented diligently,” has the potential to help the country overcome “structural human rights challenges.” In her statement introducing the report to the HRC, the Deputy High Commissioner said it was essential to ensure respect for victims' rights, including through reparations and accountability for past human rights violations, while also highlighting concerns regarding the increase in violence in rural areas, killings of human rights defenders (with 60 killed in 2016 and a further 10 dead in 2017), as well as ongoing corruption and unequal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

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## Libya

### Expected Council Action

In May, International Criminal Court Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda will deliver her semi-annual briefing on recent developments concerning cases in Libya.

### Key Recent Developments

Governing authority in Libya continues to be contested. The Tripoli-based Presidency Council has limited capacity to deliver on the ground and relies heavily on the loyalty of militias. It is challenged by, among others, the Tobruk-based House of Representatives and Tripoli-based militias supporting Khalifa Gwell, the self-appointed prime minister of a so-called national salvation government announced in 2015. Efforts to reach an inclusive and sustainable political settlement in Libya continue to falter despite an emerging consensus regarding the need to amend the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). Martin Kobler, the Special Representative of the

Secretary-General and head of UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), stressed on 19 April that despite progress made in the fight against terrorist groups, recent gains would be lost if some actors continued to destabilise institutions and civil society, and that Libya could relapse into conflict.

The humanitarian and human rights situation continues to be dire. A 13 January report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNSMIL documents a number of attacks against civilians and civilian objects (such as hospitals) and identifies patterns of attacks using imprecise weapons in heavily populated or residential areas, which together may amount to war crimes. On 13 December 2016, a joint report released by UNSMIL and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on human rights abuses against migrants in Libya concluded that the situation constituted a “human rights crisis”, with migrants subjected to arbitrary

detention, torture, other ill-treatment, unlawful killings, and sexual exploitation.

### ICC-Related Developments

A court in Tripoli sentenced Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, son of deposed leader Muammar Gaddafi, to death in absentia on 28 July 2015 for serious crimes during the 2011 revolution. On 30 July 2015, Bensouda requested that the Pre-Trial Chamber order Libya to refrain from carrying out Gaddafi's sentence and surrender him to the Court. On 20 August 2015, Libya's delegate to the ICC proceedings (mandated to be Libya's representative by both the House of Representatives and the General National Congress) responded that the judgment was not final, given that he was tried in absentia, and stressed that he could not be surrendered to the ICC because he was not in the custody of the Libyan government. The response also stated that until a unified Libyan government can be established, there is no authority that can properly make and implement a decision in respect of the situation of Gaddafi, including negotiations for his transfer. In April 2016, Bensouda filed a request for the ICC to direct the Registry to transmit to Al-Ajami al-Atiri,

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UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7927 (19 April 2017) was a briefing by Kobler. S/PV.7806 (9 November 2016) was the last briefing by Bensouda. Human Rights Council Document A/HRC/34/42 (13 January 2017) was a report on the human rights situation in Libya.

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# Libya

commander of the Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq Battalion, under whose custody Gaddafi is held, the order to surrender him. However, in a 21 November 2016 decision, the Pre Trial Chamber I denied this request arguing that the official channel of communication between Libya and the Court is the competent national authorities, namely the Government of National Accord, and that the ICC “cannot direct its cooperation requests to any other non-State entity claiming to represent the State, as suggested by the Prosecutor.”

In 2013, the ICC found the case against former Libyan intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi inadmissible before the Court since he was subject to ongoing domestic proceedings and Libya was willing and able to genuinely carry out such investigation. The 13 January report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNSMIL stated that the trial against 37 officials of the Gaddafi regime (including Saif al-Islam Gaddafi and Al-Senussi who were sentenced to death) raised serious due process concerns, including regarding the right to be informed promptly and in detail of the charges, the right to a public trial, the right to call and examine witnesses, and the right not to be compelled to confess guilt or incriminate oneself. It is unclear whether Bensouda, who had expressed in the past her intention to review her office’s assessment of the Al-Senussi case as new information becomes available, will consider that the information contained in the report questions the basis on which the Al-Senussi case was found inadmissible before the ICC. Recalling jurisprudence from the ICC Appeals Chamber, Bensouda has noted in the past that due process violations in a domestic trial must reach a high

threshold in order for a case to be deemed admissible before the ICC.

In her 9 November 2016 briefing to the Council, Bensouda stated that, despite security and budgetary constraints, she remained resolute to make the Libya situation a priority for 2017. She said that her office intended to expand significantly its investigations into crimes committed from 2011 and intended to apply for new warrants of arrest under seal as soon as practicable. On 24 April, the Pre-Trial Chamber I unsealed the arrest warrant, first issued in April 2013, against former internal security chief Mohamed Khaled al-Tuhamy, allegedly responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Libya in 2011.

## Key Issues

Ensuring accountability for international crimes committed in Libya since 2011 and exerting pressure on the parties to respect international humanitarian law are key issues.

The overarching issue is to ensure that the parties agree on a consensual solution to end the political deadlock that addresses the issues raised by those refusing to support the LPA. Related issues are maintaining the relevance of the UN mediation efforts, and pressing external actors to exercise leverage to encourage engagement in the political process.

## Options

Options on Libya include:

- holding an informal interactive dialogue with Bensouda in order to discuss options for a follow-up of ICC decisions on Libya (as she is not a UN staff member, she is not allowed in Council consultations under current practice);
- reiterating previously agreed language calling for the Presidency Council to hold accountable those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, and to cooperate fully with and provide any necessary assistance to the ICC and the prosecutor; and
- calling on member states to ensure adequate funding to support the ICC in investigating international crimes.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

The semi-annual briefings by Bensouda on Libya have had limited impact, given the reluctance of the Council to follow up regarding the difficulties in implementing ICC decisions. Council members have often reverted to general exhortations rather than addressing non-compliance in a more forceful and effective way.

The UK is the penholder on Libya. Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden) chairs the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee.

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# EU-UN Briefing

## Expected Council Action

In May, the Council will hold its annual meeting on strengthening the partnership with the EU, under its agenda item on cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations. Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will brief the Council.

## Background

Recognising the growing importance of the relationship between the EU and the UN, the Council has held annual briefings since 2010 (with the exception of 2012) on cooperation between the two organisations. The Council

formally endorsed this relationship in 2014 when it adopted a presidential statement on EU-UN cooperation. Since 2013, Council members have also met informally on an annual basis with members of the EU Political and Security Committee.

The briefings on cooperation between the EU and the UN usually follow a consistent format. Mogherini is likely to emphasise the areas of cooperation between the two organisations, present the EU’s main foreign policy priorities and objectives, and address some of the ongoing crises that occupy the agenda of both the EU and the Council.

Since the escalation of the migrant crisis

in 2015 and repeated incidents of drownings in the Mediterranean Sea, the EU has sought the best approaches to address the issue. At the moment, the EU is carrying out the naval operation Sophia, aimed at identifying, capturing and disposing of vessels and disabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers. The operation received the Council’s legal authority in 2015 when it adopted resolution 2240, which authorised states and regional organisations to inspect and seize vessels off the coast of Libya. In October 2016, the Council extended the initial authorisation for another year.

In April, the EU hosted a conference in

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**UN DOCUMENTS UN-EU COOPERATION Security Council Resolution S/RES/2312** (6 October 2016) extended the authorisation for the interdiction of vessels used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking on the high seas off the coast of Libya. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2014/4** (14 February 2014) was on cooperation between the UN and the EU, highlighting the EU’s comprehensive approach to maintenance of international peace and security. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7705** (6 June 2016) was a briefing by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, on cooperation between the EU and the UN.

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## EU-UN Briefing

Brussels on supporting the future of Syria and the region. This was a major donor conference co-chaired by the EU and the UN, among others. Both Mogherini and Secretary-General António Guterres addressed conference participants and appealed to the international community for continued humanitarian assistance for Syria and the affected region.

Cooperation between the EU and the UN is most evident in Africa, where the two organisations work together in several peace-keeping contexts. The EU provides training for security forces and assists in security sector reform in the Central African Republic (CAR), Mali and Somalia. The EU also provides salaries for the UN-authorized AU Mission in Somalia.

The issue of terrorism has become

increasingly prominent on the agenda of both organisations. There has been an increase in deadly terrorist attacks in the EU over the last several years. In addition to fighters returning from battlefields in the Middle East, the EU continues to face a threat from radicalised extremists inside its borders. The EU has made efforts to enhance cooperation and information sharing between its members in order to address the issue of terrorism.

In the EU's immediate neighbourhood, the conflict in eastern Ukraine has remained one of the organisation's top priorities. As members of the Normandy format which also includes Russia and Ukraine, EU members France and Germany played instrumental roles in negotiating the Minsk agreement in February 2015, which remains the main framework for seeking a solution to the crisis. The EU has

continued to maintain sanctions on Russia over its involvement in eastern Ukraine.

Mogherini is likely to inform the Council about the EU Global Strategy, which was adopted by the European Council last year. The strategy sets out the main priorities regarding EU foreign policy: security of the EU, state and societal resilience, an integrated approach to conflicts and crises, cooperative regional orders, and global governance for the 21st century. The aim of the EU Global Strategy is to strengthen the ability of the EU to respond to evolving threats. In addition, Mogherini is likely to discuss the Middle East peace process, the situation in Libya, the humanitarian situation in Iraq, cooperation with other regional organisations, transnational crime, climate change and, sustainable development, among other issues.

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## Sudan and South Sudan

### Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) prior to its 15 May expiration.

### Key Recent Developments

The status of Abyei, the disputed territory along the Sudan-South Sudan border, is in limbo. The Sudanese and South Sudanese governments, distracted by their own domestic crises, have made no recent progress on implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement. The institutions called for by the agreement, including the Abyei Area Administration, the Abyei Area Council, and the Abyei Police Service, all have yet to be established. Against this backdrop of political paralysis, UNISFA continues to maintain a degree of stability in Abyei. This relative peace represents an opportunity for advancing the political process that neither Sudan nor South Sudan appears to be taking advantage of.

There has been no progress in agreeing on the removal of armed Sudanese police from around the Diffra oil facility, as required by several Security Council resolutions that have called for the demilitarisation of Abyei (with

the exception of UNISFA peacekeepers and the yet to be established Abyei Police Service). Ongoing instability in South Sudan has seen the movement of displaced persons into Abyei, adding to the existing humanitarian and security burden.

The special report of the Secretary-General reviewing the mandate of UNISFA was released on 5 April. The review concluded that the mission is providing security in the absence of other institutions and is a deterrent to conflict. However, the mission is currently unable to fulfil those elements of its mandate that depend on the commitment of Sudan and South Sudan to fulfilling the terms of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, such as supporting the agreed administrative institutions. The review recommends that the mission be maintained at its current personnel level, as a reduction of troop numbers would undermine the mission's ability to maintain peace and dissuade increased incursions by armed groups from Sudan and South Sudan.

UNISFA continues to face challenges in recruiting mission personnel because of delays in the issuance, and sometimes non-issuance, of visas by Sudan. In particular, Sudan has slowed the approval of visas for community

liaison officers, who are urgently needed to support efforts to improve relations between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities.

Although UNISFA is able to maintain general peace and stability, criminal violence remains an issue of concern. Additionally, the failure of Sudan and South Sudan to fully implement the 20 June 2011 Agreement has left the people of Abyei without the institutions necessary for the basic provision of education, health care, clean water and sanitation.

During consultations on 26 April, Council members were briefed by the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, on the current state of the Sudan/South Sudan political process. Council members were also briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, El Ghassim Wane, on the strategic review of UNISFA, and by the chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko (Ukraine).

On 22 March, Major General Tesfay Gidey Hailemichael of Ethiopia assumed command as the new UNISFA force commander and acting head of mission. Ethiopian forces continue to make up the vast majority of UNISFA mission personnel.

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2318](#) (15 November 2016) extended the mission's mandate for six months. [S/RES/2024](#) (14 December 2011) added a border-monitoring support role to UNISFA's mandate. [Secretary General's Reports S/2017/312](#) (11 April 2017) was the most recent Secretary-General's report on the situation in Abyei. [S/2017/293](#) (5 April 2017) was the Secretary-General's review of UNISFA's mandate. [S/2016/864](#) (12 October 2016) was the 2016 report on the situation in Abyei.

# Sudan and South Sudan

## Key Issues

The key issue for the Council is whether to renew the mandate of UNISFA in its current format for an additional six months as recommended by the Secretary-General or to renew the mandate for a shorter period, as has previously been done, as a means of putting pressure on Sudan and South Sudan to address the current lack of progress towards a political solution.

A related issue is whether the Council should take steps to advance the stalled political process to avoid the mission's presence having to be extended indefinitely. In considering these issues, Council members will need to reflect on how the Council can best support the African Union (AU) in resuscitating the dialogue between Sudan and South Sudan on the status of Abyei.

## Options

The most likely option for the Council is to

renew the mandate of UNISFA for an additional six months as recommended by the Secretary-General. In doing so, the Council could consider:

- urging Sudan and South Sudan to revitalise the political process, with particular focus on the establishment of the institutions envisaged by the 20 June 2011 Agreement; and
- urging Sudan and South Sudan to remove impediments to the effectiveness of UNISFA, including delays in the issuing of visas for mission personnel.

Another option is for the Council to hold a briefing on Abyei in the Council chamber instead of the consultations currently preferred, as a means of increasing international attention to the status of Abyei and adding pressure on Sudan and South Sudan to advance the political process. In addition to Haysom, the Council could also invite Thabo Mbeki, head of the AU High-Level

Implementation Panel, to participate in the briefing.

## Council Dynamics

Council members have for some time recognised that the situation in Abyei and the wider border-related issues between Sudan and South Sudan cannot be resolved in isolation. Neither Sudan nor South Sudan appears willing to devote the required attention to addressing issues related to Abyei until their more immediate domestic crises are resolved. With neither party ready to advance the political process, the Council continues to devote only minimal time and focus to Abyei. Though some Council members are increasingly concerned that UNISFA is persisting longer than was intended for an interim force, the size of the mission is unlikely to be reduced at present as it is already well below its authorised personnel cap.

The US is the penholder on Abyei.

# Syria

## Expected Council Action

In May, Council members expect to receive briefings on the humanitarian and political situations in Syria, as well as on chemical weapons.

## Key Recent Developments

On 4 April, a chemical weapons attack in the Khan Shaykhun area of Idlib resulted in at least 80 civilians killed, including many children. Later that day Secretary-General António Guterres said through his spokesperson that he was “deeply disturbed by the reports of alleged use of chemical weapons”.

In a Council meeting called for by the UK and France on 5 April, Kim Won-soo, then High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, stated how the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) had already started gathering and analysing information on the attack. Upon confirmation of the use

of chemical weapons, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) would investigate to identify those responsible for using these weapons. On 19 April, Ahmet Üzümcü, the Director General of OPCW, confirmed that sarin or a sarin-like substance had been used in the attack, based on the OPCW's analysis of biomedical samples taken from victims.

On 6 April, the US launched 59 cruise missiles on the Shayrat airbase outside of Homs in Syria in response to the chemical weapons attack. The US said that the air strikes targeted the base from which the 4 April attack had been launched and that they destroyed 20 percent of Syria's operational aircraft.

The next day, 7 April, Bolivia requested a meeting in consultations to discuss this attack, but the US, as Council presidency, chose to hold a public briefing. At the meeting, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman reiterated some of the points made earlier by the Secretary-General,

calling for accountability for the chemical weapons attack and appealing for restraint to avoid any acts that could deepen the suffering of the Syrian people. He also underscored the centrality of a political solution to the conflict in Syria.

On 12 April, the Council voted on a P3 draft resolution on chemical weapons in Syria. The vote represented the culmination of a week of contentious meetings on Syria among Council members. It represented the fifth draft on this issue circulated in little over a week, preceded by two earlier P3 drafts, a Russian draft, and an E10 draft. The draft condemned the Khan Shaykhun attack, expressed full support to the Fact-Finding Mission, and requested that it report the results of its investigation as soon as possible. It recalled language from previous resolutions regarding the cooperation of the Syrian government and all parties in Syria with the OPCW and the UN, including with the JIM.

**UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2336](#) (31 December 2016) welcomed efforts by Russia and Turkey to end violence in Syria and promote a political process. [S/RES/2319](#) (17 November 2016) and [S/RES/2118](#) (27 September 2013) were on chemical weapons. [S/RES/2254](#) (18 December 2015) was on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/339](#) (19 April 2017) was on the humanitarian situation. [Security Council Letters S/2017/315](#) (12 April 2017) transmitted the draft resolution on the 4 April attack vetoed by Russia. [S/2017/260](#) (27 March 2017) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7922](#) (12 April 2017) was the meeting at which Russia vetoed a draft resolution condemning the Khan Shaykhun chemical weapons attack. [S/PV.7921](#) (12 April 2017) was a briefing by de Mistura. [S/PV.7919](#) (7 April 2017) was a briefing by Feltman on the US strikes on the Shayrat base. [S/PV.7915](#) (5 April 2017) was a briefing by Kim on the Khan Shaykhun chemical weapons attack. [S/PV.7909](#) (30 March 2017) was a briefing by OCHA head Stephen O'Brien.

# Syria

It further emphasised that this included the obligation upon Syria to provide the JIM and the FFM with information on air operations (such as flight plans and flight logs), names of all individuals in command of any aircraft, and access to air bases from which the JIM or the FFM believed chemical weapons attacks may have been launched, as well as to arrange meetings requested with generals or other officers. It recalled language in resolution 2118 threatening to impose measures under Chapter VII of the UN Charter in the event of non-compliance. (Please see *In Hindsight* this month for details of the events leading up to the vote on this draft resolution.)

The draft was vetoed by Russia. This was the eighth veto cast by Russia on Syria since 2011. Bolivia also voted against the draft, while China, Ethiopia and Kazakhstan abstained. This was the second time that China did not vote alongside Russia on a Syria draft resolution. The first time was on 8 October 2016 when China abstained on a draft resolution presented by France and Spain demanding a halt to all aerial bombardments and military flights over Aleppo that was vetoed by Russia.

Earlier on 12 April, addressing the potential for military escalation, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura had briefed the Council emphasising the need to ensure that the parties and international actors continue their commitment to negotiating and supporting a political settlement. While recognising that much still needed to be done, he highlighted how the 23-31 March fifth round of the Geneva talks had made incremental progress towards the goal of a political transition laid out in resolution 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué. The government and the opposition had discussed, through proximity talks, elements of all four baskets: governance; constitutional issues; elections; and counter-terrorism, security and confidence-building measures. De Mistura also emphasised how Iran, Russia and Turkey needed to deliver on their responsibilities as guarantors of the ceasefire, urging them to work towards renewing the ceasefire. “Astana must bring forth Geneva and vice versa”, he said.

On 18-19 April, the guarantor countries held technical-level consultations in Tehran, Iran, with the participation of a UN delegation, to address the difficulties in implementing the ceasefire. These consultations are

expected to feed into a 3-4 May high-level meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan, to which the parties have been invited.

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to be critical, including in eastern Ghutah near Damascus, where the government has curtailed formal and informal trade and the last UN humanitarian delivery was in October 2016. The evacuation of the last rebel-held enclave of Homs, Al-Waer, was criticised in a 19 April Secretary-General’s report for being preceded by the decimation of the area and resulting in the forced displacement of the civilian population, which may constitute a war crime. The report describes how a combination of insecurity and deliberate interference and restrictions by the parties to the conflict continues to prevent aid delivery. The challenging evacuation of the towns covered by the 2015 “four towns agreement” (two besieged by armed opposition, Madaya and Zabadani, and two by government and Hezbollah militias, Foah and Kafraya) persisted. On 15 April, an attack against civilians evacuating Foah and Kafraya left at least 125 people killed, including at least 67 children.

At the 4-5 April Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, member states pledged 6 billion dollars for 2017 in immediate and longer-term support.

On 21 April, the P3 organised an Arria-formula meeting with the Human Rights Council’s (HRC) Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on Syria. Its chair Paulo Pinheiro and fellow commissioner Karen AbuZayd described violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed in Syria. At the press stakeout following the meeting, Pinheiro said that all parties had committed violations during the siege and fall of Aleppo. At press time, the Secretary-General was expected to appoint the head of the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism on international crimes committed in Syria. The mechanism, which was established by the General Assembly in December 2016, is mandated to collect evidence and to prepare files in order to facilitate and expedite fair and independent criminal proceedings.

At press time, OCHA head Stephen O’Brien was scheduled to brief the Council on 27 April.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 7 April, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights called the 4 April attack on Khan Shaykhun “absolutely abhorrent” and said that if confirmed, the use of chemical weapons would amount to a war crime. The spokesperson noted that the HRC’s Col on Syria has documented seven attacks by Syrian forces involving the use of chlorine since August 2016. Emphasising that the Khan Shaykhun attack was “far from an isolated incident”, the spokesperson called on the international community, including the Security Council, to “set aside political differences and focus on ensuring that the people of Syria are spared further terror, death and devastation.”

On 18 April, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the attack near Rasheedin in western Aleppo which hit a convoy carrying people from the besieged Syrian towns of Foah and Kafraya to government-controlled areas. Reiterating the High Commissioner’s call for accountability and for the situation in Syria to be referred to the ICC, the spokesperson said that the attack “likely amounts to a war crime”.

Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Benyam Dawit Mezmur, in a 20 April statement, condemned attacks on children in Syria following the large number killed in the recent attack on the evacuation convoy near Rasheedin and the reported use of chemical weapons in the attack in Khan Shaykhun. Mezmur said that “children are bearing the brunt” of violence in Syria and have been “killed, maimed, subjected to sexual violence, and traumatized.” The year 2016 was the “worst year for Syria’s six million children affected by the conflict.” He called on “all relevant actors to investigate these abhorrent acts and bring their perpetrators to justice” including by fully supporting the OPCW’s FFM, the JIM, the Syria Col, and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on Syria established by the General Assembly.

## Key Issue

More than six years since the start of a war that has exacted a death toll approaching half a million, left nearly 620,000 living under siege, and displaced half of the Syrian population, including almost 5 million refugees, the essential issue for the Council is to exert effective leadership in enforcing the ceasefire and promoting efforts to reach a political solution.

## Options

The Council has many options at its disposal—such as imposing an arms embargo or targeted sanctions, referring Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or authorising a no-fly zone to deter the Syrian government from using its aerial capacity—but P5

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## Syria

divisions have made it impossible for the Council to fulfill its role in maintaining international peace and security in the case of Syria.

Council members could, both individually and collectively, step up efforts to ensure that the government guarantees humanitarian access to besieged and hard to reach areas.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

Despite the publicity given to Council divisions and the US decision to launch air strikes, dynamics among permanent members over Syria remain largely unchanged. While France, the UK and the US are growing increasingly frustrated with the deadlock in the Council and its inability to follow through on some of the commitments made unanimously in 2013 (through the adoption of resolution 2118), Russia has continued to oppose any punitive measure against the Syrian government. China, which had cast six of the seven previous vetoes alongside Russia, including on

28 February on a draft resolution that would have established a sanctions regime targeting the use of chemical weapons, decided to abstain on 12 April even though in explaining its vote it criticised the attempt to push through a draft resolution while serious division still remained among Council members.

Following the US air strikes, which constituted the first time that the US directly targeted government assets since the beginning of the conflict, Bolivia, Russia, Sweden and Uruguay expressed some concerns regarding the strikes' legality; France, Italy, Japan, the UK and Ukraine signalled some form of support for the air strikes; others did not address that issue. After the attack on the Shayrat base, Russia announced the suspension of its memorandum (deconfliction line) with the US regarding the prevention of flight safety incidents in the course of operations in Syria, raising concerns about the increased risk of accidental military encounters between their forces. However, on 18 April US Defence

Secretary James Mattis stated that the US was still talking to Russia on avoiding mid-air accidents and possible confrontations in Syria.

Even though it has been a pattern for permanent members of the Council to negotiate outcomes on Syria among themselves and circulate them to all 15 members with little time for incorporating inputs, the lack of inclusivity in the negotiations leading up to the 12 April veto was particularly pronounced. Elected members were largely sidelined as the P3 negotiated with China and Russia regarding a draft resolution condemning the 4 April attack. When the elected members proposed an alternative draft to break the negotiating impasse among the P5, their initiative was given short shrift by the P3, particularly by the US, which apparently believed that the E10 text was not strong enough. China was the one permanent member that gave credit to the elected members for their effort to overcome the divisions on the Council.

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## Kosovo

### Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expected to hold a quarterly briefing on the situation in Kosovo. Zahir Tanin, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), will brief on recent developments and the latest report by the Secretary-General. Serbia is likely to participate at a high level, while Kosovo will probably be represented by its ambassador to the US.

### Key Recent Developments

Since Tanin last briefed the Council in February, the security situation in Kosovo has remained relatively stable. The rift between the government and the political opposition continues to hinder the work of Kosovo's institutions. There has been no substantial progress in implementing the agreement on the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb Municipalities (ASM/CSM), which is at the core of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. The

statute of the ASM/CSM, which has yet to be drafted, would still need to be approved by the Assembly of Kosovo. This could be a daunting task, given that the opposition strongly objects to the establishment of the ASM/CSM. Another contentious issue in Kosovo is the agreement on border demarcation with Montenegro, whose ratification the opposition blocked on several occasions during 2016, including by using tear gas in the Assembly chambers and by organising street protests.

The tensions between Belgrade and Pristina have continued to linger since January, when French authorities, acting on an INTERPOL notice requested by Serbia, arrested Ramush Haradinaj for his alleged involvement in war crimes against Kosovo Serbs in the 1990s. Haradinaj is the former prime minister and current leader of the main opposition political party, the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), and lives in Kosovo. He was released on bail and has been held in France under judicial supervision

awaiting the final decision by French courts on the extradition request by Serbia. French authorities formally released Haradinaj on 27 April, after the court in Colmar rejected Serbia's request.

During an interview with a local TV station on 7 April, Haradinaj's brother Daut Haradinaj, who is also a representative of the AAK in the Assembly, threatened war and ethnic cleansing of Serbs in Kosovo should his brother be extradited to Serbia. In a statement issued on 11 April, Tanin condemned the use of hate speech by the member of the Assembly and called on the authorities to investigate the incident.

In March, Kosovo President Hashim Thaçi submitted a draft bill to the Assembly that intended to transform the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) into an army. Currently, international troops led by NATO are in charge of ensuring security in Kosovo. Creating armed forces would require amending Kosovo's constitution, which would have to be approved by a two-thirds majority in the Assembly

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON KOSOVO** [Security Council Resolution S/RES/1244](#) (10 June 1999) authorised NATO to secure and enforce the withdrawal of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces from Kosovo and established UNMIK. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/95/Rev.1](#) (6 February 2017) was the report on UNMIK. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7891](#) (27 February 2017) was a briefing on Kosovo.

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## Kosovo

and by the equivalent majority of the seats reserved for representatives of ethnic minorities. Therefore, this initiative would require buy-in from the representatives of Kosovo Serbs, who strongly oppose the creation of a Kosovo army. Thaçi has apparently sought ways to expand the KSF without amending the constitution, because that could be approved by a simple majority of votes in the Assembly and thus could not be blocked by the Kosovo Serbs. This has drawn a strong reaction from Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić, who has said that the creation of a Kosovo army would represent a clear violation of resolution 1244. NATO, the EU and the US have voiced concerns about any attempt to create a Kosovo army bypassing the constitutional processes. Consequently, Thaçi withdrew the initial bill from the legislature on 7 April, noting that he would seek support for the measure from all communities in Kosovo.

### Key Issues

Maintaining stability in Kosovo is the primary issue for the Council. Related to this is what role UNMIK can play in promoting the implementation of the existing agreements between Belgrade and Pristina.

A further issue for the Council is whether to lengthen the reporting cycle on UNMIK and the possibility of the mission's drawdown.

### Options

Should the tensions between Belgrade and Pristina escalate further or start to pose a risk to overall stability, the Council could consider issuing a statement calling on both sides to resolve outstanding issues through dialogue.

Another option would be for the Council to explore ways in which UNMIK could facilitate the implementation of the existing agreements between Belgrade and Pristina.

The Council could consider lengthening the reporting cycle and possibly modify UNMIK's mandate as advocated by some members, most notably the P3.

Given the ongoing discussions about increasing the effectiveness of UN peace operations, the Council could request the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the mission.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

Kosovo has remained an issue of low intensity for the Council, followed closely by members with a particular interest in the region such as Russia, the US, the UK, and the EU members of the Council. In addition, regional organisations such as the EU, NATO, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have been playing increasingly prominent roles in Kosovo.

The deep divisions among the permanent members continue to shape the Council dynamics on Kosovo. France, the UK and

the US recognise Kosovo's independence and are supportive of Kosovo's government, while China and Russia, which do not, strongly support Serbia's position on the issue. During the past several debates, the P3 and some elected members, such as Japan, have become increasingly vocal in advocating lengthening UNMIK's reporting cycle and thus reducing the frequency of meetings on Kosovo. The US and Japan, which are also the top two contributors to the UN peacekeeping budget, have called for a drawdown and eventual withdrawal of UNMIK given the stability in Kosovo. At the February briefing on Kosovo, the US noted that "UNMIK is over resourced and overstaffed in comparison with its limited responsibilities" and that the mission's under-spent resources from its budget should be returned. During an April briefing on reviewing the UN's peacekeeping operations, the US ambassador reiterated the view that there is no reason why UNMIK should exist.

Given that the current US administration has placed great emphasis on reviewing the UN's peacekeeping operations with the aim of reducing costs and increasing efficacy, the issue of modifying UNMIK's mandate is likely to become more prominent. However, any attempt to change the status quo regarding UNMIK, which would require a new resolution, would be strongly opposed by Russia which at the moment would likely block such an initiative.

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## Somalia

### Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expected to renew the authorisation of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which expires on 31 May. The Council also expects to receive the report of the AU-UN joint assessment of AMISOM requested by resolution 2297, and recommendations from the Secretary-General on the UN's role in Somalia in the post-election period requested by resolution 2275.

### Key Recent Developments

There has been some progress on the political

front in Somalia. On 29 March, the Somali Federal Parliament approved a new cabinet, made up of 27 members including six women. On 17 April, the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States agreed to form a National Security Council and made key decisions on priorities such as fighting corruption and drought response, following two days of consultations in Mogadishu, led by Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo" and other senior officials. Farmajo will head the Council, which will be composed of leaders from

Somalia's regions. Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) Michael Keating said that the agreement to establish the body was "a cornerstone of the federal state building process and is a basis upon which strengthened security can be built". Keating noted that, as well as the UN, AMISOM, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the EU, Italy, Ethiopia, Sweden, Turkey, the UK, and the US had all expressed their support for the outcome of the consultations.

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA AND ERITREA** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2346 (23 March 2017) was a technical rollover of UNSOM's mandate until 16 June 2017. S/RES/2317 (10 November 2016) was on Somalia and Eritrea sanctions, with ten votes in favour. S/RES/2297 (7 July 2016) extended AMISOM's authorisation until 31 May 2017 with no major changes. S/RES/2275 (24 March 2016) extended the mandate of UNSOM. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/21** (9 January 2017) was on Somalia. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7905** (23 March 2017) was a briefing by Keating, Head of AMISOM Francisco Madeira and Farmajo. **Sanctions Committee Documents S/2016/920** (7 October 2016) was the report on Eritrea of the Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group. **S/2016/919** (7 October 2016) was the report on Somalia of the Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group.

# Somalia

Numerous challenges, however, have continued to confront the country. On 6 April, President Farmajo declared Somalia a war zone and offered members of the Islamist militant group Al-Shabaab amnesty, including training, employment and education, if they laid down their arms in the following 60 days. “We want to pardon the Somali youth who were misled by Al-Shabaab,” he said. Farmajo also announced a major shake-up in the security services, in which senior intelligence and police officials have been replaced to prepare for the escalating war against the militants. Al-Shabaab attacks have continued.

Somalia has experienced severe humanitarian crises, including a cholera epidemic and a drought with a looming famine. More than 25,000 people in Somalia have been struck by cholera or acute watery diarrhea, and the epidemic could double by this summer, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on 13 April. The WHO also reported that the fatality rate for the disease, which is spread by contaminated food or water, is already 2.1 percent in Somalia, twice the emergency threshold. At least 524 deaths had been recorded at that time.

Concerning the drought and looming famine in Somalia, John Ging of OCHA said on 18 April that the situation was “very fast moving” and that more than 6.2 million people were in need of food and water and were at risk for cholera and measles. He reported that donors had funded 70 percent of the \$825 million humanitarian appeal for Somalia.

In recent months, Somalia has also seen a resurgence in piracy attacks against large commercial vessels, including the 14 March hijacking of a Comoros-flagged oil tanker, the 3 April hijacking of an Indian commercial vessel, and the 15 April attempted hijacking of an unidentified ship in the Gulf of Aden, during which foreign naval forces shot dead two Somali pirates.

On 23 March, the AU Commission convened a high-level consultation on the future of AMISOM and support for security sector institutions and reform in Somalia. Senior representatives of IGAD, the EU, the UN, and the five permanent members of the Security Council were present. A press release following the meeting said that the parties discussed the need to support AMISOM and non-AMISOM troops by providing fuel,

rations, medical supplies and transport for a limited period of six months during simultaneous offensives in the Jubba Valley corridor and the North East Coastline; and that the upcoming joint AU-UN review should provide an opportunity for the redefinition of tasks and for considering options for reconfiguring AMISOM. The release also noted that the partnership between the AU and UN will be central in the future presence of AMISOM and options to enhance this partnership should be explored in the upcoming joint AU-UN review. The meeting also took note of the AU recommendation that the UN should consider the possibility of enhanced UN participation in the substantive civilian component functions of AMISOM, including the prospect for a joint Special Representative for Somalia, as well as full support for AMISOM uniformed personnel through UN-assessed contributions.

On 15 April, a US military spokeswoman said the US is deploying “a few dozen” troops to Somalia to assist the national army and conduct unspecified security operations in the largest US deployment to the country in about two decades.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

On 13 April, the Chair of the 751/1907 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), briefed the Council on the work of the Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) over the past four months. Umarov said the Committee had received notifications related to the arms embargo on Somalia and was working on the issues of sanctions violations and actions of armed groups. He announced a possible future visit of the Committee to the Horn of Africa. During the reporting period, the SEMG had again found no links between Al-Shabaab and Eritrea, he said, but it had raised concerns about Djiboutian troop disappearances after the Djibouti-Eritrea border clashes and had examined Eritrea's compliance with relevant Council resolutions. The SEMG also investigated the origin and destination of a cache of 25,000 firearms found in Somalia. Umarov also relayed that the SEMG was primarily concerned with the threats posed by continuing illegal fishing and Al-Shabaab's involvement in the charcoal trade.

## Key Issues

Concerning the reauthorisation of AMISOM, a key issue is ensuring that the mission is equipped to adequately strengthen the Somali national security forces and enhance their

ability to carry out operations against Al-Shabaab, particularly in light of AMISOM's plan to begin withdrawing from Somalia in October 2018.

Another issue concerning AMISOM is ensuring that its forces comply with human rights standards in joint military operations with the Somali national security forces against Al-Shabaab.

On sanctions, a key issue in April will be assessing the Federal Government of Somalia's management of arms and ammunition and implementation of maritime interdiction measures regarding arms and charcoal. A major issue will be considering the findings of the midterm report of the SEMG and determining whether to consider altering or ending the Eritrea sanctions regime, as advocated by some Council members.

Regarding Somalia more generally, a pressing issue is ensuring an appropriate humanitarian response to the drought and looming famine and the outbreak of cholera.

## Options

The most likely option will be to reauthorise AMISOM for one year using the observations and recommendations of the joint AU-UN review of AMISOM as a basis for any alterations to the mandate.

## Council Dynamics

On Somalia generally, Council members are united in supporting state-building processes and in their support for AMISOM, as demonstrated by unified messages conveyed during the Council's visit to Somalia in May 2016 and the uncontentious adoption of several recent Council outcomes on Somalia.

Regarding sanctions, the Council is divided between those members who believe it should reconsider sanctions measures against Eritrea, such as China, Russia and Egypt, and those who remain concerned about Eritrea's other activities in the region and seem to view cooperation with the SEMG as a precondition for any changes in the sanctions regime. Ethiopia is likely to oppose the easing or lifting of sanctions on Eritrea advocated by some members.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia, and Kazakhstan is the chair of the 751/1907 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee for 2017.

# Lebanon (1559)

## Expected Council Action

In May, the Council expects to receive the semi-annual briefing on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559. Adopted in 2004, resolution 1559 called for the disarmament of all militias and the extension of government control over all Lebanese territory.

## Key Recent Developments

The Council held its regular quarterly debate on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 20 April. Ahead of the debate, the US, Council president in April, circulated a concept note that highlighted for discussion issues including the cross-border influx of foreign terrorist fighters and networks of “terror groups with ever-shifting alliances that threaten peace and security in the region”. It referred to the situations in several countries on the Council’s agenda, including Lebanon, where Hezbollah “undermines Lebanon’s security” and plays a key role in the Syrian conflict.

Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov briefed at the debate. Concerning Lebanon, he acknowledged that crucial progress is being made in restoring national institutions to their full functions, and said that it was now essential to address the question of weapons held outside state authority and control. Noting that social exclusion and marginalisation provided fertile ground for the rise of violent extremism, he said terrorist organisations and other non-state actors, including armed groups such as Hezbollah, thrived in a climate of weak governance and minimal human rights. US Ambassador Nikki Haley, seeking to steer the discussion away from its usual focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, said that in attempting to speak honestly about conflict in the Middle East, the Council needs to start “with the chief culprit, Iran, and its partner militia [Hezbollah]”, citing their activities in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere.

Among political developments in Lebanon, President Michel Aoun on 13 April suspended a parliamentary session for a month, temporarily blocking a proposal to extend

the parliament’s term for the third time since 2013. Parliament had been expected to vote to extend its mandate until 2018 without an election. Aoun said that the delay was aimed at giving politicians more time to reach an agreement on a new electoral law. The current parliamentarians were elected in 2009 for what was meant to be a four-year term.

On the Lebanese-Israeli border, senior Hezbollah officials gave a military briefing on 20 April to a group of journalists, reportedly from local, regional and Western media outlets, in which they said that Israel had deployed troops and attacked Lebanon and spoke of its alleged espionage. The Hezbollah officials said Israel has gone “from an offensive to a defensive doctrine”. The group reportedly was taken around, making several stops along the Lebanese-Israeli border, provided with detailed descriptions of Israeli positions, shown alleged locations of espionage systems and told that Israel had beefed up its defensive capacity on the border. The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) issued a statement that Hezbollah did not inform it of the tour and that the event was in direct violation of resolution 1701, which bars any armed forces besides the Lebanese army from the border zone.

On 1 April, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri warned that his country was close to “breaking point” because of the pressures of hosting more than one million Syrian refugees. He said he feared that unrest could escalate because of tensions between refugees and local communities. Refugees from Syria make up about a quarter of Lebanon’s population. They mostly live in informal camps across the country, some in severe poverty. The Lebanese government has long rejected creating formal refugee camps, fearing the permanent presence of refugees.

Meanwhile, days of clashes in Ain el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon in early April led to the killing of a member of the Palestinian Fatah faction and at least three other persons. Members of Fatah and other Palestinian groups clashed with hardline Sunni Islamists known as the Badr group, as has happened intermittently

in recent months in the camp. Lebanon’s Palestinian camps, which house approximately 450,000 Palestinian refugees, mainly fall outside the effective jurisdiction of the Lebanese security services.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 21 April, the Committee against Torture completed consideration of Lebanon’s initial report on its implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. While commending Lebanon’s strong will with regard to the promotion of human rights in light of the tense national and regional situation, the committee experts expressed grave concern at the “systematic nature of acts of torture” (with more than 60 percent of detainees reportedly having suffered torture during arrest), particularly for people arrested for crimes against national security.

## Key Issues

The main issue is that Hezbollah and other non-state actors continue to maintain weaponry that directly hinders the government’s exercise of full authority over its territory, poses a threat to Lebanon’s sovereignty and stability, and contravenes its obligations under resolutions 1559 and 1701, the latter of which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006.

The ongoing crisis in Syria, with Hezbollah’s involvement on the side of the government, remains a major concern for several reasons, including the flow of arms through Syria to Hezbollah. These circumstances have had a negative effect on Lebanon and continue to stall efforts to fully implement resolution 1559. Lebanon’s burden in hosting more than one million refugees from Syria is also of deep concern.

Another issue is the continuing threat of a resumption of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel.

## Options

An option for the Council would be to issue a statement in response to political developments in Lebanon, such as the dispute over a new parliamentary electoral law.

A routine option is for the Council to receive the briefing and take no further action.

**UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2305 (30 August 2016) renewed UNIFIL’s mandate for an additional year and requested the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of UNIFIL by February 2017. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, extension of the Lebanese government’s control over all Lebanese territory, and free and fair presidential elections. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel and increased UNIFIL by 15,000 troops. Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2016/15 (1 November 2016) welcomed the election of President Michel Aoun in accordance with the Lebanese constitution and stressed that the formation of a unity government and the election of a parliament by May 2017 are critical for Lebanon’s stability. S/PRST/2016/10 (22 July 2016) stressed the importance of Lebanon’s electing a president by May 2017 in order to maintain stability. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7929 (20 April 2017) was a briefing by Mladenov in the quarterly Middle East open debate. Secretary-General’s Report S/2016/366 (22 April 2016) was on the implementation of resolution 1559. Security Council Letter S/2017/202 (8 March 2017) transmitted the Secretary-General’s strategic review of UNIFIL.

# Lebanon (1559)

## Council Dynamics

The Council continues to demonstrate unity in its support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security and to support Lebanon in its efforts to insulate itself from

the damaging effect of the Syrian conflict. The Council has been united in repeatedly calling on all Lebanese parties to recommit to Lebanon's dissociation policy from the Syrian crisis and to desist from any involvement

there, while voicing concern about the vacancy in the presidency.

France is the penholder on Lebanon.

# Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Expected Council Action

In May, the Council will hold its biannual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The High Representative for BiH, Valentin Inzko, will brief, presenting the latest report of the Office of the High Representative (OHR).

## Key Recent Developments

Ethnic divisions among Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs continue to provoke political crises. These included the continuing controversy over celebrating Republika Srpska (RS) Day on 9 January in that predominantly Bosnian Serb entity. On 1 December 2016, BiH's Constitutional Court annulled the results of the 25 September 2016 referendum held in the RS, in which voters decided to continue observing RS Day on 9 January. The Constitutional Court had already determined that celebration of the holiday on 9 January was discriminatory to non-Bosnian Serbs in the RS and unconstitutional since this date is an Orthodox holiday. The date also marks the day that Bosnian Serbs established Republika Srpska in the lead-up to the 1992-1995 war. During his most recent Council briefing on 8 November 2016, Inzko said that he considered the referendum to be "a grave violation" of the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) since annex 4 of the accord states that decisions of the Constitutional Court are final and binding.

On 9 January, the RS celebrated the holiday. In Banja Luka, RS President Milorad Dodik repeated demands for greater autonomy for the entity and again raised the possibility that the entity might secede. The ceremonies in Banja Luka included the army's Third Infantry Regiment, despite warnings from state government institutions and the NATO command in Bosnia that their involvement would violate the GFAP.

On 17 January, the US imposed sanctions on Dodik for his role in defying the

Constitutional Court and obstructing the GFAP. According to a US Treasury Department statement, "By obstructing the Dayton Accords, Milorad Dodik poses a significant threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina." The sanctions block any property or interest in property of Dodik within US jurisdiction, and US citizens are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with the RS leader. Dodik called on the BiH government to declare the US ambassador persona non grata.

In a 1 December 2016 decision, the Constitutional Court ruled in favour of a challenge brought by the president of the Croatian National Congress of BiH, the flagship organisation representing Bosnian Croats. The court determined that some of the current provisions for electing delegates to the upper house of parliament in the Federation of BiH (the majority Bosniak entity) are contrary to the principle of equality of BiH's constituent people and are unconstitutional. It is likely to prove difficult for Bosniaks and Croats to reach agreement on changes to the Federation's election system to comply with the decision, which could have implications for the 2018 elections. On 28 January, the BiH Croatian National Congress repeated calls for the establishment of a third, Croat entity.

Ethnic tensions were exacerbated in February when the Bosniak member of BiH's tripartite presidency, Bakir Izetbegović, initiated an appeal against the 2007 ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that Serbia had not been complicit in the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. While the ICJ found Serbia had violated the Genocide Convention by not preventing the massacre, it said that there had not been enough proof that Bosnian Serb forces acted under the "direction" or "effective control" of Serbia. On 16 February, the BiH agent from the 2007 case, Sakib Softić,

submitted a revision request to the ICJ on Izetbegović's behalf, ten days before the expiration of the ten-year deadline to do so.

The current Bosnian Serb member of the presidency, Mladen Ivanić, warned that the appeal would worsen ethnic tensions and create a crisis. The two main Bosnian Serb political parties boycotted a parliamentary session on 16 February in protest. Ivanić and BiH Foreign Minister Igor Crnadak argued in a letter to the ICJ that Softić's appeal was not valid since it was made without the authorisation of the full presidency. On 9 March, the ICJ rejected the request to review the case, saying that "no decision has been taken by the competent authorities on behalf of BiH as a state". Izetbegović has since come under heavy criticism for seeking the ICJ review without the authority to do so, and the Bosnian Serb party, the National Democratic Movement, has submitted a criminal complaint against him and Softić.

## Key Issues

A key issue is to address ethnic tensions among Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, and divisive rhetoric along with RS referenda initiatives challenging the GFAP (which have included whether to accept the authority of the High Representative and state-level judicial institutions and a possible vote on secession).

Making progress on implementing various socio-economic and governance reforms related to BiH's EU integration and the fulfilment of a series of conditions and objectives that BiH must complete before the OHR can be closed are also recurring issues.

## Options

The Council is most likely to hold the debate without taking further action. It could, however, issue a statement encouraging BiH

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## Bosnia and Herzegovina

leaders to overcome narrow political interests and ethnic divisions and to make meaningful progress towards implementing commitments on economic and governance reforms and the criteria for closing the OHR, known as the “5 +2” agenda.

### Council Dynamics

Members routinely express concern about BiH’s political gridlock, which has limited progress on reforms, and the divisive rhetoric of RS officials usually chronicled in the High Representative’s reports. Last year’s 25 September referendum was strongly criticised by

most members; they viewed it as violating the GFAP and the rule of law and as challenging BiH’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russia, however, tends to support the positions of the RS. It argues that the entity is unfairly blamed for BiH’s problems and that political dysfunction and provocations in the Federation of BiH are overlooked. Russia is usually very critical of the High Representative, believing that his reporting is not objective and that he should focus more on encouraging intra-Bosnian dialogue and trust. It has called for his office’s closure as soon as possible. These dynamics have played

out in recent years during the once relatively routine negotiations on the resolution to re-authorise the EU-led stabilisation mission in BiH (EUFOR ALTHEA). Russia’s concerns in these negotiations have also included references to Euro-Atlantic integration, arguing that there is no agreement within BiH on joining NATO.

The BiH Coordination and Drafting Group first prepares Council products on BiH. For 2017, it comprises France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine, UK and the US.

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## Counter-Terrorism

### Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is scheduled to receive a briefing from the chairs of its counter-terrorism-related committees. The briefers will be Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), chair of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da’esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee; Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC); and Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorenty Solíz (Bolivia), chair of the 1540 Committee, which focuses on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In the past, the joint briefings were semi-annual. However starting with the briefing of 4 May 2016, they are now held annually.

### Key Recent Developments

#### *1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da’esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee*

The Council received the 19th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team assisting the Committee on 11 January. The report noted that despite states’ efforts, ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliates continue to present complex and diverse challenges to

international security. On the issue of foreign terrorist fighters, the report noted that their overall flow to Iraq and Syria has slowed, and sanctions levied against ISIL have begun to take effect, in particular with respect to the trade in antiquities illegally removed from Iraq and Syria.

The Secretary-General’s fourth report on the threat posed by ISIL of 2 February noted that the group is adapting to military pressure by altering its communications methods. ISIL continues to encourage its followers and sympathisers outside conflict zones to perpetrate attacks including, in some cases, in their countries of origin. On 7 February, the Council was briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman on the report, followed by consultations.

#### *1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee*

On 13 February, the Council held an open debate on the protection of critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks. The Council adopted resolution 2341, directing the CTC and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) assisting it to continue to examine member states’ efforts to protect critical infrastructure. In accordance with

the resolution, CTED published a report on 8 March, which compiled relevant analysis from academia and international and regional organisations.

The CTC was jointly briefed by Assistant Secretary-General and deputy head of UN Women Lakshmi Puri and CTED on 30 March. The briefers focused on efforts to advance the implementation of Security Council resolution 2242 of 13 October 2015 on women’s roles in countering violent extremism and terrorism, in the context of the Committee’s work.

#### *1540 Committee*

Solíz briefed the Council on the work of the Committee on 16 March. According to resolution 2325, which was adopted on 15 December 2016 and endorsed the 2016 comprehensive review of the implementation of resolution 1540, the Committee will brief the Council in the first quarter of each year, in addition to the joint annual briefing with the other counter-terrorism committees.

In his briefing, Solíz said the Committee intended to build on the momentum generated by resolution 2325 towards more effective implementation of resolution 1540. He

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2347 (24 March 2017) was on the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflicts. S/RES/2341 (13 February 2017) was on the protection of critical infrastructure against terrorist threats. S/RES/2331 (20 December 2016) was the first resolution on human trafficking, which condemned the phenomenon and stressed how human trafficking can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity. S/RES/2325 (15 December 2016) was on the 1540 comprehensive review. S/RES/2253 (17 December 2015) was a resolution strengthening the Al Qaida sanctions regime and focusing on ISIL. The sanctions regime was also renamed the “1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da’esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List” to reflect this focus. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7900 (16 March 2017) was a briefing by the chair of the 1540 Sanctions Committee on the work of the Committee. S/PV.7882 (13 February 2017) was on the protection of critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks. S/PV.7877 (7 February 2017) was a briefing by Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on UN counter-terrorism efforts in support of member states’ fight against ISIL. S/PV.7837 (15 December 2016) was an open debate titled “Preventing Catastrophe: A Global Agenda for Stopping the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction by Non-State Actors”. Sanctions Committee Documents S/2017/126 (10 February 2017) was the 1540 Committee’s programme of work. S/2017/35 (11 January 2017) was a letter transmitting the 19th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. S/2016/1038 (9 December 2016) was the final document on the 2016 comprehensive review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540. S/2016/671 (1 August 2016) was the 12th report of the Office of the Ombudsperson.

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## Counter-Terrorism

went on to highlight some of the key elements of the programme of work for 2017. The Committee will focus on the objective of achieving universal reporting by all member states as soon as possible and continue to encourage states to submit additional information regarding implementation. The Committee will also pay particular attention to the need to improve the system for the provision of assistance, including by revising the assistance template by the end of March 2017 to support states in developing more detailed and effective assistance requests. In this context, he welcomed the role played by international and regional organisations in responding to requests for assistance. In addition, Soliz highlighted the value of states' appointing national 1540 points of contact, co-hosting regional 1540 seminars, and making contributions to the UN Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities.

### Key Issues

A key issue for the committees is to ensure that they are able to address the widening scope and various facets of the Council's counter-terrorism agenda, within their respective mandates.

A particular issue for the 1267/1989/2253 Committee is to continue to strengthen compliance with the sanctions regime by member states.

A key issue for the 1540 Committee is the follow-up to the key findings and conclusions of the 2016 comprehensive review.

### Council Dynamics

Despite some divergences over the politicisation of the issue in the Middle East, counter-terrorism continues to have overall unanimous support among Council members. In the past, most counter-terrorism-related discussions were held in the Council's

subsidiary organs, but over the last two years the Council has discussed and adopted decisions on various aspects of counter-terrorism and related issues, including foreign terrorist fighters, international judicial cooperation on counter-terrorism, and protection of critical infrastructure against terrorist threats. This trend, initiated by Russia, has resulted from a desire for the Council itself to tackle this set of issues regularly and develop strategic thinking.

With regard to the 1540 Committee, it seems that the divisions that emerged during the 2016 comprehensive review are continuing to impact the work of the Committee this year. In particular, Russia is seen as continuing to resist the more ambitious approach to implementation of resolution 1540 and the role of the Committee advocated by the P3 and others.

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## Peacekeeping

### Expected Council Action

In May, the Council will be briefed on aspects of UN peacekeeping by the force commanders of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix is also expected to address the Council. The force commander briefings, which have been held annually since 2010, focus on the operational challenges of implementing mission mandates. No outcome is anticipated.

### Background

Each force commander will focus on a different aspect of peacekeeping particularly relevant to the mission: robust peacekeeping (MINUSCA), operating under a Chapter VI mandate (UNDOF), and mission drawdown considerations (UNMIL). While the briefings are focused on three specific missions, the themes raised are more broadly

applicable: the concept of robust peacekeeping is relevant to a number of UN missions, as MINUSCA is one of 10 UN peacekeeping operations with a protection of civilians mandate; UNDOF is one of five missions with a Chapter VI mandate; and in addition to UNMIL, UN peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti are currently in a drawdown phase.

### *MINUSCA: Robust Peacekeeping*

The security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) has continued to be precarious. The government of President Faustin Archange Touadera has limited control outside the capital, Bangui, and efforts to convince various armed groups to disarm have not gained traction, with factions of the Muslim-dominated ex-Séléka and Christian anti-Balaka rebel groups declining to give up their hold on large areas, resulting in a surge of violence over the last few months. MINUSCA, which has 12,208 uniformed personnel as of 31 March, has not been able to eliminate the threat of armed groups in large swathes of the country.

Against this backdrop, the mission's force commander, Lieutenant General Balla Keita (Senegal), is expected to address MINUSCA's ability to take a robust posture, using its limited resources to maximise its ability to protect civilians. One important issue that may be raised are the different strategies—including active patrolling, the establishment of buffer zones, and training newly arrived contingents, among others—employed by the mission to fulfil its protection mandate. Another matter that may be discussed is how the mission can best respond to the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in southwest CAR after the recent withdrawal of Uganda People's Defense Forces as Uganda terminated its participation in the AU Regional Task Force to combat the LRA. Keita may also speak about MINUSCA's efforts to address incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse. MINUSCA has been confronted with several allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse since its establishment in April 2014.

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEKEEPING** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2333 (23 December 2016) renewed the mandate of UNMIL for a final period until 30 March 2018. S/RES/2330 (19 December 2016) renewed the mandate of UNDOF until 30 June 2017. S/RES/2301 (26 July 2016) renewed the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 November 2017. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7918** (6 April 2017) was a debate on UN peacekeeping. **S/PV.7464** (17 June 2015) was a briefing by Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and the heads of the military components of the UN Mission in South Sudan, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and the UN Truce Supervision Organization.

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# Peacekeeping

## *UNDOF: Peacekeeping with a Chapter VI Mandate*

A traditional mission operating under Chapter VI, UNDOF has a mandate to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Syria, supervising the disengagement of their forces and the areas of separation and limitation. However, the spillover of the Syrian civil war into UNDOF's area of operation over the past five years continues to affect the way in which the mission carries out its mandate. In 2014, the majority of the mission's peacekeepers were redeployed to the Israeli-controlled side of the ceasefire line as a result of the deteriorating security situation and subsequent to the kidnapping by Al-Nusra Front of more than 40 peacekeepers, who were eventually released. In November 2016, UNDOF began a phased redeployment of its troops to Camp Faouar on the Syrian-controlled side.

Although there have been no major security incidents in the areas surrounding Camp Faouar, the security situation remains fluid because of the presence of a number of armed groups in the Golan Heights. Major General Jai Shanker Menon (India) may brief on the mission's limitations in being able to carry out its Chapter VI mandate given the dynamic security environment in UNDOF's area of operations and the threat posed by non-state actors. He is likely to address concerns related to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

## *UNMIL: Mission Drawdown Considerations*

When it was established in 2003, UNMIL was one of the largest UN missions, initially authorised with up to 15,000 troops with a comprehensive mandate to protect civilians and UN personnel, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and promote and monitor human rights, among other tasks. Although temporarily interrupted during the height of the Ebola crisis in 2014, the gradual drawdown of UNMIL has occurred over several years

as stability and security have returned to the country. In June 2016, Liberian authorities assumed security responsibilities from UNMIL for the first time in 13 years while the mission continued its drawdown. In December 2016, the Council adopted resolution 2333 with the intention of extending the mandate of the mission one last time, with a reduced military component, until the end of March 2018.

The UNMIL force commander, Major-General Salihu Zaway Uba (Nigeria), is likely to address the importance of ensuring a successful transition to national authorities before UNMIL's mandate expires. Given that Liberia will hold presidential elections in 2017 and is set to undergo the first democratic transfer of its presidency, it will be important that the government ensures a peaceful and transparent electoral process. Some of the main challenges regarding UNMIL's drawdown that may be raised in the briefing include the ability of the Liberian government to strengthen security and justice institutions, to address the risk of renewed conflict, and to manage public expectations.

## **Key Issues**

The key issues to be addressed in the meeting include:

- how to improve MINUSCA's physical protection capabilities;
- how to enhance the security of UNDOF peacekeepers and enable them to fulfil their mandate in an unpredictable security environment; and
- how to ensure that the drawdown of UNMIL occurs smoothly with a successful transference of security responsibilities to national capacities.

## **Options**

Options for the Council include:

- taking advantage of the interactive format of the meeting to get a better

understanding of the operational challenges to peacekeeping; and

- having the force commanders brief the Council alongside heads of mission on a case-by-case basis, as mission mandates are considered for renewal in the future.

Another option would be for Heads of Military Components (as force commanders are collectively known) to meet with Council members in an Arria-formula meeting or another informal format to exchange ideas about how to make best use of the Military Staff Committee.

## **Council Dynamics**

In past years, Council members have found the force commanders' briefing useful because of the substance of the discussions and the interactive format, which allows them to ask questions. The success of these sessions prompted then Council member Australia to organise a briefing with the heads of police components of peacekeeping operations during its November 2014 presidency; since then, the meeting with the heads of police components has also been held annually.

This year's meeting comes at a time of considerable discussion of peacekeeping reform. On 6 April, at the initiative of the US, the Council held a debate on reviewing peacekeeping operations, and the Secretary-General has tasked an internal review team in the Secretariat with providing him with options for improving the functioning of the UN's peace and security architecture by June. At the 6 April debate, a number of members emphasised points made by the High-Level Independent Panel of Peace Operations in 2015, referring to the importance of linking peacekeeping operations to overarching political strategies and of ensuring that mandates are clear and implementable, while underscoring that the form of UN engagement should be adapted to the unique circumstances of each context.

# South Sudan

## Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution renewing the mandate of the 2206 South Sudan sanctions regime, which expires on 31 May. The Council is also set to renew the mandate of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee Panel of Experts. In addition, the Council will most likely consider the Secretary-General's 30-day assessment of the deployment and future requirements of the Regional Protection Force (RPF), obstacles to setting up the force, and impediments to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in carrying out its mandate.

The mandate of UNMISS expires on 15 December 2017.

## Key Recent Developments

The security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains dire, and the political process has stalled amidst the increasing fragmentation of the conflict. Fighting continues to be reported in numerous parts of the country between government and various anti-government forces. The fragmentation of opposition groups has changed the dynamic of the conflict, and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA, the South Sudanese army) now appears to be seeking to recapture and reassert government authority over areas previously held by the various opposition groups. In recent months, there have been increasing reports of deliberate attacks against civilian populations. Food insecurity—brought on by conflict, high prices and poor harvests—affects some 4.9 million people. The famine, previously identified as focused in the former Unity state, has spread to include Northern Bahr el Ghazal, where 290,000 people are facing starvation. A further 1 million South Sudanese are on the verge of famine. In addition to the 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Sudan, approximately 1.7 million refugees have fled to neighbouring states, including nearly 200,000 since the beginning of 2017.

In early April, there was an increase of fighting between the SPLA and opposition forces in Eastern Equatoria. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has reported

that more than 6,000 South Sudanese fled to northern Uganda following violence in the town of Pajok that began on 3 April. There were unconfirmed reports that SPLA soldiers deliberately targeted civilians, particularly members of the Acholi ethnic group. UNMISS reported that it was initially blocked from reaching Pajok by SPLA forces.

UNMISS reported on 10 April that renewed fighting in Wau had led to at least 28 deaths. Initial reporting suggested the violence has primarily consisted of Dinka militias targeting members of the Lou and Fertit ethnic groups. Approximately 17,000 new internally displaced people have entered the Wau protection of civilians site, while an additional 5,000 people have joined the approximately 8,000 IDPs already seeking shelter at the Wau cathedral.

Attacks on humanitarian personnel remain a major impediment to the delivery of humanitarian relief to vulnerable populations. On 8 April, Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan Eugene Owusu issued a statement demanding that parties to the conflict uphold their responsibilities to protect civilians and ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers. The statement followed several attacks on humanitarian personnel in recent weeks.

South Sudan's Finance Minister Stephen Dhieu Dau announced on 3 April that South Sudan would not proceed with its intention to raise the fee for foreign worker permits from \$100 to \$10,000. The increase would have been a significant barrier to external humanitarian agencies.

On 6 April, the Secretary-General appointed Rwandan Lieutenant General Frank Mushyo Kamanzi as UNMISS force commander. Lieutenant General Kamanzi replaces Kenyan Lieutenant General Johnson Mogoa Kimani Ondieki, who was relieved in November following attacks on UNMISS and protection of civilian sites in Juba in July 2016. During the intervening period, Chinese Major General Chaoying Yang served as acting force commander.

The deployment of the RPF—initially authorised in resolution 2304 of 12 August

2016—which had been expected to begin in late April, has been further delayed by requirements imposed by the South Sudanese government. The force, comprising an expected 4,000 soldiers, was to facilitate humanitarian access in Juba, protect the airport and “key facilities in Juba”, and engage forces preparing to or engaging in attacks against UN sites and personnel, humanitarian actors or civilians.

On 25 April, the Council was briefed on the situation in South Sudan by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and head of UNMISS, David Shearer. This was the first time Shearer briefed the Council since taking up the post in January. Shearer focused on recent incidents of violence, the deteriorating humanitarian situation, and progress UNMISS has made in strengthening its protection activities.

## Human Right-Related Developments

In a statement on 23 April, the director of the human rights division of UNMISS, Eugene Nindorera, said that the lack of accountability for human rights abuses remains one of the “biggest challenges” in South Sudan. Following an UNMISS investigation into alleged human rights violations by government forces and aligned armed groups in Wau on 10 April, Nindorera said that no one was currently being detained in connection with the attack and that it is “more important than ever before that people are held accountable for the crimes they have committed.” In this regard, Nindorera welcomed the move by the governor of Wau State to establish a committee to investigate the attack and hold the perpetrators accountable.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

A representative for Ambassador Fodé Seck (Senegal), chair of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee, briefed the Council on 25 April on the final report of the Committee's Panel of Experts. In the report the Panel advocated an arms embargo on South Sudan, and additional targeted sanctions, in addition to other measures.

## Key Issues

The key issue for the Council is whether it can present a unified approach aimed at ending violence and revitalising the political process. Lack of unity may be undermining the Council's leverage with the government,

**UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2327](#) (16 December 2016) extended the mandate of UNMISS for one year and reauthorised the RPF. [S/RES/2304](#) (12 August 2016) authorised the RPF. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/4](#) (23 March 2017) emphasised the need for a political solution to the conflict in South Sudan. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7930](#) (25 April 2017) was a briefing of the Council by Shearer. [S/PV.7906](#) (23 March 2017) was a high-level briefing on South Sudan. [S/PV.7897](#) (10 March 2017) was a briefing on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and the Lake Chad Basin. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2017/224](#) (16 March 2017) was an UNMISS [Other S/2017/326](#) (13 April 2017) This was the final report of the South Sudan Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts. [S/2016/1085](#) (23 December 2016) was the draft resolution on an arms embargo and targeted sanctions that failed to receive the necessary support to be adopted. It received seven affirmative votes (France, New Zealand, Spain, Ukraine, Uruguay, the UK and the US) and eight abstentions (Angola, China, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, Russia, Senegal, and Venezuela).

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## South Sudan

including its response to ongoing reports of violence against civilians and impediments to humanitarian access.

A related key issue is whether to make adjustments to the sanctions regime. The Council is divided over the proper approach to sanctions in South Sudan, and significant alterations to the current sanctions regime may not receive sufficient support to be adopted.

A further important issue is how to allay the devastating impact on civilians of the ongoing fighting and the acute humanitarian crisis.

Another issue for the Council is how to achieve deployment of the RPF and ensure the force's ability to fulfil its mandate once deployed. This remains a relevant concern because of government-imposed restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNMISS and the government's objections to the RPF's mandate, particularly regarding protection of Juba's airport. The delays in the RPF's deployment since its authorisation also raise the question of how the RPF could now best contribute to the broader UNMISS mandate.

### Options

One option is for the Council to pursue the actions outlined in resolution 2304, namely the imposition of an arms embargo on the country or an assets freeze and travel ban on key figures responsible for the ongoing violence. Although there appears to be insufficient support for an embargo, the Council could focus on targeting the assets of those individuals identified as pursuing violence against civilians, UN and humanitarian personnel.

Another option would be for the Council to meet with Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom to hear how the Council could further support efforts by

the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in pursuit of a political solution in South Sudan.

A further option would be for the Council to define a united purpose regarding South Sudan through the adoption of a resolution or presidential statement including language that:

- demands an immediate cessation of hostilities;
- reminds the government of its responsibility to protect civilians from atrocity crimes;
- emphasises the Council's united support of regional efforts in pursuit of a mediated solution to the conflict; and
- condemns restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNMISS personnel and obstacles to humanitarian access imposed by the government.

A consensus statement or resolution on South Sudan by the Council could be followed by negotiation of a joint statement with the AU Peace and Security Council and IGAD. Such a statement could reinforce regional efforts in pursuit of a political solution.

### Council Dynamics

The Council lacks unity of purpose in its approach to South Sudan. At the heart of the division of the Council on South Sudan is a disagreement over the present nature of the crisis and conflict. An increasing number of reports that SPLA forces are targeting civilians and hindering UNMISS have led several Council members to identify the government of South Sudan as the primary belligerent. Other members, however, have accepted the government's argument that recent acts of violence against civilians by SPLA forces are the result of a lack of discipline or problems

with command and control.

All Council members continue to express concern about the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan with a particular focus on those areas affected by famine and recent incidents of violence. Obstacles to humanitarian access are also a common concern for Council members. The Council is, however, divided over how to respond to the South Sudanese government's approach to humanitarian access. Some Council members, such as Russia, have welcomed the government's efforts, while others, including the UK, and the US, have raised concerns that, notwithstanding its professed commitment, the government continues to hinder humanitarian efforts.

The question of whether to impose an arms embargo and additional targeted individual sanctions remains a further point of division within the Council. Several members, including France, the UK and the US, have reiterated their belief that imposition of an arms embargo would contribute to a reduction of violence and provide leverage that could be used to restart the political process. Opponents of an embargo, most prominently Russia, have argued that imposition of an embargo would undermine efforts to reach a political solution to the conflict. A draft resolution to impose an arms embargo received only seven affirmative votes in December 2016, along with eight abstentions. (A resolution requires nine votes to be adopted, assuming a veto is not cast by one or more of the permanent members of the Council on a matter that is not procedural.) It is unclear whether a similar resolution would now garner enough support to be adopted.

The US is the penholder on South Sudan while Senegal chairs the 2016 South Sudan Sanctions Committee.

## Expected Council Action

In May, Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Ján Kubiš will brief on the latest Secretary-General's report and provide an update on the government's efforts to retake Mosul from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

UNAMI's mandate expires on 31 July 2017.

## Key Recent Developments

More than six months since its launch, the military operation by Iraqi government forces to retake Mosul from ISIL is still ongoing, and the humanitarian situation in the area continues to deteriorate. In January, government forces took control of east Mosul, and they have since made significant advances into the more densely populated western part of the city. According to the latest estimates by OCHA, almost half a million people have been displaced from Mosul since October 2016, and around half a million people remain trapped in areas of west Mosul still under ISIL's control. While 91,000 displaced people returned to their homes in east Mosul, 285,000 people are being sheltered in refugee camps in the area.

Even though it is gradually losing ground in Mosul, ISIL has continued to use terrorist tactics in other parts of Iraq. Over the course of March and April, ISIL claimed responsibility for a series of suicide attacks in Baghdad and the northern city of Tikrit that claimed the lives of several dozen people.

On 3 March, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that 12 people, including children, from east Mosul were treated for exposure to a toxic chemical agent. Following the incident, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, Lise Grande, said that the use of chemical weapons constituted a war crime and a serious violation of international humanitarian law. In light of the worsening humanitarian situation and alleged use of chemical weapons in Mosul, Russia called a meeting on Iraq under "any other business" on 10 March. OCHA head Steven O'Brien and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on the situation in

Mosul. In a statement issued the same day, the Iraqi ambassador to the UN said that there was no evidence that chemical weapons were used in Mosul. On 24 March, Russia initiated another meeting under "any other business" on the situation in Mosul. At the meeting, China and Russia circulated a draft resolution that sought to extend the mandate of the Organisation for the Prohibition of the Chemical Weapons (OPCW)—UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to Iraq. The JIM is currently mandated to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Russia has circulated similar draft resolutions previously but has never pursued negotiations on this issue.

Media reports indicated that a US-led coalition airstrike in Mosul on 17 March might have resulted in the deaths of more than 200 civilians. The US Central Command said on 25 March that it had launched an official investigation into the incident. The US confirmed that, following a request by the Iraqi security forces, the US-led coalition conducted an airstrike targeting ISIL fighters at a location that corresponded to the one where civilian casualties were reported.

On 30 March, Secretary-General António Guterres arrived in Iraq for a two-day "solidarity visit" during which he appealed to the international community to assist in humanitarian efforts in light of the ongoing fight against ISIL. Guterres met with various political leaders in Baghdad and Erbil, including Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. At the forefront of the discussions were issues related to the ongoing humanitarian crisis, the protection of civilians, political processes, and national reconciliation efforts. During a visit to Hasan Sham refugee camp near Mosul on 31 March, Guterres noted that UN programmes helping those who were displaced remain seriously underfunded. Although the humanitarian situation in Mosul is currently receiving the most attention, around 11 million people across Iraq are in the need of humanitarian assistance, while around three million people remain internally displaced.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a report to the Human Rights Council, the

Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, concluded following her visit to Iraq from 27 February to 7 March that ethnic and religious communities are facing an "unprecedented crisis that may threaten their continued existence in Iraq" (A/HRC/34/53/Add.1). The report calls for the "overwhelming evidence" of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide against minority groups – including the Yazidis – to be fully investigated. While noting that the "atrocities" committed by ISIL constitute the "most recent and brutal attack" on these groups, the report maintains that the "challenges facing minorities did not begin with ISIL and will not end with its defeat alone" and that solutions must "confront long-standing issues of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization" in Iraqi society.

In a statement on 28 March, the High Commissioner for Human Rights deplored the massive loss of civilian lives in west Mosul due to actions by ISIL, including the reported use of human shields, and to airstrikes conducted by Iraqi and coalition forces. Between 17 February and 22 March, at least 307 people were killed and another 273 wounded. Criticising ISIL for "ruthlessly exploit[ing] civilians to serve its own ends", the High Commissioner also called on Iraqi and coalition forces to make efforts to avoid or reduce the loss of civilian life from their operations.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

On 26 January, 21 February and 8 March, the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee removed three entities from the sanctions list in a continuing effort to wind down the Committee. At press time, 170 entities and 86 individuals remain on the sanctions list.

## Key Issues

The most pressing issue for the Council is the ongoing military operation to retake Mosul and the effects of the campaign on the human rights, humanitarian and security situations in Iraq. In addition, the Council remains concerned about the alleged use of chemical weapons in Mosul.

Promoting national reconciliation and a genuinely inclusive government accountable to the Iraqi people remains an ongoing issue.

A related issue is determining how the Council and UNAMI can support Prime Minister Abadi's reform process and encourage greater cooperation on financial, security and humanitarian issues between Abadi's dominant Shi'a Dawa party and Kurdish and Sunni parliamentarians.

**UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAQ** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2335 (30 December 2016) authorised the Secretary-General to continue to maintain the escrow account authorised by resolution 1958 until 30 June 2017. S/RES/2299 (25 July 2016) renewed UNAMI. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2017/258 (27 March 2017) was the "oil-for-food" escrow account report. S/2017/75 (26 January 2017) was the UNAMI report. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.7875 (2 February 2017) was a briefing on the UNAMI report and the situation in Iraq. **Sanctions Committee Documents** SC/12696, SC/12726 and SC/12742 were press releases respectively dated, 26 January, 21 February, and 8 March 2017 about the removal of entities from the sanctions list.

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## Iraq

### Options

Even though the security response to ISIL is happening outside the Council's purview, the Council could adopt a resolution or a presidential statement:

- calling on all parties to strictly adhere to international human rights and international humanitarian law and take every step possible to protect civilians;
- calling on the government to ensure that screening of civilians fleeing conflict areas is done in strict accordance with international human rights and international humanitarian law, underscoring that such screening should not be conducted by paramilitary groups;
- asking the OPCW to investigate the reported use of chemical weapons in Mosul;
- calling on the government to work towards enhanced security and humanitarian coordination with Kurdish and Sunni leaders and for UNAMI to support the

government in that effort; and

- calling on the government to cooperate with UNAMI in areas that may require enhanced mission activities, such as human rights, rule of law, security sector reform, stabilisation activities in areas liberated from ISIL, and best practices for child protection and gender policies.

### Council Dynamics

Council members uniformly support the UN's role in Iraq and UNAMI's mandate, which they believe is broad and flexible enough to allow Kubiš to fulfil the mission's good offices role.

Nevertheless, the Council in general remains disengaged from tackling the underlying political divisions among Iraq's Shi'a, Sunni and Kurdish populations, beyond calls for an inclusive government. Correspondingly, the Council has been similarly disengaged from directly addressing the humanitarian crisis although it remains active with its

engagement on other humanitarian crises in the region, such as in Syria and Yemen. Since the operation to retake Mosul started in October 2016, Russia has been more active in initiating discussion on the humanitarian situation. Beyond calling for occasional briefings, however, Council members show no inclination to engage more substantively on this issue. The divisions between the permanent members reappeared over the issue of expanding the JIM's mandate to Iraq as suggested by the draft resolution submitted by China and Russia during the 24 March consultations. It seems unlikely that this initiative will be realised because of the evident opposition of the P3, as well as some elected members. The rift on this issue widened further after the 12 April Russian veto of the draft resolution on the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The US is the penholder on Iraq issues in general, and the UK is the penholder on Iraq-Kuwait issues. Egypt is the Chair of the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee.

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## DPRK (North Korea)

### Expected Council Action

In May, the chair of the 1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi (Italy), is due to brief Security Council members in consultations on the Committee's work.

### Key Recent Developments

At press time, the Council was scheduled to hold a ministerial-level meeting on 28 April, chaired by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, to discuss denuclearisation of the DPRK amid growing concern about the recent escalation of tension on the Korean Peninsula. The Secretary-General was expected to brief. In a concept note, the US said the objective of the meeting would be to discuss ways to maximise the impact of existing Council measures and demonstrate resolve to respond to further provocations with significant new measures.

Since Cardi's last Council briefing on 27

February, the DPRK has conducted several ballistic missile launches and repeatedly threatened to use military force against the US and its allies. On 5 March, it fired four missiles into the sea off Japan's northwest coast. On 19 March, Pyongyang announced it had tested a new rocket engine, described by Republic of Korea (ROK) officials as a technological breakthrough. Following a 21 March failed missile test, the DPRK conducted a successful launch on 4 April of what appeared to be a medium-range missile. In a 7 April letter to the Council, the DPRK accused the US of engaging in "aggressive schemes" that amounted to a declaration of war and warned of a pre-emptive strike.

In a 7 March press statement, Council members condemned the 5 March launches and noted, in a first, that such activities contribute to increasing tensions in the region and beyond as well as to the risk of a regional arms race, and emphasised the importance of

the DPRK's "showing sincere commitment to denuclearisation". They reiterated the call for member states to redouble their efforts to implement UN sanctions. Similarly worded press statements were issued on 23 March and 6 April.

In addition, the DPRK has repeatedly warned of its intention to test another nuclear bomb. Most recently, at a press conference in New York on 18 April, the DPRK's deputy permanent representative to the UN said that a nuclear test would take place "at a time and at a place where headquarters deems necessary". A 12 April report from 38 North, a website devoted to analysis of the DPRK's nuclear programme, confirmed that the Punggye-ri nuclear test site appeared to be ready for another test. There was speculation that Pyongyang would conduct such a test during the celebration of the birth of Kim Il-sung on 15 April, but instead it attempted unsuccessfully to fire another ballistic missile.

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/2345 (23 March 2017) extended the Panel of Experts' mandate. S/RES/2321 (30 November 2016) strengthened sanctions on the DPRK in response to its 9 September 2016 nuclear test. **Security Council Press Statements** SC/12801 (20 April 2017) condemned the DPRK's 15 April missile launch. SC/12780 (6 April 2017) condemned the DPRK's 4 April missile launch. SC/12763 (23 March 2017) condemned the DPRK's 19 March engine test and 21 March failed missile launch. SC/12741 (7 March 2017) condemned the DPRK's 5 March missile launches. **Other** S/2017/337 (18 April 2017) was the concept note for the 28 April Council meeting. S/2017/303 (7 April 2017) was the letter from the DPRK. A/HRC/34/L.23 (24 March 2017) was the HRC resolution on the DPRK. S/2017/150 (27 February 2017) was the report from the Panel of Experts under its previous mandate.

## DPRK (North Korea)

Council members condemned the failed launch in a 20 April press statement in which they also explicitly demanded that the DPRK conduct no further nuclear tests.

In the face of these provocations and with the arrival of a new US administration that has signalled a tougher stance on the DPRK, discussions intensified among China, Japan, the ROK and the US about how to deal with the threat and de-escalate the situation. It was one of the main issues discussed when President Donald Trump (US) and President Xi Jinping (China) met on 4 April and in their subsequent phone calls on 12 and 24 April. On 17 and 18 April, US Vice President Mike Pence visited the ROK and on 19 April he went to Japan. He emphasised that “the era of strategic patience is over” and warned the DPRK not to test the resolve or military strength of the US. ROK media questioned the credibility of the US, however, when it emerged that an earlier announcement by US officials that the aircraft carrier Carl Vinson had been redirected towards the Korean Peninsula, referred to by Trump as the US “sending an armada”, turned out to be incorrect.

In other developments, on 7 March Malaysia presented an oral report to the executive council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the possible use of the prohibited nerve agent VX in the 13 February killing of Kim Jung-un’s half-brother at the Kuala Lumpur airport. Malaysia said that a preliminary analysis had shown traces of VX on the deceased but that the investigation would continue. In a 9 March decision, the executive council expressed concern and requested the OPCW’s director-general to provide technical assistance to the government of Malaysia.

### Sanctions-Related Developments

On 23 March, in resolution 2345, the Council renewed for another 13 months the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 Sanctions Committee. It requested the Panel to submit its mid-term report to the Committee by 5 August and its final report by 1 February 2018.

Over the past month, the Committee started a series of regional outreach meetings in New York. On 31 March the Committee met with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries and on 10 April with the Eastern European Group. It was scheduled to hold subsequent meetings with the other regional groups. The meetings are being convened as a follow-up to paragraph 44 of resolution 2321, adopted in response to the 9

September 2016 nuclear test, which requested the Committee “to hold special meetings on important thematic and regional topics and member states’ capacity challenges”.

In a separate development, the US on 31 March announced sanctions designation for one entity and 11 individuals, citing their “continued violations” of Council resolutions.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement during a 13 March interactive dialogue that the Human Rights Council (HRC) held on the DPRK, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, Tomás Ojea Quintana, maintained that although escalating tensions meant that the focus was increasingly on developments in the political and military arenas, it was still an appropriate time to address human rights concerns. However, Quintana warned there were “no quick fixes or instant solutions” to tackle the human rights violations. Noting that recent tensions had led the Security Council and neighbouring states to adopt new sanctions measures to address the DPRK’s development of nuclear and ballistic-missile technology, Quintana highlighted the potential human cost of sanctions. Quintana encouraged the Sanctions Committee to give “due consideration” to protecting the civilian population from the adverse consequences of sanctions measures designed to deter nuclear proliferation, as pledged in relevant Council resolutions.

On 24 March, the HRC adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for one year.

### Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is how to deal with the serious escalation in the threat posed by the DPRK. A further issue is whether the tightening of sanctions will eventually induce the DPRK to change its behaviour or whether a different approach would be more effective.

In the 1718 Sanctions Committee, ensuring strict implementation of the sanctions and responding to the findings of the Panel of Experts are the key issues. A further issue is the potential humanitarian impact of the sanctions, as highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on human rights.

### Options

One option for the Council is to request the Secretary-General to use his good offices in attempting to bring about a freeze in the DPRK’s nuclear programme.

Another option is to remain focused on sanctions as the main tool for getting the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons programme, including by imposing additional

measures such as an oil embargo, a ban on hiring DPRK workers abroad, and further restrictions on transportation and exports.

In the Committee, the main option is to implement the Panel’s recommendations and continue with outreach activities.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

It seems Russia did not initially agree to the press statement on the 15 April missile launch. While the original draft proposed by the US on 19 April mostly reiterated agreed language from previous press statements, it omitted a reference to dialogue when welcoming efforts to facilitate a peaceful and comprehensive solution. This was acceptable to China but not to Russia. The revised agreed text retained the reference to a peaceful solution through dialogue used in previous statements, but also added an explicit reference to sanctions as one of the “further significant measures” that the Council may take.

In terms of the larger picture, the Council meeting on 28 April may be helpful in clarifying the views of key members. The new US administration has signalled a tougher stance on the DPRK than the Obama administration, but the preliminary broad approach that has now apparently been approved by President Trump does not seem to represent a fundamental shift. Although US officials have repeatedly said that all options are on the table, including the use of military force, it seems the Trump administration remains focused on sanctions and on getting China to use its leverage, while maintaining the same conditions for the resumption of talks as before.

As for China, it appears to be growing increasingly impatient and willing to put more pressure on its recalcitrant neighbour, including through a strict interpretation of the ban on the import of coal. It has continued to emphasise the need to resolve the nuclear issue through dialogue, reiterating calls for direct talks between the US and the DPRK, but it has also signalled a readiness to impose further measures, including restrictions on oil, in the event of another nuclear test.

At the regional level, dynamics may be affected by the outcome of the presidential elections in the ROK on 9 May, reflecting differences between the leading candidates in how they propose to deal with the DPRK.

The US is the penholder on the DPRK.

# Yemen

## Expected Council Action

In May, the Council expects to receive a briefing from the Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

## Key Recent Developments

The war in Yemen entered its third year at the end of March. Efforts to resume political talks remained stalled, and the humanitarian crisis continues to worsen, with increasing warnings of possible famine. The conflict pits the Houthis, a Zaydi Shiite rebel group, and forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh against the Yemeni government and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition.

There have been ongoing serious concerns about a potential attack against the Houthi-controlled port city of Hodeidah by Yemeni and coalition forces, which they have said they are planning to launch. Hodeidah's port, the largest in the country, handles 70 to 80 percent of Yemen's humanitarian assistance and the majority of its commercial cargo. Yemen has historically imported 80 to 90 percent of its food, fuel and medicine. Concerns, therefore, have been that an attack would significantly worsen the already grave humanitarian crisis as an offensive on the city would probably be difficult and destructive, lead to the port's prolonged closure, and might cut off the civilian population in Houthi-controlled areas from aid.

During a 10 March Council briefing on various humanitarian crises, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien called the humanitarian crisis already prevailing in Yemen the "largest in the world", with 18.8 million people in need of assistance. Food insecurity in Yemen increased by 3 million people since January, affecting 17 million by March, of whom 7 million are severely food insecure. O'Brien said that all parties to the conflict have denied sustained humanitarian access and have politicised aid, adding that famine would be inevitable if they do not change their behaviour.

On 17 March, Council members discussed the prospects of an attack on Hodeidah during consultations under "any other business" with Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman. In press elements afterwards, members called on the parties to allow humanitarian and commercial access, including through the critical port of

Hodeidah. When the Special Envoy briefed members in consultations on 29 March, he did not report any significant progress on reviving peace talks. During the session, Ould Cheikh Ahmed said that an attack on Hodeidah must not happen and, according to a statement his office released, he urged the Council to "use all of its diplomatic weight to push for the relevant parties to make the concessions required to reach a final agreement before more lives are lost".

On 25 April, a high-level pledging conference for the 2017 Yemen humanitarian response plan was held in Geneva. Secretary-General António Guterres chaired the conference, which was co-hosted by Sweden and Switzerland. Pledges of \$1.1 billion were made against the \$2.1 billion required by the plan.

The US, under the administration of President Donald Trump, has apparently considered increasing its support to the Saudi-led coalition. On 14 March, Saudi Deputy Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammad Bin Salman met with Trump in Washington. According to a Saudi press release, the meeting "marked a significant shift in relations, across all political, military, security and economic fields". US Defence Secretary James Mattis visited Riyadh from 18 to 19 April; his meetings with Saudi leaders focused in large part on Yemen. At a press conference, Mattis said, "In Yemen, our goal is to push this conflict into U.N.-brokered negotiations to make sure it is ended as soon as possible". He asserted that Iran has supported the Houthis with weapons and referred to the need to overcome Iran's destabilising activities and the creation of another "Lebanese Hezbollah".

## Sanctions-Related Developments

On 18 April, the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee held a session on humanitarian access through Yemeni Red Sea ports, which was organised following a case study submitted by the Yemen Panel of Experts on the issue. UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen Jamie McGoldrick, Coordinator of the Panel of Experts Ahmed Himiche, and Country Director of the World Food Programme Stephen Anderson briefed, focusing on the situation of Hodeidah. Access challenges include an increase in delays in inspections by the coalition and in its coordination with the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM), which approves commercial shipments to the port; Hodeidah port's limited capacity because of, *inter alia*, the destruction of its cranes and poor

port management; and Yemen's worsening macroeconomic situation. During the session, it was highlighted that no substitute exists, among the contingency plans and options being considered, that could make up for Yemen's needs if Hodeidah becomes unusable.

On 28 April, the Committee met with the Panel following the 12 April appointment by the Secretary-General of the Panel's expert on armed groups. The Panel discussed with members its work plan for the coming year.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 24 March, the High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the escalation in fighting since the beginning of the year, which has exacerbated the man-made catastrophe in Yemen. He described the conflict as "two years of wanton violence and bloodshed, thousands of deaths and millions of people desperate for their basic rights to food, water, health and security". While noting that his office continues to provide support to the Yemeni National Commission, as mandated by the Human Rights Council (HRC), the High Commissioner stressed the need for an independent, international investigative body to examine the numerous reports of serious human rights violations in the country.

The HRC's Special Rapporteur on human rights and international sanctions, Idriss Jazairy, called on 12 April for the lifting of the "unwarranted" aerial and naval blockade on the flow of commercial and humanitarian goods into Yemen. Jazairy argued that the blockade "involves grave breaches of the most basic norms of human rights law, as well as of the law of armed conflict" and amounts to an unlawful unilateral coercive measure under international law. The restrictions have "paralysed" the nation, according to Jazairy, and represent one of the main causes of the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen, in which seven million people are facing famine.

## Key Issues

The key issue is how the Council can support efforts to achieve a cessation of hostilities and convince the parties to resume peace talks.

An ongoing but increasingly urgent concern is the humanitarian crisis, including issues of humanitarian access, averting famine, and widespread violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict.

A related issue is the potential attack on Hodeidah, the humanitarian and political implications of an assault, and ways the Council could respond in light of the possible offensive.

Another issue is the expansion in Yemen of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and the

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# Yemen

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as a result of the vacuum created by the war.

## Options

The Council could consider a new resolution on Yemen, as the UK said in autumn 2016 that it would propose, which:

- demands an immediate cessation of hostilities, including all land, sea and air military activities; and
- calls for the sides to resume negotiations on the basis of the Special Envoy's October proposals, with the recognition by both sides of the need to compromise.

A resolution could additionally:

- demand that the parties allow unhindered access for aid and comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including avoiding harming civilians and targeting civilian infrastructure;
- demand that the ban on commercial flights to and from Sana'a be lifted;
- demand that Houthi and Saleh forces allow sustained humanitarian access to the city of Taiz;
- call on the parties to cooperate with the Special Envoy to work expeditiously on a plan to resume the payment of public sector salaries and the disbursement of social welfare fund cash transfers;
- encourage OCHA and/or UNVIM to deploy personnel to support the Hodeidah port authorities in managing the port;
- demand that the parties cooperate with

efforts to rehabilitate the Hodeidah port, including allowing the delivery of cranes to facilitate essential imports of food, fuel and medicine;

- affirm that UNVIM should provide clearance to, and oversee inspections of, commercial shipments to Yemen in compliance with resolution 2216 and call on member states to cooperate fully with UNVIM; and
- stress the importance of accountability for alleged breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

Members agree that there is no military solution to the conflict and all express concern about the humanitarian crisis. However, political relationships and interests, particularly with Saudi Arabia, make the Yemen conflict difficult for the Council to address as members are cautious about taking positions that are contrary to Saudi preferences. These have included Saudi Arabia's opposition to any new Council resolutions on the conflict. Among Council members, Egypt is a member of the coalition, and the UK and US have been providing it with assistance as Saudi allies. Russia has played a role in making Council outcomes more even-handed between the parties, highlighting Houthi perspectives, but has often raised the conflict in the face of criticism regarding its role in Syria.

During the 29 March Council meeting, various members suggested that efforts to

resume talks become more inclusive, through engagement with a broader cross-section of Yemenis or expanding the range of international actors involved. While expressing support for the Special Envoy, some members seemed frustrated that he did not offer new ideas to break the deadlock. The coalition and the Yemeni government have contended that Hodeidah's fall could push the Houthis back to the negotiating table and improve the humanitarian situation by ending Houthi diversion of aid and other imported goods entering the port. The delay in launching the offensive may suggest they recognise the difficulties and consequences of an assault.

In 2016, the US drove the activities of the Quad—comprised of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the UK and the US—which emerged to play an active role in trying to break the political impasse and support the Special Envoy's roadmap, subsequently referred to as the UN "proposals" and currently the UN "timeline". The group has since become known as "the Quint", as Oman became a member this year. However, with the change in US administrations, the Quint is considered unlikely to continue having an active role, and a meeting on 13 March in London was viewed as having been unproductive.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen. Japan chairs the 2140 Committee.

## Notable Dates for May

REPORT DUE	REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN MAY	REQUESTING DOCUMENT
25 April	SG report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (Lebanon)	S/PRST/2004/36 S/RES/1559
25 April	SG report on UNAMI (Iraq)	S/RES/2299
26 April	SG report on conflict-related sexual violence	S/RES/2106
27 April	OPCW report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (Syrian chemical weapons)	S/RES/2118
28 April	SG report on UNMIK (Kosovo)	S/RES/1244
1 May	High Representative's report on Bosnia and Herzegovina	S/RES/2183
8 May	SG report on UNSOM and AMISOM (Somalia)	S/RES/2297
15 May	SG report on protection of civilians in armed conflict	S/PRST/2015/23
15 May	SG report on UNMISS (South Sudan)	S/RES/2327
15 May	SG report on the DRC	S/RES/2348
22 May	SG report on the humanitarian situation in Syria	S/RES/2139

MANDATES EXPIRE	RELEVANT DOCUMENT	
15 May	UNISFA (Abyei)	S/RES/2318
31 May	AMISOM (Somalia)	S/RES/2297
31 May	South Sudan sanctions and Panel of Experts of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee (Panel of Experts' mandate does not expire until 1 July, but is due for renewal in May.)	S/RES/2290

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