

Monthly Forecast

- 2 In Hindsight: Security Council Visiting Missions
- 3 Status Update since our February Forecast
- 5 DRC and the Great Lakes Region
- 7 DPRK (North Korea)
- 8 Libya
- 10 Syria
- 12 Afghanistan
- 13 Lebanon
- 15 Liberia
- 16 Haiti
- 18 Peacebuilding
- 19 Somalia
- 20 UNDOF (Golan Heights)
- 22 EU-UN Cooperation
- 24 Notable Dates

Overview

During its March presidency of the Security Council, Angola has organised a [ministerial-level open debate on the Great Lakes region](#) with a focus on natural resources as drivers of conflict and the wider relationship between development and security in the region. The Secretary-General, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the region and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security will brief and the foreign ministers of Burundi, the CAR and the DRC are expected to participate. The ministerial-level meeting comes in the same month as the Council's consideration of the report on the implementation of the [DRC's Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement](#) as well as the [renewal of MONUSCO](#).

Angola has two further initiatives this month: an open debate on the [role of women in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa](#), and an Arria-formula meeting on [food security in Africa](#).

In early March, Council members will undertake a [visiting mission](#) to Mali, Guinea-Bissau and the Dakar-based UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel. Other African issues the Council will consider in March are:

- [Liberia](#), the regular briefing on UNMIL;
- [Libya](#), the renewal of UNSMIL and the 1970 sanctions regime;
- [Somalia](#), the renewal of UNSOM; and
- [South Sudan](#), the renewal of the 2206 sanctions regime.

Council members will be following developments in [Syria](#) after the cessation of hostilities went into effect on 27 February and the announced resumption of political talks on 7 March if the truce holds. Council members will also have their regular Syria briefings on the political, humanitarian and chemical weapons tracks. Separately,

the spillover effects of the conflict and the refugee crisis in Europe are expected to be a major focus of the [Council's meeting with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy](#) in March.

Other Middle East issues that will be considered this month include:

- [Golan Heights](#), the quarterly briefing on UNDOF;
- [Israel/Palestine](#), the regular monthly meeting; and
- [Lebanon](#), a briefing on implementation of resolution 1701 and UNIFIL.

At press time, the Council was poised to adopt a resolution that would significantly strengthen sanctions against the [DPRK](#) in response to its 6 January nuclear test and subsequent 7 February satellite launch. The Council is also expected to adopt another DPRK resolution to renew the 1718 Panel of Experts.

Other issues on the March programme of work include:

- [Afghanistan](#), the renewal of UNAMA;
- [Haiti](#), the regular briefing on MINUSTAH; and
- the adoption of a resolution on the review of the [UN peacebuilding architecture](#).

In addition, it seems possible France might revive negotiations on a draft presidential statement circulated in February that expressed the Council's intention to strengthen the UN's presence in [Burundi](#).

Finally, the Council will be following developments on the peace process in [Colombia](#) and members expect the Secretary-General to present recommendations for the political mission established by resolution 2261. •

29 February 2016

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In Hindsight: Security Council Visiting Missions

Council members appear to have a renewed interest lately in making use of the visiting mission as a tool that can serve a number of purposes. Since the Council first travelled to Cambodia and Viet Nam in 1964, it has used the visiting mission for preventive diplomacy, gathering first-hand information, supporting peace processes and mediation. In the period since the end of the Cold War through January 2016, the Council undertook 51 visiting missions to a total of some 45 countries and territories. Several locations were visited repeatedly, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) holding the record at 12 and Burundi in second place with nine visits.

Following the visit to Burundi in January this year, Council members seem to appreciate anew the usefulness of Council missions, including return visits, and the value of speeding up the deployment of a mission. The Council had previously visited Burundi in March 2015 in an attempt to address the crisis then looming. In light of the growing violence and deepening political divisions late last year, the Council resolved to dispatch another mission to the country, and after securing the government's consent, travelled there in January. It is too early to assess the true impact of that visit, but the combination of a clear and united message from the Council in Burundi and a Burundi-focused working meeting with the Peace and Security Council of the AU held on the way back appears to have encouraged increased engagement between the government and the international community.

Several members spoke about the Burundi visit during the 29 January wrap-up session held by Uruguay at the end of its presidency (S/PV.7616). Egypt called it an example of a "genuine engagement with a crisis" and Angola said it was a "contribution to easing tensions in Burundi". France, which led the visit, expressed interest in reviewing the Council's methodology for preparing for missions.

It may be interesting to examine how various aspects of this practice, such as the

decision to deploy a mission, mission composition and mission leadership, evolved over the years.

In the 1990s and the early 2000s, a decision to undertake a mission, the actual visit and the subsequent publication of the relevant report tended to happen in quick succession. The reports were written literally on the flight back and published just days after the Council delegation returned to New York. In one case, a Council visiting mission to Indonesia and East Timor in September 1999, at the time the first Council mission for more than four years, the decision to undertake the mission and the departure of the delegation took place on the same day. More recently, the whole process has been much slower. It has tended to take several months for Council members to reach agreement on the destination of a proposed mission, its timing and duration. For example, a mission in response to the December 2013 implosion of South Sudan took place only in August 2014. Mission reports have been issued following delays of several months and, in a few cases, well over a year.

In the 1990s, all Council missions consisted of a sub-set of Council members. The June 2001 visit to Kosovo (led by Bangladesh) was the first Council mission in which all 15 members participated. Since then, most missions have involved the full Council, though there have been some exceptions, most recently the November 2012 mission to Timor-Leste in which six members participated.

The structure of leadership of visiting missions has also evolved over the years. For several years, each mission had a single permanent representative as leader, and in the first several post-Cold War years, all were led by an elected member. The US became the first permanent member to lead a mission with the 4-8 May 2000 visit to the DRC, Eritrea and Ethiopia. For the next few years, the leadership of missions would alternate between a permanent and an elected member. The first mission with different leaders for different segments was the 2003 visit to

West Africa, during which Mexico and the UK alternated. And in 2007, during a mission to Africa, the practice of co-leadership emerged, whereby the UK and South Africa jointly led the visit to Addis Ababa, Accra and Khartoum. Since then, almost all missions have had different sets of co-leads (usually a permanent and an elected member) for each segment.

Most missions over the years have involved travel to more than one country, though in the past, despite multiple destinations, the focus would be on one conflict situation, and the different stops involved interactions with the different key relevant actors. (The January visit to Africa may signal a return to this approach as the stop in Addis Ababa also had Burundi as its main focus.)

The new momentum surrounding Council visits that has developed following the January travel has resulted in a quick decision to undertake another mission to seriously troubled countries. The Council is set to visit Mali and Guinea-Bissau in early March, followed by a stop in Dakar (the seat of the UN Office for West Africa), to gain a broader, regional perspective as well as to familiarise itself better with the preventive diplomacy role performed by UN regional political offices.

All the changes in the methodology of visiting missions as well as the speed with which they sometimes occur illustrate that this is a very flexible tool and that it is up to the creativity of the lead(s) as to how to get the most value out of the missions. The past practice also suggests that, like several other Council tools, it is likely to continue to evolve. The renewed energy surrounding the visiting missions may also signal that they will happen faster, have more clearly defined goals and give rise to reports submitted in a timely fashion.

For more background on the Council's visiting missions and a complete list of missions undertaken by the Council since 1992, please visit SCR's website: www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/visiting-mission.php.

Status Update since our February Forecast

Boko Haram

On 2 February, Council members issued a press statement condemning the 30 January Boko Haram attacks (SC/12233).

Sudan (Darfur)

On 4 February, Council members held consultations on the work of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee. Ambassador Rafael Ramírez (Venezuela), chair of the Committee, briefed on the Panel of Experts' final report, which at press time was not yet public. On 10 February, the Council adopted resolution 2265, renewing the mandate of the Panel until 12 March 2017 (S/PV.7619).

Guinea-Bissau

On 4 February, Council members were briefed under "any other business" by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayé-Brooke Zerihoun on Guinea-Bissau's political crisis. On 17 February, the Council was briefed by Special Representative Miguel Trovoadá (S/PV.7624), who presented the Secretary-General's six-month report on Guinea-Bissau (S/2016/141). The chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Antonio Patriota (Brazil), also briefed. Council members issued press elements expressing concern over the tensions within the PAIGC and national institutions and calling on political leaders to resume dialogue. Council members decided to include a visit to Guinea-Bissau as part of a broader Council visiting mission early in March. On 26 February, the Council adopted a resolution renewing the mandate of UNIOGBIS for one year (S/RES/2267).

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

On 4 February, Special Representative and head of UNRCCA, Petko Draganov, briefed Council members in consultations. Following recent Council practice, Russia proposed a press statement but Council members failed to reach agreement. This was also the case the last time they were briefed by Draganov on 8 September 2015, due to divisions over whether to add new language relating to UNRCCA's cooperation with regional organisations.

Israel/Palestine

There were three briefings under "any other business" in February, all at the request of Venezuela. DPA briefed on illegal settlements

and the demolition of Palestinian houses on 5 February and on Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and international protection to Palestinian people there on 16 February. OCHA head Stephen O'Brien briefed on the humanitarian situation and the situation of Palestinian children on 25 February. Following the 5 February briefing, Venezuela circulated a draft press statement on the issues discussed. However, consensus could not be reached and the statement was not issued. On 18 February, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed the Council during the regular monthly meeting on the Middle East, which was followed by consultations (S/PV.7627).

Counter-terrorism

On 9 February, the Council was briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman on UN counter-terrorism efforts against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (S/PV.7618). The briefing was based on a 29 January Secretary-General's report on the threat posed by ISIL to international peace and security and the range of UN efforts in support of member states in countering the threat (S/2016/92).

Central African Republic

On 9 February, the Council adopted resolution 2264 to increase the number of corrections officers in MINUSCA from 40 to 108.

Burundi

On 10 February, Council members were briefed by Special Adviser Jamal Benomar in consultations on the situation in Burundi. In late February, Council members negotiated a draft presidential statement that expressed the Council's intention to strengthen the UN's presence in Burundi. However at press time, agreement had not been reached and it was unclear if the statement would be adopted.

Western Sahara

On 10 February, at the request of Venezuela, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed Council members under "any other business" on the proposed visit of the Secretary-General to the region.

Working Methods

On 11 February, the Security Council held a debate titled "Working Methods of Security

Council Subsidiary Organs" (S/PV.7620). It was organised on the initiative of Venezuela, who had circulated a concept note for the debate (S/2016/102). Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile, Carlos Olguín Cigarroa, and Ambassador Olof Skoog of Sweden briefed. Cigarroa briefed on behalf of Ambassador Cristián Barros who chaired the 1572 Côte d'Ivoire and 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committees, as well as the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals during Chile's 2014-15 term as an elected Council member. Sweden was one of the five main sponsors of the High-Level Review of UN Sanctions launched in May 2014, which resulted in the publication of a compendium that was submitted to the Council in June 2015 (S/2015/432). In addition to Council members, representatives of the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Iran, Libya and Sudan spoke as countries affected by sanctions. As a follow-up to the debate, a note by the president of the Council issued on 22 February (S/2016/170) outlined a set of measures aimed at improving the transparency of the Council's subsidiary organs, improving the selection process and the preparation of chairs and improving the interaction and coordination among subsidiary organs and between the Council and the subsidiary organs.

Mali

On 12 February, Council members issued a press statement condemning a terrorist attack against MINUSMA that killed seven peacekeepers from Guinea (SC/12240).

Open Debate on the UN Charter

On 15 February, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate on the topic of respect for the principles and purposes of the UN Charter (S/PV.7621). Foreign Minister Delcy Rodríguez Gómez of Venezuela presided, while Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon briefed. In preparation for the debate, Venezuela circulated a concept note to help guide the discussion (S/2016/103). While no Council decision came out of the debate, Venezuela intends to produce a summary of the discussion.

Yemen

On 16 February, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council on the humanitarian situation in Yemen (S/PV.7622). Following consultations, Council members

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

issued press elements urging all parties to fulfill their obligations under international humanitarian law, and to facilitate the delivery of commercial goods, humanitarian assistance and fuel for civilian purposes to all parts of Yemen. The following day, Special Envoy Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed briefed the Council reporting that he had not received sufficient assurances that a new cessation of hostilities would be respected (S/PV.7625). Ambassador Motohide Yoshikawa (Japan) also briefed as chair of the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee on the recent consideration of the final report of the Committee's Panel of Experts (S/2016/73). Council members issued a press statement that expressed serious concern over Yemen's humanitarian crisis, and urged all parties to the conflict in Yemen to take urgent steps towards resuming a ceasefire (SC/12250). On 24 February, the Council adopted resolution 2266, renewing the Yemen sanctions measures until 26 February 2017 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 27 March 2017.

Iraq

On 16 February, Special Representative Ján Kubiš briefed the Council (S/PV.7623) and presented the Secretary-General's reports on UNAMI (S/2016/77) and on Iraq/Kuwait missing persons and property (S/2016/87).

Sudan/South Sudan

On 18 February, Special Envoy Haile Menkerios briefed Council members via video teleconference on the implementation of resolution 2046 on Sudan/South Sudan issues. On 25 February, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed Council members on the humanitarian situation in Sudan and South Sudan under "any other business." Following the meeting, press elements were issued in which Council members expressed concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in both countries.

South Sudan

On 19 February, the Council held a briefing, followed by consultations, on the situation in South Sudan and on UNMISS, as well as on the work of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee (S/PV.7628). The meeting included a discussion of the most recent UNMISS report (S/2016/138) and the final report of the Committee's Panel of Experts (S/2016/70). Regarding the situation in South Sudan and UNMISS, briefings by video teleconference were made by Deputy Special Representative Moustapha Soumaré; Chairman of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Festus Mogae; and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonovic. Ambassador Fodé Seck (Senegal), the Chair of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee, briefed on the Sanctions Committee's work. Also on 19 February, Council members issued a press statement condemning the violence in the Malakal protection of civilians site that resulted in the deaths of 18 people (SC/12252).

Peacebuilding

On 23 February, the Council held an open debate on the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture (S/PV.7629). Briefings were provided by the Peacebuilding Commission current chair, Ambassador Macharia Kamau (Kenya), and by last year's chair, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden). Gert Rosenthal, the Chair of the Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, also briefed. In total, representatives of 48 member states and regional organisations delivered statements. Remarks focused on the findings of the 29 June 2015 report of the Advisory Group of Experts (S/2015/490).

Myanmar

On 25 February, at the request of the UK, Special Adviser Vijay Nambiar briefed

Council members under "any other business". Maarit Kohonen Sheriff, the deputy head of OHCHR's New York office, was present to answer questions. Nambiar focused on the political transition, the peace process and the human rights situation. Earlier in the month, on 4 February, the UK sent a letter to the Council president requesting the retention of the situation in Myanmar on the list of items of which the Council is seized (S/2016/113).

International Criminal Tribunals

On 25 February, Council members were briefed under "any other business" on the Secretary-General's nominations for the president and prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals by Stephen Mathias, Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, after Russia expressed its opposition to the nominations. On 29 February, the Council adopted resolution 2269 appointing Serge Brammertz as the prosecutor of the Mechanism with effect from 1 March until 30 June 2018.

OSCE

On 29 February, the Council was briefed by German Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Steinmeier presented the main priorities of the OSCE in 2016 and addressed the crisis in Ukraine (S/PV.7635).

Kosovo

On 29 February, Special Representative Zahir Tanin briefed (S/PV.7637) the Council on Kosovo and the most recent UNMIK report (S/2016/99). At the meeting, Serbia was represented by Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, while Kosovo was represented by its ambassador to the US, Vlora Çitaku.

DRC and the Great Lakes Region

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council will be briefed by Maman Sambo Sidikou, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, will also brief on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement.

The Council is expected to renew the mandate of MONUSCO, which expires on 31 March 2016.

A ministerial-level open debate on the Great Lakes region is also planned in March, at the initiative of Council president, Angola, with the Secretary-General, Djinnit and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui, briefing. The foreign ministers of Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are also expected to participate.

Key Recent Developments

Rebel groups continue to spread violence in eastern DRC. In his most recent briefing to the Council on 14 January, Sidikou said that there was a significant deterioration in eastern DRC, particularly in North Kivu. The operations of the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) against the Force Démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) have displaced FDLR fighters and ethnic Tutsis, and there has been an increase in Mayi-Mayi rebel groups' activities against the FDLR, with reprisal attacks by suspected FDLR elements. These have resulted in civilians being caught up in the fighting and being killed, displaced, forcibly abducted or harassed, often on the basis of ethnicity and perceived collaboration with opposing groups.

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamist Ugandan group, continues to wreak havoc in North Kivu. The group was reportedly responsible for an attack on FARDC positions and a village near the town of

Eringeti on 12 February, in which six civilians were killed and 14 others were kidnapped.

On the political front, the presidential elections scheduled for November continue to be a deeply divisive issue, given the absence of an agreed electoral calendar or a budget for the elections. Many fear that President Joseph Kabila intends to stay in power beyond the constitutionally mandated two terms, which end at the end of the year, and that the impractically dense electoral calendar and consequent delays are part of this strategy. While Kabila has not commented publicly on his political future, the government's official line is that he will abide by the constitution. In any event, as preparations for elections are at a standstill, it seems less and less likely that presidential elections can or will be held on time.

On 28 November 2015, Kabila called for a national dialogue to address several issues, including the election calendar and funding. The main opposition parties have refused to participate, insisting that it is yet another tactic to avert elections.

The UN, AU, EU and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF) issued a joint press statement on 16 February that underscored the necessity of an inclusive political dialogue in the DRC and urged all Congolese political actors to spare no effort, within the framework of the country's constitution, to ensure the successful holding of elections. The statement further recalled the appointment of former Togolese Prime Minister Edem Kodjo as Special Envoy by the AU Commission to facilitate the political dialogue. (Despite the request of the DRC, the UN has yet to appoint a mediator for this purpose.)

Opposition parties and civil society groups organised a "stay-at-home" strike, bringing business and civic activity in Kinshasa to a standstill on 16 February, in order to pressure Kabila to step down at the end of his term.

During his 14 January briefing, Sidikou said that the political polarisation has heightened tensions and contributed to an

atmosphere of increased harassment and human rights violations, mostly against opposition members, civil society representatives and journalists. Combined with the violence in the east, he added, holding peaceful and timely credible elections seems less and less likely.

Sidikou also spoke about the Secretary-General's proposal to reduce MONUSCO by 1,700 troops, in accordance with the DRC's wishes to see MONUSCO downsized. He stated that the drawdown will be accompanied by a process of transforming MONUSCO into a more agile and proactive force, which will ensure that MONUSCO exercises greater operational capability, even as the force is gradually reduced in overall numbers. He added that the resumption of security cooperation would be a key aspect of this strategy and asked for the Council's support for this approach. (Since then, MONUSCO and the DRC have signed a technical agreement on coordination of military activities.)

For its March presidency, Angola has planned an open debate that aims at looking at the Great Lakes Region holistically. With Burundi, CAR and the DRC all on the Council's agenda, the open debate seeks to encourage more strategic thinking about achieving peace and security in the region. One aspect Angola wishes the open debate to focus on will be on natural resources as drivers of conflict in the region, together with the wider relationship between development and security in the Great Lakes. Angola, as the current Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), hosted the ICGLR heads of state summit on 12 February, which focused on accelerating the effective implementation of the ICGLR's "Pact on Security, Stability and Development" and its Protocols.

Relatedly, on 11 February, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) held a session on natural resources and conflicts in Africa. In a press statement after the session, the PSC recognised that fairness, transparency and accountability in the management of

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2211](#) (26 March 2015) renewed the mandate of MONUSCO, including its intervention brigade. [S/RES/2198](#) (29 January 2015) renewed the DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/20](#) (9 November 2015) stressed the importance of neutralising armed groups in the DRC and expressed the Council's concern that joint operations between the Congolese army and the Force Intervention Brigade in cooperation with the whole of MONUSCO had yet to resume. [Secretary-General's Report S/2015/1031](#) (24 December 2015) was on MONUSCO. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7603](#) (14 January 2016) was a briefing by Special Representative Sambo Sidikou on the latest MONUSCO report. [Security Council Letter S/2015/983](#) (16 December 2015) contained the Secretary-General's recommendation for reducing MONUSCO's troop strength by 1,700 peacekeepers.

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS [Special Representative of the Secretary-General](#) Maman Sambo Sidikou (Niger) [MONUSCO Force Commander](#) Lieutenant General Derick Mbuyiselo Mgwebi (South Africa) [MONUSCO Size, Composition and Cost of Mission](#) Strength as of 31 August 2015: 19,784 troops (including 462 military observers and 1,090 police), 840 international civilian personnel, 2,725 local civilian staff and 450 UN volunteers. *Approved budget* (1 July 2015–30 June 2016): \$1.33 billion *Mission duration*: July 2010 to present

DRC and the Great Lakes Region (con't)

natural resources is critical to preventing conflict and promoting sustainable development in Africa.

The Secretary-General visited Goma and Kinshasa on 23-25 February. While in Kinshasa, he presided over the opening session of the Great Lakes Private Sector Investment Conference. Later he met with Kabila, government officials, opposition figures and civil society representatives, stressing the importance of political dialogue as a way to address challenges linked to the electoral process. He expressed hope that constructive dialogue would lead to peaceful and credible elections in accordance with the constitution. He also stated that during the election period, the fundamental rights of freedom of the press, expression and peaceful assembly must be upheld.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 27 January, the Group of Experts assisting the DRC Sanctions Committee briefed the Committee on their recent update report. The report said that there is evidence to suggest that an attack attributed to the ADF in May 2015, in which two Tanzanian peacekeepers were killed, was actually committed by the FARDC.

Some details about the circumstances of the incident, however, remained unclear.

In March, the Committee may meet to receive an update from MONUSCO on the implementation of the arms embargo in the DRC.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 February, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a media statement that expressed alarm over reports of escalating inter-communal violence in the Lubero and Walikale territories, North Kivu province. During the preceding weekend, at least 21 people were killed and 40 wounded, and 70 houses were burned down. There were also reports of massive displacement of civilians, looting, abductions and at least three rapes in the area. The attack may have been prompted by the killing of at least 14 members of the Nande ethnic group on 7 January,

presumed to be by the FDLR. According to the statement, tensions between the Hutu and Nande communities, which have been increasing since November 2015, seem to have reached an alarming level and could lead to large-scale violence and further displacement. In January, the UN Joint Human Rights Office documented 411 human rights violations, compared to 347 recorded in December 2015. Of these violations, 52 were related to the restriction of democratic participation, compared to 45 such violations documented in December 2015.

Key Issues

The key issue for the Council in March is renewing MONUSCO's mandate and deciding whether to lower its troop level.

A major concern is the political tension surrounding the electoral calendar and Kabila's possible attempt to remain in power.

The continued violence of rebel groups on the population in North Kivu remain a serious threat to peace and security.

Renewing cooperation between MONUSCO and the DRC is another issue of concern for the Council.

On the Great Lakes more generally, key issues are cross-border drivers of conflict that affect several States in the region, such as illicit trade in natural resources, the movement of arms and rebel groups.

Options

The Council will adopt a resolution renewing MONUSCO's mandate in which it might lower MONUSCO's troop level by 1,700 troops or maintain its current level. In addition, the resolution could:

- encourage MONUSCO to implement plans to develop a more proactive and visible presence in eastern DRC and prepare for possible instability in other areas due to the political situation;
- urge the Secretary-General to appoint

a mediator to help facilitate the DRC national dialogue;

- call on all political actors to abide by the constitution and its term limits; and
- call on opposition parties to immediately enter into a national dialogue in order to reach consensus on an electoral calendar and hold elections on time or as soon as possible thereafter.

The Council could also consider visiting the country during the electoral period to take stock of the situation and deliver a strong political message to interlocutors.

On the Great Lakes, the Council may consider adopting an outcome document recognising the impact of cross-border issues on security and stability and the need for strategic thinking and enhanced cooperation to address these issues at the regional level.

Council Dynamics

On the issue of troop reductions, some Council members, including the UK and the US, are concerned about the DRC's desire to downsize MONUSCO, in particular if DRC-MONUSCO cooperation does not improve dramatically. On the other hand, some countries take the view that the proposed reduction will not affect MONUSCO's operations in the east or contribute to a deterioration in the security situation, particularly in light of MONUSCO's plans to divert the freed resources to enhance the capacity of the remaining peacekeepers. They also emphasise that renewed cooperation between MONUSCO and the DRC in the east, which is related to the DRC's wish to accelerate MONUSCO's drawdown, is of critical importance to improving the security situation.

France is the penholder on the DRC.

DPRK (North Korea)

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution to renew for another 13 months the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee.

Key Recent Developments

At press time, the Council was poised to adopt a resolution that would significantly strengthen sanctions against the DPRK in response to its 6 January nuclear test and subsequent 7 February satellite launch. The draft, which was circulated to Council members on 25 February after weeks of protracted negotiations between China and the US, would, among other things, institute mandatory inspections of all cargo going in and out of the DPRK, strengthen financial sanctions, impose restrictions on exports from the DPRK of coal, iron, gold titanium and rare earth minerals, ban the supply to the DPRK of aviation fuel and expand the weapons embargo to include small arms. It would also significantly expand the list of entities and individuals subject to targeted sanctions, adding 17 individuals and 12 entities, and strengthen restrictions on the transfer to and from the DPRK of prohibited proliferation-sensitive or dual-use items.

In the period since the nuclear test, the DPRK has remained defiant of the international community despite widespread condemnation and the threat of new sanctions issued by the Council in a press statement on the day of the test. On 2 February, the DPRK notified the International Maritime Organisation that it would launch an earth observation satellite between 8 and 25 February. In a 4 February letter to the Council, the Republic of Korea (ROK) referred to the move as "a direct challenge to the entire international community" and warned that the DPRK would face a harsh international response if it went ahead with the launch. The US and others also warned that such a launch would be met with a tough response, while China expressed serious concern.

Notwithstanding these warnings, the DPRK on 7 February declared that it had successfully put a satellite into orbit. Council members held consultations that same day

and condemned the launch in a press statement. In particular, they noted that although characterised by the DPRK as a satellite launch, it used ballistic missile technology that could be employed to deliver nuclear weapons systems and was therefore a serious violation of relevant Council resolutions. They also recalled their intention to develop significant new measures in response to the 6 January nuclear test and said they would expeditiously adopt a new resolution.

According to the ROK, the rocket used for the satellite launch had a longer range and carried a heavier payload than the one used for a similar launch in April 2012, and was capable of reaching the US West Coast. There were also reports that the DPRK had expanded its Yongbyon nuclear enrichment facility and restarted its plutonium production reactor there.

Meanwhile, the ROK announced on 10 February that in response to Pyongyang's provocations it would suspend all operations at the Kaesong industrial complex run jointly with the DPRK, and accused the DPRK of using income from the operations there to finance its nuclear programme. The DPRK on 11 February called the move a declaration of war and said the complex would be converted into a military control zone.

On 18 February, the ROK announced that the annual ROK-US joint military exercises due to begin in March would be the largest ever. As it has done in the past, the DPRK strongly criticised the plans and warned that it would "immediately and mercilessly" respond to any provocations. Earlier in the month, the ROK and the US announced that they would start formal consultations on the possible deployment of the US anti-ballistic missile system referred to as THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System) in response to the increased threat from the DPRK, but on 23 February, just ahead of a meeting in Washington, D.C., between the foreign ministers of China and the US, they said the talks would be postponed. The US denied, however, that the postponement was linked to the sanctions negotiations.

Humanitarian assistance to the DPRK remained severely underfunded. To alleviate the situation, the Secretary-General on

3 February announced the release of \$8 million dollars from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund towards assistance for some 2.2 million people who are most vulnerable and at risk of malnutrition. According to the UN, around 70 percent of the population in the DPRK is considered food insecure, while the chronic malnutrition rate among children under the age of five was 28 percent. In 2015, 11 percent of the agricultural harvest was lost due to drought.

Other Sanctions-Related Developments

The 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee met on 18 February to discuss the final report of its Panel of Experts under resolution 2207. The report concluded that widespread sanctions violations had continued, highlighting in particular the activities of networks linked to the Ocean Maritime Management Company (OMM), which was designated by the Committee in July 2014, as well as activities involving African countries. Emphasising the importance of implementation by member states, the report noted that several Council members in 2015 had themselves failed to submit national implementation reports as required under resolution 2094. Recommendations included more outreach to non-Council members through open briefings and bilateral meetings, providing additional guidance on the implementation of the arms embargo and the ban on training of DPRK nationals, expanding the list of prohibited items and designating additional individuals and entities for targeted sanctions. The Committee chair, Ambassador Román Oyarzun (Spain), briefed Council members in consultations on the work of the Committee on 25 February.

In separate developments, Japan announced on 10 February that it would strengthen its bilateral sanctions against the DPRK by, among other things, imposing additional restrictions on travel between the two countries, a complete ban on DPRK ships entering Japanese ports and a ban on remittances to the DPRK except for those made for humanitarian purposes. On 18 February, a strengthening of US sanctions against the DPRK came into effect, targeting activities contributing to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK Security Council Resolution S/RES/2207 (4 March 2015) renewed the Panel of Experts' mandate for 13 months. **Security Council Letter S/2016/117** (4 February 2016) was the ROK letter on the DPRK's announcement that it would launch a satellite. **Security Council Press Statements SC/12234** (7 February 2016) condemned the DPRK's satellite launch. **SC/12191** (6 January 2016) condemned the DPRK's nuclear test. **Sanctions Committee Document S/2016/157** (24 February 2016) was the Panel of Experts' final report. **Human Rights Council Documents A/HRC/31/70** (19 January 2016) was the report of the special rapporteur. **A/HRC/31/38** (1 February 2016) was the OHCHR's report.

DPRK (North Korea) (con't)

as well as arms-related materials, human rights abuses and activities undermining cybersecurity.

Human Rights-Related Developments

At its 31st session in March, the Human Rights Council (HRC) will consider the report of Marzuki Darusman, the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, and the report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which covers the activities of the field-based structure in Seoul created to strengthen the monitoring and documentation of the human rights situation in the DPRK.

The special rapporteur's report concludes that crimes against humanity appear to be continuing in the DPRK and urges the Security Council to refer the situation to the ICC, failing which it suggests the General Assembly could establish a tribunal under its residual powers of "Uniting for Peace". It calls on member states to ensure that the Council holds regular briefings on the situation, with the participation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other relevant experts, including the special rapporteur. Furthermore, the report recommends that the HRC arrange to have an official communication addressed to the Supreme Leader of the DPRK to advise him and other senior leaders that they may be investigated and, if found to be responsible, held accountable for crimes against humanity committed under their leadership. It also recommends that the HRC establish a group of independent experts with a mandate to determine an appropriate approach towards accountability.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is the serious escalation in the threat posed by the DPRK to

international peace and security as it continues to defy the Council's demands and reject any dialogue aimed at denuclearisation. A further issue is whether the tightening of sanctions currently underway will induce the DPRK to change its behaviour or only further aggravate the situation.

An immediate issue is the renewal of the Panel of Experts' mandate and whether any changes will be required to reflect changes in the sanctions regime.

In the Sanctions Committee, key issues include implementation of the new sanctions provisions and follow-up to the Panel's latest report.

Options

The main option for the Council is to renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts for another 13 months.

Another option is for the Committee chair to convene an open briefing for UN member states to explain the measures contained in the new sanctions resolution and to present the Panel of Experts' report. (It is now more than a year and a half since the last open briefing was held in July 2014.)

A further option is for the Committee to issue guidance, as needed, aimed at helping member states implement the new sanctions measures.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members generally welcome the

new sanctions resolution, including members like Japan, who had been pushing hard for a strong outcome on the sidelines of the negotiations between China and the US. The ROK also expressed satisfaction with the new measures. Overall, the outcome seems to have exceeded expectations, given China's initially cautious approach. It appears that the DPRK's 7 February satellite launch was an important factor in convincing China that a more robust response was needed.

While China's position now seems to have shifted towards a tougher stance, it made clear when the draft resolution was presented that sanctions are not the fundamental way to solve the nuclear issue. It reiterated its call for a two-track approach including efforts to formally end the Korean war, echoing the DPRK's demand for negotiations to begin on a peace treaty. China has also continued to call for the resumption of the six-party talks involving the DPRK, China, Japan, the ROK, Russia and the US. It therefore remains to be seen whether the agreement on the new sanctions resolution will lead to greater unity going forward among China, the US and other key regional players in dealing with the DPRK nuclear threat and to what extent China will be willing to use its bilateral leverage to exert pressure on Pyongyang.

The US is the penholder on the DPRK.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). UNSMIL head, Martin Kobler, will brief on recent political developments and the Secretary-General's latest report.

The Council is also likely to renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and expects a briefing by its chair, Ambassador Ramlan Ibrahim (Malaysia).

The mandates of UNSMIL and the Panel

of Experts expire on 15 March and 30 April, respectively.

Key Recent Developments

Five years since Libya's uprising, the security situation continues to deteriorate despite some positive political developments. On 17 December, participants in the political dialogue—including members from the House of Representatives and the General National Congress (GNC), political parties, civil society, municipalities and women's groups—signed

the Libyan Political Agreement in Skhirat, Morocco. On 23 December, the Council adopted resolution 2259, welcoming the signing of the Agreement and the formation of a Presidency Council. The resolution called on the Presidency Council to work expeditiously to form a Government of National Accord (GNA) within 30 days and to finalise interim security arrangements necessary for stabilising Libya. It also called on member states to cease support to, and having official contact with, parallel institutions outside of the Agreement.

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2259 (23 December 2015) welcomed the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement. S/RES/2238 (10 September 2015) renewed the mandate of UNSMIL until 15 March 2016. Security Council Press Statements SC/12214 (20 January 2016) welcomed the announcement by the Presidency Council of the formation of the GNA and looked forward to the House of Representatives' endorsement of the GNA. SC/12194 (8 January 2016) condemned the terrorist attacks claimed by a group with an allegiance to ISIS. Security Council Letters S/2015/1018 (23 December 2015) was from the speakers of the House and the GNC criticising the UN-led political process. S/2015/891 (22 September 2015) transmitted a report of the Monitoring Team on the terrorism threat in Libya posed by ISIL, Ansar al Sharia and other Al-Qaida affiliates.

Libya (con't)

As the 30-day deadline approached, Kobler briefed Council members on 15 January under “any other business” at the request of Russia, on the challenges to form a GNA. On 18 January, the Presidency Council proposed a list of 32 ministers to be endorsed by the House. On 20 January, Security Council members issued a press statement welcoming this announcement and looking forward to the House’s endorsement of the GNA. On 25 January, the House rejected the proposed list, and negotiations continued. An 18-member Cabinet was proposed on 15 February, but at press time the House had yet to endorse it. On 24 February a majority of House members signed a statement in which they declared their approval of the GNA proposed by the Presidency Council. In a statement, Kobler called on the House leadership to formalise this endorsement.

Although the House endorsed the Agreement in principle on 25 January, it expressed reservations regarding the transfer of military power included in article 8 of the additional provisions of the Agreement. Among controversial issues is the role that General Khalifa Haftar (the military leader of Operation Dignity in eastern Libya) is to play once a GNA is sworn in.

The security situation continues to be highly volatile, and UNSMIL has repeatedly condemned the indiscriminate targeting of civilians by all parties. On 14 January, the Presidency Council decided to establish a Temporary Security Committee to facilitate the implementation of the security arrangements outlined in the Agreement. However, the security situation continues to be highly unstable in Tripoli, which is critical for the establishment of the GNA there as well as for the return of UNSMIL. On 23 February, Haftar’s forces carried out an offensive in Benghazi, taking over key neighbourhoods of the city. Fighting resumed in the south despite a ceasefire between Tuareg and Tebu tribes.

The increasing presence of terrorist groups continues to be a threat to Libya and the region. A 22 September 2015 report of the Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Dae’sh)/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee stated that ISIL may have 2,000 to 3,000 fighters in Libya and intends to control additional territory in Libya. (It controls a 250-kilometre stretch of territory along the coast.) There

have been several attacks on oil infrastructure, including the 4 January ISIL takeover of the town of Ben Jawad and attacks on other oil facilities in Sidra and Ras Lanuf in Libya’s oil crescent. On 7 January, ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack on a police training facility in the western town of Zliten that resulted in at least 60 deaths and was condemned by the Council.

Despite the increasing presence of ISIL, Libyan authorities have repeatedly refused to invite Western intervention. However, on 19 February, the US conducted an airstrike on an ISIL training camp near Sabratha, resulting in more than 40 casualties. Western governments are engaged in contingency planning to support counter-terrorism efforts in Libya once a GNA is formed.

Following a request by Kobler, a needs assessment mission was deployed in January to evaluate the feasibility of UNSMIL’s return to Libya (UNSMIL has been operating from Tunis since July 2014). The mission concluded that such move is contingent upon the establishment of the GNA in Tripoli and the authorisation to deploy a UN guard unit.

The humanitarian situation in Libya continues to be fragile. According to OCHA, after ongoing fighting, the lack of resources is the second biggest obstacle to responding to the 2.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and implementing Libya’s Humanitarian Response Plan. At press time, only 2 percent of the \$165.6 million requested for 2016 had been received.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The final report of the Panel of Experts of the 1970 Sanctions Committee highlighted how continuous violations of the arms embargo mirroring regional rivalries have been fuelling instability in Libya. It also blamed the leaderships of the House and the GNC for negatively impacting the completion of the transition to the GNA. The report puts forward several recommendations to the Council focusing on the structure of Libya’s security and defence sector under the GNA in order to allow for exemptions to the arms embargo, questioning the usefulness of measures targeting the illicit export of crude oil and recommending explicitly authorising the re-investment of assets frozen as a result of sanctions.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The Human Rights Council will consider the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the findings of the mission by his Office

to investigate violations and abuses of international human rights law committed in Libya since the beginning of 2014 (A/HRC/31/47), during its 31st session in March. The report describes widespread violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and abuses of human rights, perpetrated by all parties to the conflict in Libya throughout 2014 and 2015, including unlawful killings, indiscriminate attacks, torture, arbitrary detention, abductions and gender-based violence. The report also describes the situation of human rights defenders, journalists, migrants, the Tawerghan community and children. It also provides an assessment of the justice sector and recommends urgent measures to fight against impunity.

Key Issues

The overarching issues are how to ensure the broad acceptance of the Agreement, including its endorsement by the House, how to bring on board those unwilling to sign it and how to isolate spoilers actively undermining the political process.

A key issue is ensuring that military actors commit to implement the ceasefire and other security arrangements provided for in the Agreement. Stopping 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.

Options

Options for Council members on Libya include:

- adopting a technical resolution extending UNSMIL’s mandate for three months as recommended by the Secretary-General, with the view to renewing the mandate once a GNA is in place;
- emphasising the role that UNSMIL will continue to play in broadening support for the Agreement and its implementation and reiterating that the door remains open to others who may wish to sign it;
- visiting Libya and/or the region to hold discussions with the parties and regional stakeholders in order to generate momentum for the endorsement of the GNA and discuss with Libyan stakeholders the Council’s approach regarding the sanctions in place;
- taking on board the recommendations of the Panel of Experts’ report;
- bringing effective pressure to bear on those member states identified as violating

Libya (con't)

the sanctions regime; and

- considering imposing sanctions on spoilers.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members generally support UNSMIL's mediation efforts 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. However, during the negotiations on resolution 2259, Russia insisted on

including a reference to a 23 December 2015 letter from Speakers Aguila Saleh Gouider (House) and Nouri Ali Abu-Sahmain (GNC) complaining that UNSMIL had gone ahead with the signing ceremony in Skhirat without considering their inputs to the political process. (Since early December 2015, some parliamentarians from both the House and GNC opposed to the Agreement have tried to add momentum to a parallel negotiation track not facilitated by the UN.)

Until now, disagreements over how to support mediation efforts, including the use of

UN sanctions, have hindered the Council's engagement on Libya. If the GNA is finally endorsed by the House, divergences might again arise, over deciding what action to take regarding those who decide not to sign or accept its authority. In addition, once the government is sworn in, Council members might have different perspectives regarding the kind of international engagement the Council should support against terrorist groups in Libya, such as ISIL.

The UK is the penholder on Libya.

Syria

Expected Council Action

Council members will be closely watching whether the cessation of hostilities that went into effect on 27 February, and was endorsed in resolution 2268, is sufficiently observed by the parties to allow for the resumption of political talks in early March. Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura is expected to brief in mid-March on implementation of resolutions 2254 and 2268.

Council members will also receive their regular monthly briefings on the chemical weapons and humanitarian tracks in Syria.

Key Recent Developments

As Syria enters the sixth year of devastating conflict, there is an agreed cessation of hostilities and path toward a political solution. Following intense diplomatic activity between Russia and the US in the context of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), on 22 February terms were agreed for a cessation of hostilities. This includes the necessity for all parties to agree to participate in UN-facilitated talks towards full implementation of resolution 2254; allowing sustained and unfettered humanitarian access; ceasing attacks, including aerial bombardment; refraining from acquiring territory from other parties to the agreement; using force proportionately and only in self-defence; and committing to

work for the early release of detainees. Counter-terrorism operations are excluded from the cessation of hostilities.

In the preceding weeks, attempts to forge a political solution went through several dramatic turns. UN-facilitated talks in Geneva between the Syrian government and the Syrian opposition began on 29 January with the intent to continue for six months. However, in under a week they were suspended. On 5 February, de Mistura briefed Security Council members, reporting that the negotiations were undermined by the ongoing lack of humanitarian access coupled with the sudden increase in aerial bombings and military activities, a reference to the government's Aleppo offensive backed by Russian airstrikes.

On 10 February, Council members New Zealand and Spain called for consultations after OCHA head Stephen O'Brien announced that the Aleppo offensive had displaced 30,000 people. At press time, the situation along the Syrian-Turkish border was fragile as almost 70,000 Syrians had fled the Aleppo offensive and were amassed near Turkey's border. Meanwhile, Turkey shelled Kurdish positions in Syria along the border to check advances by Kurdish forces taking territory lost by Syrian opposition groups. Russia called for two meetings of Security Council members in February to

discuss the military escalation between Turkey and Syrian Kurdish forces, and introduced a draft resolution on the issue. There was not significant support among Council members for the draft text, with several stressing the need to de-escalate the situation and stay focused on a political solution to the Syrian crisis through the implementation of resolution 2254.

In an 11 February statement, the ISSG committed to use their influence with parties on the ground to press for the end of any indiscriminate use of weapons; support and accelerate agreement on implementing a nationwide ceasefire; facilitate immediate humanitarian access; urge the release of arbitrarily detained persons; and fight terrorism. The ISSG also announced the creation of two follow-up task forces under UN auspices, one on humanitarian access and another on a nationwide ceasefire, starting with a cessation of hostilities.

On 26 February, the ISSG ceasefire task force, co-chaired by Russia and the US, met in Geneva to review the parties' agreement to the terms of the cessation of hostilities. The government, which had previously said it planned to fight until it re-established control over all of Syria, has agreed to cease combat operations except those against ISIS, Al-Nusra Front and "other terrorist organisations". The Riyadh-based opposition High

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2268 (26 February 2015) was on the cessation of hostilities and the resumption of political talks. S/RES/2254 (18 December 2015) was on a political solution for the Syrian crisis. 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/2258 (22 December 2015), 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 Press Statements SC/12232 (1 February 2016) and SC/12254 (23 February 2016) condemned, respectively, the ISIS attacks on 31 January in Damascus and the 21 February attacks in Damascus and Homs. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7634 (26 February 2016) was a briefing by the Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura ahead of the adoption of resolution 2268. S/PV.7631 (24 February 2016) was on the humanitarian situation. Secretary-General's Reports S/2016/156 (18 February 2016) was on the humanitarian situation. S/2016/152 (17 February 2016) was the 60-day report on the implementation of resolution 2254 on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. S/2016/142 (12 February 2016) was the first report of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism. S/2016/85 (28 January 2016) was on chemical weapons.

Syria (con't)

Negotiations Committee (HNC) also agreed, but signalled that they would give the truce two weeks to establish the seriousness of the government's commitment. Opposition groups have also flagged significant concerns about the selective nature of the agreement, which allows counter-terrorism operations to continue. Russia and the US, via the ISSG ceasefire task force, have agreed to delineate the territory held by ISIS and Al-Nusra Front, and other terrorist organisations designated by the UN Security Council, so that such parties, and the areas they control, would be excluded from the cessation of hostilities.

De Mistura briefed the Council via video teleconference from Geneva after this meeting, announcing that political talks would resume on 7 March if the truce holds. Also on 26 February, the Council adopted resolution 2268 endorsing the cessation of hostilities in Syria. The resolution demands furthermore the full and immediate implementation of resolution 2254 on a Syrian-owned political transition in accordance with the 30 June 2012 Geneva Communiqué as set forth in ISSG statements; demands that all parties to the cessation of hostilities fulfil their commitments and acknowledges the acceptance by the government and Syrian opposition groups of the terms; welcomes the cessation of hostilities as a first step toward a lasting ceasefire and a parallel political process; calls for sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access via the most direct routes, and specifically names a number of besieged and hard-to-reach areas; calls on member states with influence to advance the peace process and confidence-building measures, including the early release of arbitrarily detained persons; and requests the resumption of UN-facilitated negotiations. In addition, the draft resolution annexes in full the 22 February joint statement by Russia and the US that details the terms of the cessation of hostilities.

On the humanitarian track, O'Brien briefed the Council on 24 February presenting the latest Secretary-General's report that described an increasing trend of attacks on medical facilities, and noted that of 112 such attacks in 2015, 85 percent had been committed by the government. After an attack on a hospital run by Médecins Sans Frontières on 15 February, the organisation announced it would no longer provide locations of medical facilities to the Syrian government or

Russian forces due to the increased chance of being directly targeted.

O'Brien also reported that aid had reached 100,000 people in need of assistance in five besieged towns (rebel-held Madaya, Zabadani and Mouadamiya besieged by government forces, and government-held Foua and Kefraya—the only two villages under siege by opposition fighters). However, the government had yet to provide clearance for sustained and unimpeded access to all besieged and hard-to-reach areas, an important confidence-building measure for the cessation of hostilities and political talks. Humanitarian access remained sporadic and subject to ad-hoc approvals.

In February, OCHA increased its estimates of those living under siege from 394,000 to 486,700. However, the NGO SiegeWatch estimates almost 1.1 million Syrians are besieged in 46 areas—overwhelmingly by government forces or allied militias. Similarly, for months the UN has maintained its estimate of 250,000 killed by the conflict, but the estimate by the Syrian Centre for Policy Research is 400,000 killed and another 70,000 fatalities due to the lack of basic services such as clean water and access to medical care.

On the chemical weapons track, Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on 22 February. He reported that the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team had raised new issues regarding gaps in Syria's declared chemical weapons arsenal which would be addressed at a meeting of the OPCW Executive Council in March. Virginia Gamba—the head of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), the body mandated to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria—also briefed, presenting the JIM's first report. Gamba gave an account of the methodology used to identify seven potential cases that will be subject to in-depth investigations beginning in March.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The Commission of Inquiry on Syria released on 8 February a thematic report, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Deaths in Detention in the Syrian Arab Republic", which examines the killing of detainees by all parties. The report details how Syrian civilians have been arbitrarily arrested, unlawfully detained, taken hostage or kidnapped, and describes how thousands of detainees held by the Syrian government have been beaten to

death or died as a result of injuries sustained due to torture. Many other detainees died from inhumane living conditions and deprivation of medical care. The Commission determines that the Syrian government has committed the crimes against humanity of extermination, murder, rape or other forms of sexual violence, torture, imprisonment, enforced disappearance and other inhuman acts, constituting war crimes where the acts were committed after the start of the armed conflict.

The Human Rights Council will consider the Commission's 11th report (A/HRC/31/68) during its 31st session in March. Among the report's findings are that Syria is on the brink of collapse, humanitarian space is shrinking, denial of humanitarian access and other forms of deprivation are being used as instruments of war to force surrender or to extract political concessions, and an inadequate international protection response has meant that civilians pay the price of "the horrors of war". The Commission recommends that the Security Council include regular briefings by the Commission as part of its formal agenda and that it take appropriate action by referring the situation to the ICC or an ad hoc tribunal.

Key Issues

The essential issue for the Council—entering the sixth year of a war that has exacted a death toll of 470,000, injured one million and displaced half of the Syrian population, including 4.7 million refugees—is to build on the momentum of resolutions 2254 and 2268, and the agreements reached by the ISSG, and exert effective leadership in supporting a cessation of violence and efforts to implement a political solution.

Options

The ISSG and resolutions 2254 and 2268 have identified roles for the Security Council in the event that talks in 2016 produce concrete results towards a national ceasefire and a parallel political process. How such a ceasefire would be monitored would require more consideration by the Council. On 18 January, de Mistura provided the outline of what the UN is planning in terms of a "light touch" option, based out of Damascus, whereby national counterparts would call in violations that could be investigated by a small group of UN personnel. If future security conditions permit, a further option might be a strengthened international role. However, more recently, the Secretary-General has said that under current conditions it would be difficult to envisage any deployment of UN monitors. In the near

Syria (con't)

term, any party to the cessation of hostilities will be able to bring a violation to the attention of the ISSG ceasefire task force—either through de Mistura's office or directly to Russia or the US as co-chairs.

Council Dynamics

There is unanimity in the Council on the importance of lowering overall levels of violence, improving the humanitarian situation and putting a political process in place. However, it is unclear to many Council members whether the cessation of hostilities agreement and the adoption of resolution 2268 is a pivotal moment in the trajectory of the Syrian

conflict, or whether the momentum will falter.

Regarding the cessation of hostilities agreement, some Council members have observed that the government will be able to argue that their military operations are targeting terrorists, whereas opposition groups will not be able to make similar claims. A few Council members have reservations about whether the delineation of territory by the ISSG will sufficiently restrain how counter-terrorism airstrikes will be conducted. There is significant concern that opposition groups which are not designated terrorist groups, but may cooperate tactically with Al-Nusra or are located near Al-Nusra positions, will be

subject to attack, placing the cessation of hostilities agreement on an uncertain foundation.

Most outcomes on the Syria political track are agreed between Russia and the US prior to seeking agreement by the broader Council, as was the case with resolutions 2254 and 2268. Egypt, New Zealand and Spain lead on humanitarian issues. Egypt has been consistent in cautioning against “politicising” the humanitarian track, while New Zealand and Spain have argued that when the devastating humanitarian situation on the ground impacts political talks, it is impossible to keep the two tracks separate. France and the UK are also active in calling for meetings and drafting texts.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council plans to adopt a resolution renewing the mandate of UNAMA, which expires on 17 March. It will also 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.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Afghanistan remains dire, with the Taliban carrying out a spate of attacks in Kabul and other parts of the country in early 2016, causing high levels of casualties to civilians and security forces. On 1 January, the Taliban exploded a bomb and engaged in a firefight at a restaurant in Kabul, leading to the death of a child and wounding 15 others. On 4 January, a bomb-filled truck exploded at a facility for workers in Kabul, killing one civilian and injuring another 22 civilians. A Taliban suicide bomber attacked a bus carrying media personnel in Kabul on 20 January, killing seven people and wounding more than 20; Council members issued a press statement condemning that attack. On 26 January, in Uruzgun province in

south-central Afghanistan, a police officer allied with the Taliban poisoned ten of his co-workers, who were then shot to death by the Taliban. A police facility in Kabul was struck by a suicide bomber on 1 February, resulting in the deaths of more than 20 police officers. On 8 February, three people died as a result of a suicide bombing in Mazari Sharif in northern Balkh province.

In recent months, the Taliban has engaged in heavy fighting with Afghan security forces in southern Helmand Province, as well as in the northern provinces of Baglan and Kunduz. On 9 February, the US military announced that it would deploy several hundred troops to Helmand to assist and train Afghan security forces.

Militants affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) remain a security threat in Afghanistan, especially in eastern Nangarhar province. On 13 January, they attacked an Afghan government facility near Pakistan's consulate in Jalalabad, resulting in the deaths of seven Afghan security personnel.

Leila Zerrougui, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, visited Afghanistan from 13 to 17 February. While there, she expressed concern at the significant rise in the recruitment of child soldiers during 2015, primarily

by armed groups, including the Taliban. On 17 February, Human Rights Watch reported that in Kunduz province “the Taliban has increasingly used madrasas, or Islamic religious schools, to provide military training to children between the ages of 13 and 17, many of whom have been deployed in combat”.

There has been very limited progress regarding reconciliation. The Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QGC)—consisting of Afghan, Chinese, Pakistani and US officials—convened on 11 January in Islamabad, Pakistan, to discuss how to chart a course for negotiations with the Taliban, who were not present at these discussions. On 23 February, the QGC reconvened in Kabul, again without the Taliban present, announcing that direct talks would be held in early March in Islamabad between representatives of the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. The Taliban's commitment to the talks is questionable, with some key figures against negotiations and other key figures placing conditions on negotiations such as the departure of foreign troops.

On 18 January, Afghanistan's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) announced that provincial and district council elections would be held on 15 October. The decision has been criticised by some in the national unity government, who believe that electoral

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2210 (16 March 2015) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2016. **Security Council Letter S/2015/713** (15 September 2015) contained the report of the Tripartite Review Commission on the UN in Afghanistan. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7591** (21 December 2015) was a debate on UNAMA. **Security Council Press Statement SC/12215** (21 January 2016) condemned the fatal attack in Kabul on a minibus carrying media workers. **Sanctions Committee Document S/2015/648** (18 August 2015) was the sixth report of the 1988 Committee's Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

Useful Additional Resource Martine van Bijlert, *Political Landscape: The IEC Announces 2016 Election Date—but what about electoral reform?* Afghanistan Analysts Network, 18 January 2016; available at <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-iec-announces-an-election-date/>

Afghanistan (con't)

reforms must take place prior to the elections. For example, some question the IEC's legitimacy and advocate the replacement of its members, in part because of its handling of the 2014 presidential elections, which were marred by accusations of malfeasance.

Haysom last briefed the Council during the 21 December 2015 debate on Afghanistan. He said that the war was hindering attempts to produce the political and economic progress needed to ensure stability in the country.

Human Rights-Related Developments

UNAMA, in coordination with the UN Human Rights Office, released its 2015 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict on 14 February. The report documented 11,002 civilian casualties (3,545 deaths and 7,457 injuries) in 2015, exceeding by 4 percent the previous record levels of civilian casualties that occurred in 2014. Anti-government elements continued to cause the most harm, accounting for 62 percent of all civilian casualties. Ground engagements caused the highest number of total civilian casualties, followed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and suicide and complex attacks. The Human Rights Council will consider the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and on the achievements of technical assistance in the field of human rights in 2015 (A/HRC/31/46) during its 31st session in March.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is how the deteriorating security situation can be addressed, its negative impact on the country's stability and the toll the conflict is taking on the civilian population.

A related issue is whether it is possible to generate momentum for reconciliation efforts, given the fragmentation of the insurgency.

Considering the security and political

difficulties facing the country, another important issue is ensuring that UNAMA effectively discharges its mandate, which covers a wide array of tasks, including exercising good offices, promoting human rights and the rule of law, coordinating humanitarian assistance and donor support and countering narcotics. In September 2015, the Tripartite Review Commission—which included representatives of the donor community, the UN and the government of Afghanistan and which was formed to examine the UN's role in Afghanistan—highlighted the importance of UNAMA's work in the country and observed that Afghanistan “continue[s] to demand significant international assistance...to achieve political and economic stability and security”.

Options

The most likely option for the Council is to renew UNAMA's mandate for an additional year. In doing so, the Council may consider:

- underscoring the need for the international community to continue to support Afghanistan, including through military commitments expected at NATO's July 2016 Warsaw Summit and financial commitments anticipated at the Brussels Conference in October 2016;
- emphasising the linkages between extremism on the one hand and drug production and illegal exploitation of natural resources (e.g. talcum, marble and gold) on the other hand, in keeping with the findings of the recent report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team;
- emphasising the need to improve efforts to prevent the transfer of small arms and light weapons to the Taliban and to trace the flow of IED components to them;

- expressing concern at the increasing presence and potential growth of ISIS affiliates in Afghanistan; and
- highlighting the importance of electoral reforms, given the irregularities in the 2014 presidential elections and the fact that parliamentary elections are scheduled for later this year.

Council Dynamics

Members are broadly supportive of UNAMA's work. However, there is widespread concern about the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and the toll that the conflict continues to inflict on civilians, especially women and children. While the Taliban remains the greatest threat to the country's security, several Council members are expressing alarm at the presence of ISIS in Afghanistan. New Zealand has underscored the devastating impact of IEDs in the conflict, noting in the December 2015 debate that “IEDs remain one of the biggest killers of Afghan security forces and civilians, including children”.

There is also broad emphasis in the Council on the importance of the reconciliation process in bringing stability to Afghanistan. In particular, China and the US have tried to play a supportive role in the mediation process.

Several members continue to be worried about the links between the cultivation of narcotics and their trafficking and terrorist financing, a concern that has been reiterated for several years by France and Russia but that is increasingly voiced by other members as well.

Spain is the penholder on Afghanistan, while New Zealand chairs the 1988 Taliban sanctions committee.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In March, Special Coordinator for Lebanon Sigrid Kaag and the Department of Peacekeeping Affairs will brief Council members in consultations on the Secretary-General's

report on the implementation of resolution 1701, which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006.

The mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) expires on 31 August.

Key Recent Developments

The current situation in UNIFIL's area of operations could be described as relatively calm but fragile. There were two serious violations of resolution 1701 and several other

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON **Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/2236 (21 August 2015) extended the mandate of UNIFIL for one year. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory and free and fair presidential elections. **Security Council Presidential Statement** S/PRST/2015/7 (19 March 2015) addressed, among other things, the situation along the Blue Line; the vacancy in the presidential office; and the effects of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, including the challenges posed by hosting nearly 1.2 million refugees, and it expressed support for the LAF, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and the International Support Group for Lebanon. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2015/837 (4 November 2015) was on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701. S/2015/764 (7 October 2015) was on implementation of resolution 1559.

Lebanon (con't)

minor incidents. The most recent was on 4 January when two Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) vehicles were attacked south of the Blue Line, established in 2000 to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, in the general area of Sheb'a Farms. Hezbollah fighters set off a bomb, and Israeli forces responded with artillery fire. Hezbollah said in a statement that the attack was carried out by a group that it named after Samir Qantar, a prominent commander who was killed in Damascus by an Israeli air strike on 20 December, after which it had vowed to retaliate.

On the evening of Qantar's killing, UNIFIL radars detected three rockets fired towards Israel from the general area of Al Hinnayah in southern Lebanon. The IDF informed UNIFIL that two rockets had impacted northern Israel and a third had fallen into the sea. The IDF retaliated with approximately eight rounds of mortar fire that impacted near Zibqin in southern Lebanon. No casualties were reported on either side. UNIFIL head Major General Luciano Portolano called the incident a violation of resolution 1701 directed at undermining stability in the area.

Tensions between Israel and Hezbollah remain high. In a televised address on 17 February, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah threatened to attack Israeli gas facilities, which could result in the deaths of up to 800,000 people. Nasrallah said the group has the capability to strike ammonia gas storage tanks in Haifa if the confrontation with Israel escalates, adding that "Israel knows Hezbollah has missiles and rockets that can strike anywhere in its territory".

Meanwhile, Lebanon continues to be affected by regional developments and the effects of tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran reverberating throughout the region. On 19 February, Saudi Arabia suspended a \$3 billion aid package for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to buy arms from France in what a Saudi official described as retaliation for Beirut's failure to condemn attacks on Saudi missions in Iran. The decision came after Lebanese Foreign Minister Gibran Bassil refused to support Saudi resolutions condemning Iran during two meetings of Arab and Muslim foreign ministers. Saudi Arabia has also cancelled the remainder of \$1 billion in aid that it had earmarked for Lebanon's

internal security service. (Saudi Arabia had pledged the aid package in 2013. The first shipment of equipment was delivered to Lebanon in April 2014 to support the LAF in its fight against Islamist militants infiltrating from neighbouring Syria.) Following the Saudi announcement that it was halting the aid, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on 20 February declared its "full support" for the decision, urged the Lebanese government to "reconsider its positions and policies", and expressed its "deep regret" that Lebanese policy had become "hostage to the interests of external regional powers".

The Saudi move shook an already splintered Lebanese political field. Lebanese Justice Minister Ashraf Rifi resigned from the cabinet on 21 February, saying Hezbollah was harming Beirut's relations with Arab countries. "There is an armed party that is dominating the government's decisions", Rifi said. "I call upon the government to at least apologize to the (Saudi) kingdom, its leadership and people".

On 22 February, Lebanon's cabinet met in emergency session on the Saudi decision. In a statement following the meeting, Prime Minister Tammam Salam insisted that Beirut stood by Arab countries and said that it was necessary to rectify relations between Lebanon and its "brothers", to "remove the stains" that had surfaced recently. He added that Lebanon would maintain its policy of disassociation from regional conflicts. Salam announced that he would head a ministerial committee to visit GCC states to reassure them that Lebanon's foreign policy respects its ties with Arab nations. However, the following day Saudi Arabia, along with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, issued travel warnings for their citizens in Lebanon, urging them to leave the country. On 24 February, Kuwait and Qatar followed suit.

Lebanon continues to face grave challenges. The country's parliament has not been able to elect a new head of state, and the country has been without a president since May 2014. The resultant power vacuum and intensified sectarian divisions have impaired Lebanon's capacity to deal with the political and social challenges it is facing. Fighting along the border with Syria and an inflow of more than 1.2 million registered refugees have placed additional burdens on the country's stability.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The Human Rights Council will consider the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Lebanon (A/HRC/31/5) and the report of the special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/HRC/31/18/Add.1), during its 31st session in March. The special rapporteur's report found that people in Lebanon are free to practice their religions and beliefs. Its recommendations include the need to reform the structural discrimination of religious family courts and develop a legal framework in accordance with international norms and standards for refugees fleeing religious persecution. The Working Group's report contained 219 recommendations including abolishing the death penalty; taking further measures to eradicate discrimination against women; ratifying the Rome Statute of the ICC; and establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles.

Key Issues

An increasingly worrying issue is the paralysis of the Lebanese parliament and its inability to elect a president, which threatens Lebanon's stability. A related issue is how the Saudi-Iran confrontation may exacerbate existing sectarianism and further fracture the domestic political field.

An ongoing issue for the Council is the increasing involvement of Hezbollah and other non-state actors in the Syrian conflict and how this may draw Lebanon into more frequent confrontation with Israel, as in the instance of Israel's killing of Qantar in Syria. Lebanon's burden in hosting more than 1.2 million registered refugees from Syria is of deep concern as well.

Options

As Lebanon is approaching two years without a president, the Council could consider issuing a strong message (a resolution or a statement) encouraging political actors to elect a president. Such a message could address concerns about the situation along the Blue Line and urge parties to ensure that the cessation of hostilities is sustained. The Council could also reiterate its call on all Lebanese parties to recommit to Lebanon's policy of disassociation from the Syrian crisis, consistent with their commitment in the Baabda Declaration in June 2012.

Receiving the briefing and taking no action is also an option.

Council Dynamics

The Council has been united in its position that UNIFIL contributes to stability between

Lebanon (con't)

Israel and Lebanon, especially considering the current Syrian crisis. A comprehensive presidential statement of 19 March 2015 outlined the main issues on which the Council is in agreement. Though the statement

was issued one year ago, the range of concerns remains the same. Council consensus includes its support for Lebanon's territorial integrity and security, its condemnation of acts of terrorism on Lebanese territory and

its recognition of the crucial role of the LAF in responding to security challenges.

France is the penholder on Lebanon.

Liberia

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council is expecting a briefing from Farid Zarif, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), on the Secretary-General's midterm report and other recent developments. In addition, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), chair of the Liberia Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, may brief.

Key Recent Developments

The 2014 Ebola crisis focused the Council's discussion of Liberia primarily on the effects of the epidemic on the country. With the gradual containment of the epidemic in the last months of 2015, the discussion in the Council has shifted towards the planned drawdown of UNMIL. When it last discussed Liberia in September 2015, the Council adopted resolution 2239, effectively setting 30 June as the date when Liberian authorities should take over security responsibilities from UNMIL. The resolution mandated the continued drawdown of UNMIL to a total of 1,240 military and 606 police personnel by this deadline. Pending the impact on the security situation, the Council could decide on the withdrawal of UNMIL and a transition to another form of UN presence in the country.

Despite the deadline, there are some doubts regarding the capacity of the Liberian authorities to handle the transition within the timeframe. There are a number of legislative reforms in the security sector that the legislature has not passed. The most notable among these are bills on the police, the immigration service and firearms and ammunition control. Moreover, the Liberian government has struggled to secure adequate funding for transition activities in light of the economic slowdown and a drop in global commodity prices. Initially,

the government estimated the cost of the transition at \$104 million. Later, the government reduced the estimated funding needs to \$38 million, without revising any of the set criteria and planned activities. Out of this sum the government could only secure \$10 million. The inadequate financial resources for the transition leaves Liberia in a precarious position and possibly dependent on donor contributions.

During the Joint Council of Chiefs and Elders meeting between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire held in January, the issue of the withdrawal of UNMIL was raised by the Ivorian President, Alassane Ouattara. He said that he would ask the UN Secretary-General to extend UNMIL's mandate until after Liberia's elections in 2017. On 29 January, Ouattara and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf sent a joint letter to the Secretary-General containing this request. Following Ouattara's comments, Liberian defence minister Brownie Samukai reaffirmed the readiness of Liberian security forces for the transition, while guaranteeing that the military will not interfere in the election process or its outcome. However, he noted that an international presence during elections in Liberia would be of great importance, considering the process of handover from one administration to another.

On 14 January, the World Health Organization declared Liberia free of Ebola but cautioned that new outbreaks were still possible. Liberia has been declared Ebola-free on two previous occasions, but the disease returned. However, this is the first time since the outbreak of the epidemic that all three of the most-affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) are Ebola-free.

Sanctions-Related Developments

Though limited in scope, the sanctions regime for Liberia remains active. The Council significantly reduced sanctions measures when it adopted

resolution 2237 in September 2015. The resolution renewed the arms embargo for non-state actors while terminating the travel ban and asset-freeze measures. On 12 November, US President Barack Obama signed an executive order lifting US sanctions on Liberia, citing the significant progress the country has made.

Key Issues

The most prominent issue for the Council is maintaining stability in Liberia amid the imminent UNMIL drawdown, as well as the possible modification or termination of the sanctions regime.

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.

Options

Council members are unlikely to take action on Liberia in March. In light of UNMIL's upcoming drawdown, Council members could begin their thinking about possible modifications to the mission's mandate that could be incorporated during the renewal in September.

With no scheduled meetings on UNMIL until September, the Council could also request additional briefings in the months leading up to the start of the transition in June in order to keep abreast of developments on the ground.

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBERIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2239 (17 September 2015) authorised a further drawdown of UNMIL to 1,240 military personnel and 606 police by 30 June 2016. S/RES/2237 (2 September 2015) renewed the arms embargo on non-state actors for nine months but terminated the asset freeze and travel ban. **Secretary-General's Report S/2016/169** (22 February 2016) was on UNMIL. **Peacebuilding Commission Document Chairperson's Summary**, 2 December 2015.

Liberia (con't)

Council and Wider Dynamics

With the Ebola epidemic officially contained, the Council seems to be solely focused on the upcoming drawdown of UNMIL. Council members seem to be unanimous in their support for the mission's drawdown and the transition of security responsibilities to the Liberian authorities. This view was reaffirmed in September 2015, when the Council adopted resolution 2239. Support for the drawdown also comes from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which has maintained this position for some time now. There seems to be a prevailing view in

DPKO that UNMIL's drawdown is overdue, considering that the mission has lasted more than 13 years and that the country has been relatively stable for several years. DPKO and the Council seem to share the view that there are more urgent conflict situations to which peacekeeping resources could be applied.

With the transition approaching in June, Liberian authorities seem to be confident in their ability to take over security responsibilities from UNMIL. Council members will have the opportunity to get a better understanding of the transition process in August when the regular report of the Secretary-General on

UNMIL is expected to be published. Resolution 2239 also requested the Secretary-General to conduct an assessment mission to Liberia and provide recommendations for the Council by November. Council members' approach to UNMIL's mandate renewal in September will be contingent on findings in the next Secretary-General's report, while recommendations from the assessment mission due in November will be instrumental to discussions on possible reconfiguration of the mission.

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

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In March, the Secretary-General is due to submit his semi-annual report on the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The Council is scheduled to hold a debate, with a briefing by the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Sandra Honoré.

MINUSTAH's mandate expires on 15 October.

Key Recent Developments

Despite the consistent urging of the international community, Haiti failed to hold presidential elections to appoint a successor to Michel Martelly before his term ended on 7 February. The second round of the elections was called off at two days' notice, leading to the installation of an interim president on 14 February.

The second round had initially been scheduled for 27 December 2015, but was postponed in response to accusations by the opposition of widespread fraud and irregularities in the first round on 25 October. In a field of 54 candidates, the government-backed candidate, Jovenel Moïse, received the most votes, with 32.76 percent, while the second-most votes went to opposition candidate Jude Célestin, with 25.29 percent.

In response to opposition-led calls for an independent investigation of the 25 October results, Martelly on 22 December created an

electoral evaluation commission. That same day, Security Council members issued a press statement on the importance of holding elections as a critical element of Haiti's development and called on stakeholders to bring the electoral process to conclusion in accordance with the constitutional timeframe, including the inauguration of a new president by 7 February. They took note of the creation of the commission and expressed support for initiatives to increase the transparency and credibility of the electoral process, while calling on all actors to refrain from any violence or other provocations.

The commission's report, released on 2 January, concluded that a number of serious irregularities had taken place during the first round and made recommendations for improving the process, but did not call for any changes to the elections schedule. In a 4 January statement, Honoré and members of the international core group based in Port-au-Prince—Brazil, Canada, France, Spain, the US, the EU and the Organization of American States (OAS)—took note of the report and asked all relevant parties to take the necessary measures to ensure a peaceful transfer of power on 7 February.

The Provisional Electoral Council (Conseil Electoral Provisoire, or CEP) announced on 5 January that the second round of the presidential elections would be held on 24 January,

along with parliamentary elections for the 22 constituencies where the results of the 9 August 2015 first round had been cancelled and country-wide local elections. It affirmed that this would provide enough time for results to be certified by 7 February. In a 7 January statement, the OAS electoral observer mission in Haiti welcomed the setting of a date and appealed to the two candidates to fully participate in the electoral process. It also noted that despite irregularities in the first round, "the information gathered by the OAS on the ground did not show inconsistencies with the final result presented by the CEP in terms of which two candidates go to the run-off".

Meanwhile, the creation of the electoral evaluation commission and steps taken to implement the commission's recommendations did not seem to appease the opposition. A group of eight opposition candidates, including Célestin, called for the creation of a provisional government to complete the election process and the resignation of the CEP, while Célestin said he would boycott the 24 January elections. Demonstrations turned increasingly violent, with protesters attacking electoral offices, erecting burning roadblocks and shattering windows. Despite calls by the OAS, the UN, the US and others for the second round to proceed as planned, it was cancelled at the last minute when it became clear that Célestin would not participate. The

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI Security Council Resolution S/RES/2243 (14 October 2015) renewed MINUSTAH's mandate until 15 October 2016. **Secretary-General's Report S/2015/667** (31 August 2015) was the most recent MINUSTAH report. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7530** (8 October 2015) was the Council's last debate on Haiti. **Security Council Press Statements SC/12229** (29 January 2016) expressed concern about the postponement of the elections. **SC/12183** (22 December 2015) called for the conclusion of the electoral process by 7 February.

Haiti (con't)

CEP on 22 January announced the indefinite postponement of the elections following the adoption by the senate on 20 January of a resolution to suspend the second round. Subsequently, at the request of Martelly, the OAS decided on 27 January to send a mission to Haiti to help resolve the stalemate.

At the initiative of the US, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El Ghassim Wane briefed Council members on 28 January on the situation in consultations. In a subsequent press statement, they expressed their “strong concern regarding the developments leading to the indefinite postponement of the final round of elections in Haiti”, and “strongly urged” relevant actors to reach an agreement by 7 February on a road map for the conclusion of the electoral cycle in “a free, fair, inclusive and transparent contest”. They also urged all political actors to remain calm and refrain from any violence.

Subsequently, Martelly and the leaders of the two chambers of parliament reached an agreement on 5 February to secure “constitutional continuity” at the end of the presidential term. As a first step, Martelly resigned on 7 February as required by the constitution, and then on 14 February parliament elected Jocelerme Privert, an opposition senator and former cabinet member under President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to serve as interim president for a maximum period of 120 days, until the holding of elections. The agreement stipulated that the interim president should nominate a new consensus prime minister to replace Evans Paul and appoint a new electoral council, with elections preliminarily scheduled for 24 April and the inauguration of the new president projected for 14 May. On 25 February, Privert announced the appointment of Fritz Jean, an economist, as the new prime minister. At press time, consultations on the selection of the new members of the CEP were ongoing.

The humanitarian situation seemed to deteriorate even further as Haiti entered its third consecutive year of drought, exacerbated by El Niño. The World Food Programme said on 9 February that the number of people facing severe food insecurity had doubled to 1.5 million since last year and that because of

poor harvests the country was facing its worst food crisis since 2011. Also, OCHA reported in January that the number of reported cholera cases had increased by 24 percent from 2014 to 2015, with 36,045 cases and 322 deaths.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The independent expert on the human rights situation in Haiti, Gustavo Gallón, visited the country from 22 February to 1 March to assess the political situation and its implications for human rights as well as prison conditions. The Human Rights Council will consider the report of the independent expert (A/HRC/31/77), during its 31st session in March.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is the continued risk of instability and violence associated with the electoral process, as well as the risk of further delays, in particular if disputes continue over the results of the first round of the presidential elections.

On the security side, a key issue is the capacity-building of the Haitian National Police. A further issue is the implications of the electoral crisis for MINUSTAH and the planning process for the anticipated future reconfiguration of the UN presence.

Options

One option for the Council is to simply hold the debate and for Council members to express their views in national statements.

A further option is to adopt a presidential statement to signal that the situation is being closely watched by the Council and reiterate the importance of bringing the electoral process to a conclusion without any further delays, while noting an intention to review the UN presence by 15 October with a view to withdrawing the military contingent. Such a statement would also provide an opportunity for the Council to provide additional guidance to the Secretary-General on the planned strategic assessment of MINUSTAH.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are united in their frustration and disappointment over the postponement of the second round of the presidential elections. It seems that most members agree

with the view expressed by the US, the UN and others that the elections scheduled for 24 January should not have been cancelled, given international electoral observers’ assessment that the irregularities reported in the first round had not altered the final outcome. Donor countries are also concerned about the additional costs caused by the delays.

With regard to the security situation, Council members were pleased to note that Wane in his briefing on 28 January said that the Haitian police had been able to handle the recent election-related protests without any operational assistance from MINUSTAH. While it is understood that there will be no changes in the mission before the end of the current mandate, there is still some frustration that the postponement of the elections will lead to a similar delay in the preparations and planning for the reconfiguration and eventual drawdown foreseen when the Council renewed MINUSTAH’s mandate last October in resolution 2243.

The resolution requested the Secretary-General to dispatch a strategic assessment mission to Haiti, which would present recommendations on the future presence and role of the UN in Haiti “preferably by 90 days after the inauguration of the new President and ideally after the formation of a new government”. On the basis of the new election schedule, this means that the Secretary-General’s recommendations are now due in mid-August instead of early May, which is much later than some Council members had wanted. When MINUSTAH’s mandate was last renewed, France and the UK, which have argued for a while that the mission’s military contingent should be withdrawn as soon as possible, pushed unsuccessfully to include a provision that would have indicated the Council’s intention to review MINUSTAH by June 2016 and, depending on the situation on the ground, authorise a further drawdown. However, the continued uncertainty surrounding the elections schedule seems to have vindicated those Council members who have consistently cautioned against a premature drawdown of the mission.

The US is the penholder on MINUSTAH.

Peacebuilding

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution that will be identical to a General Assembly resolution on the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture.

The co-facilitators of the review process appointed by the Council and the General Assembly, Angola and Australia, respectively, are likely to address the Council before the vote.

Key Recent Developments

On 29 June 2015, the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE), a seven-person group appointed by the Secretary-General, submitted to member states their report, titled “The Challenges of Sustaining Peace”, culminating the first of a two-phase process for the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture. This review had been mandated by the Council and the General Assembly for the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

The overarching thesis of the AGE report was that there must be a broader understanding of peacebuilding. The AGE contended that peacebuilding is not just a post-conflict activity as is the common understanding, but that peacebuilding also occurs before and during conflict. For this reason, it is an activity at the core of the UN’s work. The report suggests that the term “sustaining peace” could be more appropriate than “peacebuilding”. A narrow understanding and a lack of commitment to peacebuilding has manifested itself in the underfunding of peacebuilding and neglect of conflict prevention. Another key conclusion is that peacebuilding efforts have been hindered by fragmentation among the UN’s intergovernmental organs, the Secretariat and the wider UN system.

The AGE report noted that in the past the Council used an all-encompassing definition, saying in a 2001 presidential statement, “peacebuilding is aimed at preventing the outbreak, the recurrence or the continuation of armed conflict ... [that] requires short- and long-term actions tailored to address the particular needs of societies sliding into conflict or emerging from it.”

The AGE report’s recommendations included proposals to strengthen the PBC’s impact, in particular by having it become an advisory “bridge” to address the fragmentation among the Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The PBC’s ability to carry out this role will particularly depend on a greater commitment from the Council. The report recommended, for example, that the Council draw on the PBC’s advice regarding peacebuilding aspects of peace operations’ mandates; that the PBC diversify its working methods to consider a broader range of countries; and that the PBC become more involved in conflict prevention.

To address peacebuilding’s under-funding, the AGE proposed that 1 percent of the value of total UN budgets for peace operations or \$100 million (whichever is greater) be provided annually to the PBF from assessed contributions. It also recommended that assessed contributions be provided for programmatic dimensions of peace operations’ mandates, such as rule of law and security sector reform, which currently rely on voluntary contributions. Among other elements, the report emphasised the importance of “inclusive” national ownership to prevent conflict relapse and the need for enhanced cooperation between the PBC, regional and subregional organisations and international financial institutions.

The submission of the report triggered the review’s second phase, an intergovernmental process for member states to consider the AGE report’s analysis and recommendations and convert them into policy decisions for concurrent Council and General Assembly resolutions. The Council and the General Assembly appointed Angola and Australia as co-facilitators of this intergovernmental process, which began in October 2015 and was initially scheduled for completion by December 2015. The co-facilitators proposed in November an extension until March 2016, coinciding with Angola’s Council presidency. Following consultations with regional groups and member states, Angola and Australia circulated a draft resolution in December. Negotiations on the text have been ongoing among the full UN membership since mid-January,

and a Council open debate on the review was held on 23 February.

Developments in the PBC

The PBC’s six country-specific configurations are Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Amidst Burundi’s worsening violence after President Pierre Nkurunziza was elected for a third term, Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), the chair of the Burundi configuration, travelled to Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania from 9 to 14 November 2015 and to Burundi, Rwanda and AU headquarters in Addis Ababa from 15 to 20 February 2016. While in Burundi on 9 November, Lauber briefed the Council via video teleconference during a Council urgent session on the situation.

The Guinea-Bissau configuration issued three statements between August 2015 and February 2016 during that country’s prolonged political crisis on the need for political leaders to resolve the impasse.

The PBC held a rare meeting on a non-PBC agenda country on 15 September 2015, with the president of Burkina Faso’s national electoral commission briefing on electoral preparations.

Ambassador Macharia Kamau (Kenya) was elected PBC Chair on 3 February.

Key Issues

Concluding negotiations on the draft resolution will be a priority. Differences during negotiations have been over funding for peacebuilding, Council-PBC relations and elements introduced by the AGE report regarding inclusivity, conflict prevention, the PBC’s mandate and a common understanding of “sustaining peace”.

Options

The Council and the General Assembly may adopt concurrent resolutions in March, or may continue negotiations if more time is necessary to reach consensus.

On the AGE’s funding recommendations, the resolution may emphasise the need for predictable and sustained financing of peacebuilding, while asking the Secretary-General to provide options for funding peacebuilding activities in a future report that could also include an update on carrying forward recommendations of the review.

Council and Wider Dynamics

During the preparation of the AGE report, there was an effort to ensure coherence with

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEBUILDING Security Council Resolutions S/RES/1947 (29 October 2010) welcomed the report on the first five-year review of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture and called for a further review in 2015. S/RES/1645 (20 December 2005) created the PBC and the PBF. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2001/5 (20 February 2001) was on a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding. Secretary-General’s Report S/2015/490 (29 June 2015) was the Advisory Group of Experts’ report for the 2015 review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. Security Council Letter S/2014/911 (15 December 2014) contained the terms of reference for the 2015 peacebuilding review. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7629 (23 February 2016) was an open debate on peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding (con't)

the two other major review processes in 2015—the reviews of peace operations and the review of the implementation of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The co-facilitators have similarly sought to ensure such coherence. The initial draft resolution prepared by the co-facilitators comprehensively reflected the report's main themes and recommendations. However, on the predictably contentious issue of financing, they avoided concrete decisions by calling for a Secretary-General's report in two years that would contain funding options for peacebuilding.

Regarding the report's funding recommendations, the UN's large financial contributors—such as the P5, Japan and Germany, which would be most affected by new assessed contributions—do not support the proposals. They have argued that assessed contributions for the PBF could result in weakening what is

considered the most successful entity of the UN's peacebuilding architecture, since this would create an oversight role for the Fifth Committee and likely reduce the PBF's flexibility and nimbleness. Part of the co-facilitators' reasoning to seek further funding options from the Secretary-General was that the AGE report offered only one option. A stronger case could therefore be made for assessed contributions if this idea is determined to be the best of available options.

On Council-PBC relations, the P5 believe that the Council should not be forced to engage with the PBC through a prescriptive resolution. They argue that the Council will engage with the PBC naturally as the PBC demonstrates its added value. Other members argue that the PBC can only show its impact if the Council becomes more committed to working with it. Tension has long

existed between the P5 and the PBC in part due to a perception that countries such as Brazil, Germany and Japan want to use the PBC to have a greater influence on peace and security issues, which the P5 view as the prerogative of the Security Council.

Russia has appeared to be resistant to some of the ideas introduced by the AGE report, including expanding the PBC's original mandate. Co-facilitator Angola has been trying to create support for the text from Non-Aligned Movement states, as some of this groupings' members have also expressed concerns over some of the report's concepts for peacebuilding, such as the impact of conflict prevention on sovereignty. EU members have additionally had difficulty developing common positions, particularly over funding and Council-PBC relations.

Somalia

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council is due to extend the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) before the current mandate expires on 30 March.

Key Recent Developments

On 28 January, Michael Keating, the Secretary-General's new Special Representative for Somalia, who succeeded Nicholas Kay in January, and Francisco Caetano José Madeira, the new Special Representative of the AU for Somalia and head of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), briefed the Council. The day before, the Somali government announced that it had made a decision on the model for the electoral process. According to the so-called Mogadishu Declaration agreed by the National Consultative Forum on 16 December 2015, the electoral model should have been presented at a ceremony in Kisumu on 10 January. The delay in reaching an agreement had caused concern among Somalia's international partners, who had called for a decision to be made before the 28 January

Council meeting, but up until the last minute it was unclear whether this would happen.

In his briefing, Keating referred to the decision on the electoral model as a watershed moment. He said that the model entailed a lower house of 275 members, based on the 4.5 power-sharing formula, which gives an equal share to each of the four major clans while a coalition of smaller clans gets half a share, and an upper house of 54 members, based on equal representation of the federal member states and the allocation of additional seats to Puntland and Somaliland. He stressed, however, that much work remained to agree on details regarding implementation of the model, and a political road map for the period 2016 to 2020 with universal elections as the end goal. He noted the importance of continued international support, including from the Council.

Madeira also welcomed progress on the political front, but referring to the two most recent attacks by the Islamist rebel group Al-Shabaab—the 15 January attack against the AMISOM base in El-Adde and the 22 January attack against a restaurant in Mogadishu,

which were condemned in two separate Council press statements—he acknowledged that the security situation remained difficult and that AMISOM's capacity was overstretched. In order to strengthen implementation of AMISOM's mandate, Madeira called for enhanced international support for the creation of a capable, legitimate and inclusive Somali National Army (SNA); better coordination among AMISOM, UNSOM and the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS); and the provision of additional enablers to the mission, such as helicopters.

He announced that the AU would organise a summit meeting for the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) to discuss command and control issues, the provision of additional enablers and enhanced overall coordination. The meeting was held on 28 February. In addition, highlighting the funding gap resulting from the EU's decision to cut the allowances for uniformed personnel by 20 percent as of 1 January, Madeira urged the Council to consider alternative funding mechanisms to support AMISOM, including financial

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2244](#) (23 October 2015) renewed the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group's mandate. [S/RES/2232](#) (28 July 2015) extended UNSOM's mandate until 30 March 2016 and re-authorised AMISOM through 30 May 2016. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7626](#) (18 February 2016) was the briefing on the work of the Sanctions Committee. [S/PV.7614](#) (28 January 2016) was the briefing by Keating and Madeira. [Secretary-General's Report S/2016/27](#) (8 January 2016) was the most recent quarterly report on Somalia. [Security Council Press Statements SC/12226](#) (28 January 2016) welcomed the decision on an electoral model. [SC/12216](#) (22 January 2016) condemned the Al-Shabaab attack in Mogadishu. [SC/12205](#) (15 January 2016) condemned the Al-Shabaab attack against AMISOM. [Sanctions Committee Documents S/2015/802](#) (9 October 2015) was the Monitoring Group's latest report on Eritrea. [S/2015/801](#) (9 October 2015) was the Monitoring Group's latest report on Somalia.

Somalia (con't)

support from the UN, individual Council members and other stakeholders.

In a press statement on the day of the meeting, Council members welcomed the decision on an electoral model and the government's commitment to hold an electoral process in 2016, while recalling their expectation that there should be no further extension of the electoral timelines and underlining the importance of completing the electoral process and the constitutional review. They reiterated their condemnation of the recent Al-Shabaab attacks, underlined the importance of continuing offensive operations against the rebel group by AMISOM and the SNA "in a well-coordinated manner and in line with the qualitative improvements requested" in resolution 2232, and welcomed the planned AMISOM TCC meeting. They also stressed the importance of rapidly developing the capacity of the SNA as well as Somali police.

On 18 February, Kenya announced that it had killed Al-Shabaab's deputy commander, Mahad Karate, in an 8 February airstrike, along with 42 other Al-Shabaab fighters. Karate was believed to have played a major role in the 15 January attack against AMISOM. On 19 February, the AU said that Ethiopia and Kenya had offered to deploy helicopters to AMISOM. (The Council has authorised the deployment of up to 12 military helicopters, but at present the mission has none.) It is understood that the offer is for a total of six helicopters.

On 23 and 24 February, the high-level partnership forum met in Istanbul to review progress against the New Deal Compact for Somalia agreed in September 2013. In a communiqué covering all relevant issues, participants underlined among other things the importance of a timely implementation of the electoral process and their strong expectation that there should be no extension of the term limits of the legislature and executive. They urged the government and regional authorities to make every effort to ensure that Puntland would participate in the electoral process. (Puntland has not accepted the electoral model and was not present at the forum.)

The humanitarian situation seemed to deteriorate. On 8 February, the Office of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia said that the food insecurity and malnutrition situation was alarming, with 4.7 million, or almost 40 percent, of the Somali population in need of humanitarian

assistance. It noted that the level of malnutrition was particularly severe among children, with nearly 305,000 acutely malnourished children under the age of five.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 18 February, the chair of the 751/1907 Somalia/Eritrea Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Rafael Darío Ramírez Carreño (Venezuela), briefed the Council on the work of the Committee. In the past, briefings on the work of the Committee have always taken place in consultations, but at the initiative of Venezuela, which has held the chairmanship since 1 January 2015, the briefing was held in public for the first time. The Committee had not met since 9 October 2015, when it discussed the final reports of its Monitoring Group under resolution 2244. In the February briefing, Ramírez focused on the Monitoring Group's findings and also said that the Committee was considering a draft implementation note on the arms embargo, with publication expected in March.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is assessing progress in the implementation of resolution 2232 and whether to make any changes in UNSOM's mandate. In particular, this includes consideration of the implementation of the resolution's provisions regarding UNSOM, such as strengthening the relationship between the mission and AMISOM, and expanding its presence in the rest of the country to support peace and reconciliation efforts and political processes. It also involves assessing progress in the implementation of the "qualitative improvements" referred to in the 28 January press statement aimed at enabling a surge in AMISOM's efficiency, further strengthening the capacity and coordination of Somali security forces and finalising the Somali national security sector architecture.

More generally, immediate key issues include the continuing threat posed by Al-Shabaab, implementation of the recently agreed model for the 2016 electoral process, completion of the new federal structure and constitutional review, the protection of civilians and the alarming humanitarian situation.

On the sanctions front, a key issue is whether the measures against Eritrea should be lifted in light of the absence of any evidence of Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab, as reported by the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group.

Options

The main option for the Council is to adopt

a resolution renewing UNSOM's mandate without any changes either for one year or for a shorter period, and reiterating some of the key points of the high-level partnership forum communiqué.

A further option is to revise the sanctions measures against Eritrea.

At the Sanctions Committee level, one option is to issue an implementation assistance notice on the arms embargo as requested by resolution 2244. Another option is to hold a joint meeting with the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Dae'sh)/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. A further option is for the chair to visit the region.

Council Dynamics

The Council remains largely united on Somalia. At press time negotiations on the resolution renewing UNSOM's mandate had yet to begin, but no changes were expected. However, the resolution was seen as an opportunity to send key messages to Somali leaders about the importance of implementing the electoral process according to the agreed timelines and address other key issues discussed at the recent meeting of the High Level Partnership Forum. It seems the mandate will probably be extended for a full year.

In general, Council members seem particularly concerned about the security situation and the continued strength of Al-Shabaab. This was reflected during the 28 January consultations with Keating, when members raised questions about AMISOM's performance and wanted more information about measures to enhance its effectiveness. The Council may use the upcoming UNSOM resolution to express these concerns and reiterate the need to strengthen efforts aimed at stabilising the security situation, but there will be another opportunity to review the situation in May when the Council is due to adopt a resolution renewing the authorisation of AMISOM.

On the sanctions side, the 18 February briefing on the work of the Committee seemed to show a growing divide between members who believe the Council should consider lifting the measures against Eritrea, such as Angola, China, Russia and Venezuela, and those who remain concerned about Eritrea's other activities in the region and seem to view cooperation with the Monitoring Group as a precondition for any changes in the sanctions regime.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

Expected Council Action

In March, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will brief Council members in consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). The Secretary-General's report is due 21 March. No outcome is expected.

UNDOF was established in 1974 to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria. Its mandate expires on 30 June.

Key Recent Developments

Due to the spillover of the Syrian civil war into UNDOF's area of operations, most UNDOF peacekeepers relocated from the Bravo (Syrian) side to the Alpha (Israeli) side of the ceasefire line in September 2014. The majority of personnel remain based on the Alpha (Israeli) side, resulting in restricted mission mobility and operational capacity. The UNDOF command moved its headquarters to Damascus and some peacekeepers remain on the Syrian side at Mt. Hermon. 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.

The December 2015 UNDOF report detailed how Syrian forces had recaptured some positions from armed opposition groups in the Golan, resulting in a somewhat calmer situation in the central and northern areas of UNDOF's area of operations. In early January, clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups increased as the government launched an offensive to regain ground in the southern part of the mission's area of operations.

The civil war in Syria continues to adversely affect UNDOF's ability to function, and increases the possibility of escalating tensions not only between Israel and Syria but also between Israel and Lebanon due to the overt presence in the Golan of Hezbollah—the

Tehran-backed Lebanese militia fighting on the side of the Syrian regime.

On 19 December 2015, Samir Kuntar—a Lebanese militant affiliated with Hezbollah who headed the “Syrian resistance for the liberation of the occupied Golan”—was killed in Damascus, reportedly by a targeted Israeli airstrike. The head of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, said that Israel carried out the assassination and that Hezbollah would respond. On 20 December, three rockets were launched from southern Lebanon towards Israel and Israel responded with mortar fire. No casualties were reported from the exchange of fire.

This incident was followed by further hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel. On 4 January, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon reported that an Israeli military patrol was attacked near Sheb'a Farms. Hezbollah fighters set off a roadside bomb, and Israeli forces responded with artillery fire. Hezbollah said the attack was carried out in retaliation for Kuntar's assassination.

On 17 February, media reports indicated that Israeli missiles struck a government military facility near Damascus. Israel has maintained that it has a neutral policy vis-à-vis the Syrian crisis except to interdict weapons shipments via Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Nasrallah responded that Hezbollah was not seeking war with Israel, but nevertheless threatened to target ammonia storage tanks in Haifa.

Since Russia commenced airstrikes in Syria in support of President Bashar al-Assad in September 2015, Israel and Russia have made arrangements to avoid clashes of their respective forces operating in Syrian airspace.

Key Issues

Considering the 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.

It is unclear if the recently agreed cessation of hostilities in Syria will sufficiently improve security conditions to allow for the return of UNDOF peacekeepers.

The primary concern for the Council remains the increasing ceasefire violations. The presence of Syrian armed forces and heavy weapons in the area of separation monitored by the mission, Syrian airstrikes, Israeli airstrikes and artillery fire over the ceasefire line are all violations of the disengagement agreement. No military forces other than those of UNDOF are allowed in the area of separation.

Options

UNDOF was established as a Syria-based mission. How it operates is subject to the disengagement agreement, and options remain extremely limited since any change would require agreement by Israel and Syria, which is unlikely to be forthcoming.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Israel and Syria value UNDOF's presence and want to see the return of the mission to the Bravo side. However, the security situation is not conducive to the mission's full redeployment back to the Syrian side of the ceasefire line.

Council members are concerned about armed clashes in the area of operations, as well as the tension between Israel and Syria along the armistice line, which has been exacerbated by the presence of Hezbollah.

The Council has always generally agreed that UNDOF contributes to stability in the region in the absence of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria. However, its liaison function is particularly important now in order to avoid further negative security implications for the region.

Since June 2012, Russia and the US have been the co-penholders on resolutions renewing UNDOF.

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNDOF Security Council Resolution S/RES/2257 (22 December 2015) renewed UNDOF for six months. **Secretary-General's Report S/2015/930** (3 December 2015) was the latest UNDOF report.

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS **Force Commander** Major General Jai Shanker Menon (India); **Size of Mission** 789 troops; **Troop Contributors** Bhutan, Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands

EU-UN Cooperation

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council will hold a meeting on cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations, with a focus on strengthening the partnership with the EU. Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will brief the Council. The Secretary-General may also brief.

No outcome was expected at press time.

Background

Meetings on cooperation between the EU and the UN are starting to become a regular feature of the work of the Council, illustrating the growing importance of this relationship for both organisations. This will be the sixth formal meeting on EU-UN cooperation. With the exception of 2012, the Council has been holding these meetings annually since 2010. The Council formally endorsed the relationship in 2014 when it adopted a presidential statement on cooperation between the EU and the UN. Since 2013, Council members have also met informally on an annual basis with members of the EU Political and Security Committee.

Key Recent Developments

The precarious situation in the Middle East caused by fallout from the Syrian conflict, as well as the refugee crisis in Europe and the heightened threat of terrorism, continue to occupy a great part of the agenda of both the EU and the Council. In 2015, Mogherini frequently visited the UN and met with the Security Council. This demonstrated the growing interaction and relationship between the two organisations in tackling challenges to international peace and security.

In March 2015, Mogherini briefed the Council specifically on cooperation between the EU and the UN. She used this opportunity to reiterate the importance of the partnership with the UN and other regional organisations in dealing with a variety of challenges. Mogherini outlined the main issues faced by the EU, such as the situation in Ukraine, extremism, terrorism and the migration crisis. In addition, Mogherini also spoke about cooperation between the two organisations in peacekeeping and managing the Ebola crisis.

Mogherini was back in New York on 28 April 2015 to attend the Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference and used the opportunity to meet with some Council members, in particular its EU members—France, Lithuania, Spain and the UK. The primary issue during these meetings was migrant smuggling and human trafficking in the Mediterranean, including possible endorsement by the Council of the eventual EU enforcement operation aimed at disrupting “the business model” of the smuggling. The negotiations on the draft to authorise such an operation took several months and a resolution was adopted in October 2015.

Dealing with the escalation of the migration crisis and incidents of migrants’ drowning in the Mediterranean became one of the EU’s main priorities in 2015. On 11 May 2015, Mogherini briefed the Council on the integrated strategy of the EU to address the smuggling of migrants in the Mediterranean. Following the briefing, the Council held an informal interactive dialogue with Mogherini and the AU representative.

In June 2015, the EU authorised EU NAVFOR (renamed Operation Sophia on 28 September), an operation aimed at identifying, capturing and disposing of vessels as well as disabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers. On 9 October, the Council provided legal backing for Operation Sophia by adopting resolution 2240. It authorised member states and regional organisations to inspect and seize vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya if it is suspected and confirmed that they were being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking from Libya.

Though consumed by the migration crisis in 2015, the EU continued its significant diplomatic efforts in Ukraine. The leaders of EU members France and Germany played key roles in reaching the second Minsk agreement in February 2015, which significantly reduced hostilities in eastern Ukraine and created a roadmap for a solution. Pending full implementation of the Minsk agreement, the EU maintains sanctions on Russia because of its involvement in eastern Ukraine. The EU also provides significant financial assistance to Ukraine and maintains the EU Advisory

Mission, whose aim is to assist security sector reforms in Ukraine.

EU coordination and its diplomatic efforts were instrumental in the resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue, which led to agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on 14 July 2015. After verification of Iran’s compliance with the JCPOA on 16 January, the EU lifted all nuclear-related economic sanctions against Iran.

Cooperation between the EU and the UN is most evident in Africa, where the two organisations work together on several peacekeeping issues. The EU provides training for security forces and assists in security sector reform in the Central African Republic (CAR), Mali and Somalia. In 2014, the Council authorised an EU military mission in the CAR with responsibility for security in the Bangui area. The mission ended in March 2015. In Somalia, the EU also provides salaries for the UN-mandated AU Mission to Somalia.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, Mogherini will likely emphasise the importance of dealing with other matters on the agenda of both organisations. These are mainly a political settlement in Syria, establishment of a unity government in Libya, counter-terrorism, countering religious extremism and the Middle East peace process.

Key Issues

Considering the growing number of challenges and threats faced by both the EU and the UN, the main issue is to generate a constructive discussion about cooperation between the two organisations. Another issue is how to strengthen this relationship and make it more effective, especially in situations where there are overlapping agendas.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council has been generally supportive of the cooperation between the UN and the EU. Considering the multitude of threats to international peace and security and the challenges they pose to both the EU and the UN, Council members seem to be eager to hold a meeting with Mogherini.

The Council’s dynamics with the EU have been affected by the rift between Russia and

UN DOCUMENTS ON EU-UN COOPERATION Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2240 (9 October 2015) authorised the interdiction of vessels used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking on the high seas off the coast of Libya. S/RES/1631 (17 October 2005) addressed the issue of cooperation between the UN and regional organisations and stressed the role of regional organisations in addressing the issue of small arms. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2014/4 (14 February 2014) was on EU-UN cooperation. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7439 (11 May 2015) was on the smuggling of migrants on the Mediterranean Sea. S/PV.7402 (9 March 2015) was on EU-UN cooperation.

EU-UN Cooperation (con't)

Western members of the Council over the crisis in Ukraine. The EU has maintained sanctions on Russia since July 2014 because of its role in the conflict in eastern Ukraine. The lifting of sanctions is contingent on the implementation of the Minsk agreements and Russia's compliance in that regard. Russia holds the position that sanctions other than those imposed by the Security Council are

counterproductive and undermine the primacy of the Council. Despite some hostility between the EU and Russia over Ukraine, the two have managed to cooperate on other issues. During the March 2015 briefing, Russian ambassador Vitaly Churkin said that cooperation with the EU continues on an array of issues, such as "terrorism, religious extremism, piracy, drug trafficking,

transnational crime, illegal migration, combating the Ebola virus, dealing with the Middle East peace process and resolving the situations in Libya and around Iran's nuclear program". Russia is likely to emphasise the subordinate role of regional organisations based on the provisions of the UN Charter, in particular Chapter VIII.

Notable Dates for March

REPORT DUE	REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN MARCH	REQUESTING DOCUMENT
24 February	SG report on UNSMIL (Libya)	S/RES/2238
26 February	SG report on implementation of resolution 1701 (UNIFIL in Lebanon)	S/RES/2236
26 February	OPCW report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (Syrian chemical weapons)	S/RES/2118
26 February	SG report on UNMIL (Liberia)	S/RES/2239
8 March	SG report on UNAMA (Afghanistan)	S/RES/2210
9 March	SG report on MONUSCO (DRC)	S/RES/2211
9 March	SG report on the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC	S/RES/2211
10 March	SG report on MINUSTAH (Haiti)	S/RES/2243
15 March	Final report of the Panel of Experts of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee	S/RES/2213
21 March	SG report on UNDOF (Golan Heights)	S/RES/2257
22 March	SG report on the humanitarian situation in Syria	S/RES/2139

MANDATES EXPIRE	RELEVANT DOCUMENT
3 March	South Sudan sanctions and the Panel of Experts of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee S/RES/2206
15 March	UNSMIL (Libya) S/RES/2238
17 March	UNAMA (Afghanistan) S/RES/2210
30 March	UNSOM (Somalia) S/RES/2232
31 March	MONUSCO (DRC) S/RES/2211
31 March	Sanctions on the illicit export of oil from Libya S/RES/2213
5 April	Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee (expires in April but will likely be renewed in March) S/RES/2207
30 April	Panel of Experts of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee (expires in April but will likely be renewed in March) S/RES/2213

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