

Monthly Forecast

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Supplement

Selecting the UN Secretary-General: Vetoes, Timing and Regional Rotation

31 August 2015

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Overview

Russia will hold the Council presidency in September. A ministerial-level open debate on the [settlement of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and countering the terrorist threat in the region](#) is planned, with Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov presiding and a briefing by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The quarterly debate on [Afghanistan](#) with a briefing by the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Nicholas Haysom, is also scheduled for September.

A briefing is expected on the work of the [1737 Iran Sanctions Committee](#) by its chair, Ambassador Román Oyarzun (Spain).

Briefings, followed by consultations, are expected on:

- developments in [Liberia](#) and the Secretary-General's latest report on the UN Mission in Liberia, most likely by Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Edmond Mulet;
- the [humanitarian situation in Syria](#), by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien; and
- the [Middle East](#), by Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov.

Briefings in consultations are planned on:

- the implementation of resolution 2046 on

[Sudan/South Sudan](#) issues, by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Haile Menkerios;

- the work of the [UN Interim Security Force for Abyei](#), most likely by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous;
- [chemical weapons in Syria](#), by Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo;
- the Secretary-General's latest report on the [UN Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights](#), by Mulet; and
- the work of the [UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia](#) by its head, Petko Draganov.

Formal sessions will be held to adopt resolutions to renew the mandates of:

- the [UN Support Mission in Libya](#);
- the [UN Mission in Liberia](#); and
- the Panel of Experts assisting the [1521 Liberia Sanctions Committee](#), as well as to renew and possibly modify the [1521 sanctions regime](#).

Several high-level meetings on issues of direct concern to the Security Council, including [Syria](#), [Mali](#), [peacekeeping](#) and [the use of the veto](#) are expected to be held in the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly.

Throughout the month members will be following closely developments in [Guinea-Bissau](#), [Libya](#), [Mali](#), [South Sudan](#) and [Ukraine](#), and additional meetings may be scheduled. •

Status Updates since our August Forecast

Central African Republic

On 3 August, Council members issued a press statement condemning an attack against a MINUSCA convoy in Bangui (SC/11995). On 9 August, Council members issued another press statement expressing sorrow at the death of five peacekeepers when one killed himself and four others (SC/12004). On 5 August, the Council was briefed on the latest MINUSCA report (S/2015/576) by the then Special Representative and head of MINUSCA, Babacar Gaye, and by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Morocco, Abderrazzak Laassel, in the stead of Ambassador Omar Hilale, the chair of the CAR configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (SPV.7500). The briefing was followed by consultations with Gaye. On 13 August, the Secretary-General briefed Council members on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by MINUSCA peacekeepers in the CAR. On 18 August, Council members issued a press statement, expressing their outrage at these allegations and welcoming the commitment of the Secretary-General to strictly enforce his zero-tolerance policy (SC/12010). They also took note of the Secretary-General's decision to ask for the resignation of Gaye, and of the appointment of Parfait Onanga-Anyanga (Gabon) in his place as acting head of MINUSCA. The 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee met on 3 August with the regional countries to discuss the arms embargo (SC/11999). On 21 August it met with the regional countries again regarding the arms embargo and then with its Panel of Experts to discuss the Panel's recent midterm report (SC/12024). The Committee added three individuals and one entity to its sanctions list on 20 August (SC/12018). Finally, the chair of the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Raimonda Murmokaitė (Lithuania), began a five-day visit to the CAR on 24 August.

Burundi

On 4 August, Council members issued a press statement condemning the killing of General Adolphe Nshimirimana in Bujumbura on 2 August and the violent attack on human rights activist Pierre Claver Mbonimpa on 3 August (SC/11996). Council members also expressed concern over the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Burundi and called on all political actors to resume

an inclusive dialogue without delay. On 10 August, Council members were briefed in consultations on the situation in Burundi by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayè-Brook Zerihoun and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović. On 28 August, at the request of France, Zerihoun briefed Council members on the political and security situation in Burundi under "any other business", an update was also provided on the process to appoint a UN mediator.

Counter-Terrorism

On 6 August, Council members condemned the terrorist attack claimed by ISIS at a mosque at the headquarters of the Special Emergency Security Forces in the Asir region of Saudi Arabia (SC/12000).

Yemen

On 12 August, Council members were briefed in consultations by Special Envoy Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed, via video teleconference. Council members issued "press elements" following the meeting urging the parties to resolve their differences through dialogue since a military solution is not attainable and to cooperate with the Special Envoy. On 19 August, the Council was briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien following his 9-13 August visit to Yemen and Djibouti (S/PV.7507). The briefing was followed by consultations. The 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee met on 17 and 25 August. On 17 August, the Committee was briefed by the Panel of Experts on its midterm report. On 25 August, the Committee was briefed by the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Yemen Crisis, Amer Daoudi, on the establishment of a verification and inspection mechanism that the UN has been negotiating between Yemen and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition to increase the flow of commercial goods, such as food and fuel, to Yemen (SC/12026).

Lebanon

On 13 August Council members met with UNIFIL troop-contributing countries (S/PV.7503). On 14 August, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Edmond Mulet briefed Council members on the work of UNIFIL, the threats Lebanon is

facing due to the war in neighbouring Syria and the need for Lebanon to fill the office of the president, which has been vacant since 25 May 2014. On 21 August, the Council adopted resolution 2236, extending the mandate of UNIFIL for one year.

Ebola

On 13 August, the Council had a briefing on the global response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Ebola David Nabarro briefed (S/PV.7502). Also briefing the Council were Deputy Permanent Representative Per Thöresson (Sweden) on behalf of Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden) the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission; AU Ambassador to the UN Tête Antonio; and Mosoka Fallah, Director of the Community-Based Initiative. As outlined in the concept note, circulated ahead of the meeting by Nigeria, one of the key purposes of the meeting was to consider the role of regional and sub-regional organisations in fighting epidemics and to discuss how the international community can more strategically respond to future Ebola outbreaks or other pandemics (S/2015/600).

Regional Organisations

At the initiative of Nigeria, the Council president for August, the Council held an open debate on 18 August on regional organisations and contemporary challenges of global security (S/PV.7505 and Resumption 1). A concept note had been circulated on 5 August in preparation for the open debate (S/2015/599).

Israel/Palestine

On 19 August, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed the Council in the regular monthly meeting on the Middle East (S/PV.7506). Feltman said the risk of escalation in Israel and Palestine is palpable and that a comprehensive approach on the ground, in the region and with the international community is needed to restore confidence, before returning to realistic negotiations. On the Israeli side, that should reflect significant policy shifts to enable Palestine's sovereignty, economy and security to grow while on the Palestinian side, unity is critical, he said. On recent events, he briefed that violence continued, including incidents that

Status Update since our August Forecast (con't)

resulted in Palestinian casualties as well as attacks on Israelis and Israeli security forces. Israel's practice of demolishing homes and structures also continued.

Security Sector Reform

On 20 August, the Council held a briefing on Security Sector Reform (SSR) at the initiative of Nigeria. The briefers were Dmitry Titov, the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in DPKO; Director of UNDP's Crisis Response Unit Izumi Nakamitsu; and Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura (S/PV.7508). Following the circulation of a concept note ahead of the briefing (S/2015/614), Council members focused largely on the implementation of resolution 2151 of 28 April 2014.

Kosovo

On 21 August, the Council held a quarterly debate on Kosovo. Special Representative Farid Zarif briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's Kosovo report (S/2015/579) and recent developments (S/PV.7510). Zarif emphasised the importance of continued dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina as well as the recently approved constitutional changes paving a way for the establishment of the special court for war crimes. After four years as head of UNMIK, Zarif said he would be relinquishing the post shortly after the debate.

Iraq

On 24 August, Chile and the US organised an

Arria-formula meeting on ISIS's targeting of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons, as part of ISIS's ongoing track record of deliberately targeting minorities and vulnerable populations in Iraq and Syria. Angola and Chad did not attend but the majority of Council members heard first-hand accounts from affected individuals from both Iraq and Syria and were briefed by Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and Jessica Stern, Executive Director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. On 25 August, Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura briefed Council members in consultations on her 16-29 April visit to the Middle East (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey) where sexual violence is being committed strategically, in a widespread and systematic manner, and with a high-degree of sophistication by most parties to the conflicts in Iraq and Syria—both state and non-state actors.

Sudan

On 26 August, Ambassador Rafael Ramirez (Venezuela), chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, briefed Council members in consultations. The quarterly briefing covered the work of the Committee since the last briefing by Ramirez on 28 May, including the 1591 Committee's most recent meeting on 20 August where it discussed the Panel of Experts' mid-term report.

DPRK (North Korea)

On 26 August, the chair of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Román

Oyarzun (Spain), briefed Council members in consultations on the work of the Committee. Also during August, the Council received letters from the Republic of Korea (ROK), dated 18 August (S/2015/642), and the DPRK, dated 21 August (S/2015/658) related to the landmines that injured two ROK soldiers on 4 August and the escalation of tensions between the two countries. On 19 August, the DPRK also addressed a letter to the Council repeating its request for the Council to place the issue of US-ROK joint military exercises on the Council's agenda (S/2015/650).

Burkina Faso

On 27 August, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed Council members under "any other business" on his one day visit to Burkina Faso. On 25 August, Feltman visited the country, together with UNOWA head Mohammed Ibn Chambas, ahead of the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for 11 October.

Myanmar

On 28 August, at the request of the UK, Special Adviser Vijay Nambiar briefed Council members on Myanmar under "any other business" with Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović present to answer questions if they arose. An update was provided on progress towards signing a national ceasefire agreement, as well as the situation with regard to minority groups in Rakhine State, and preparations for elections later this year.

In Hindsight: The Process of Selecting a UN Secretary-General

Before the end of 2016, the next UN Secretary-General has to be chosen. The Security Council had its first informal discussion on this issue on 22 July. Though no meetings are scheduled in September in the Council on the Secretary-General selection process, members will be participating in the final stages of negotiations on a draft resolution in the General Assembly on the revitalisation of its work, which includes significant paragraphs on the selection process. With activity expected to pick up in the coming months, it may be helpful to recall the evolution of relevant Council practice over the years. (For more, please see SCR's Special Research Reports: The Appointment of a New Secretary-General of 16 February 2006; The Appointment of a New Secretary-General of 21 June 2006; and The Appointment of the UN Secretary-General of 24 May 2011.)

The UN Charter in Article 97 says that the Secretary-General "shall be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council". With one exception, the General Assembly's role in appointing the Secretary-General has been limited to the formal act of appointment, with the Council doing the real decision-making. (In 1950, following a succession of inconclusive votes in the Council, the General Assembly decided in a majority vote to extend the term of Trygve Lie without a recommendation from the Council.)

There are no requirements for a timetable for the selection process other than General Assembly resolution 51/241, which states that "the Secretary-General should be appointed as early as possible, preferably no later than one month before the date on which the term of the incumbent expires". From 1972 to 1997, the practice was a Council decision in December or late November, with the new Secretary-General starting in January. Reappointments were occasionally considerably earlier. In the last competitive selection process in 2006, which resulted in Ban Ki-moon's appointment, for the first time there was a concerted effort to start the process earlier. Successive Council presidents began meeting with the president of the General Assembly

from March 2006 to discuss the selection process. In June, a formal letter was sent by the Council president to the General Assembly president informing him that the Council would start considering candidates in early July. The formal selection took place in October 2006. In 2015, there have been proposals that the process of selection of the next Secretary-General should be initiated considerably sooner through a joint letter from the two presidents.

Once a formal announcement is made, the nomination process begins. Specific details of how it has been done over the years are difficult to ascertain but it appears that in the early years, candidates were generally suggested by P5 members. In recent years, member states have presented candidates (who do not need to be their nationals) to the Council president. Regional organisations have also sometimes chosen to endorse candidates from their region.

Once a list emerges, the Council begins its consideration of the candidates. A system for determining the views of Council members, particularly the P5, ahead of a formal decision has developed over the years. Since 1981, if there has been more than one candidate, the Council has conducted "straw polls" in consultations where members vote to either "encourage" or "discourage" each candidate. Ugandan permanent representative, Olara Otunnu, who was president of the Council in August 1981, proposed the idea of straw polls, to assess new candidates after a deadlock between incumbent Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, who was seeking an unprecedented third term, and Salim Salim of Tanzania. In 1991 the practice of colour-coded ballots was added to differentiate votes between permanent and elected members in the final stages of the straw ballot process. An innovation in 2006 was the inclusion of a "no opinion" or abstention option, in addition to "encourage" and "discourage" in the straw polls. The straw-ballot process allows votes to be cast informally during consultations without official Council meetings or official votes. While this has resulted in greater flexibility, it has also made the process more secretive as, unlike private meetings, consultations have

no official record. Once an acceptable candidate emerges, a formal private meeting is held to adopt a resolution with the Council's recommendation to the General Assembly. This is in line with Rule 48 that states the Council's recommendation to the General Assembly "be discussed and decided at a private meeting". This decision is a matter of substance which under Article 27 (3) of the Charter requires "an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of permanent members".

Regional rotation and the Secretary-General's term of office, as well as whether more than one candidate should be recommended to the General Assembly, are expected to be among the key issues in the lead-up to the next appointment. Article 97 provides no guidance on either issue. While some believe that a principle of rotation has come to exist, and that this time it is Eastern Europe's turn, others argue that the history of the terms does not establish a clear practice. After eight male Secretaries-General, many are also showing strong preference for a female Secretary-General. The UN Charter does not specify the term of office, but five years is customary. General Assembly resolution 11(1) decided that the first Secretary-General should be appointed for five years, renewable for another five. It also said that the General Assembly and the Council are "free to modify the term of office of future Secretaries-General in the light of experience". There are calls for a non-renewable term, perhaps of seven years, instead. The proposal that multiple candidates should be presented by the Council to the General Assembly is a highly controversial one, and unlikely to gain traction among the P5. Many of these issues are being raised by member states (for example the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group of 27 countries), as well as various civil society groups.

The evolution of Council practice in selecting the Secretary-General illustrates clearly that nothing is set in stone. Over the years, the Council has demonstrated flexibility and creativity in making this important decision with its major impact on the performance of the UN.

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

Council members continue to follow events in South Sudan closely. While no Council meetings on South Sudan are currently scheduled in September, it is possible that this issue could be addressed during the month, given the anticipated need to adjust the mandate of UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) following the signature on 26 August by President Salva Kiir of the peace agreement proposed by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The mandate of UNMISS expires on 30 November.

Key Recent Developments

While the international community presses the parties to commit to peace, there persists a security, human rights and humanitarian catastrophe in South Sudan. Fighting continues in a civil war that began in December 2013 as a political dispute within the ruling party; it soon spiralled into a vicious cycle of inter-ethnic violence. Precise figures are hard to come by, but the conflict has claimed tens of thousands of lives. At present, there are roughly 1.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country, as well as more than 619,000 refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries. Approximately 200,000 IDPs are now protected in six UNMISS bases (i.e. Protection of Civilians sites) across South Sudan. Severe food insecurity confronts 4.6 million of South Sudan's approximately 12 million people.

On 6 August, the parties convened in Addis Ababa for negotiations on a draft agreement prepared by IGAD, with a 17 August deadline for signing the document. Several issues were reportedly contested by the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) during the negotiations, including proposals on power-sharing at the national and state levels.

On 17 August, a draft agreement was signed by the SPLM/A-IO. However, the government refused to sign and requested an additional 15 days for internal consultations. On 18 August, South Sudan's Information Minister Michael Makuei called the draft agreement a "sell-out". On 19 August, US Secretary of State John Kerry called Kiir,

who told Kerry that he would sign the agreement after a few more days of consultations.

Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson briefed Council members during "any other business" on 19 August. Eliasson, who had been in Addis Ababa during the recent South Sudan negotiations, stated that the international community needed to apply strong diplomatic pressure on Kiir to sign the agreement. At the meeting, the US circulated to Council members a draft resolution intended to put pressure on Kiir to sign the agreement. The draft resolution would impose an arms embargo on South Sudan if the agreement was not signed by 1 September. Furthermore, if the government failed to sign, an asset freeze and travel ban would be automatically imposed, effective on 6 September, on certain individuals, including senior political leaders of the government.

Finally, on 25 August, the government of South Sudan announced that Kiir would sign the agreement the next day. Also on 25 August, a briefing and consultations were held on UNMISS and on the work of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNMISS Ellen Margrethe Løj and OCHA head Stephen O'Brien briefed on the situation in South Sudan. Ambassador Cristián Barros (Chile), chair of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee also briefed. In press elements issued after the meeting, Council members stated their preparedness to act immediately if Kiir did not sign on 26 August.

Even though reiterating his reservations regarding parts of the agreement, Kiir signed on 26 August. That same day, the US circulated a draft presidential statement welcoming his signature. At press time, Council members were negotiating language related to accountability as well as a reference to pursuing appropriate measures to ensure implementation of the agreement in full and without exception. (During the negotiations some Council members had proposed that an arms embargo should be imposed even if the government signs the agreement.)

Key Elements of the Peace Agreement

The peace agreement proposes a transitional government of national unity to be established 90 days after the signing of the agreement. It

includes the following elements.

- The transitional period would last 30 months and culminate in national elections 60 days prior to the end of the period.
- Kiir would serve as president during the transitional period, while the first vice president would be selected by the South Sudan Armed Opposition.
- At the national level, Council of Ministers positions would be allocated as follows: Government of the Republic of South Sudan, 53 percent; South Sudan Armed Opposition, 33 percent; former detainees, 7 percent; and other political parties, 7 percent.
- In Unity, Upper Nile, and Jonglei states – which have all witnessed heavy fighting – the State Council of Ministers positions would be distributed according to the following formula: Government of the Republic of South Sudan, 46 percent; South Sudan Armed Opposition, 40 percent; former detainees, 7 percent; and other political parties, 7 percent.
- In the remaining seven states, the State Council of Ministers positions would be allocated as follows: Government of the Republic of South Sudan, 85 percent; and South Sudan Armed Opposition, 15 percent.
- Juba would become a demilitarised zone with the exception of presidential guards, guard forces protecting military barracks and other sites, and joint integrated police.
- A Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) – consisting of representatives of the parties to the agreement and other Sudanese stakeholders, countries in the region, China, the Troika countries (Norway, the UK and the US), the UN, the AU, the EU, and the IGAD Partners Forum (donors to IGAD) – would be responsible for monitoring and overseeing the agreement's implementation and the transitional government's mandate and tasks.
- A Hybrid Court for South Sudan would be formed to investigate and prosecute individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other violations of international law and applicable South Sudanese law in the period from 15 December 2013 to the completion of the transitional period.
- A Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing would be formed to establish a record of violations of human rights and the rule of law between July 2005 (i.e., when the southern Sudan autonomous region was established) and the date of the agreement's signing. Funding for this commission, as well as for the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, would be determined by legislation of the transitional government establishing these institutions.

In the midst of the negotiations in Addis Ababa, Peter Gatdet and Gathoth Gathoth, two SPLM/A-IO generals who had

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2223 (28 May 2015) renewed the mandate of UNMISS until 30 November. S/RES/2206 (3 March 2015) established a sanctions regime on South Sudan. Secretary-General's Report S/2015/655 (21 August 2015) was on UNMISS. Sanctions-Related Document S/2015/656 (21 August 2015) was the 2206 South Sudan Panel of Experts' mid-term report.

South Sudan (con't)

been relieved of their duties by Riek Machar in July, rejected Machar's leadership of the SPLM/A-IO at a press conference in Khartoum on 10 August. On the same day, Gatdet said in a press release issued on behalf of a handful of disillusioned opposition generals, "We reject any peace agreement that includes President Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar in the leadership of the Transitional Government of National Unity." The press release referred to both men as "symbols of hate and conflict and...obstacles to peace". Gatdet proposed that others (i.e. not Kiir and Machar) should lead during a transitional period and that if this was not possible, a military-led transitional government should take power until elections could be held. South Sudanese officials have cited divisions in the rebel camp as a factor complicating the peace talks.

Media repression and intimidation in South Sudan remain a significant problem. In early August, the government's National Security Service shut down two newspapers—The Citizen and Al Rai—and a radio station called Free Voice. The Citizen was reportedly closed for publishing a press release by opposition political parties and an opinion piece urging the government to sign IGAD's proposed peace agreement, while Al Rai was apparently accused of having a rebel as an editorial board member. It is unclear why Free Voice was closed down. On 16 August, while speaking to journalists at the Juba airport before departing for the peace talks in Addis Ababa, Kiir said, "If anybody...does not know that this country has killed people, we will demonstrate it one day, one time...Freedom of the press does not mean you work against the country". Kiir's remarks have been condemned by the Committee to Protect Journalists. On 19 August, Peter Moi, a journalist for South Sudan's Corporate Weekly, was shot and killed by an unidentified assailant in Juba.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 20 August, the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee met to discuss the interim report of the Panel of Experts. A member of the Panel briefed committee members. He told them that the security and humanitarian situation in the country continued to deteriorate, while noting

that countries in the region were concerned about the spill-over of the conflict. He said that if an arms embargo were imposed on South Sudan, as proposed in the draft resolution the Council was considering at the time, the UNMISS mandate would have to be adapted to facilitate the Panel's monitoring of the embargo. In its interim report, the Panel recommended that the Council consider imposing targeted sanctions on key decision-makers in South Sudan and implementing an arms embargo on the country.

Key Issues

Following the 26 August signing of the peace agreement, an underlying issue is the implications of the "reservations" expressed by Kiir at the signature ceremony and whether the agreement can be implemented and lead to a durable peace. Two factors in particular require careful consideration. First, it is unclear whether dissident opposition generals can be convinced not to take up arms to resist implementation of an agreement that fails to incorporate their views. A related matter is how much support they might be able to garner in South Sudan for any such resistance. Second, it will be a significant challenge for Kiir and Machar to work together constructively in a transitional government of national unity; the difficulties they had serving together in government in the past could be magnified in a transitional government, especially considering their history with one another since December 2013.

If the conflict continues even after the agreement has been signed, another important issue is whether additional targeted measures against key political figures could leverage a greater commitment to peace on their part. Six military figures, representing both sides of the conflict, have already been sanctioned, but these designations have been criticised by some because they were not directed at the major decision-makers.

Another sanctions-related concern—relevant to both the targeted sanctions and the arms embargo which has been considered by the Council—is encouraging countries in the region and other influential states to support these measures and convincing the South Sudanese people that they are aimed at individuals and not at particular communities.

Options

The most likely option for the Council is to adapt the mandate of UNMISS to enable it to support implementation of the peace agreement on issues such as transitional security arrangements—e.g., cantonment of forces and establishing demilitarised areas.

Other options for the Council include:

- imposing targeted sanctions on key decision-makers in South Sudan and an arms embargo on the country;
- authorising an independent commission of inquiry to investigate alleged crimes since December 2013; and
- encouraging UNMISS to develop a communications strategy to emphasise that targeted sanctions are aimed solely at individuals and not at particular communities in South Sudan, given the inter-communal rifts that have been exacerbated by the crisis.

Council Dynamics

Council members have been unified in their concern with the deterioration of the security, human rights, humanitarian and political situation in South Sudan. However, different perspectives on how to approach the situation were evident during the negotiations on the draft resolution circulated by the US. The draft established an arms embargo and called for targeted measures to be imposed on certain individuals if the government did not sign the peace agreement by 1 September. Regarding the targeted sanctions, African Council members believed that these prospective designations should not be automatic, and rather should be first considered by the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee. Also, several countries had difficulties with a phrase stating that the Council would retain the option of referring the situation in South Sudan to the ICC. During the negotiations, some Council members considered that the establishment of an arms embargo was long overdue in South Sudan and stated their willingness to move forward on the negotiations to establish it even if the agreement was signed by all.

The US is the penholder on South Sudan.

Liberia

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council is expected to receive a briefing on the latest report of the Secretary-General on the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Resolutions are anticipated regarding Liberia sanctions (the arms embargo and travel ban expire 9 September and the mandate of the Panel of Experts expires 9 October) and UNMIL (the mandate expires 30 September).

Key Recent Developments

The Secretary-General's report on UNMIL released on 13 August chronicles security incidents in urban Monrovia and rural Sinoe County. In the former case, on 16 April eight police officers were injured and six police stations were damaged during a confrontation between the police and more than 1,000 community members and commercial motorcyclists. The catalyst for the violence was the death of a commercial motorcyclist while being apprehended by the police after having attempted to evade arrest for a traffic violation. In the latter case, on 26 May, 200 youths protested at a Golden Veroleum Liberia palm oil plantation, alleging inadequate prior consultation with the local community regarding concession agreements. After the youths were denied access to company officials, the situation became violent, resulting in the destruction of property and injuries to government and company officials. UNMIL military and police were deployed to support the Liberia National Police (LNP) in restoring order. The Secretary-General's report concludes that these two incidents highlight the weakness of the LNP regarding "operational preparedness and response capability for addressing public disorder or crisis situations, as well as weak command and control structures".

Progress has been uneven with respect to the Liberian government's preparations for assuming full responsibility for security as of 1 July 2016. On 22 July, the House of Representatives endorsed the national budget, which includes a \$20 million allocation for the security transition (a \$5 million increase over the \$15 million allocated in the draft

national budget); on 6 August, the Senate concurred. However, the Ministry of Justice estimates \$37 million is required for the period 2015/2016. Meanwhile, components of a security sector legal framework—including laws on firearms and ammunition control, a uniform code of military justice and a revised law for the national police—have been under consideration but have yet to be passed in the legislature.

When the Council last discussed UNMIL on 5 May, Karin Landgren, then Special Representative and head of UNMIL, briefed the Council. Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific configuration on Liberia, and Liberia's Minister for Justice Benedict Sannoh also addressed the Council. Landgren identified several potential underlying and proximate threats to stability in Liberia: incomplete national reconciliation and transitional justice processes, tensions regarding land and the extractive industries, porous and insecure borders and upcoming elections in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, which could potentially result in political violence and cross-border forced migration. Landgren echoed some of these themes in Monrovia on 30 June—as well as the need for greater transparency and accountability in governance—during her farewell address as Special Representative. On 12 August, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced his decision to appoint Farid Zarif as Landgren's successor.

On 13 August, the Council was briefed on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa by representatives of the AU, Peacebuilding Commission, UN Secretary-General, World Health Organization and a Liberian NGO. Dr. Mosoka Fallah, coordinator of the Montserrat Community Based Initiative Project, explained that widespread distrust in government institutions necessitated a change in approach to the outbreak in the West Point slum of Monrovia, "We realised that, if we were going to win the fight against Ebola, we needed to involve the community."

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 12 August, Council members were briefed in consultations by Ambassador Dina Kawar (Jordan), chair of the 1521 Liberia Sanctions Committee. The briefing mainly concerned the final report of the Panel of Experts and an update from the Secretary-General that had been requested by the Council in resolution 2188 regarding progress made by the government of Liberia toward regulation of arms and ammunition and management of the border with Côte d'Ivoire. More generally, the chair summarised the work of the Committee, noting that informal consultations were held on 3 February, 4 May and 21 July. Several Council members stated they were looking forward to receiving the draft resolution on sanctions from the penholder, the US, which was subsequently circulated on 20 August.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The Human Rights Council considered the report on Liberia of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, during its 30th session. Recommendations in the report include: ratification of the optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, amongst other international conventions; the abolition of the death penalty; and the decriminalisation of same-sex consensual relations between adults (A/HRC/30/4).

Key Issues

Risk factors for insecurity in Liberia include: inadequate government regulation of arms and ammunition, a lack of control over insecure border areas, potentially contentious upcoming national elections in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, incomplete national reconciliation and transitional justice processes, widespread corruption and a lack of public sector transparency and accountability, and economic dependence on natural resource exports (large-scale agriculture and the extractive industries are recurring sources of social unrest over labour and land issues).

Within this context, the principal challenge continues to be maintaining stability in Liberia during UNMIL's drawdown and a potential modification or termination of sanctions.

Options

Regarding sanctions, the Council could

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBERIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2215 (2 April 2015) authorised a drawdown of UNMIL to 3,590 military personnel and 1,515 police by September 2015. S/RES/2190 (15 December 2014) extended the mandate of UNMIL until 30 September 2015. S/RES/2188 (9 December 2014) reaffirmed the asset freeze and renewed the travel ban, targeted arms embargo and mandate of the Panel of Experts. S/RES/2177 (18 September 2014) declared the Ebola outbreak in West Africa a threat to international peace and security. S/RES/1521 (22 December 2003) imposed sanctions on Liberia, including an arms embargo, targeted travel ban, rough diamond export ban and timber export ban. **Security Council Letters** S/2015/590 (31 July 2015) was an update by the Secretary-General on arms, ammunition and border issues. S/2015/558 (21 July 2015) transmitted the final report of the Group of Experts. **Security Council Meetings** S/PV.7502 (13 August 2015) was a briefing on Ebola. S/PV.7438 (5 May 2015) was a briefing on UNMIL. **Secretary-General's Report** S/2015/620 (13 August 2015) was on UNMIL.

Liberia (con't)

choose to renew the partial arms embargo and targeted travel ban and reaffirm the asset freeze (which is not time-limited). Alternatively, the Council could choose to terminate the Liberia sanctions regime. However, the most likely option—representing a middle ground between maintaining the status quo and terminating the regime—would be modification of the sanctions regime. In particular, this could entail terminating the asset freeze and travel ban but renewing the partial arms embargo.

With respect to UNMIL, one option would be to renew the mandate for one year and proceed with a drawdown to 1,240 military personnel and 606 police personnel by 1 July 2016, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his latest report. Other options include proceeding with the drawdown at a pace other than recommended by the Secretary-General or renewing UNMIL's mandate for a shorter period of time, such as up to 30 June 2016, thus allowing for a re-evaluation of UNMIL's mandate for the period after the government of Liberia will assume full responsibility for security.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council stated its intention in resolution

2188 to keep sanctions measures under review with a view toward their modification or termination, contingent upon sufficient progress toward meeting the conditions outlined in resolution 1521 (i.e., maintain the ceasefire; disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation; security sector reform; implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement; and stability in Liberia and the sub-region), while also taking into consideration the threat posed by Ebola. The final report by the Panel of Experts transmitted 21 July identified underlying threats to stability in Liberia, while the update by the Secretary-General transmitted 31 July assessed the government of Liberia's progress toward regulating arms and ammunition and managing borders. How Council members interpret this information in relation to the criteria for termination in resolution 1521 should establish the parameters for their decision-making with regard to Liberia sanctions. It seems that most Council members currently support modifying the regime.

With the receding of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which the Council had declared a threat to international peace and security in resolution 2177, the momentum has shifted

back toward the drawdown of UNMIL. In April, the Council adopted resolution 2215, authorising a drawdown of UNMIL to 3,590 troops and 1,515 police (from 4,811 troops and 1,795 police). The resolution reaffirmed the Council's expectation that the government of Liberia will assume full responsibility for security no later than 30 June 2016 and also reaffirmed its intention to consider the reconfiguration of UNMIL accordingly. Given concerns regarding peacekeeping budgets and the need for UN peacekeeping resources in other conflicts, Council members are likely to support UNMIL's continued drawdown when its mandate renewal is considered in September. However, at press time it remained unclear to what extent the probable next phase of drawdown will reflect the Secretary-General's recommendations in his latest report, including with regard to the size and configuration of UNMIL for the period after the government of Liberia has assumed full responsibility for security.

The US is the penholder on Liberia, and Jordan is the chair of the 1521 Liberia Sanctions Committee.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council is due to renew the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Depending on developments in the political dialogue, Bernardino León, the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, might brief on his efforts to bring on board the parties that have yet to initial the political agreement.

The mandate of UNSMIL expires on 15 September 2015.

Key Recent Developments

On 11 July, some parties to the conflict in Libya initialled a peace agreement in the Moroccan city of Skhirat. Representatives

from the Tobruk-based House of Representatives and officials from municipalities such as Tripoli and Misrata, among others, initialled the agreement, but the Tripoli-based General National Congress (GNC) refused to initial it. The agreement provides for a one-year government of national accord and grants the executive authority to a council of ministers headed by a presidency council comprising the prime minister, two deputies and two ministers. The House will remain the legislative body, and a State Council including members from the GNC will be created to act as a consultative body with the capacity to express both binding and advisory opinions. Briefing the Council on 15 July, León

emphasised that the door remains open for the GNC to join the agreement “with the clear understanding that it will not be further amended, without prejudice to the negotiations on its annexes”.

Since then, another round of the political dialogue took place on 11-12 August in Geneva. Agreement on the annexes (including the formation of a government of national accord and the mandate of the newly-formed State Council) remains elusive, and the military actors have yet to express whether and, if so, how they will support the security arrangements laid out in the agreement. Briefing the Council on 26 August, León stated the need to expedite the dialogue process and reach

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2214](#) (27 March 2015) focused on counter-terrorism efforts. [S/RES/2213](#) (27 March 2015) renewed UNSMIL and the 1970 Libya Panel of Experts. [Secretary-General's Report S/2015/624](#) (13 August 2015) was the latest report on Libya. [Security Council Press Statements SC/12027](#) (19 August 2015) condemned the terrorist attacks in Sirte by a group that has pledged allegiance to ISIS. [SC/11973](#) (16 July 2015) welcomed the initialling of the Libyan Political Agreement of Skhirat, Morocco, on 11 July by the majority of the Libyan delegates. [SC/11957](#) (1 July 2015) urged the participants in the political dialogue to agree on a government of national accord and to sign the proposal presented by UNSMIL in the coming days. [SC/11931](#) (17 June 2015) strongly encouraged all participants in the political dialogue to positively consider the proposals contained in the fourth draft and commit to the swift conclusion of an agreement. [Security Council Letter S/2015/630](#) (13 August 2015) was from Libya regarding the situation in Sirte. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7512](#) (26 August 2015) was a briefing by Special Representative León on Libya.

Libya (con't)

an agreement signed by all parties before the end of the mandate of the House in October. At press time, the parties were expected to meet in Skhirat on 27 August.

Despite UNSMIL's mediation efforts, fighting continues between elements of the two main coalitions—Misrata-based and Islamist militias (collectively known as Libya Dawn) and Zintan-based militias and elements of the army commanded by General Khalifa Haftar (Operation Dignity). A 13 August Secretary-General's report highlights how various local ceasefire initiatives led to a marked reduction of military tensions in western Libya and the greater Tripoli area. The situation in the east continues to be critical, including in Benghazi, where UNSMIL has repeatedly condemned the indiscriminate shelling of residential areas by all parties and the report pointed out that “the ongoing conflict [has] shifted into an urban war of attrition in which neither side has been able to make additional significant territorial gains”. In the south, despite several attempts to broker local ceasefires, intermittent clashes between Tabu and Tuareg militias have continued.

Groups pledging allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) continue to clash with both warring coalitions, notably in Sirte and in the vicinity of Derna. In Sirte, under ISIS control since June, ISIS killed more than 70 people in mid-August in response to an attempted rebellion. A 13 August letter sent by the permanent representative of Libya, Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi, to the Council president drew the attention of the Council to the situation in Sirte while blaming the Council for not authorising exemptions to the arms embargo in order to fight ISIS. A 16 August statement by the governments of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK and the US condemned the barbaric acts and underscored the “urgent need for parties in Libya to reach agreement on forming a government of national accord that, in partnership with the international community, can provide security against violent extremist groups seeking to destabilise the country”. After an 18 August meeting, the Arab League vowed military support to fight terrorism in Libya and urged the 1970 Sanctions Committee to respond to the exemptions to the arms embargo requested by the internationally recognised government. (In March, proposals to lift the arms embargo

and grant exemptions for shipments of military materiel for fighting terrorism were put on hold by several Council members due to fears regarding the impact such decisions could have on the dynamics on the ground in the absence of a political solution.)

Contingency planning for fighting terrorism in Libya once a government of national accord is sworn in is ongoing. Early August press reports suggest that the western countries mentioned above, in discussion with the UN and the EU, might be planning to deploy a security assistance mission to train Libyan forces in countering terrorism.

According to the Secretary-General's 13 August report, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, affecting an estimated two million people, including approximately 435,000 internally displaced persons. According to the International Organization for Migration, the number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who have arrived in Europe by sea in 2015 is now approaching 250,000, with rescues at sea occurring at a rate of more than 1,000 migrants a day this summer off the coasts of Italy and Greece. After two separate wrecks off the coast of Libya on 5 and 11 August, at least 2,300 have drowned this year. Negotiations on a draft resolution authorising operation EU NAVFOR Med to tackle the smuggling of migrants off the coast of Libya have been on hold since May because of difficulties in obtaining consent from the Libyan authorities. Those negotiations might resume once a government of national accord is sworn in.

On 28 July, Saif Al-Islam Qaddafi, son of deposed leader Muammar Qaddafi, was sentenced to death by a court in Tripoli that had tried him along with 36 other Qaddafi-era officials accused of serious crimes during the 2011 revolution. Qaddafi has been tried in absentia since he is held in a militia-controlled jail in the town of Zintan. The trial was criticised by both UNSMIL and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as not meeting international standards of a fair trial. On 10 December 2014, the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber issued a decision on the non-compliance of Libya with the Court on the case against Qaddafi, by which the matter was referred back to the Council. Although the ICC decision was noted in resolution 2213, so far the Council has failed to follow up on this issue and has not met to discuss

it. On 30 July ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda requested that the Pre-Trial Chamber I order Libya to refrain from carrying out Qaddafi's sentence, surrender him to the Court and inform the Council of the death sentence.

Sanctions-Related Developments

León has repeatedly emphasised the usefulness of sanctions to target hardliners and advance the political process, but a proposal by France, Spain, the UK and the US to impose sanctions (travel ban and asset freeze) on two individuals affiliated with each of the warring coalitions was put on hold by Russia and China in early June. Following the initialling of the agreement, it seems some Council members questioned the appropriateness of targeting hardliners from both sides and promoted targeting only the GNC side (even though Haftar has also rejected the agreement). In his 15 July briefing to the Council, León warned that “spoilers should be held accountable because they bear the responsibility of hindering the political agreement”.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 18 August, the spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Rupert Colville, issued a statement that expressed concern over recent events in Sirte involving militants claiming allegiance to ISIS. The statement said that residents told the human rights division of UNSMIL that most civilians had fled the area where fighting was taking place by the morning of 13 August. The district was reportedly indiscriminately shelled by ISIS forces during the fighting. The total number of fatalities was not known at the time of the statement, but unconfirmed estimates received by UNSMIL range between four and 38. The statement also called for individuals, groups and organisations to submit information relevant to the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' investigation on Libya, which was established through Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution 28/30 adopted on 27 March. The resolution asked the High Commissioner to dispatch a mission to “investigate violations and abuses of international human rights law that have been committed in Libya since the beginning of 2014, and to establish the facts and circumstances of such abuses and violations, with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring full accountability”.

Key Issues

An overarching issue is isolating spoilers on both sides and maintaining the engagement of the parties that have not initialled the agreement in the negotiation of the annexes.

A key issue is ensuring that military actors are brought into the political process to address the implementation of the ceasefire

Libya (con't)

and other security arrangements provided for in the agreement. Stopping continual violations of international humanitarian law by the parties is a related issue.

The growing threat in Libya of terrorist groups with regional reach is an urgent issue.

Another urgent issue is ensuring support of all regional and international actors to the political dialogue in Libya.

Options

It is unlikely that there will be an agreement providing for a government of national accord signed by all parties by the time UNSMIL's renewal is due. In that case, an option for the Council could be to adopt a rollover resolution until an agreement is reached with language:

- calling on all parties to sign the agreement and to negotiate the annexes in good faith and in the spirit of compromise; and
- expressing concern about attacks on

civilians in Libya, including in Sirte, that can amount to international crimes.

If an agreement is signed by all parties, the Council could adopt a resolution modifying UNSMIL's mandate to ensure the implementation of the agreement in matters such as ceasefire monitoring, security arrangements and support to the government of national accord.

An additional option for the Council is to impose measures under resolution 2213 (travel ban and assets freeze) against spoilers. Council members could also hold an informal meeting to discuss how to proceed regarding Libya's failure to cooperate with the ICC in the light of Qaddafi's death sentence.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members generally support the mediation efforts by León and have repeatedly stated that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Libya. There is also a

feeling of urgency among Council members given the growing threat of ISIS in Libya and the October expiration of the mandate of the House that can further exacerbate divisions. Disagreements over how to support mediation efforts, including the use of UN sanctions, have hindered the Council's engagement on Libya. Discussions about sanctions on spoilers at the EU level and counter-terrorism initiatives by regional organisations (such as the EU and the Arab League) might well be a result of the Council's lack of leadership on this issue. After the initialling of the agreement, it took the Council four days to agree on a press statement welcoming this development because it was deadlocked in discussions about whether to refer to the agreement as "the Skhirat Agreement" (after the Moroccan town where it was initialled) and how to portray the role of governments of the region in support of the political process.

The UK is the penholder on Libya.

Syria

Expected Council Action

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

In addition, early in the month the Council is expected to exchange letters with the Secretary-General regarding the recommendations to establish a UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Key Recent Developments

The adoption of resolution 2235 on 7 August to establish the JIM followed almost four months of P5 negotiations, largely between Russia and the US. Recommendations for the JIM's establishment and operation were due by 27 August for the Council to respond to within five days. The JIM mandate will differ from the existing OPCW fact-finding mission in that the JIM is able to attribute responsibility for use of chemical weapons. The OPCW

fact-finding mission can only determine whether chemical weapons have been used. It has found that chlorine bombs have been dropped from helicopters, noting that only the government has aerial capacity and only rebel-held areas were targeted.

Regarding the military situation, aerial bombardment of eastern Ghouta outside Damascus by government forces significantly increased over the course of July and August to an almost daily rate. On 16 August, in one of the deadliest raids since the outbreak of the war, Syrian government warplanes carried out two air strikes (the second to target first responders) on a marketplace in Douma, a besieged area in eastern Ghouta, reportedly killing more than 100 people and injuring more than 200 others. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien was in the country at the time and said during a press conference in Damascus on 17 August that he was "particularly appalled" by the attack and "horrified by the total disrespect for civilian life".

Such attacks on civilians "are unlawful, unacceptable and must stop". After his return to New York, he briefed Council members on 19 August under "any other business" on the Douma attacks. O'Brien briefed the Council again on 27 August, presenting the Secretary-General's report that said indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks by all parties to the conflict, including through the use of barrel bombs and other explosive weapons in populated areas, remain by far the primary cause of civilian deaths and injuries.

On 27 August, a 48-hour ceasefire mediated by Iran and Turkey was declared between rebel forces and Syrian forces, including the government-allied Lebanese militia Hezbollah, in Zabadani (the last rebel-held town near the Lebanese border) and in a pair of Shi'ite Muslim villages in Idlib province. A similar ceasefire had collapsed earlier in the month—reportedly over proposed population transfers of Sunnis and Shias between the three towns, other reports have characterised this as "civilian evacuation".

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2235 (7 August 2015), S/RES/2209 (6 March 2015) and S/RES/2118 (27 September 2013) were on chemical weapons. S/RES/2191 (17 December 2014), S/RES/2165 (14 July 2014) and S/RES/2139 (22 February 2014) were on the humanitarian situation. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/15 (17 August 2015) expressed support for UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7513 (27 August 2015) was on the humanitarian situation. S/PV.7504 (17 August 2015) was Venezuela's disassociation from the presidential statement expressing support for UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. Secretary-General's Reports S/2015/651 (20 August 2015) was on the humanitarian situation. S/2015/572 (28 July 2015) was on chemical weapons.

Syria (con't)

Following Turkey's agreement to allow the US to use the Incirlik airbase last month, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) has taken control of more territory in northern Syria bordering Turkey where the US-led coalition is planning for an "ISIS-free zone"—in particular near rebel-held Marea where ISIS has reportedly launched shells laced with chemical agents against civilians on 21 August. On 23 August, the US and Turkey concluded talks on the launch of joint air operations to flush ISIS fighters from this zone. For the anti-ISIS coalition this operation has the potential to cut ISIS's supply routes and transit points for foreign fighters across the Turkish border. For Turkey, it has the added benefit of blocking Kurdish control of contiguous areas in Syria along its border. While Kurdish forces have been instrumental allies in the anti-ISIS fight in Syria, the US and Turkey have agreed they will not have a role in the "ISIS-free zone". To date Turkey's focus on anti-ISIS strikes has been limited in comparison to its strikes against the Kurdistan Workers' Party in northern Iraq.

On the political track, the Council adopted a presidential statement on 17 August expressing its support for the work of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, in particular the approach he presented to the Council on 29 July for his office to facilitate intra-Syrian working groups to address ways to implement key elements of the Geneva Communiqué. (The Geneva Communiqué is political transition plan agreed in June 2012 that has been continually stymied over the role of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.) The working groups are expected to start discussions in September with the aim of generating a "Syrian-owned framework document" on the implementation of the Geneva Communiqué, in particular to lead to the establishment of a transitional governing body. However, the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) has already expressed reservations, saying that de Mistura's plan is not sufficient to address the need for a transitional government. On 25 August, Assad characterised de Mistura as biased. In response to remarks made by US President Barack Obama on 5 August that "Russia and Iran recognise that the trend lines are not good for Assad," he added that he was confident of Iran and Russia's ongoing support.

The recent agreement between the US

and Russia on Syria-related outcomes in the Council in August came amid a flurry of diplomacy surrounding the conflict. On 3 August, US Secretary of State John Kerry, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met in Doha, Qatar, and, according to media reports, acknowledged the need for a political solution and the important role to be played by opposition groups in reaching that solution. A newly appointed US Special Envoy for Syria met with officials in Moscow and Riyadh in late August and also travelled to Geneva to meet with de Mistura.

Meanwhile, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moualem travelled to Tehran on 4 August for meetings with Iranian and Russian officials; during the visit, he said that efforts to fight ISIS should be coordinated with the Assad regime. On 5 August, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian announced that Iran would present a peace plan for Syria to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon after detailed discussions between Tehran and Damascus are completed. The plan will reportedly be based on a four-point initiative presented to the UN last year by Iran calling for an immediate ceasefire, formation of a national unity government, constitutional protection for minorities and supervised elections. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with Assad in Damascus on 12 August to discuss the proposal. On 14 August, at the invitation of Russia, the head of the SNC, Khaled Khoja, held talks with Lavrov in Moscow, where, according to media reports, Khaled insisted Assad must go.

On 24 August, Chile and the US organised an Arrria-formula meeting on ISIS's targeting of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons, as part of ISIS's ongoing track record of deliberately targeting minorities and vulnerable populations. Earlier in the month ISIS had kidnapped 230 Christians from Homs.

Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura briefed Council members on 25 August on her 16–29 April visit to the Middle East, including to Syria where, she said, sexual violence is being committed strategically, in a widespread and systematic manner, and with a high degree of sophistication by most parties to the conflict in Syria—both state and non-state actors.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 24 August, the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee met to discuss the report of its Monitoring Team on the implementation of resolution 2199 on how illegal oil exporting, traffic of cultural heritage, ransom payments and external donations support the operational capacity of ISIS and Al-Nusra. The report suggests that the measures tackling illegal oil trade have so far had a limited impact, given the ability of ISIS to extract benefits at the different stages of the value chain, from selling crude oil at the well-head to levying fees at checkpoints, exchanging crude oil for refined products and selling the latter to the local population. Some humanitarian actors, such as OCHA, have raised concerns regarding the unintended consequences for the local population of some of these measures, including the reluctance of some humanitarian organisations to operate in those contexts, given fears of legal consequences in case of an inadvertent diversion of humanitarian supplies to a listed entity.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 18 August, the spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement on the 16 August Douma attack which emphasised that any intentional direct attack on civilians or civilian objects and the use of indiscriminate weapons in densely populated areas are serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and may amount to war crimes for which individuals can be held criminally responsible. The statement reiterated a call to the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC. The Human Rights Council considered the tenth report of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria (A/HRC/30/48) during its 30th session.

Key Issues

The main issue for the Council—in the fifth year of a war that has exacted a death toll of 250,000, injured one million and displaced half of the Syrian population—is to find ways to exert effective leadership, particularly in supporting a cessation of violence and resuscitating efforts for a political solution.

Ongoing issues include how to get agreement to follow up on the violations of resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 on the humanitarian situation—in particular, aerial bombardment.

Options

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

Syria (con't)

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

The recent cooperation and apparent show of unanimity on Syria amongst the P5 in August, with the adoptions of a resolution on the chemical weapons track and presidential statement on the political track, in tandem with the successful conclusion of the Iran nuclear deal, may open space for Council members to move forward on a range of other initiatives. This could include a resolution drafted by France and the UK on indiscriminate attacks, including the government's use of barrel bombs.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Despite overwhelming indications that various resolutions threatening consequences for

lack of implementation have continually been 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 such action specific to the government remains a deterrent.

The great majority of Council members think that the UN-OPCW JIM has the potential to allow the Council to receive explicit information about the actors responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. However, none believe that this would be sufficient to bridge divisive Council dynamics in order to adopt the "further measures" that have been persistently threatened for non-compliance with Security Council resolutions, such as targeted sanctions or an arms embargo.

During negotiations on the presidential statement adopted on 17 August, Venezuela

broke silence, arguing that the language on the need for a political transition went beyond the Syrian constitution. (The Syrian constitution contains a number of clauses which could make it difficult for many opposition members to be part of a transition government.) After several days of negotiations between Venezuela and P5 members, the statement was adopted without Venezuela's proposed changes, but addressing the Council after the adoption, Venezuela dissociated itself from the consensus.

France is the penholder on Syria overall. Jordan, New Zealand and Spain lead on humanitarian issues. In practice, however, most texts are agreed between Russia and the US prior to seeking agreement by the broader Council.

Iran

Expected Council Action

In September, the chair of the 1737 Iran Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Román Oyarzun (Spain), is due to provide his quarterly briefing to the Council on the Committee's work. The 1737 Committee is also likely to meet earlier in the month ahead of this briefing.

Key Recent Developments

On 14 July, the P5, Germany, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Iran reached a deal on Iran's nuclear programme. In the agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran agreed to the establishment of an international monitoring and verification system to ensure the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. In exchange, the agreement will result in the eventual termination of Security Council sanctions and all other multilateral and bilateral sanctions.

These are the key provisions of the landmark agreement:

- Iran must remove two-thirds of its centrifuges to number no more than 6,104

for the next ten years, and over the next 15 years can only enrich uranium at its Natanz facility;

- Iran must reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98 percent, and this cap on its enriched uranium will remain in place for 15 years;
- Iran will convert the Fordow nuclear facility into a nuclear, physics, and technology centre and redesign the Arak heavy water reactor so it cannot produce weapons-grade plutonium for the next 15 years;
- Iran must provide to the IAEA information on possible military dimensions of its past nuclear program;
- a Joint Commission, comprising the members of the JCPOA (China, EU, France, Germany, Iran, Russia, UK and US) will be established to monitor the implementation of the agreement;
- the IAEA will monitor Iran's nuclear-related facilities and uranium ore production for 25 years, and can conduct inspections of suspicious off-site locations within 24 days of a request if a majority of Joint Commission members agree; and

- a "procurement channel" will be established to approve, on a case-by-case basis, the supply, sale, or transfer to Iran of certain nuclear-related and dual-use materials and technology.

The JCPOA also called for the adoption of a Council resolution endorsing the agreement, triggering its entry into effect within 90 days and beginning a process to end sanctions.

On 20 July, the Council adopted resolution 2231. According to the resolution:

- the Security Council sanctions regime, which includes the 1737 Sanctions Committee, will terminate once the Council receives an IAEA report confirming Iran's implementation of agreed nuclear-related measures set out in an annex to the JCPOA, including measures listed above (most estimates for the timeframe in which Iran can complete these tasks and the IAEA can verify compliance are 6 to 12 months);
- "restrictions" are established that maintain the embargo on conventional arms and ballistic missiles for an additional 5 to

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2231 (20 July 2015) endorsed the JCPOA and terminates the Iranian sanctions upon receiving an IAEA report verifying Iran's fulfilment of specific nuclear related-measures. Security Council Letter S/2015/538 (14 July 2015) expressed the intention of the P5, Germany and the EU to adopt a new resolution after ten years to extend the mechanism for automatically reactivating sanctions for five years.

Iran (con't)

8 years, respectively;

- a “snap-back” mechanism is created to automatically re-activate sanctions if it is believed Iran has significantly violated the agreement;
- the Council will forward member state proposals for exports related to Iran’s nuclear programme to the Joint Commission, and review its recommendations before the goods or service can be provided; and
- the provisions of the resolution will end ten years after the JCPOA’s entry into effect and “Non-proliferation”, the subject under which Iran is considered, will be removed from the Council agenda.

Despite the intention to terminate the resolution’s provisions in ten years, the P5, Germany and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy sent the Secretary-General a letter on 14 July stating they would seek a new Council resolution at that point. According to the letter, the new resolution would extend the mechanism for automatically re-activating the sanctions for a five-year period.

Resolution 2231 outlined how the “snap-back” mechanism for reactivating sanctions will function. Following a process to resolve concerns of Iranian non-compliance in the Joint Commission and between foreign ministers (detailed in the JCPOA), a member of the JCPOA, if still unsatisfied, can notify the Council that it believes there has been a significant issue of non-compliance. The sanctions automatically resume 30 days after this notification unless the Council adopts a resolution that continues the lifting of the sanctions. Such a resolution could thus be vetoed by any permanent member concerned about non-compliance.

Also on 20 July, the EU Foreign Affairs Council expressed its support for the JCPOA and resolution 2231. The 90-day period between the resolution’s adoption and the agreement’s entry into effect was created to allow the US congress time to review the deal. The agreement has set off a multi-million-dollar lobbying campaign for the US congress to reject the deal. US President Barack Obama said he would veto any resolution against the agreement. A two-thirds majority of US Senate members would be required to override a presidential veto.

On 21 July, Iran’s parliament also set

up a 15-member committee to review the nuclear deal, which has been criticised by Iranian conservatives as an affront to the country’s sovereignty.

On 12 August, a US State Department spokesperson said that a visit to Russia in late July by Major General Qassim Suleimani, the head of Iran’s Quds force, violated the Council’s travel ban. Suleimani was listed in 2007. The US said it would ask the Iran Sanctions Committee and its Panel of Experts to investigate the incident. Russia’s deputy foreign minister publicly denied the US claims.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 15 July, the Human Rights Council’s special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, called on the government of Iran and the international community to seize the opportunity created by the agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme to address the human rights situation in the country. In a statement, Shaheed cited the alarming surge in executions this past year, increasing restrictions on freedom of expression and peaceful assemblies, violations of women’s rights, discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities and the ongoing prosecution of journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders. The special rapporteur noted that the lifting of economic sanctions would have a beneficial effect on the human rights situation in the country, especially on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. He also renewed his call for the Iranian authorities to allow him to visit the country.

In a 5 August statement, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein expressed alarm at the imposition of the death penalty on Mohammad Ali Taheri, the founder of a spiritual movement, writer and practitioner of alternative medicine theories used in Iran and abroad. He said, for an individual to be sentenced to death for the peaceful exercise of freedom of expression, religion or belief it is an absolute outrage and a clear violation of international human rights law. Iran has reportedly executed more than 600 people so far this year.

On 14 August, Shaheed issued a joint statement with the special rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye, and Seong-Phil Hong, head of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, urging the Iranian government to immediately release Jason Rezaian, the Washington Post’s correspondent in Tehran. Iranian authorities detained Rezaian and his wife, Yeganeh Salehi, over a year ago, though she was subsequently released. According to the statement, Rezaian has been accused during closed proceedings of espionage, collaboration with hostile governments, gathering classified information and disseminating propaganda against Iran. Rezaian now awaits a verdict after his fourth and possibly final hearing. The statement noted

that Rezaian, who is being held at Evin Prison in Tehran, was placed in solitary confinement for five months and subjected to full-day interrogation sessions that caused significant physical and psychological strain. His case is seen as part of a broader crackdown on freedom of expression in Iran. The statement reminded the Iranian government of its responsibility to ensure that journalists do not face prosecution for exercising their professional activities.

Key Issues

The key issue will be the implications of the JCPOA and resolution 2231 for the 1737 Sanctions Committee and future work of the Council.

This includes preparations for the expected termination of the Committee and deciding on a mechanism to replace it in order to undertake the tasks that the resolution establishes for the Council, including monitoring and reviewing proposals related to nuclear-related exports to Iran, answering member states’ inquiries, providing guidance and examining information regarding alleged actions inconsistent with the resolution. In a joint statement, attached as an annex to resolution 2231, China, the EU, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the US propose that the Secretary-General report to the Council every six months on the implementation of the Joint Statement’s provisions. The Secretary-General is requested in the resolution to take administrative measures to facilitate communications between member states, the Council and the Joint Commission.

Options

One option is to establish, through the circulation of a letter, a Security Council expert-level working group for the consideration of Iranian issues, with one member serving as its coordinator.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Resolution 2231 was prepared in Vienna during the negotiations on the JCPOA between the P5, Germany, Iran and the EU. Elected members have been very supportive of the agreement, and when the draft resolution was presented to the Council, they supported the text and recognised the difficulties that would have been posed by opening up the draft for negotiation.

During the negotiation on the JCPOA, it was apparently very important for Iran that

Iran (con't)

the deal represent an end to the sanctions and reflect a new relationship with the international community, no longer portraying it as a problem on the Council's agenda. Iran was adamant that a sanctions committee should no longer exist. The US, which is the penholder on Iran, is in the lead on developing a mechanism that can still enable the Council to carry out the tasks given to it in resolution

2231. To a great extent, functions that are characteristic of a sanctions committee will be performed by the Joint Commission and its Working Group on Procurement.

Regarding the opposition to the JCPOA, if the US congress overrides a presidential veto (considered unlikely), the Iran sanctions regime would still likely come apart as European countries, Russia and China would

probably move forward with lifting sanctions. Israel has continued to heavily criticise the agreement, described by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a "historic mistake". Gulf Cooperation Council members, despite their concerns, issued a joint statement with the US on 3 August expressing support for the agreement.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council will hold its quarterly debate on Afghanistan, during which it will consider the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Nicholas Haysom, the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Afghanistan and head of UNAMA, is expected to brief. No outcome is anticipated.

UNAMA's mandate expires on 17 March 2016.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Afghanistan remains unstable. Recent months have been marred by heavy fighting between government and Taliban forces, with the Taliban expanding its attacks into northern areas of the country. In Nangarhar province, located in eastern Afghanistan and bordering Pakistan, skirmishes have been reported between Taliban fighters and Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) militants.

Some experts have pointed to improvements in the performance of Afghan security forces, but it has come at a heavy price. On 22 July, The New York Times reported that approximately 4,100 Afghan police and military had been killed and roughly 7,800 injured in the first six months of 2015; this outpaces the high casualty rates among Afghan security forces in 2014, as approximately 5,000 Afghan police and military forces were killed during that entire year.

Civilians continue to suffer greatly in the conflict. In August, a spate of attacks by anti-government forces led to large numbers of

civilian casualties in Kabul and elsewhere. In Kabul, more than 40 people were killed and over 300 wounded on 7 August in three separate attacks. On the following day, UNAMA noted in a press statement that these casualty figures represented "the highest number of civilians killed and injured in one day since [UNAMA] began systematically recording civilian casualties in 2009". On 9 August, Security Council members issued a press statement strongly condemning these and other recent attacks in Kabul. On 10 August, a suicide bombing by the Taliban near the Kabul international airport killed five civilians and injured 16 more.

Fighting continues between government forces and insurgents in the northern province of Kunduz. On 8 August, a Taliban suicide bomber reportedly killed at least 29 people there; those targeted were apparently part of a pro-government militia.

The large number of violent attacks in August orchestrated by anti-government forces followed closely on the heels of the Taliban's 28 July announcement that Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour had been selected as the group's new leader by its leadership council. Mansour's appointment came only two days after the Afghan government declared that Mullah Omar, the Taliban's long-time leader, had been dead since 2013. Maulavi Haibatullah Akhonzada and Mullah Sirajuddin Haqqani—two members of the Haqqani network, a Pakistan-based branch of the Taliban—were chosen as Mansour's deputies, reportedly in an effort to balance the leadership among

different parts of the Taliban. According to media reports, there may be dissension over Mullah Mansour's selection among some influential Taliban figures.

Initial peace talks took place between representatives of the government and the Taliban in Murree, Pakistan, on 7 July. Media reports indicated that officials from China, Pakistan and the US were present at the 7 July meeting, which was welcomed by Council members in a 10 July press statement. A subsequent meeting between the parties was scheduled for 27 July but was suspended at the request of the Taliban after Mullah Omar's death became public. New Taliban leader Mullah Mansour has reportedly rejected the idea of negotiations with the government.

Following the numerous deadly bombings in Kabul, President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan said in a press conference on 10 August that terrorists continued to use Pakistan as a base to prepare for and launch attacks on Afghanistan. "The last few days have shown that suicide-bomber training camps and bomb-producing factories which are killing our people are as active as before in Pakistan", he said. Pakistan's Foreign Office reportedly condemned the violence in Kabul and expressed support for Afghanistan.

In recent months, the role of ISIS in Afghanistan has become more pronounced. On 18 April, an ISIS suicide bomber attacked a bank in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, killing at least 35 people and wounding more than 100. In April, media reports indicated that the Taliban and ISIS

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2210 (16 March 2015) renewed the mandate of UNAMA for one year. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7467** (22 June 2015) was a quarterly UNAMA debate. **Security Council Press Statements SC/12003** (9 August 2015) condemned the series of attacks in Kabul, at least two of them claimed by the Taliban. **SC/11967** (10 July 2015) welcomed the 7 July meeting between the government of Afghanistan and Taliban representatives in Murree, Pakistan. **SC/11937** (22 June 2015) condemned the attack by the Taliban on the parliament in Kabul. **Secretary-General's Report S/2015/422** (10 June 2015) was on Afghanistan.

Afghanistan (con't)

had declared war on each other. In early June, at least ten Taliban fighters were captured and beheaded by ISIS members in Nangarhar after they had retreated from a skirmish with Afghan security forces. On 10 August, ISIS released a video in which ten men, allegedly supporters of the Taliban, were executed when they were made to sit on top of bombs that were then detonated.

On the political front, President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah announced 16 ministerial nominees on 21 March. The nominees were subsequently confirmed by the Wolesi Jirga (the lower house of parliament) and were sworn in on 21 April. Seven months after Ghani and Abdullah's agreement to establish a power-sharing national unity government, the appointments represented the near-completion of their cabinet, which now comprises 24 ministers. On 21 May, President Ghani nominated Mohammed Masoom Stanekzai as defence minister, the last outstanding appointment; however, on 4 July, Stanekzai did not obtain the parliament's approval, failing to garner the requisite number of votes. At press time, the post had not been filled, although Stanekzai is serving as the acting defence minister.

Ghani issued two decrees in June and July on political matters. On 19 June, following postponement of parliamentary elections, Ghani extended the term of parliament, which would have expired on 21 June, until the elections are held; however, a new date for the postponed elections has yet to be determined. And in a 16 July decree, he authorised the appointment of 14 people to the Electoral System Reform Commission.

In keeping with resolution 2210 of 16 March renewing UNAMA's mandate, the role, structure and activities of all UN entities in Afghanistan are being examined by UNAMA and other UN entities, the Afghan government and international donors. (The Afghan government is represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance.) At press time, it remained unclear whether the examination would be completed within six months (i.e., by 16 September) as requested by resolution 2210.

The Council held its last quarterly debate on UNAMA on 22 June, with Special Representative Haysom briefing on the situation in Afghanistan and the UNAMA report. Haysom said that political progress had been

achieved with the appointment of cabinet members but expressed concern about the challenging security situation. He said there is "considerable concern" that ISIS "is seeking to establish a foothold" in Afghanistan. In a 22 June press statement, Council members condemned the terrorist attack by the Taliban on the parliament in Kabul earlier in the day.

Sanctions-Related Developments

Members of the 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee received the sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team on 1 June. The report apparently described a military impasse on the ground. It reportedly underscored the importance of ongoing external financial assistance to Afghan security forces and of Afghan public confidence in governing institutions in order to promote peace and security in the country. On 24 July, the Committee adopted a position paper on the report's recommendations. It decided to accept the report's recommendation that on an annual basis (starting from July 2015), member states will be informed of any updates to "special notices" on designated individuals. It further accepted the recommendation that the Committee be briefed by the command of the Combined Maritime Taskforce 150 (a multinational taskforce of 30 member states fostering maritime security), representatives from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (an inter-governmental body including China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan that promotes economic, political and security cooperation among its members) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (an organisation that includes Russia and several post-Soviet states with the goal of addressing mutual security challenges) on their counter-narcotics activities related to the Taliban.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The 2015 Mid-year Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, prepared by UNAMA and the UN Human Rights Office, documented 4,921 civilian casualties (1,592 deaths and 3,329 injured) in the first half of 2015. This rise mainly stemmed from an increase in complex and suicide attacks and a rise in targeted and deliberate killings. Anti-government elements continued to cause the most harm, accounting for 70 percent of civilian casualties. The report attributes 16 percent of total civilian casualties to pro-government forces (15 percent to Afghan National Security Forces and pro-government armed groups and 1 percent to international military forces). The report notes with concern that this is a 60 percent increase in civilian casualties caused by pro-government forces compared to the same period in 2014. In the first six months of 2015, UNAMA documented a 23 percent increase in women casualties and a 13 percent increase in children casualties. The report outlines key steps to be taken by parties

to the conflict to mitigate casualties and protect civilians from harm.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is the deteriorating security situation and its negative impact on the country's security forces and on the civilian population.

Another important issue is whether the reconciliation process can gain any momentum. Some viewed the 7 July meeting in Murree, Pakistan, as an encouraging first step, but the terrorist attacks following the appointment of Mullah Mansour as head of the Taliban have dampened optimism about progress on reconciliation issues. There is speculation that internal divisions within the Taliban could further complicate the peace process.

How the Council chooses to approach the results of the examination of the role, structure and activities of all UN entities in Afghanistan—which may be completed in time for Haysom's briefing in September—is another important matter for its consideration.

Options

One option for the Council would be to issue a statement condemning the high number of civilian casualties and demanding that all sides avoid killing and injuring civilians, while recalling that targeting civilians is a war crime.

The Council could also call for a briefing specifically on the security situation, given the high rate of casualties among both civilians and Afghan security forces and the increasing involvement of ISIS in Afghanistan in recent months.

Another option would be to consider changing the format of the Council's treatment of Afghanistan to a briefing and consultations, which may allow for more frank dialogue and interaction among members than is possible in the current debate format.

Council Dynamics

Council members have been encouraged by the progress made by Afghanistan in forming a government of national unity this year. Nonetheless, there is widespread concern about the deteriorating security situation in the country. Council members frequently reiterate their condemnation of acts of violence by the Taliban and state their distress at the heavy toll that the conflict continues to take on civilians. In the last UNAMA debate,

Afghanistan (con't)

some members alluded to the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and the presence of ISIS in Afghanistan. In large part because of its proximity to Afghanistan, Russia has been particularly vocal about the potential for regional insecurity posed by an unstable Afghanistan.

Russia and France consistently emphasise the negative security implications of Afghan drug production and trafficking, although other members have noted this challenge as well.

The US and China, whose restive Xinjiang province shares a border with Afghanistan, have tried to play a supportive role in

the mediation process, as reflected by their presence at the 7 July meeting.

Spain is the penholder on Afghanistan, while New Zealand is the chair of the 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee.

Sudan and South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In September, Council members will hold consultations on the implementation of resolution 2046 on Sudan/South Sudan issues, as well as on the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Haile Menkerios, the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, is expected to brief on developments, while Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, is likely to brief on UNISFA's activities.

UNISFA's mandate expires on 15 December.

Key Recent Developments

In recent months, Sudan and South Sudan have not made progress in addressing unresolved issues—including the determination of the centre line of the Safe Demilitarised Border Zone (SDBZ) along the Sudan-South Sudan border, the full implementation of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), demarcation of the mutual border, the establishment of temporary administrative units in the disputed Abyei area and the final status of the area. Both Sudan and South Sudan continue to accuse each other of backing rebels on their respective sides of the border—allegations denied by both governments.

The humanitarian situation in Sudan and South Sudan remains troubling. As of December 2014, approximately 3.1 million people were internally displaced in Sudan. The UN Children's Fund recently estimated that "some two million children under age five suffer from chronic malnutrition." In South Sudan, 1.6 million people are internally displaced, while 4.6 million people suffer from severe food insecurity. More than

600,000 South Sudanese have fled to neighbouring countries since the start of the civil war in December 2013, including approximately 189,000 now living in Sudan.

On 5 July, Sudan, South Sudan and the World Food Programme extended for six months the memorandum of understanding allowing humanitarian aid to be delivered through Sudan to South Sudan. Between June 2014 and June 2015, 20,000 tons of food had been delivered to South Sudan through this mechanism.

Little progress has been made on Sudan's internal peace process. On 3 August, Thabo Mbeki, chair of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel, met with President Omar al-Bashir to discuss intra-Sudan peace talks. While Bashir expressed willingness to reach a negotiated settlement to the fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, no concrete date for resuming peace talks with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) was set. On 6 August, the SPLM-N reiterated its perspective that any framework for negotiations needs to be part of an inclusive, national process—i.e., not just focused on South Kordofan and Blue Nile—leading to Sudan's democratic transformation.

Bashir chaired a 5 August meeting of the "national dialogue committee", in which plans were proposed to launch Sudan's national dialogue on 10 October. Opposition parties and rebel groups have expressed significant reservations about the government's commitment to genuine "national dialogue", given ongoing government repression including the arrest of key opposition figures. On 5 August, Sadiq al-Mahdi, head of the opposition National Umma Party, called for the initial stages of the national dialogue to take

place outside Sudan, apparently so the process cannot be manipulated by the ruling National Congress Party.

Council members were briefed on Sudan/South Sudan issues and UNISFA on 8 July. During the meeting, Menkerios referred to accusations by Sudan and South Sudan that each was harbouring rebels on the other side of their mutual border. He further noted that there had been reports of increased fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. On Abyei, Haile Tilahun Gebremariam, the head of UNISFA, observed that Sudan and South Sudan had exhibited a lack of will regarding the implementation of the JBVMM, which UNISFA is mandated to support.

On 31 July, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) adopted a communiqué (PSC/PR/COMM.2 [DXXIX]) on Abyei. The communiqué expressed disappointment with the "indefinite postponement" of the meeting between traditional leaders of the Ngok-Dinka and the Misseriya communities, which had been planned for 20-24 June with the goal of promoting reconciliation between the two communities and fostering stability in Abyei. It called for the expeditious establishment of temporary administrative and security institutions in Abyei, which the UN Security Council has demanded in numerous resolutions. The PSC requested in the communiqué that the investigation committee created "to investigate the killing of [Ngok-Dinka paramount] Chief Kuol Deng Kuol and UNISFA personnel on 4 May 2013" submit its report to the PSC by September. (Kuol's killing by a Misseriya gunman exacerbated tensions between the Ngok-Dinka and the Misseriya in Abyei. The

Sudan and South Sudan (con't)

Ngok-Dinka have long called for the findings of the investigatory committee—which included representatives of the UN, the AU and the governments of Sudan and South Sudan—to be made public. It appears that the delay in releasing the report has fuelled reluctance from some in the Ngok-Dinka community to participate in a meeting of traditional leaders.)

Key Issues

Given the turmoil in both Sudan and South Sudan, a key question is whether these countries are in a position to work toward a resolution of their outstanding differences at the current time. Following the cancellation of a meeting scheduled for 24 August, the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) has not convened in more than two years.

The future of the JBVMM is another important matter for the Council, as UNISFA is authorised to support this mechanism. In resolution 2230, which renewed UNISFA's mandate until 15 December, the Council took note of “the Secretary-General's recommendations [in his last UNISFA report] that continued investment in achieving full operational capability of JBVMM should be based on a set of conditions, including resolution of the dispute over SDBZ, resumption of border-demarcation discussions, occurrence of regular meetings of the JPSM and granting of full freedom of movement”. The ineffectiveness of the JBVMM is reflected in continued reports that Sudan and South Sudan support rebels on the other side of their mutual border.

An ongoing issue for the Council is the

violence against civilians and the humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. In July, Amnesty International released a report, titled *Don't We Matter? Four Years of Unrelenting Attacks Against Civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan State*, in which it said that between January and April 2015, the Sudanese Air Force dropped an estimated 374 Antonov, MiG and Sukhoi bombs in 60 locations across South Kordofan. “The aerial bombardments and ground shelling resulted in the deaths of an estimated 35 civilians and injured a further 70 individuals”, the report said. It pointed to high levels of food insecurity in parts of South Kordofan under the control of the SPLM-N because of restrictions on humanitarian access imposed by the government.

Options

Options for the Council include:

- requesting a report from the Secretariat on alleged support by Sudan and South Sudan for rebel groups on either side of the border;
- holding an Arria-formula meeting open to the wider UN membership and NGOs on the humanitarian situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile to ensure that attention on this issue does not wane;
- establishing a commission of inquiry to investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in South Kordofan and Blue Nile;
- imposing an arms embargo on these two areas; and
- adopting a statement urging Sudan and

South Sudan to recommence JPSM meetings on a consistent basis to address their dispute over the centre line of the SDBZ and border demarcation, among other matters.

Council Dynamics

Most Council members remain frustrated that Sudan and South Sudan, engaged in their respective domestic crises, have made little headway in addressing issues of mutual concern, such as border demarcation, the establishment of temporary administrative units in Abyei and the final status of the region. Concerns expressed by some members when UNISFA was first established in 2011 that the mission could have a front row seat to a “frozen conflict” grow in relevance with each passing mandate cycle. UNISFA was intended to be an interim force, which would create space for negotiations to resolve outstanding issues, but the negotiations have not had success.

Divisions within the Council continue to prevent it from playing a constructive role in alleviating the suffering of civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Some members, most notably the US, have expressed strong concerns about violence against civilians committed by government forces and the dire humanitarian situation in these two areas, while other members, particularly Russia, have asserted Sudan's sovereign right to defend itself against rebels.

The US is the penholder on Sudan/South Sudan and UNISFA.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

Expected Council Action

In September, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) will brief Council members in consultations on the report on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), due 11 September. No outcome is expected.

UNDOF was established in 1974 to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria. Its

mandate expires on 31 December.

Key Recent Developments

The spillover of the Syrian civil war into UNDOF's area of operations has significantly affected the way the mission carries out its mandate. In September 2014, after Al-Qaida affiliated Al-Nusra Front overran Syrian government forces in Quneitra (a Syrian district

close to the Israeli-occupied Golan), the majority of UNDOF peacekeepers relocated from the Bravo (Syrian) side to the Alpha (Israeli) side of the ceasefire line. A small number of peacekeepers are still deployed on the Syrian side on Mt. Hermon, and UNDOF command has moved to Damascus.

The 3 June UNDOF report noted continuous incidents of artillery fire from both

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNDOF Security Council Resolution S/RES/2229 (29 June 2015) renewed UNDOF. Secretary-General's Report S/2015/405 (3 June 2015) was the UNDOF report. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7464 (17 June 2015) was on peacekeeping operations.

UNDOF (Golan Heights) (con't)

sides across the ceasefire line. The report also noted that Syrian armed forces and opposition armed groups have been increasingly using more heavy weapons, while the Syrian government has also employed air power in the area of limitation on the Bravo side.

Other challenges faced by UNDOF were highlighted during the 17 June briefing on UN peacekeeping operations. Major General Michael Finn (Ireland)—who heads the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), whose observers are attached to UNDOF—was a briefer. In the case of UNDOF, the crisis in Syria and its spread to the Golan have heightened the security concerns of troop-contributing countries (TCCs); almost half of UNTSO's 25 TCCs have imposed caveats that restrict where their observers can be deployed. Caveats have had a profound impact on UNDOF, especially since September 2014, when the majority of the peacekeepers were redeployed to the Israeli side of the ceasefire line due to security concerns. Though UNDOF is a Syria-based mission, currently there is only a small contingent of Nepalese peacekeepers still stationed on the Syrian side on Mt. Hermon. Current circumstances limiting UNDOF's performance could trigger a discussion about a possible reconfiguration of the mission during the next renewal in December.

Heavy fighting has continued in Quneitra province. UNDOF has been particularly concerned regarding the situation of the Syrian Druze village of Hader, located near the ceasefire line. The Druze are a religious minority in Syria who have been generally supportive of the Syrian regime. However, the regime has withdrawn its forces from Druze areas over the past several months, and by mid-June, Al Nusra took control of some of these military positions around Hader, effectively putting the village under siege. There are growing fears that the fall of Hader might result in mass killings of the Druze population.

On 22 June, more than 100 Druze residing in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights attacked an Israeli military ambulance carrying injured Syrians near Majdal Shams on the Israeli side. Druze demonstrators claimed that the injured Syrians were members of Al-Nusra fighting against the Druze community on the Syrian side of the Golan. Following this incident, Israel announced it

would no longer allow wounded Al-Nusra members across the ceasefire line for medical treatment.

For more than a year UNDOF has observed the transfer of people and cargo trucks across the ceasefire line, as well as Israeli forces interacting with members of armed groups. Israel characterises these transfers and interactions as humanitarian in nature, while the Druze and the Tehran-backed Lebanese militia Hezbollah—also active in the Golan on behalf of the Syrian regime—suspect Israel of aiding Al-Nusra in the south. The forthcoming UNDOF report is expected to confirm that since Israel's announcement, UNDOF has observed a significant decrease in such activity.

On 29 July, media reports indicated that an Israeli drone targeted Hezbollah forces near Hader. Israel has maintained that it has a neutral policy vis-à-vis the Syrian crisis except where they detect a threat from Hezbollah.

Tensions in the Golan intensified on 20 August when four rockets were fired from Syria into the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Israeli airstrikes then targeted Syrian regime forces which Israel considers responsible for attacks launched from Syrian territory. The next day, Israel continued with the airstrikes, claiming to target Tehran-backed Palestinian militants of Islamic Jihad. Islamic Jihad denied involvement in the previous day's rocket attack. On 21 August, the Secretary-General called on all involved to exercise maximum restraint to prevent further escalation in the already tense regional environment.

Key Issues

The primary concern for the Council remains the spillover of the Syrian crisis into UNDOF's area of operations and increasing ceasefire violations that have the potential to escalate tensions, not only between Israel and Syria but also between Israel and Lebanon due to the overt presence of Hezbollah in the Golan.

Considering the deteriorating security situation in the Golan, the full return of UNDOF to the Syrian side seems unlikely in the foreseeable future, significantly constraining the mission's ability to carry out its monitoring tasks. In this respect, an issue for the Council is whether Israel should be asked to allow UNDOF more mobility for

its patrolling tasks on the Israeli side of the ceasefire line, especially access to hilltops to observe the area of operations.

With respect to risk mitigation, an issue is how the safety of the remaining peacekeepers on the Syrian side of the ceasefire line will be guaranteed. Mt. Hermon is strategically important to Israel, which could feel compelled to man the position itself if there were no UNDOF security presence there. This would be an especially difficult challenge to regional security and the 1974 disengagement agreement.

Options

UNDOF was established as a Syria-based mission, and how it operates is subject to the 1974 disengagement agreement. Any changes require agreement by Israel and Syria. The mission's mobility and operational capacity has been restricted because the majority of personnel are now based on the Alpha (Israeli) side. Considering these circumstances on the ground, the Council could start looking ahead and consider possible mandate changes during December's renewal.

At the moment the Council could adopt a statement that would:

- support DPKO's efforts;
- reiterate the need for restraint by all parties;
- urge Israel to allow UNDOF to establish more positions west of the ceasefire line on the Alpha side, given the mission's limited mobility there, in particular access to elevated sites for improved observation; and
- urge Syria to allow UNDOF to reinforce Mt. Hermon, in particular by enabling the position to be supplied from the Bravo side by establishing another base between Damascus and Mt. Hermon.

Council Dynamics

Council members are concerned about the increasing clashes in UNDOF's area of operations and the tension between Israel and Syria along the armistice line, which has been exacerbated by the presence of Hezbollah militia forces.

The Council has always generally agreed that UNDOF contributes to stability in the region, considering the absence of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria. Nonetheless, its function is notably more important now in order to avoid further negative

UNDOF (Golan Heights) (con't)

security implications for the region. For that reason, most Council members are keen to maintain good relationships with troop-contributing countries to ensure UNDOF's

ability to operate, even in its currently constrained configuration.

Though the US is the penholder on the Golan Heights, resolutions renewing

UNDOF have been jointly authored with Russia since June 2012, suggesting consensus on an aspect of the Syria file that is otherwise defined by highly divisive P5 dynamics.

Counter-Terrorism

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council is expected to hold a ministerial-level open debate on the settlement of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and countering the terrorist threat in the region. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is expected to brief the Council and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is likely to preside. A presidential statement is expected as an outcome.

Background

The debate is expected to focus on the genesis of the terrorist threat in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as how existing conflicts contribute to a narrative exploited by violent extremism.

The Council has often failed to analyse and then to tackle root causes of conflicts, mostly because of political sensitivities. In different contexts the Council has discussed structural issues conducive to the growth of the terrorist threat, such as the porous nature of some borders, socio-economic exclusion and the availability of weapons. These are often combined with narratives that tap into existing grievances, identify a common enemy and reinforce the definition of identities that promote violent extremism and are disseminated widely by social media. At a 14 September 2005 summit-level meeting, the Council adopted resolution 1624 which called upon member states to prohibit by law the incitement to commit a terrorist act. Since then, language on countering violent extremism has been included in several resolutions, among them resolution 2178, adopted on 24 September 2014 under Chapter VII, which encouraged member states “to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter

the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts [and] address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism”. As a follow-up to a Summit on Countering Violent Extremism held at the White House in February, US President Barack Obama is expected to chair an event on this same topic in the margins of the UN General Assembly High-Level Segment.

On 19 December 2000, the Council adopted resolution 1333, which extended an assets freeze originally imposed on the Taliban to also target Usama bin Laden and individuals and entities associated with him, including those in Al-Qaida. For more than 15 years, efforts by the Council to disrupt the activities of individuals and entities affiliated with Al-Qaida by targeting their sources of revenue have been ongoing. The most recent of these initiatives was also led by Russia and resulted in the Council adopting resolution 2199 on 12 February. The resolution focused on how the illegal exporting of oil, traffic of cultural heritage, ransom payments and external donations increase the operational capacity of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and Al-Nusra Front. According to this resolution, member states are required to report to the 1267/1989 Committee within 30 days any interdiction in their territory of assets being smuggled from or to ISIS- or Al-Nusra-controlled territories that would result in violations of the already existing measures (asset freeze and arms embargo). Despite the focus of many member states on financial assets and financial institutions when discussing the implementation of the assets freeze, the Council's definition of this obligation is much broader and includes freezing economic resources, including assets of every kind.

Noting with concern that ISIS and

Al-Nusra are generating income from engaging directly or indirectly in the looting and smuggling of cultural heritage items, resolution 2199 imposed a new legal obligation on member states to take appropriate steps to prevent the trade in Syrian cultural property and other items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific and religious importance illegally removed from Syria since 15 March 2011. The resolution also recalled the validity of a similar ban on antiquities illegally removed from Iraq since 6 August 1990.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is to assess the root causes and the regional dimension of terrorism in an effort to counter it more effectively.

Another relevant issue is to assess the implementation of obligations imposed by the Council on member states to curb the financing of different terrorist groups' affiliates and to enhance the Council's instruments to tackle the evolving nature of the terrorist threat.

Another key issue is to tackle violent extremism and radicalisation processes while maintaining full respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Options

The Council could adopt a presidential statement that:

- reiterates the Council's call on member states to provide alternative narratives to violent extremism;
- urges regional and international actors in the Middle East and North Africa to refrain from fuelling conflicts in the region in order to advance their own interest;
- calls on all member states to ensure overall implementation of the Council's

UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2161 (17 June 2014) renewed the measures targeting Al-Qaida-associated individuals and entities. S/RES/1373 (28 September 2001) obliged member states to freeze without delay funds and other financial assets or economic resources of persons who commit, or attempt to commit, terrorist acts. Sanctions Committee Documents S/2015/441 (16 June 2015) was the 17th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. S/2014/815 (13 November 2014) was a report of the Monitoring Team on the sources of ISIS and Al-Nusra Front's recruitment, funding and arms.

USEFUL ADDITIONAL RESOURCE *Financing of the terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant*, Financial Action Task Force, February 2015.

Counter-Terrorism (con't)

counter-terrorism framework, including the Al-Qaida sanctions regime, in order to address the evolving nature of the terrorist threat; and

- calls on member states to be mindful of the humanitarian impact of such sanctions on the civilian population.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Even though counter-terrorism continues to

be one of the issues generating unanimous support among Council members, the way in which the debate has been framed to focus on the root causes of the terrorist threat in the Middle East and North Africa might show clear divergences in how Council members assess the appearance of this phenomenon. Prior and current divisions among permanent members over Syria, Israel/Palestine, Libya or Yemen might feature in the debate.

Furthermore, countering violent extremism and tackling radicalisation through the internet and other electronic means have proven to be issues where there is a lack of a common vision regarding standards of respect for fundamental freedoms (such as freedom of speech and press) among Council members.

Guinea-Bissau

Expected Council Action

While no meetings are currently scheduled, according to the terms of resolution 2203, the Council may review in September the Guinea-Bissau sanctions regime and possibly adopt a resolution. The 2048 Guinea-Bissau sanctions regime is open-ended and the mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) expires on 29 February 2016.

Key Recent Developments

Guinea-Bissau experienced a political crisis in August as tensions persisted between President José Mário Vaz and Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira. The issue between the two leaders stemmed in part from differences over their interpretation of the constitution and the president's role in government decision-making. By early August, it became clear that Vaz intended to dissolve the government.

On 6 August, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon telephoned Vaz to urge restraint. Senegal's President Mackey Sall, who is also the current chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and Guinea-Conakry's President Alpha Condé met with Vaz in Dakar on 7 August to encourage him to back down from his plan to dissolve the government.

The political bureau of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), which is the party of both Vaz and Simões Pereira, convened a meeting

on 8 August about the crisis. A statement was issued that condemned Vaz's actions and warned of the possible withdrawal of confidence, which could trigger a "direct, political and judicial struggle for his removal". It called on Vaz to resume dialogue with other state figures, in particular Simões Pereira.

Despite these efforts, Vaz announced on 12 August that he had decided to dismiss the government. On 15 August, the PAIGC renominated Simões Pereira as prime minister. Vaz, however, proceeded to appoint and swear-in Baciro Djá, formerly a presidential adviser, as prime minister on 20 August. At a special session on 22 August, Guinea-Bissau's National Assembly issued a statement that "vehemently condemned" Djá's appointment, noting that he "was not proposed by the party which won the last legislative elections, in this case the PAIGC." Two days later, the National Assembly adopted a resolution stating it would pursue legal means, including through the Supreme Court, to depose Djá.

Amidst this crisis, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayé-Brook Zerihoun briefed Council members under "any other business" during consultations on 10 August. Council members subsequently issued a press statement on 12 August, just before Vaz's announcement. The statement welcomed the ongoing efforts of regional and international actors to encourage dialogue, in particular the efforts of Sall, Condé and Special Representative and head of UNIOGBIS Miguel Trovoada. In light of Vaz's decision to

dissolve the government, Zerihoun briefed Council members again in consultations on 14 August. Following this meeting, Council members issued a second press statement calling on leaders to seek dialogue and consensus, and underscoring the importance of the non-interference of security forces in the political situation.

At press time, the Council was scheduled to be briefed on 28 August by Trovoada on the Secretary-General's latest report on UNIOGBIS's activities and the situation in the country. Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota (Brazil), the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Guinea-Bissau country configuration, was also expected to brief.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 11 August, the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee was briefed by the Secretariat on the assessment it conducted, as mandated by resolution 2203, of progress in Guinea-Bissau since the restoration of constitutional order and recommendations on continuing the Guinea-Bissau sanctions regime. The Secretary-General's report concluded that the root causes of fragility still exist and recommended that the Council maintain the existing sanctions. The sanctions consist of a travel ban currently applied to 11 individuals involved in the 12 April 2012 coup. The Secretary-General noted that the sanctions can continue to have a deterrent effect on potential spoilers, while the criteria established by the Council to impose sanctions remain relevant.

The Secretary-General additionally recommended that the Council establish a two-person Panel of Experts to assist the 2048 Sanctions Committee (it is one of the three out of the 16 existing sanctions committees that does not have

UN DOCUMENTS ON GUINEA-BISSAU Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2203 (18 February 2015) renewed UNIOGBIS until 29 February 2016 and requested a review of the 2048 sanctions regime. S/RES/2048 (18 May 2012) imposed travel bans on coup leaders and set up a new sanctions committee. **Security Council Press Statements** SC/12007 (14 August 2015) called on leaders to seek dialogue and consensus in resolving the crisis and underscored the importance of the non-interference of security forces in the political situation. SC/12005 (12 August 2015) called on Guinea-Bissau's political leadership to resume dialogue. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.7514 (28 August 2015) was a briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2015/626 (13 August 2015) was a UNIOGBIS report. S/2015/619 (12 August 2015) was a set of recommendations on the sanctions regime.

Guinea-Bissau (con't)

a monitoring mechanism to assist it). For its mandate, he proposed the Panel could “identify those who meet the designation criteria for targeted measures” with “specific attention...to those who undermine the process of national dialogue and reconciliation, perpetrate acts of human rights violations, impede the security sector and judicial reform processes, undermine the process of State-building and peacebuilding through corruption and organised crime and misappropriate the country’s natural resources.”

He further recommended that the Council elaborate benchmarks for ending the sanctions and that the Committee review the current individuals who are designated to determine whether they still meet the designation criteria.

In making his recommendations, the Secretary-General stressed that the sanctions are widely regarded in Guinea-Bissau as the only serious existing measure of accountability against those who perpetrated the coup.

Key Issues

A key immediate issue is whether to adopt the Secretary-General’s recommendations.

A broader ongoing issue is supporting efforts to resolve the current political crisis and ensuring that the progress Guinea-Bissau has made since the restoration of constitutional order in 2014 is not lost.

Options

Regarding the sanctions review, the Council could adopt a resolution in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General that:

- maintains the sanctions and designation criteria against those who threaten the stability and constitutional order of Guinea-Bissau, while declaring its readiness to adopt additional sanctions measures and designations;
- establishes a panel of experts and benchmarks for lifting the sanctions; and
- requests the Committee to review currently designated individuals.

Another option is maintaining the sanctions regime in accordance with the Secretary-General’s recommendations without establishing a panel of experts. The Council could also decide not to take any action at this time.

Regarding the political crisis, a small Council mission could be dispatched to Guinea-Bissau to support UN and regional mediation efforts, stressing the need to resolve the current dispute through the creation of an inclusive government.

Council Dynamics

Earlier this year when the Council requested the Secretariat’s assessment on continuing the sanctions, a number of members seemed inclined to end the sanctions since their main purpose—to pressure the April 2012 coup leaders to bring about the restoration of constitutional order—had been achieved. The recent political crisis seems to have strengthened arguments that the

country’s continuing fragility, despite last year’s elections, makes the sanctions a valuable tool for deterring spoilers. In the Sanctions Committee’s 11 August meeting, no member expressed opposition to continuing the sanctions, and most seemed to support maintaining them. At press time, the level of support for establishing a panel of experts was unclear, though members have expressed interest in the Secretary-General’s proposals. Other considerations may be whether it would be more appropriate to follow up on his recommendations after the political crisis has subsided or, conversely, if acting upon the recommendations now could have a positive impact on the situation.

Regarding the political crisis, the Council often follows the lead of key regional actors when considering Guinea-Bissau. Both Nigeria, as a member of ECOWAS and main contributor to the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, and Angola, as a member of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, are keenly interested in developments in the country. Recently Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari appointed former president Olusegun Obasanjo as a special envoy to mediate in the crisis.

Nigeria is the penholder on Guinea-Bissau and the chair of the 2048 Sanctions Committee.

Mali

Expected Council Action

Even though no meetings are scheduled in September, Council members are expected to follow the situation in Mali closely in view of the ceasefire violations that took place in mid-August.

The mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) expires on 30 June 2016.

Key Recent Developments

On 20 June, the Coordination, a coalition of armed groups seeking autonomy for the north, signed the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, brokered by Algeria. Briefing the Council on 23 June, Special Representative for Mali Mongi Hamdi stated that “the Agreement is not peace itself, as peace cannot be decreed, but it establishes the conditions for building peace and lays out the best way to get there”.

On 29 June, the Council adopted resolution 2227 mandating MINUSMA to support the implementation of the Agreement as well as to support, monitor and supervise the implementation of the ceasefire arrangements and confidence-building measures, and to report to the Council on any violations of the ceasefire. The task of supporting the return of state authority throughout the country—which had been part of MINUSMA’s mandate since 2013 in spite

UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2227](#) (29 June 2015) renewed MINUSMA. [Secretary-General’s Report S/2015/426](#) (11 June 2015) was the latest Mali report. [Security Council Press Statements SC/11959](#) (2 July 2015) condemned the 2 July terrorist attack against MINUSMA in the region of Timbuktu, during which six Burkinabe peacekeepers were killed and others injured. [SC/11934](#) (18 June 2015) reiterated the support of Council members for the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and urged the Coordination and Platform armed groups to refrain from any action that could undermine the peace process. [SC/11914](#) (29 May 2015) deplored the 25 May shooting in Bamako, during which a Bangladeshi MINUSMA peacekeeper was killed and another injured, and condemned the 28 May explosion of a mine targeting a MINUSMA convoy, in which the force commander and police commissioner were present, which injured three peacekeepers. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7468](#) (23 June 2015) was a briefing on the 20 June signing of the peace agreement by the Coordination. [S/PV.7464](#) (17 June 2015) was a briefing by Ladsous and the heads of military components of peacekeeping operations.

Mali (con't)

of concerns that in the absence of a peace agreement it was in conflict with MINUSMA's good offices role—became part of the mandate to support the implementation of the Agreement. Following the recommendation of the Secretary-General, the resolution increased the authorised troop ceiling by 40 military personnel to 11,240, including, for the first time, at least 40 military observers in order to adequately monitor and supervise the ceasefire.

Even though the 11 June Secretary-General's report said that “the Council may wish to consider the introduction of sanctions against perpetrators of the ceasefire violations”, the resolution fell short of establishing a sanctions regime and instead expressed the Council's readiness “to consider targeted sanctions against those who take actions to obstruct or threaten the implementation of the Agreement, those who resume hostilities and violate the ceasefire, as well as those who attack and take actions to threaten MINUSMA”.

Despite the threat to impose sanctions, the first major ceasefire violations occurred in mid-August when the Groupe Autodéfense Touareg Imghad et Alliés (GATIA)—a member of the Platform coalition of armed groups closely aligned with the government—established new forward positions in areas of the Kidal region which under the ceasefire arrangements were under the control of the Coordination coalition of armed groups. This resulted in deadly clashes with Coordination forces and GATIA's takeover of the town of Anéfis. At the request of France, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous briefed Council members on 19 August under “any other business” on the ceasefire violations, describing the deployment of a joint observation and verification team to the north and the establishment of a security zone by MINUSMA around Kidal to prevent further ceasefire violations. In elements to the press issued after the meeting, Council members underscored their preparedness to adopt targeted sanctions against those who violate the ceasefire or threaten the implementation of the peace agreement. (For almost two months, and also in violation of existing ceasefire arrangements, GATIA had held the town of Ménaka, which it finally abandoned on 19 June, paving the way for the signing of the Agreement

by the Coordination, which had made this withdrawal a precondition for its signing.)

The implementation of other provisions of the Agreement has been hindered by difficulties in reaching agreement on the formation, membership and scope of mission of the Comité de Suivi de l'Accord, the main follow-up mechanism to the Agreement headed by Algeria, and its sub-committees. (One of the commitments made by the mediation team to the Coordination, which refused to initial and sign the Agreement for over two months, was to address the Coordination's concerns in the implementation phase.) On 23 August, the Coordination announced the suspension of its participation in the Comité until GATIA withdraws from Anéfis.

MINUSMA, its contractors and other international actors (including NGOs), continue to be targeted by Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist groups through improvised explosive devices (IED), ambushes, suicide bombings and other attacks. (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.) A terrorist attack on 2 July against MINUSMA in the region of Timbuktu left six Burkinabe peacekeepers dead and others injured. Attacks on 7 and 8 August in the Byblos hotel in Sévaré in central Mali resulted in 13 deaths, including four employees of a MINUSMA contractor, and left several injured.

The issue of asymmetric attacks suffered by peace operations has featured repeatedly in Council discussions. On 17 June, shortly before the Council renewed MINUSMA's mandate, members were briefed on the asymmetrical challenges facing MINUSMA by its force commander, Major General Michael Lollesgaard, during the annual briefing to the Council by force commanders. Lollesgaard emphasised how effective intelligence gathering and communication with the population constitute critical tasks for the success of the mission and called for enhanced training, especially counter-IED training, and improved logistics in hostile areas. On 31 July, the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations discussed the operational, political and financial implications of conducting a peace operation in Mali in a counter-terrorism environment; the discussion was

held at the initiative of Chad, the chair of the Working Group and MINUSMA's third largest troop contributor.

Since its establishment, MINUSMA's delay in reaching its full operational capability has been a source of concern to Council members, and resolution 2227 highlighted how MINUSMA's slow pace of deployment of personnel and equipment has seriously hindered its ability to fully implement its mandate. As of 31 July, 91 percent of MINUSMA's authorised uniformed personnel had been deployed. Council members have also discussed the limited capabilities of some of the battalions already deployed. According to the 11 June report, MINUSMA has put together temporary “survivability packages” to improve the operational status of some contingents until the unit requirements are met. In the longer term, the non-performing units are expected to be reviewed and replaced.

As a result of the relative improvement in the security situation in June and July, before major ceasefire violations, OCHA reported on the continued return home of internally displaced persons in the north and centre of the country, particularly Timbuktu and Mopti. As of 5 August, only 33 percent of Mali's \$377 million humanitarian appeal had been funded.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement released on 30 July, MINUSMA noted with concern that allegations of grave human rights violations and abuses attributable to elements of armed groups that have signed the Agreement have been recorded in several locations, in particular in the north. MINUSMA's human rights division has deployed missions on the ground to establish the facts and responsibility regarding violations, according to the statement.

On 11 August, the spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ravina Shamdasani, issued a statement expressing concern at the reported release on 16 July of detainees who were suspected of involvement in, or already formally charged with, serious crimes, including war crimes, terrorist acts and gross human rights violations. The statement also voiced concerns that further releases may be imminent. Any measure that would de facto amount to an amnesty would be contrary to international law, the statement argued, and in violation of the commitments by the parties to the Agreement. The statement also condemned the attacks in Sévaré. The statement pointed out that such attacks, which appear designed to provoke a state of terror and to intimidate, are in violation of national and international law, and it called

Mali (con't)

on the international community and neighbouring states to give all possible assistance to Mali in its ongoing efforts to restore peace, security and the full respect for human rights.

Key Issues

Preventing further escalation of violence by the warring parties and establishing accountability mechanisms for those violating the ceasefire is an imminent issue of concern for the Council.

An overarching issue is the slow and difficult implementation of the Agreement.

The marked increase in terrorist attacks and the deliberate targeting of MINUSMA, and thus addressing the safety concerns of troop- and police-contributing countries, are further key issues for the Council. The recent release from detention of alleged perpetrators of these attacks is a related concern.

Options

The Council could issue a statement that:

- calls on all parties to respect the ceasefire agreement, act with restraint and refrain from any further violence;
- urges the parties to act in good faith and

with the spirit of compromise in the discussions regarding the implementation of the Agreement;

- urges Malian authorities to ensure accountability for armed attacks against civilians;
- requests the Secretary-General to share the results of the investigation over the recent ceasefire violations; and
- reiterates the Council's support of Hamdi and MINUSMA's good offices mandate to encourage and support the full implementation of the Agreement.

The Council could also establish a sanctions regime to impose measures on those violating the ceasefire, whether directly or through proxies.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members' different perspectives over the appropriateness of imposing sanctions immediately after the signing of the Agreement by all parties framed the discussions over resolution 2227. Despite the Secretary-General's suggestion, the first draft circulated by France to all Council members did not include language establishing a new

sanctions regime. Also divisive was a reference to the impact of the stabilising effect of MINUSMA and the international presence in Mali in reducing the smuggling of migrants. Although MINUSMA's mandate does not include tackling organised crime, it seems some Council members were supportive of connecting a more stable environment created by MINUSMA to a reduction in the smuggling of migrants. Other Council members were opposed to making such a linkage, and in the end these references were deleted.

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

France is the penholder on Mali.

Notable Dates for September

REPORT DUE	REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN SEPTEMBER	REQUESTING DOCUMENT
12 August	SG report on Guinea-Bissau sanctions (S/2015/619)	S/RES/2203
14 August	SG report on UNMIL (Liberia) (S/2015/620)	S/RES/2190
26 August	OPCW report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (Syrian chemical weapons)	S/RES/2118
10 September	SG report on UNAMA (Afghanistan)	S/RES/2210
10 September	SG report on the humanitarian situation in Syria	S/RES/2139
11 September	SG report on UNDOF (Golan Heights)	S/RES/2229
11 September	SG report on UNISFA (Abyei)	S/RES/2230

MANDATES EXPIRE	RELEVANT DOCUMENT
9 September	Liberia sanctions S/RES/2188
15 September	UNSMIL (Libya) S/RES/2213
30 September	UNMIL (Liberia) S/RES/2190
9 October	1521 Liberia Panel of Experts (mandate expires in October but will be renewed in September) S/RES/2188

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