

Monthly Forecast

- 2 Status Update since our March Forecast
- 4 Syria
- 5 Western Sahara
- 7 Central African Republic
- 9 Mali
- 10 Côte d'Ivoire
- 12 Israel/Palestine
- 13 Lebanon
- 14 Women, Peace and Security
- 16 Notable Dates

Overview

Jordan will hold the Security Council presidency in April. A ministerial-level open debate on [the role of youth in countering violent extremism](#) is planned, with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II of Jordan expected to preside and the Secretary-General will likely brief. The quarterly open debate on the [Middle East](#) will also be held in April, with Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriate Affairs, Nasser Judeh, expected to preside.

Briefings are planned on:

- the [humanitarian situation in Syria](#), likely to be held at ministerial-level, by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos; and
- [sexual violence in conflict](#) and the latest Secretary-General's report on this issue, by Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura.

Briefings, followed by consultations, are expected on:

- the situation in [Mali](#) and the latest Secretary-General's report on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous;
- the work of the [1572 Côte d'Ivoire Sanctions Committee](#) and the final report of its Group of Experts, by the Committee's chair, Ambassador Cristián Barros (Chile); and
- the situation in the [Central African Republic](#) and the latest Secretary-General's report on

the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), by its head Babacar Gaye.

Briefings in consultations are likely on:

- [chemical weapons in Syria](#), by High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane;
- the situation in [Western Sahara](#) and the latest Secretary-General's report on the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) by MINURSO's head Kim Bolduc and the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Christopher Ross; and
- the latest Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1559 concerning [Lebanon](#), by Special Envoy Terje Rød-Larsen.

Also in April, members will participate in a two-day [annual retreat hosted by the Secretary-General](#) outside of New York City.

Formal sessions will be needed to adopt resolutions to renew:

- the mandate of [MINURSO](#);
- the mandate of [MINUSCA](#); and
- Côte d'Ivoire sanctions and the mandate of the Group of Experts assisting the [1572 Côte d'Ivoire Sanctions Committee](#).

Throughout the month members will be following closely developments in [Ukraine](#), [Yemen](#), [Darfur](#), [South Sudan](#) and in the [Boko Haram-affected areas of Africa](#) and additional meetings may be scheduled. •

31 March 2015

This report is available online at securitycouncilreport.org.

For daily insights by SCR on evolving Security Council actions please subscribe to our "What's In Blue" series at whatsinblue.org or follow [@SCRtweets](https://twitter.com/SCRtweets) on Twitter.

Status Update since our March Forecast

South Sudan

The Council adopted resolution 2206 on 3 March creating a sanctions regime for South Sudan (S/PV.7396). On 18 March, Haile Menkerios, Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and Special Representative to the AU, briefed Council members in consultations, telling them that hardliners on both sides of the South Sudan conflict were committed to a military solution. On 24 March, the Council held a meeting (S/PV.7413) to adopt a presidential statement that reiterated the intent to impose sanctions, including an arms embargo or targeted measures against senior figures who have threatened South Sudan's peace, security and stability (S/PRST/2015/9).

Yemen

On 3 March, Council members were briefed in consultations by Special Adviser Jamal Benomar on the implementation of resolution 2201 that deplored the Houthi's actions to take over government institutions and urged negotiations to resolve the political impasse. On 20 March, Council members condemned attacks against Aden International Airport and airstrikes on the presidential compound in Aden in a press statement (SC/11826). Also on 20 March, Council members issued a press statement condemning suicide bombings at two Zaydi Shi'a mosques (SC/11827). In response to these events, an emergency meeting was held on 22 March. Benomar briefed from Doha by video teleconference. Yemen and Qatar, on behalf of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), also participated (S/PV.7411). The Council adopted a presidential statement the same day condemning the Houthi's unilateral actions and reaffirming its readiness to take further measures (S/PRST/2015/8). On 24 March, President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi sent the Council a letter asking for a Chapter VII resolution inviting all willing countries to provide support to deter the Houthi advance in the south. He also informed the Council about his request to the GCC and other Arab countries to intervene militarily against the Houthis. That same day the Qatari mission to the UN hosted an informal meeting with Council members, outlining the elements of a resolution that GCC countries were preparing, but at press time no text had been circulated. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia announced that it was commencing airstrikes against

Houthi targets with other Arab countries in response to Hadi's request.

DPRK (North Korea)

On 4 March, the Council adopted resolution 2207, renewing the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 5 April 2016. The Panel of Experts' most recent report was transmitted to the Council on 23 February (S/2015/131).

Libya

On 4 March, Special Representative Bernardino León briefed (S/PV.7398) the Council on the UNSMIL report (S/2015/144). The chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Hussein Haniff (Malaysia), presented the report of the Panel of Experts (S/2015/128). On 5 March, the Council adopted resolution 2208, a technical rollover of UNSMIL as well as on the measures on vessels transporting crude oil illicitly exported from Libya until 31 March (S/PV.7399). On 27 March, the Council adopted resolution 2213 renewing UNSMIL, the 1970 Libya Panel of Experts and the above mentioned measures, and resolution 2214, which focused on counter-terrorism efforts (S/PV.7420).

Ukraine

On 6 March, the Council held a briefing on the political, humanitarian and human rights situation in Ukraine (S/PV.7400) with briefings by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, OCHA official John Ging and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović. On 19 March, Lithuania organised an Arria-formula meeting on the human rights situation, media freedom and the situation of national minorities in Crimea and in eastern Ukraine. At this meeting Council members heard from Mustafa Dzhemilev, a leader in the Crimean Tatar National Movement and member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, and Andrey Zubarev, a representative of the Crimean Field Mission on Human Rights—a joint initiative of Ukraine, Russia and other CIS countries' civil society organisations monitoring the human rights situation in Crimea.

EU-UN Cooperation

On 9 March, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, briefed the Council on

cooperation between the EU and the UN and stressed the importance of this relationship for maintaining international peace and security (S/PV.7402). Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also addressed the Council and welcomed such cooperation.

Security Council Visiting Mission to Africa

Council members visited the Central African Republic (CAR), Burundi and the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa from 10 to 13 March (S/2015/162). Angola and France co-led the visit to CAR and Addis Ababa. The CAR visit assessed progress and challenges facing MINUSCA and gave Council members an opportunity to meet with the transitional authorities on the political process, including preparations for elections. In addition to their activities in Bangui, Council members went to Bria in eastern CAR to visit local authorities, civil society and ex-Séléka members. On 12 March, the Council held its Ninth Annual Joint Consultative Session Meeting with the AU Peace and Security Council. Following an additional week of negotiations, a communiqué on the joint session was issued (S/2015/212). Angola, France and the US co-led the Burundi visit where Council members met with MENU, the UN Country Team, government officials, other political actors and civil society. The focus of these discussions was whether President Pierre Nkurunziza would seek a third term, which the opposition contests would violate the constitution and could lead to violence. In the meeting with Nkurunziza, Council members stressed that he take actions that ensure the country's unity. France and Angola briefed the Council on the visiting mission on 18 March (S/PV.7407).

Afghanistan

The Council held its quarterly debate on UNAMA on 16 March (S/PV.7403). Special Representative Nicholas Haysom presented the Secretary-General's Afghanistan report (S/2015/151), noting that UNAMA had urged Afghanistan's political leaders to finalise the appointment of senior government officials and expressed concern with the rise of civilian casualties in the conflict. Afghanistan also addressed the Council. The Council adopted resolution 2210 renewing UNAMA until 17 March 2016.

Status Update since our March *Forecast* (con't)

Haiti

On 18 March, Special Representative Sandra Honoré briefed (S/PV.7408) the Council at its semi-annual debate, presenting the Secretary-General's MINUSTAH report (S/2015/157). The discussion included an update on preparations for legislative and presidential elections and the merits of the planned drawdown of the military component of the peacekeeping mission.

Liberia

On 16 March, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous updated Council members on the political and security situation in Liberia following the Ebola outbreak. Ladsous recommended that the drawdown, which had been postponed due to the Ebola outbreak, should resume during the remainder of UNMIL's current mandate, which expires 30 September. It seems likely the Council will consider a resolution taking up this recommendation in the near future.

DRC

On 19 March, Special Representative Martin Kobler briefed (S/PV.7410) the Council on the latest MONUSCO report (S/2015/172). Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, briefed on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement (S/2015/173). DRC Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda also addressed the Council. The Council adopted resolution 2211 on 26 March, renewing MONUSCO and its intervention brigade until 31 March 2016.

Sudan (Darfur)

On 17 March, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous briefed the Council (S/PV.7405) on the most recent UNAMID report (S/2015/141) and on the special report on the implementation of UNAMID's strategic review (S/2015/163). He said that the "security situation had deteriorated significantly over the past year" in Darfur. He also indicated that the UN, the AU and Sudan had begun discussions on the creation of an exit strategy for UNAMID. Sudan also addressed the Council. On 25 March, the UK circulated a draft presidential statement reiterating the Council's endorsement of UNAMID's revised strategic priorities. At press time, adoption was still pending.

Counter-Terrorism

On 18 March, Council members condemned the terrorist attack at the National Bardo Museum in Tunisia (SC/11823).

Sudan and South Sudan

On 17 March, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous briefed Council members under "any other business" on the situation in Abyei, focusing on a 2 March incident in which Misseriya assailants attacked a Dinka village. He noted that UNISFA peacekeepers detained several of the assailants, and based on interrogations, learned that one of the attackers was affiliated with Sudanese military intelligence. On 24 March, Haile Menkerios, Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and Special Representative to the AU, briefed via video teleconference on Sudan/South Sudan relations.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

On 24 March, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations briefed Council members in consultations on the Secretary-General's latest UNDOF report (S/2015/177).

Iran

On 24 March, Ambassador Román Oyarzun (Spain), chair of the 1737 Iran Sanctions Committee, briefed the Council (S/PV.7412). He emphasised that although there are ongoing P5+1 negotiations with Iran, UN sanctions remain in full effect.

Children and Armed Conflict

On 25 March, the Security Council held an open debate on children and armed conflict focused on child victims of non-state armed groups (S/PV.7414). France circulated a concept note in preparation for the debate (S/2015/168). There were briefings by the Secretary-General, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Layla Zerrougui and Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF Yoka Brandt. Perspectives from the field were provided by the Child Protection Advisor from Save the Children in the Central African Republic, Julie Bodin. Junior Nzita Nsuami, a former child soldier from the DRC who heads Paix pour l'enfance, shared his experience as a child soldier and goodwill ambassador for the implementation of the action plan on child recruitment in the DRC. The Secretary-General noted

that numbers of children affected by armed conflict have grown with the intensification of many conflicts and the emergence of new ones. He also highlighted the rising number of cases of abductions by armed groups. Given the large number of non-state actors that have been documented to have committed violations against children, Zerrougui highlighted the need to enter into constructive dialogue with non-state actors. France is likely to follow up by circulating a letter with a non-paper containing a summary of key points made in the debate.

Protection of Minorities in the Middle East

On 27 March, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius chaired a ministerial-level open debate on the situation of persecuted ethnic or religious minorities in the Middle East (S/PV.7419). The Secretary-General and High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein briefed. An Iraqi parliamentarian of the Yazidi faith and the head of the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Babylon also addressed the Council. France circulated a concept note in preparation for the debate (S/2015/176).

Somalia

On 28 March, the members of the Security Council issued a press statement strongly condemning the attack by Al-Shabaab on a hotel in Mogadishu the previous day, which resulted in the deaths of numerous Somalis (SC/11844). The members of the Council expressed their deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, who included Somalia's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Yusuf Bari-Bari.

Boko Haram

On 30 March, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-wha Kang and the head of UNOWA, Special Representative Mohammed Ibn Chambas, were expected to brief the Council on the security, political and humanitarian situation in Boko Haram-affected areas, followed by consultations (S/PV.7421). On 26 March, the draft resolution on Boko Haram and the Multinational Joint Task Force was raised under "any other business"—the timing of any possible adoption remained unclear at press time.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In April, Council members expect to receive their regular monthly briefings on the chemical weapons and humanitarian tracks.

Key Recent Developments

At press time, Islamist groups, including Al-Nusra Front, had just captured the city of Idlib—located on the main highway linking Aleppo and Damascus—from government forces. The surrounding countryside has been in opposition hands for some time.

Meanwhile, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura's efforts to negotiate a cessation of hostilities in Aleppo stalled. Opposition representatives rejected the plan unless it was linked to a comprehensive solution based on the June 2012 Geneva Communiqué—bringing the political track back to the issue of whether President Bashar al Assad would have a role in any transitional arrangement.

On 15 March, US Secretary of State John Kerry suggested that there could be a place for Assad in a diplomatic solution, drawing swift criticism from Arab and European states. Washington denied its position had changed, reiterating there was no future for Assad in Syria. On 29 March, Assad said he would welcome dialogue with the US but that Washington had not directly communicated with Damascus.

Other political initiatives in April, outside of the UN framework, include ongoing talks between opposition leaders in Cairo and a second round of talks in Moscow between the Syrian government and opposition leaders tolerated by the government.

On 6 March, the Council adopted resolution 2209, which condemned the use of toxic chemicals such as chlorine, without attributing blame, and threatened sanctions. (UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane had briefed Council members the previous day.) Ten days later, allegations emerged that the Syrian regime had again dropped chlorine bombs, killing a family of six.

On 26 March, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos briefed the Council on the devastating humanitarian situation, breath-taking levels of savagery and unrelenting aerial bombardment and indiscriminate shelling of populated areas. She

also focused on the needs of neighbouring countries that host the 3.9 million refugees who have fled Syria. The same day, Council members issued a press statement supporting Amos's call to fund the UN's 2015 Syria response plan at the Kuwait Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria on 31 March.

The needs of the 12.2 million requiring humanitarian assistance in Syria continue to outpace the reach and resources of humanitarian actors. Of those needing assistance, 7.6 million are internally displaced and 4.8 million are in hard-to-reach areas. Amos updated the estimates of the besieged population from 212,000 to 440,000, largely by government forces and ISIS. However, some analysts have estimated the number of besieged to be in excess of 640,000. The death toll in Syria is conservatively estimated at 220,000 people.

Amos reported there had been 85 cross-border aid deliveries but cross-line deliveries within Syria remain difficult. She said conditions for those in besieged areas continue to deteriorate, education and medical facilities continue to be attacked, health workers are killed and medical supplies cannot pass unrestricted to people in need. (The NGO, Physicians for Human Rights, has documented that the government is responsible for 88 percent of the recorded hospital attacks and 97 percent of medical personnel killings, with 139 deaths directly attributed to torture or execution.)

Regarding accountability, the Human Rights Council held an interactive dialogue with its Commission of Inquiry on Syria on 17 March and continued to advocate for an urgent Security Council referral of Syria to the ICC or an ad hoc tribunal. The Commission announced that information relating to specific alleged perpetrators will be shared confidentially with states preparing cases for an impartial judiciary willing to exercise universal jurisdiction. The Commission declined to comment on whether any states have requested such information.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 13 March, the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee listed "Indonesia Hilal Ahmar Society for Syria" and three affiliated individuals for recruiting, funding and facilitating travel of foreign terrorist fighters to Syria (SC/11816).

Key Issues

The key issue for the Council—as the civil war enters its fifth year—is to find ways to show leadership, particularly in supporting a cessation of violence and resuscitating efforts for a political solution.

In light of the Commission of Inquiry's decision for targeted disclosure of alleged perpetrators, pressure on the Council to respond to the widespread impunity in Syria may re-emerge.

Ongoing issues include how to get agreement to follow up the violations of resolutions 2139 and 2191 on the humanitarian situation and 2118 and 2209 on chemical weapons—in particular aerial bombardment and the use of chlorine bombs.

Options

While the Council has many tools at its disposal—such as imposing an arms embargo or targeted sanctions, referring Syria to the ICC and authorising a no-fly zone to disable Syria's aerial capacity—P5 divisions have made it impossible for the Council to fulfil its role in maintaining international peace and security in the case of Syria. There has been a modicum of agreement on humanitarian, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism efforts, but there has not been the corresponding ability to effectively stop or hold accountable a government that has systematically attacked its own citizens for over four years. Although unlikely, the Council could vote to refer Syria to the General Assembly under "Uniting for Peace" so that the General Assembly may recommend collective action, including sanctions and the use of force.

This would be a procedural vote and therefore cannot be vetoed by the P5 and only requires nine affirmative votes. A "Uniting for Peace" resolution by the General Assembly can confer legitimacy on international collective action, but it would carry no binding obligation for such action. (Separately, the Arab League agreed to form a military force to counter regional security threats at its 28-29 March summit.)

The "Uniting for Peace" formula has been used a dozen times, but the Council has not resorted to it since 1982.

However, it seems more likely that the

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2209](#) (6 March 2015) condemned the use of chlorine bombs. [S/RES/2139](#) (22 February 2014) was on humanitarian access, along with demands regarding human rights and protection of civilians. [S/RES/2118](#) (27 September 2013) was on chemical weapons. [Security Council Press Statement SC/11838](#) (26 March 2015) expressed support for the Kuwait Humanitarian Pledging Conference. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7418](#) (26 March 2015) was on the humanitarian situation. [S/PV.7401](#) (6 March 2015) was the vote on resolution 2209. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2015/211](#) (25 March 2015) and [S/2015/138](#) (25 February 2015) were on chemical weapons. [S/2015/206](#) (23 March 2015) was on the humanitarian situation. [General Assembly Document A/RES/377\(V\)](#) (3 November 1950) contained the "Uniting for Peace" formula.

Syria (con't)

Council will continue to receive more briefings confirming what is already widely known about the brutal tactics by the government and extremist groups. In that context, the Council could invite de Mistura to brief so members could engage with the Special Envoy on possible next steps on the political track, such as:

- opportunities to continue to pressure the parties toward implementation of the “Aleppo freeze”;
- opportunities for UN-negotiated cease-fires in less contentious areas;
- a UN role in the Cairo and Moscow processes to make them more credible by including a wider array of opposition groups; and
- reviving the defunct Geneva process toward a negotiated political transition.

Options for Council members concerned that elements of resolution 2139, such as demands regarding human rights and protection of civilians, are being flagrantly ignored include:

- inviting the Commission of Inquiry or the High Commissioner for Human Rights to give periodic briefings;
- attempting to seek accountability through an ICC referral or an ad hoc tribunal; and
- following through on previous threats to adopt targeted measures against persons and groups credibly implicated in egregious violations.

An option for Council members concerned about the government’s continued

use of chlorine bombs would be to put forward a resolution determining that Syria has breached resolutions 2118 and 2209 and impose targeted sanctions. In addition, given that chlorine is delivered in barrel bombs, such an outcome could be an opportunity to address the broader and more pervasive issue of indiscriminate aerial bombardment.

Council Dynamics

Despite overwhelming indications that various resolutions threatening consequences for lack of implementation have been continually breached, it is unlikely that Council members will push for follow-up measures, such as targeted sanctions or another attempt at an ICC referral. The assumption that Russia would veto any effort specific to the government remains a deterrent.

In the meantime, some Council members have been trying to compensate for the lack of a Syria sanctions regime by targeting extremist groups via the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida sanctions regime and, with considerably less success, attempting to target Iranian support for pro-government militias in Syria via the 1737 Iran sanctions regime.

On the political track, Council members seem resigned to de Mistura’s stalled efforts. This appears to tacitly acknowledge that no one has been able to devise a way to overcome the government’s intransigence to a negotiated political settlement. Complacency over fresh thinking, however, has led Council members to view the problematic Cairo and Moscow

processes as viable “placeholders” until some as-yet unforeseen initiative takes shape.

On the chemical weapons track, fundamental differences remain despite the adoption of resolution 2209. As with the June 2012 Geneva Communiqué, the US and Russia have agreed to intentionally vague documents, leaving both free to interpret the same text at opposite ends of the spectrum. The US views resolution 2209 to be a final warning to Damascus before consequences are sought for its use of chlorine bombs. Russia insists that the Council cannot apportion blame to Damascus since only the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has the capacity to fully assess the situation. While the OPCW fact-finding mission can investigate whether chlorine has been used as a weapon, it is specifically prohibited from attributing blame. Despite the recent allegations of Syria’s continued use of chlorine bombs, no Council member called for a meeting or suggested follow-up measures. However, the OPCW confirmed its fact-finding mission would investigate this claim as well as claims by the government that they too had been subject to chlorine bomb attacks.

France is the penholder on Syria overall, though the last text it put forward was the vetoed ICC referral in May 2014. Jordan, New Zealand and Spain lead on humanitarian issues. In practice, however, most texts need to be agreed between Russia and the US prior to agreement by the broader Council.

Western Sahara

Expected Council Action

In April, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution extending the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for another 12 months. Prior to the mandate renewal, Council members expect a briefing in consultations on the situation in Western Sahara from Kim Bolduc, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of MINURSO, and Christopher Ross, the Secretary-General’s Personal Envoy.

Key Recent Developments

Bolduc, who was supposed to take up her position as Special Representative and head of MINURSO on 1 August 2014, had been unable to travel to her post, obstructed by Morocco, until February. She arrived in Rabat on 5 February and was received by the Moroccan foreign and interior ministers, the secretary-general of the Foreign Ministry, and the Moroccan coordinator with MINURSO. (Morocco had delayed Bolduc’s

taking up the position because it was displeased that it had not been consulted about the appointment.) On 7 February, she met with the leaders of the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Polisario) in Tindouf.

On 14 February, Ross also travelled to the region in his first tour since March 2014. He met with Sahrawi President Mohamed Abdelaziz and members of the Sahrawi delegation in charge of negotiations. Following

UN DOCUMENTS ON WESTERN SAHARA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2152 (29 April 2014) extended the mandate of MINURSO for a year and supported the Secretary-General’s request for an additional 15 military observers. S/RES/1754 (30 April 2007) provided the framework for the negotiating process. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2014/258** (10 April 2014) was the most recent Secretary-General’s report. **Security Council Letters S/2014/322** (6 May 2014) was from the Secretary-General announcing his intention to appoint Bolduc as his Special Representative and head of MINURSO. S/2007/210 (16 April 2007) was from South Africa to the Council transmitting the Polisario plan. S/2007/206 (11 April 2007) was from Morocco to the Council transmitting the Moroccan plan. S/2002/161 (12 February 2002) was the Corell opinion.

Western Sahara (con't)

talks with Ross, Abdelaziz, speaking on Algerian public television on 16 February called “on the UN to put pressure on Morocco to make arrangements to organise a referendum on self-determination”. Ross returned to the region again in late March.

The deployments of Bolduc and Ross followed a 22 January phone call involving Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and King Mohammed VI of Morocco. A readout issued by Ban’s office following the call stated that he acknowledged Morocco’s concerns about the UN-sponsored negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario, confirmed that reports to the Council on this issue “will remain objective and reflect facts” and reiterated that MINURSO will “continue to exercise its existing mandate” as set forth by the Council.

Meanwhile, the deep chasm between the parties’ positions remains. In a 6 November 2014 speech, King Mohammed strongly reiterated Morocco’s position on the issue of Western Sahara, reaffirming that “Morocco’s sovereignty over its entire territory is effective, inalienable and non-negotiable”. The king affirmed that Morocco’s autonomy initiative is the maximum that it can offer in terms of negotiation to achieve a final solution to the conflict. He stressed that Morocco rejects attempts to present the conflict as a decolonisation issue, to reconsider the principles and criteria of the negotiation process or to revise and expand the MINURSO mandate to include such matters as monitoring the human rights situation. Referring to Algeria, he said that he also rejects allowing the “real party” to evade its responsibilities, as well as attempts to place a separatist movement—the Polisario—on the same footing as a UN member state.

On the controversial issue of natural resource exploration in Western Sahara, Hans Corell, then Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs who in 2002 wrote an extensive opinion for the Council on the legality of Morocco’s offering and signing contracts with foreign companies for resource exploration in Western Sahara, published an article entitled, “The Responsibility of the UN Security Council in the Case of Western Sahara”, in the Winter 2015 issue of the International Judicial Monitor. In this piece, he addresses a fisheries agreement between the EU and Morocco, “which does not contain one word

... about the fact that Morocco’s ‘jurisdiction’ in the waters of Western Sahara is limited by the international rules on self-determination”. He opines that, to be legal, “an agreement of this nature would have to contain an explicit reference to the fishing zone off the coast of Western Sahara, defined by coordinates” and that revenues generated by such licenses would have to be delivered to an “account that can be audited independently by representatives of the people of Western Sahara”. He adds that this applies also to other natural resources. Against this backdrop, he calls for the Security Council to examine the legality of the fisheries agreement, suggesting the Council request the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to give an advisory opinion on the question in accordance with article 96 of the UN Charter. (Corell’s 2002 opinion said that if exploration and exploitation activities proceeded in disregard of the interests and wishes of the people of Western Sahara, they would be in violation of international law applicable to mineral resource activities in Non-Self-Governing Territories”.)

In a verdict issued on 13 October 2014, the European Court of Justice stated that Morocco has neither the right nor the authority to grant licenses to European vessels according to the fisheries pact signed with the EU. Also, on 19 December 2014, the American oil company Kosmos Energy began drilling for oil in Western Sahara.

Meanwhile, a report of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) released in February seems to confirm some of Morocco’s long-held accusations against Algeria and the Polisario. Based on investigations undertaken between 2003 and 2007, OLAF reported that large parts of the EU’s humanitarian aid assistance intended for refugees in the Tindouf camps had been diverted for years by Algerian senior officials and Polisario leaders. According to the report, such diversions were possible in part because of an overestimation by Algeria of the number of refugees and that neither Algeria nor the Polisario would agree to conduct a census of the camps’ population.

On the longstanding question of human rights monitoring in Western Sahara, Algerian Foreign Affairs Minister Ramtane Lamamra repeated calls on 3 March in Geneva for the High Commissioner for Human Rights to set up an independent mechanism for monitoring human rights. Also, in an 11 February letter

to the Secretary-General, Abdelaziz reiterated calls for a MINURSO human rights monitoring mechanism, the release of all political prisoners, cessation of illicit natural resource exploitation and removal of the berm, the wall that separates the Moroccan-controlled and Polisario-controlled areas of Western Sahara.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council will be ascertaining what it can do to break the deadlock between the parties and determining whether an alternative approach ought to be adopted by Ross. (In his 2014 report, the Secretary-General recommended that if no progress occurred before April 2015, “the time will have come to engage the members of the Council in a comprehensive review of the framework that it provided for the negotiating process in April 2007”. In the time since that recommendation was written, Ross’ work was largely stalled, and it remains to be seen what, if any, progress was made in his two recent visits.)

Human rights monitoring and agreement on a mechanism that is independent, impartial, sustained and comprehensive is an ongoing issue.

Underlying Problems

Given the protracted nature of the conflict and the intransigence of the parties, the threat of a resumption of military hostilities in the longer term cannot be fully ruled out. There is also the threat of popular unrest and the recruitment of frustrated Sahrawi youth by violent extremist or criminal networks proliferating throughout the region. Additionally, there have been concerns that the situation could encourage illegal migration to Europe.

Options

One option is for the Council to merely renew the mandate of MINURSO for a period of 12 months, maintaining similar language to that of the current mandate and encouraging progress in the negotiating process and the resumption of direct talks.

Another option would be for the Council to engage in a comprehensive review of the framework that it provided for the negotiating process in 2007, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his 2014 report.

In this context, undertaking a visit to Western Sahara (the first since 1995) would be a related option for the Council.

Western Sahara (con't)

Introducing a human rights component to MINURSO's mandate is also an option.

Referring the question of the legality of natural resource exploration and exploitation in Western Sahara to the ICJ is another option.

Council Dynamics

The Group of Friends on Western Sahara—France, Russia, Spain, the UK and the US—four of whom are permanent Council

members, joined by Spain as the former colonial power, leads on decisions pertaining to this issue. Spain joined the Council this year as an elected member and it remains to be seen how active a role it will play on Western Sahara while on the Council.

The role of other members remains limited and, generally, most do not follow the situation closely. Over the last several years the pattern has been that the Group of Friends negotiates the mandate renewal, and when

the draft reaches the full Council, there is often little appetite for further negotiations.

Three current Council members have recognised the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic: Angola, Nigeria and Venezuela. Angola, which is supportive of the Sahrawi position, also maintains diplomatic relations with Morocco, as does Nigeria. Venezuela does not have diplomatic ties with Morocco.

The US is the penholder on Western Sahara.

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In April, the Council is due to renew the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Prior to the renewal, the Special Representative Babacar Gaye will brief the Council on the latest MINUSCA report.

Key Recent Developments

The situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) remains dire. In late January, a truce was signed in Nairobi by representatives of the Muslim ex-Séléka and the Christian anti-Balaka groups. However, the Nairobi talks and the truce did not include the CAR transitional government and were rejected by the latter and the members of the Economic Community of Central African States. The truce has not calmed the situation on the ground either, as fighting and violence continue. While the security situation in Bangui has improved, criminal violence in the city continues.

Council members visited the CAR on 10 and 11 March. This first ever Council visit to the country was co-led by France and Angola as the first leg of an Africa trip that also included Burundi and the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. Council members received briefings from UN officials, including the head of the UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Abdoulaye Bathily, and Gaye and met representatives of the French forces in the

CAR and EUFOR (the 700-strong EU force in the CAR). Council members also met with the transitional president of the CAR, Katherine Samba-Panza, and her cabinet; the president of the National Authority for Elections, Dieudonné Kombo-Yaya; and representatives of the National Transitional Council.

Council members heard from MINUSCA that the security situation was gradually improving, though security gaps remain, including insufficient deployment in eastern CAR and a shortage of helicopters.

On the political process, members stressed to local officials the importance of the Bangui Forum (a forum dedicated to national reconciliation and dialogue on the political future of the CAR), currently scheduled for April, and of continued preparations for the legislative and presidential elections, currently scheduled for July and August, respectively. Local authorities highlighted certain challenges to Council members, including monetary shortages for the transitional process and for the elections. Bathily and some MINUSCA officials expressed concerns about the government's political will to follow through on the transitional process and warned of the possibility that members of the various transitional bodies, including the president, may run for election, in contravention of the 18 April 2013 N'Djamena Declaration that outlined the transition process and banned such participation.

Council members also travelled to the

eastern town of Bria, where they met with recently reinstated local authorities, civil society groups and ex-Séléka members. (On 11 February, MINUSCA, with the assistance of French forces, carried out an attack against the Popular Front for the Renaissance of Central Africa, a faction of the ex-Séléka, which had set up a de-facto parallel administration in Bria, removing local authorities. The operation reportedly resulted in the deaths of seven rebels and achieved its goal of removing the rebels from their strongholds but exposed nearby villages to reprisal attacks by the ex-Séléka, causing their inhabitants to flee.)

Council members visited the CAR against the backdrop of EUFOR's mandate expiration on 15 March. EUFOR was assigned to secure Bangui's airport and other locations in the city. In its stead, the EU authorised a military advisory mission (EUMAM) to advise the security authorities on the conduct of security sector reforms and on army training programmes. The French force, which numbered 2,000 troops, has also begun reducing its contingent. France is expected to cut the force to about 500 troops by the end of 2015.

The situation of the Muslims in the CAR remains a major concern. In several areas, including in Bangui, Muslims who did not flee their homes remain isolated in their neighbourhoods with limited mobility. Outside of Bangui, where MINUSCA's presence is sparse, security remains lacking. In

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2212 (26 March 2015) authorised an increase to MINUSCA's troop ceiling. S/RES/2196 (22 January 2015) renewed the CAR sanctions regime and the Panel of Experts. S/RES/2149 (10 April 2014) established MINUSCA. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7407** (18 March 2015) was a briefing by France and Angola on the Council's visiting mission to Africa from 9 to 13 March. **Security Council Letter S/2015/85** (29 January 2015) was from the Secretary-General requesting a troop increase for MINUSCA.

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS Special Representative and Head of MINUSCA Babacar Gaye (Senegal) **MINUSCA Force Commander** Major General Martin Chomu Tumenta (Cameroon) **MINUSCA Size, Composition and Cost of Mission Strength as of 28 February 2015** 7,973 military personnel, 116 military observers and 1,196 police, 234 international civilian personnel, 123 local civilian staff and 18 UN volunteers. **Mission Duration** 10 April 2014 to present **Approved budget** (1 July 2014 – 31 December 2014): \$253.4 million

Central African Republic (con't)

comments to reporters in New York on 18 March, US Ambassador Samantha Power lamented the fact that out of 436 mosques in the CAR, 417 have been destroyed in the conflict. She noted her impression, from the Council's visit to a remaining Muslim neighbourhood in Bangui, that the Muslim population lives in constant fear.

A pending issue while the Council visited the CAR was the request by the Secretary-General to increase troops for MINUSCA by 750 military personnel, 280 police and 20 corrections officers. In response, France, the penholder on the CAR, circulated a concise and technical draft resolution on 4 February authorising the troop increase. On 10 February, the US requested a briefing from the Secretariat to get more information on the current operations of MINUSCA, remaining gaps and expected costs of the reinforcements. On 26 February, Council members were briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous under "any other business" on this issue. On 26 March, the Council adopted resolution 2212 authorising the troop increase.

The International Contact Group on the CAR met in Brazzaville on 16 March, with 27 countries participating along with MINUSCA, UNOCA and several international monetary institutions and international organisations. The participants noted the importance of the deadlines for the transitional process, including the Bangui Forum, timely elections and continued talks about the disarmament of all armed groups. They also stressed the need to avoid any parallel negotiations outside of the CAR, thus rejecting the Nairobi talks. The participants also welcomed an EU initiative to hold a donor conference on 24 April in Brussels to support the political process. The Contact Group is next expected to meet in June in Addis Ababa.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 22 January, the Council adopted resolution 2196, renewing the CAR sanctions regime (arms embargo, assets freeze and travel ban) until 29 January 2016 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee until 29 February 2016.

On 9 February, the Sanctions Committee was briefed by the UN Mine Action Service, on its work in the CAR where it has been rehabilitating,

constructing and managing storage facilities and storing stockpiles of small arms and light weapons. (The briefing was the initiative of Lithuania, the chair of the Committee.)

Also in February, Committee members received an update report from the Panel on various issues, including natural resources and the humanitarian situation. (Resolution 2196 authorises the Panel to submit progress updates to the Committee as the Panel deems necessary.)

At press time, the Committee was scheduled to meet with the Panel on 31 March to receive an overview of the Panel's planned work until the end of its current mandate.

The designations of 12 individuals and three entities suggested for sanctioning by the Panel are still pending in the Committee.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The independent expert on the CAR for the Human Rights Council, Marie-Thérèse Keita Bocoum, visited the country from 3 to 14 February. In a statement released on 12 February in Bangui, Bocoum highlighted five areas of concern, namely the rights of the Muslim minority, which she observed as still unable to participate fully in the political, economic and social life of the country; internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the need for the government to formulate a strategy to facilitate their safe return; attacks against civilians; the fight against impunity, including security sector reform; and the need for reconciliation, particularly through interreligious platforms.

The Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Kyung-wha Kang; the special rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs, Chaloka Beyani; and the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office Director of Operations, Jean-Louis de Brouwer, conducted a high-level mission to the CAR from 10 to 14 February, visiting Bambari, Yaloke, Mpoko and the PK5 neighbourhood in Bangui. In a 14 February press conference, they called for greater access to and protection of IDPs and vulnerable communities, noting their concern that armed groups were present at all the camps and sites they visited and stressing the need to take the necessary steps to preserve the camps' civilian nature. The delegation highlighted the primary responsibility of the transitional authorities to protect the population but added that humanitarian partners can do more in identifying the most vulnerable and supporting local and religious authorities and civil society in providing adequate services and protection, in particular to women and children.

Key Issues

The immediate issue for the Council is what modifications may be needed when renewing MINUSCA's mandate.

Monitoring the situation closely, in

particular MINUSCA's operations to restore security throughout the CAR, including in rural areas, will be an ongoing key issue.

In the period leading up to the elections, ensuring the success of the transitional political process will be an important issue.

Also a key issue is ensuring accountability for human rights and international humanitarian law violations.

Options

Options for the Council while renewing MINUSCA's mandate include:

- calling on the transitional authorities to abide by their commitment to the transitional process;
- stressing the Council's long-term commitment to CAR's stabilisation and rebuilding; and
- emphasising the importance of holding fair and free elections in a timely manner.

An option for the Sanctions Committee is endorsing the recommendations of the Panel and listing further individuals.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are in general agreement that the visiting mission was instrumental in understanding the current state of affairs in the CAR in terms of the security challenges and gaps (particularly in rural areas), the humanitarian situation and the political process.

The departure of EUFOR and gradual drawdown of the French troops add additional concerns over MINUSCA's ability to fill the gap at the current troop level. For these reasons Council members, including the US, were amenable to an increase in MINUSCA's troop ceiling. It seems that they were also left with the impression that while some security improvements are noticeable, a year after establishing MINUSCA, CAR is still in the stabilisation stage.

As for the political process, after meeting with the political interlocutors in the CAR, some Council members had questions about the commitment of the transitional authorities to the process. They were also left with the impression that it will be difficult to observe the current timeframe for elections, already postponed from their original date.

France is the penholder on the CAR.

Expected Council Action

In April, the Council expects a briefing on the situation in Mali from Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous.

The mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) expires on 30 June 2015.

Key Recent Developments

At the beginning of 2015, and until the resumption of the fifth round of talks in Algiers in mid-February, there were multiple clashes on the ground between armed groups and pro-government militias. On 6 February, in response to violations of the 23 May 2014 ceasefire agreement and the 24 July 2014 cessation of hostilities agreement, the Council issued a presidential statement demanding that all parties, including non-signatories of the 2013 Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement, cease all hostilities immediately and reject violence. The statement included for the first time a reference to the Council's readiness to consider appropriate measures, including targeted sanctions, against those who resume hostilities and violate the ceasefire. On 19 February, within the framework of the inter-Malian peace process taking place in Algiers, the government signed a ceasefire agreement with the different armed groups, which are organised in two coalitions.

On 1 March, the government and a coalition of armed groups considered to be more closely aligned with the government—the Platform—initialled a peace agreement in Algiers. The other coalition of armed groups—the Coordination—requested more time to consult with its constituency before initialling the document. MINUSMA's head Mongi Hamdi briefed Council members on these developments via video teleconference under “any other business” on 4 March. Council members subsequently agreed on elements to the press encouraging the Coordination to initial the agreement. On 15 March, after holding a series of consultative meetings in Kidal, the Coordination decided not to sign the agreement, claiming that the document

“did not take into account the legitimate aspirations of the people of Azawad”, and requested more talks. (Divergences seem to arise from what the Coordination perceives as insufficient legal and political recognition for the northern territory, referred to as Azawad, as well as concern over security arrangements for the north.) The mediation team has stated its willingness to address the issues raised by the Coordination during the implementation of the agreement. On 18 March the government announced that it would not engage in further talks about the agreement.

MINUSMA and international actors (including NGOs), continue to be targeted by Al-Qaida affiliated terrorist groups which have increased their reach further south. (Four of these groups—the Mouvement pour l'Unification et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest, Ansar Eddine, Al-Mourabitoun and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb are listed under the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida sanctions regime.) On 17 January, coordinated attacks against MINUSMA resulted in the death of a Chadian peacekeeper and injuries to several others. On 7 March a masked individual opened fire in a restaurant in Bamako, killing five people (three nationals and two internationals working for the EU) and wounding seven others. On 8 March, a coordinated attack against a MINUSMA camp in Kidal resulted in the death of two children and a Chadian peacekeeper.

As of 15 December 2014, 76 percent of MINUSMA's authorised military personnel had been deployed. Despite efforts to enhance MINUSMA's capabilities in the face of increased asymmetric attacks, the December 2014 Secretary-General's report acknowledges how “the operational capability of almost all former units of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali continues to be limited by the lack of self-sustainment capacity and contingent-owned equipment that meet UN standards”. In 2014, 28 MINUSMA peacekeepers were killed as a result of hostile acts, which is the highest number of fatalities in a single peacekeeping operation in a given year since the UN Operation in Somalia II in 1994.

MINUSMA has also been the target of popular discontent. During a demonstration against the mission in Gao on 27 January, three people were allegedly killed by MINUSMA forces. In response, the Secretary-General launched a fact-finding inquiry. The inquiry team spent eight days in Mali and at press time Council members were expecting the results by the end of March. (The demonstration followed a 20 January incident in which a MINUSMA helicopter gunship destroyed a Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad vehicle, after the mission's forces came under fire from this armed group in the northern town of Tabankort.)

According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the deteriorating security situation and the resumption of hostilities in January further hampered humanitarian access in northern Mali. This included incidents of violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The independent expert on the situation of human rights in Mali, Suliman Baldo, visited Mali from 1 to 10 March. At a press conference on 10 March in Bamako, he expressed serious concerns that all parties involved in the conflict continue to commit serious human rights violations, including violations of the right to life, enforced disappearances, torture, sexual violence and arbitrary detentions. He noted that in the absence of magistrates and other criminal justice officials, a climate of impunity exists in the north. Baldo also stressed the need to place victims at the centre of the peace and reconciliation process as well as the importance of women's participation. The Human Rights Council considered Baldo's report during its 28th session in March. On 20 March, the first joint public report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and MINUSMA was released.

Key Issues

The possibility of a return to violence by the warring parties is an imminent issue of concern for the Council.

An overarching issue is the deadlock in the political process over the initialling of the peace agreement.

The marked increase in terrorist attacks

UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2164](#) (25 June 2014) renewed the mandate of MINUSMA. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/5](#) (6 February 2015) was adopted ahead of the fifth round of the inter-Malian negotiation process in Algiers. [Secretary-General's Report S/2014/943](#) (23 December 2014) was the latest report on the situation in Mali. [Security Council Press Statements SC/11820](#) (17 March 2015) expressed regret at the death of two Dutch MINUSMA peacekeepers in a helicopter accident. [SC/11812](#) (8 March 2015) condemned the attacks against MINUSMA in Kidal, which resulted in the death of two children and a Chadian peacekeeper. [SC/11811](#) (7 March 2015) condemned the terrorist attack in Bamako that resulted in the death of five civilians. [SC/11739](#) (17 January 2015) condemned the attacks against MINUSMA, in which one Chadian peacekeeper was killed. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7355](#) (6 January 2015) was a briefing by Ladsous on the situation in Mali. [Security Council Letters S/2015/187](#) (18 March 2015) was a report on operational support provided by French forces to MINUSMA. [S/2015/166](#) (4 March 2015) was on the appointment of Major General Michael Lollsgaard as MINUSMA Force Commander. [S/2015/3](#) (2 January 2015) outlined some lessons learned on re-hatting processes in Mali and the Central African Republic. [Human Rights Council Document A/HRC/28/83](#) (9 January 2015) highlighted how the May 2014 incidents in Kidal called into question the strengthening of state authority in the north.

Mali (con't)

and the deliberate targeting of MINUSMA are further key issues for the Council. Ensuring that the safety concerns of troop- and police-contributing countries are addressed is an ongoing issue.

Preventing terrorist groups from taking advantage of the current stalemate in the political process is a related issue for the Council.

Ensuring accountability for crimes committed since 2012 while pursuing a political settlement is an underlying key issue. A closely related issue for the Council is the establishment of an international commission of inquiry called for in resolution 2164, which is still pending.

Options

If a peace agreement is not reached, the Council could:

- call on all parties to respect the ceasefire and engage in a good faith effort to finalise the Algeria-led political process;
- establish a sanctions regime to impose measures on spoilers violating the ceasefire or undermining the political process whether directly or through proxies;
- establish an expert group to identify those involved in transnational organised crime in Mali and the Sahel, with a view to the possibility of imposing targeted sanctions, as recommended by the Secretary-General

in 2013; and

- reiterate the request to the Secretary-General, included in resolution 2164, to urgently establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate international crimes.

If a peace agreement is reached, the Council could consider modifying MINUSMA's mandate to ensure the implementation of the agreement in matters such as security arrangements, transitional justice and institutional capacity-building.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are concerned with the stalemate in the political process. So far Council members support the mediation in trying to find a solution to the current impasse in the political process. Following the reference to imposing further measures in the 6 February presidential statement, France has stated in public its readiness to consider sanctions. Briefing the Council on several occasions, the Secretariat has cautioned against rushing to an agreement at any cost without addressing the grievances of the parties or providing for a sustainable solution. In this context, for some Council members, it is unclear if sanctions at this stage might push armed groups' leadership towards an agreement that would hold or further alienate them from their supporters

within the community, potentially increasing instability.

Council members are worried about the continuous attacks targeting MINUSMA in northern Mali. Given the historic numbers of fatalities in MINUSMA and despite improvements in the living conditions of troops deployed in the north, the tension between the troop contributors willing to deploy their forces in the most dangerous territory (and who are not necessarily the best equipped) and other, more risk-averse contributors reflects what is seen as an increasing gap between contributors from the developing and the developed world.

On 2 January, Council members received a letter from the Secretary-General outlining some lessons learned following the re-hatting processes in Mali and the Central African Republic. The letter highlighted the need to enhance the capabilities of AU re-hatted contingents that were (and remain) below UN standards. Also, the letter acknowledged how concerns regarding the human rights record of some of these troops were only partially addressed. At press time, Council members were expecting a Secretary-General's report on the partnerships with the AU and the EU on peacekeeping, and some Council members seem interested in taking up this issue in the Council.

France is the penholder on Mali.

Côte d'Ivoire

Expected Council Action

In April, the Council is expected to receive a briefing from Ambassador Cristián Barros (Chile), chair of the 1572 Côte d'Ivoire Sanctions Committee, regarding the final report of the Group of Experts, which is due 15 April.

The Council is likely to adopt a resolution renewing targeted sanctions—a partial arms embargo, asset freeze and travel ban—due to expire on 30 April. The mandate of the Group of Experts, which expires 30 May, is also likely to be renewed.

Key Recent Developments

On 10 March, a national court sentenced

Simone Gbagbo, the wife of former president Laurent Gbagbo, to 20 years in jail for her role in violence that killed more than 3,000 people following the presidential election in late 2010. She had been charged with organising armed gangs, undermining the security of the state and disturbing public order. Since December 2014, 83 supporters of Laurent Gbagbo and the opposition party Front populaire ivoirien have been on trial. Other high-profile defendants who were sentenced on 10 March include two prominent generals (sentenced to 20 years in prison each); Aboudrahmane Sangare, a close political ally of the former president (ten years); and

Michel Gbagbo, the son of Laurent Gbagbo (five years). The trials have prompted claims of victor's justice, as thus far only supporters of Gbagbo have been charged in domestic courts for post-election violence; no members of the ruling Rassemblement des républicains party supporting President Alasane Ouattara have been charged. Simone Gbagbo, Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Blé Goudé, the last two of whom are soon to be tried jointly at the ICC, are among the six individuals currently listed under the 1572 Côte d'Ivoire sanctions regime.

The third quadripartite meeting involving the governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire

UN DOCUMENTS ON CÔTE D'IVOIRE Security Council Resolution S/RES/2153 (29 April 2014) lifted the diamond embargo, partially lifted the arms embargo and renewed other sanctions measures on Côte d'Ivoire. Security Council Meeting S/PV.7358 (13 January 2015) was a briefing on UNOCI and sanctions.

Côte d'Ivoire (con't)

and the UN peacekeeping missions in the two countries took place in Abidjan on 10 March. Each country's delegation was led by its foreign affairs minister, while the interior ministers of both countries also participated. The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) were represented by their respective heads, Karin Landgren and Aïchatou Mindaoudou. The heads of UNMIL and UNOCI emphasised their continued full support for joint efforts by Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire to consolidate stability and security along their shared border. The meeting focused on the security and humanitarian situations along the common border, bilateral cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and other forums, such as the scheduled May follow up to the Joint Council of Traditional Chiefs and Elders held in October 2013, the sixth edition of the 1972 Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire Joint Commission for Bi-lateral Cooperation to be held in April, the ongoing work of the Mano River Union established in 1973 and the resumption of activities by the Tripartite Commission (comprising the two countries and the UN Refugee Agency).

At a meeting of the Tripartite Commission in Abidjan on 12 March, it was agreed that the voluntary repatriation of 38,000 Ivorian refugees remaining in Liberia would resume as early as 6 April. Refugees initially fled from Côte d'Ivoire to Liberia due to the 2002-2007 civil war and the 2010-2011 post-election violence. Since October 2011, when the repatriation process was first launched, about 205,000 Ivorians have returned to Côte d'Ivoire from Liberia. However, due to the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, the border between the two countries was officially closed in July 2014. At the meeting, plans were also developed to put security and disease control measures in place, including a pre-departure risk assessment and health monitoring in both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The Tripartite Commission also recommended that security operations be improved on both sides of the border and that UN missions assist governments in road repairs to facilitate the movement of refugee convoys.

The Council last discussed the situation in Côte d'Ivoire on 13 January. Mindaoudou briefed on the work of UNOCI during the previous six months and other recent developments in Côte d'Ivoire. Barros briefed on

his trip to the country on 2-7 November 2014 as chair of the 1572 Sanctions Committee; and Ambassador Youssoufou Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) also addressed the Council. Mindaoudou identified an incomplete security sector reform (SSR) process, including widespread public demonstrations by disaffected members of the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire, as a continued threat to stability. She also mentioned that while the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process is making progress, it is projected that at least 14,000 former combatants will still need assistance from authorities by the June 2015 deadline. With regard to national reconciliation, Mindaoudou further stressed the need to fight against impunity and improve accountability for human rights abuses. Barros recounted his discussions with the authorities in Côte d'Ivoire, including his emphasis that progress on SSR, DDR, national reconciliation and fighting impunity are the factors for determining the suitability of lifting UN sanctions. Barros mentioned that notable achievements had been made but that more needed to be done, particularly within the context of the upcoming presidential election in October.

Human Rights-Related Developments

Mohammed Ayat, the independent expert of the Human Rights Council (HRC) on capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights, conducted his first visit to the country from 12 to 21 January. In a press conference on 21 January in Abidjan, Ayat highlighted the need for domestic legal proceedings and frameworks to comply with international standards, particularly in prosecuting those responsible for human rights violations. He also urged the government to address the situation of detainees and called on the international community to support the government's efforts in these areas. Ayat will submit a written report to the HRC at its 29th session.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein issued a statement on 11 March, the day after supporters of former President Laurent Gbagbo, including his wife Simone Gbagbo, were sentenced. He called for the prompt prosecution of the perpetrators of killings, rapes and other serious breaches of international law that occurred prior to and during the 2010-2011 conflict in the country. Zeid added that while important measures have been taken to bring domestic criminal laws into conformity with the Rome Statute, it is essential that the authorities take prompt steps to ensure the adoption of the draft law on victim and witness protection, shorten pre-trial detention periods and develop

an effective appeals process. He added that Côte d'Ivoire must prioritise equitable justice, truth and reconciliation, particularly ahead of the presidential elections.

Key Issues

The principal focus for the Council in April will be assessing potential threats to peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly within the context of upcoming presidential elections. More specifically, the Council will need to evaluate the 1572 Côte d'Ivoire sanctions regime in order to determine how it may best contribute to maintaining stability in the country during a presidential election year.

Options

The most likely option would be for the Council to renew the current sanctions regime—which includes an asset freeze, travel ban and a partial arms embargo—without modification.

Other considerably less likely options include:

- reinstating the comprehensive arms embargo or diamond export ban; or
- not renewing current measures and thus letting the sanctions regime expire.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council dynamics on Côte d'Ivoire were readily apparent during the negotiation of resolution 2153, adopted 29 April 2014, which most recently reauthorised sanctions. France, the former colonial power and penholder, was the strongest proponent of partially lifting the arms embargo and removing the ban on the export of rough diamonds, while the US was more reluctant to modify the sanctions regime, particularly regarding the arms embargo. As communicated to 1572 Sanctions Committee chair Barros when he visited in November, the government favours termination of the UN sanctions regime.

However, as there has been insufficient progress made on DDR, SSR, national reconciliation and accountability, there is unlikely to be much support in the Council for that position at this juncture. This is particularly the case given the risks to stability posed by the upcoming presidential election, whose timing roughly coincides with the trial of Laurent Gbagbo at the ICC. An entrenched perception of victor's justice held by members of the Front populaire ivoirien opposition party further complicates what could be a highly

Côte d'Ivoire (con't)

contentious election period. These factors would seem to argue for a cautious approach with respect to either loosening or terminating

the sanctions regime, at least until after the presidential elections in October.

France is the penholder on Côte d'Ivoire

and Chile is the chair of the 1572 Côte d'Ivoire Sanctions Committee.

Israel/Palestine

Expected Council Action

In April, the Security Council will hold its quarterly open debate on the Middle East, with a focus on the situation in Israel/Palestine. Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasser Judeh is expected to preside.

Key Recent Developments

Israeli legislative elections were held on 17 March. With a voter turnout of 72.3 percent, incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party won the most seats. On the eve of the election, Netanyahu promised would-be voters that a Palestinian state would not be established on his watch and that anyone who moves to establish such a state is "giving radical Islam an area from which to attack the state of Israel".

Two days after the election, on 19 March, US President Barack Obama called Netanyahu to congratulate him on his victory. A White House statement that followed said that in the call, Obama reaffirmed that the US is committed to a two-state solution "that results in a secure Israel alongside a sovereign and viable Palestine". Earlier that day, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said that Netanyahu's pre-election statements demonstrated that he was "no longer committed to a two-state solution", that the US is in a position to re-evaluate its thinking and that the comments have consequences for actions that the US takes "at the United Nations and other places".

Also on 19 March, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, speaking at a meeting of the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) executive committee in the West Bank city of Ramallah, cited Netanyahu's comments repudiating a two-state solution and said he would continue his unilateral strategy of seeking full UN recognition and using the ICC to press war crimes charges.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made a congratulatory call to Netanyahu on 20 March

and urged him to renew Israel's commitment to the two-state solution. Ban also urged Netanyahu to release the tax revenue currently held by Israel but owed to the Palestinian Authority (PA). Israel stopped transferring customs revenue to the PA after Abbas, on 31 December 2014, followed through on a promise to accede to the Rome Statute if a Security Council resolution on ending Israel's occupation failed to be adopted. In three months, about \$374 million has been frozen. The tax freeze has forced the PA to adopt harsh budgetary restraints and in recent months Palestinian civil service workers have received only about 60 percent of their salaries.

The Middle East Quartet—comprised of the EU, Russia, UN and US—met on 8 February in Munich to prioritise the urgent resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and a revival of the peace process. On 9 February, the group issued a statement urging the resumption of negotiations "as soon as possible" and calling for donor funding to accelerate reconstruction of Gaza "to address the basic needs of the Palestinian population and to ensure stability".

In his final briefing as Special Coordinator, Robert Serry on 26 March urged the Council to take the lead and present a framework for negotiations as perhaps "the only way to preserve the goal of a two-state solution". He recalled that all three stalled negotiations, had been followed by wars in Gaza, called for a new strategy that prioritised Gaza, and warned that persistent illegal settlement activity could kill the prospects for peace.

In Gaza, limited progress has been made in rebuilding following last summer's fighting between Gaza militants and Israeli forces. On 26 February, a joint statement from some 30 aid agencies expressed alarm at the slow pace of reconstruction, stating that "repairs to the tens of thousands of homes, hospitals and schools damaged or destroyed in the fighting has been

woefully slow" and that "sporadic rocket fire from Palestinian armed groups" had resumed.

On 2 March, an Egyptian court declared Hamas a terrorist organisation, as Egypt has blamed Hamas for violence in the Sinai Peninsula. Due to Egyptian security concerns, the Rafah crossing, which links Gaza to the Sinai, has been mostly closed since last October. On 4 March, Serry expressed "deep concern" that not enough was being done to address Gaza's underlying issues and urged "all stakeholders, including the government of national consensus, Palestinian factions, Israel, Egypt, the international community and donors, to adopt a 'Gaza first' strategy". Egypt's foreign ministry issued a response noting Serry's "inability" to negotiate with Israeli officials to remove the blockade and stressing Egypt's right to take the "necessary measures" to protect and secure its borders, referring to the closure of the crossing.

A Human Rights Council's commission of inquiry established to investigate possible war crimes committed by all sides during the Gaza conflict last year announced on 9 March that it was postponing the publication of its report until June; the report was originally due on 23 March. On 3 February, Commission head William Schabas stepped down from his post amid claims by Israel that he had a "clear and documented" bias against Israel. After Schabas' resignation, Netanyahu said it was "time to shelve the anti-Israeli report his committee wrote".

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced on 5 February that Nickolay Mladenov will succeed Serry as his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and his Personal Representative to the PLO and the PA. In this capacity, Mladenov will be the Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Quartet.

On 15 March, media reported that Tony Blair intends to step down from his post as

UN DOCUMENTS ON ISRAEL/PALESTINE Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7417 (26 March 2015) was a regular monthly briefing on the Middle East. S/PV.7360 (15 January 2015) was a regular quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East S/PV.7354 (30 December 2014) was the vote on the draft resolution on ending the occupation, which was not adopted. Other S/2014/916 (17 December 2014) was a draft resolution on ending the occupation put into blue by Jordan.

Israel/Palestine (con't)

Middle East envoy for the Quartet, however at press time no official statement had been released.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 28th session in March, the Human Rights Council considered six reports on the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, including the Secretary-General's report on Israeli settlements (A/HRC/28/44) and the High Commissioner for Human Rights' report (A/HRC/28/43). Presenting the reports on 23 March, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Flavia Pansieri commented that the establishment and expansion of settlements are at the centre of many of the ongoing human rights violations. She also said doubts persist about the Israeli authorities' willingness to ensure accountability and to prevent future violations in light of persistent impunity regarding past operations. Israel did not attend the session.

Key Issues

The overarching issue is determining how to move forward on a two-state solution in light of the breakdown of US-brokered negotiations in April 2014.

A related issue is Israel's continuing

settlement expansion in the West Bank, which undermines prospects for peace.

Continuing to encourage and facilitate emergency humanitarian and reconstruction assistance for the devastated Gaza Strip remains a key issue.

Another key issue regarding Gaza is ensuring that investigations into alleged war crimes committed during last summer's conflict are impartial and that those found accountable are prosecuted.

Options

One option for the Council at this time is to revisit the idea of adopting a resolution outlining parameters for a final status agreement, an initiative that has been brewing behind the scenes among some Council members for a while.

Another option, in lieu of an agreement on a parameters resolution, would be to explore other Council outcomes that could help advance prospects for a negotiated settlement of the conflict, such as a resolution condemning the continued building of settlements in the West Bank, which remains a key impediment to achieving a two-state solution.

Council Dynamics

Given the political sensitivities surrounding the issue, Council decisions on Israel/Palestine are generally negotiated outside of New York, at capital level, and it is generally accepted that any outcome's fate lies ultimately with the US, which has historically used its veto to protect Israeli interests in the Council. Recent developments between Israel and the US, particularly the fallout over Netanyahu's pre-election comments repudiating a two-state solution, may mean that, given the deadlock in US-brokered negotiations and Netanyahu's apparent intransigence, the US may shift its posture towards action on the issue in the Council.

Other Council members, such as France, Jordan and the UK, have been involved since late last year in efforts to broker agreement on a resolution that sets parameters for a final status agreement, though movement on any such document was stalled due to US insistence that the Council should not act until after Israel's elections. With the elections out of the way, these or other members may be compelled to re-introduce such an initiative.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In April, Council members expect to receive the semi-annual briefing in consultations from Special Envoy Terje Rød-Larsen on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559. Adopted in 2004, the resolution urged the disarmament of all militias and the extension of government control over all Lebanese territory. Discussion is expected to focus on the political situation in Lebanon, the failure to elect a president and the security situation in border areas.

Key Recent Developments

Council members last met on Lebanon on 17

March when Special Coordinator for Lebanon Sigrid Kaag and Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Edmond Mulet briefed in consultations on the most recent report on the implementation of resolution 1701, which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006.

Kaag addressed a wide range of pressing issues related to Lebanon, including a 28 January incident along the Blue Line—the border demarcation between Lebanon and Israel published by the UN in 2000—which she described as the worst violation of resolution 1701 since 2006. An attack that day by Hezbollah on the Israeli Defense Forces

(IDF) killed two soldiers and was met with retaliatory fire that killed a UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeeper. Kaag noted that a UNIFIL preliminary report on the incident had been shared with the parties for comment. She touched upon numerous other issues, such as the possession of arms by Hezbollah; the manifold effects of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon, including the importance of Lebanon's maintaining its policy of disassociation from that conflict; and the refugee crisis. She also stressed the need to support the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). Concerning the political situation and the country's inability to elect a president

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2172](#) (26 August 2014) extended the mandate of UNIFIL for one year. [S/RES/1559](#) (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias and extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory. [Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2015/7](#) (19 March 2015) addressed several issues, including the situation along the Blue Line; the vacancy in the presidential office; and the effects of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, including the challenges posed by hosting nearly 1.2 million refugees, and it expressed support for the LAF, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and the International Support Group for Lebanon. [S/PRST/2014/10](#) (29 May 2014) expressed disappointment that presidential elections were not completed within the constitutional timeframe and urged Lebanon to hold elections quickly. It also called on all parties to respect Lebanon's policy of disassociation and to refrain from any involvement in the Syrian crisis—a reference to Hezbollah's fighting in Syria. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2015/147](#) (27 February 2015) was the most recent report on the implementation of resolution 1701. [S/2014/720](#) (7 October 2014) was the most recent report on the implementation of resolution 1559. [Security Council Press Statements SC/11766](#) (4 February 2015) condemned the killing of a UNIFIL peacekeeper.

USEFUL ADDITIONAL RESOURCE [Special Tribunal for Lebanon Sixth Annual Report](#) (2014–2015)

Lebanon (con't)

for the past ten months, Kaag stressed that the international community must maintain pressure on all parties to ensure they resolve their differences and elect a president.

Mulet briefed on several other incidents in UNIFIL's area of operations and also on the investigation into the 28 January incident.

France suggested in the consultations that a presidential statement ought to be adopted to address several key issues and stressed that there was a need to emphasise the unity of the Council in its support for Lebanon. All Council members were in favour of this approach and, following consultations, France circulated a comprehensive presidential statement. The statement, which was adopted on 19 March with few amendments, addressed stability along the Blue Line and in the UNIFIL area of operations; the now ten-month stalemate in the election of a president; the increasing negative impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon's stability; the impact of hosting nearly 1.2 million Syrian registered refugees; the renewal of the mandate of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon; and the Council's supportive stance towards the LAF and the International Support Group for Lebanon, which aims to help Lebanon cope with the influx of Syrian refugees.

Concerning the presidential vacuum, on 11 March, Lebanon's parliament failed, for the 19th time, to elect a president, as rival factions remained unable to agree on a consensus candidate. As in the past, the parliament was unable to reach an agreement because

Hezbollah and allied parliamentarians from Michel Aoun's Change and Reform bloc boycotted the sessions. Speaker Nabih Berri, who is allied with Hezbollah and Aoun, scheduled the next parliamentary session to elect a president to take place on 2 April. The office has been vacant since former president Michel Sleiman's term expired on 25 May 2014.

The Tribunal released its sixth annual report, covering the period from 1 March 2014 to 28 February 2015 on 10 March. The jurisdiction of the tribunal extends to attacks connected to the 14 February 2005 assassination of prime minister Rafik Hariri, which occurred between 1 October 2004 and 12 December 2005. Potentially, with the consent of Lebanon, the UN and the Security Council, this jurisdiction could extend to later connected attacks. The prosecutor reported that assessment of such attacks is continuing. To permit the conclusion of the current work of the Tribunal and accommodate continuing investigation, the Secretary-General renewed its mandate for a third three-year term, until 28 February 2018.

Key Issues

The key issue is that Hezbollah and other non-state actors continue to maintain weaponry, which restricts the ability of the state to exercise full authority over its territory, poses a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability and contravenes its obligations under resolutions 1559 and 1701.

Several pressing issues arise from the conflict in neighbouring Syria, including the engagement of Lebanese elements in the war there, continued fighting in border areas and the immense burden of hosting growing numbers of Syrian refugees.

Another key issue is Lebanon's inability to elect a president, which has paralysed the country's parliament at a time when it is facing a multitude of threats to its stability.

Options

Given that the Council has just recently adopted a comprehensive presidential statement on the situation in Lebanon, the most likely option for the Council is to receive the briefing and take no further action at this time.

Council Dynamics

As demonstrated by the quick adoption of an extensive presidential statement on Lebanon on 19 March, the Council continues to exhibit unity in its support for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security and to support Lebanon in its fight to insulate itself from the deleterious effects of the conflict in neighbouring Syria. The Council also remains united in its concern about the continued vacancy in the presidency, particularly given the extreme challenges facing Lebanon at this time.

France is the penholder on Lebanon in the Council.

Women, Peace and Security

Expected Council Action

In mid-April, Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura will brief the Council on the Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence. A civil society representative was also expected to speak. At press time, no outcome was planned and it remained unclear whether the format would be a briefing or an open debate. This issue has been considered in the open debate format since 2009.

Key Recent Developments

The Secretary-General's report describes 2014 as a year marked by harrowing accounts of sexual violence in the context of violent extremism, with particular focus on Boko Haram and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). It details how terrorist groups use sexual violence to achieve tactical objectives, dispelling the notion that sexual violence is just an incidental by-product of conflict. Sexual violence by extremist groups terrorizes

communities into compliance, displaces populations from strategic areas and generates revenue through trafficking, slave trade and ransoms. The report also highlights the vulnerability of displaced or refugee women and girls to sexual exploitation, such as human trafficking, early marriage and forced marriage.

The report includes analysis that conflict-related sexual violence occurs in situations where there is also systemic gender-based discrimination, such as the exclusion of women

UN DOCUMENTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2122 (18 October 2013) requested the global study in preparation for the 2015 high-level review. S/RES/1325 (31 October 2000) recognised that conflict has a disproportionate impact on women. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2014/21 (28 October 2014) addressed the needs of displaced women and highlighted the impact of violent extremism on women. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7414 (25 March 2015) was an open debate on children and armed conflict. S/PV.7374 (30 January 2015) was an open debate on the protection challenges of women and girls. S/PV.7289 (28 October 2014) was an open debate on women, peace and security. S/PV.7160 (25 April 2014) was an open debate on conflict-related sexual violence.

Women, Peace and Security (con't)

from political life, economic marginalisation and discriminatory systems of both formal and informal law. Furthermore, survivors of sexual violence often face double victimisation through accusations of “honour” or “morality” crimes, through reporting to unresponsive or predatory security officials or through forced marriage to the perpetrator as a form of traditional settlement.

Violent extremism and the vulnerability of displaced women were central themes in the 28 October 2014 open debate on women, peace and security and the 30 January open debate on protection of civilians. The presidential statement adopted after the October debate similarly emphasised needs of displaced women and highlighted the impact of violent extremism on women. More recently, the 25 March open debate on children and armed conflict focused on child victims of non-state armed groups, with the deleterious impact of groups like Boko Haram and ISIS prominently discussed.

The Secretary-General's Report

The 2015 report added Iraq while removing Angola, Cambodia and Sierra Leone. It provides information in three categories:

- **Sexual violence in conflict-affected settings:** Afghanistan, the Central African Republic (CAR), Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan/Darfur, Syria and Yemen;
- **Sexual violence in post-conflict situations:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Nepal and Sri Lanka; and
- **Other situations of concern:** Nigeria.

Since 2012, these reports have also included an annex listing parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the Council's agenda. Additions to the 2015 annex include state and non-state actors in Somalia. Several terrorist groups were also added: ISIS in both Iraq and Syria, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram. In relation to Boko Haram, Nigeria is mentioned in the body of the report but not in the annex. This is likely due to sensitivities that Nigeria—also a current elected Security Council member—should not be construed as an issue on the Council's agenda.

The annex also includes other changes. Five specific non-state armed groups in Syria,

other than ISIS, were added to the existing entry, which already included Syrian government forces, intelligence forces and regime-allied militias. The Justice and Equality Movement, a Darfur-based rebel group, was added to the existing South Sudan entry, reflecting the fact that the group has taken refuge there and fought on the side of President Salva Kiir. For CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC and Mali, the respective militias, armed groups and government forces remained largely unchanged.

Key Issues

A key issue for the open debate will be how to deal with extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISIS, which do not operate in just one country, are difficult to approach and are unlikely to respond to the usual forms of pressure. Related issues include:

- ensuring the women, peace and security agenda is integrated into the Council's thematic work on counterterrorism and country-specific situations where these groups operate;
- ensuring that counterinsurgency efforts against extremist groups do not exacerbate the vulnerabilities that women and girls face, such as in Somalia; and
- not losing sight of the fact that in many situations where sexual violence occurs governments are a primary driver of conflict in their own territory, such as in Syria and Darfur.

A continuing issue is the reluctance of Council members to use sanctions to pressure many of the groups listed on the Secretary-General's annex.

Another issue is how the Council can encourage the UN system and member states to develop and implement a gender-sensitive humanitarian response to the needs of displaced women and girls.

Finally, an issue is how to take forward any concrete recommendations from this debate to the high-level review of resolution 1325 in October.

Options

Options for the Council regarding perpetrators include taking up recommendations from the 2015 report to:

- refer those who commit, command or condone sexual violence to the ICC; and
- direct relevant sanctions committees—including the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida

Sanctions Committee, which has already listed both Boko Haram and ISIS—to engage with the Special Representative and consider whether parties in the annex should be subject to existing sanctions or whether designation criteria should be expanded to include sexual violence.

Options for the Council to integrate sexual violence concerns into its country-specific work—especially when renewing or establishing peace operations—include:

- ensuring that a gender lens is applied in processes devoted to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, security sector reform and justice reform;
- ensuring the deployment of gender expertise in missions, both gender advisers and women's protection advisers;
- expanding the call for the implementation of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence in all relevant mission mandates; and
- calling for the inclusion of sexual violence concerns in mediation and peace processes, particularly in the context of security arrangements and transitional justice mechanisms.

Council Dynamics

Since the Council has not sought a new resolution on women, peace and security since 2013, the dynamic among members has been relatively quiet, with most being supportive, or at least neutral, on this thematic issue. Currently there is considerable momentum building toward the global study and high-level review of resolution 1325—expected to be finalised in October.

However, there may be resistance by some Council members to any ambitious expectations around the high-level review. Last October, China and Russia made agreement difficult on language in the presidential statement referencing accountability issues and the global study. This indicates difficulties may arise later this year when the Secretary-General submits the results of the study for the Council's consideration.

The UK is the penholder on women, peace and security in the Council. The US is the penholder on sexual violence issues.

Notable Dates for April

REPORT DUE	REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN APRIL	REQUESTING DOCUMENT
24 March	OPCW report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (Syrian chemical weapons) (S/2015/211)	S/RES/2118
25 March	SG report on MINUSMA (Mali)	S/RES/2164
27 March	SG report on conflict-related sexual violence	S/RES/2106
1 April	SG report on MINUSCA (Central African Republic)	S/RES/2149
9 April	SG report on MINURSO (Western Sahara)	S/RES/2152
14 April	SG report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (Lebanon)	S/PRST/2004/36 S/RES/1559
15 April	Final report of the 1572 Côte d'Ivoire Group of Experts	S/RES/2153
17 April	SG report on the humanitarian situation in Syria	S/RES/2139 S/RES/2191

MANDATES EXPIRE	RELEVANT DOCUMENT
30 April	MINUSCA (Central African Republic) S/RES/2149
30 April	MINURSO (Western Sahara) S/RES/2152
30 April	Côte d'Ivoire sanctions S/RES/2153
30 May	1572 Côte d'Ivoire Group of Experts (mandate expires in May but will likely be renewed in April) S/RES/2153

The Security Council Report and What's in Blue Apps are available for free at the App Store.



Keep informed of the latest developments in the Security Council through our Apps for the iPhone and iPad.

The material in this publication is subject to copyright ownership. Material in this publication may be freely used as in the public domain. You are free to copy, distribute, or make derivative works of the work under the following conditions: you must attribute the work to Security Council Report, Inc.; you may not use this work for commercial purposes; if you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under a license identical to this one.

Security Council Report Staff

Joanna Weschler
Deputy Executive Director & Director of Research

Amanda Roberts
Coordinating Editor & Senior Research Analyst

Shamala Kandiah Thompson
What's in Blue Editor & Senior Research Analyst

Astrid Forberg Ryan
Senior Research Analyst & Development Officer

Victor Casanova Abos
Research Analyst

Charles Cater
Research Analyst

Dahlia Morched
Research Analyst & Communications Coordinator

Paul Romita
Research Analyst

Eran Sthoeger
Research Analyst

Benjamin Villanti
Research Analyst

Robbin VanNewkirk
Publications Coordinator

Vladimir Sesar
Research Associate

Lindiwe Knutson
Research Assistant

Maritza Tenerelli
Administrative Assistant

Stevenson Swanson
Editorial Consultant

Security Council Report is a non-profit organisation supported by the Governments of Angola, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Uruguay, and The Carnegie Corporation and The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Design Point Five, NY

Security Council Report
One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
885 2nd Ave at 48th St, 21st Floor
New York NY 10017

Telephone +1 212 759 6394
Fax +1 212 759 4038
Web securitycouncilreport.org
whatsinblue.org

