

Monthly Forecast

- 1 In Hindsight: Voting for a Secretary-General
- 3 Status Update since our May Forecast
- 5 Security Council Elections
- 6 Protection of Civilians
- 8 Women, Peace and Security
- 9 Libya
- 11 International Criminal Tribunals
- 12 Counter-Terrorism
- 14 Sudan (Darfur)
- 15 UNOCA/LRA
- 17 UNRCCA (Central Asia)
- 18 Mali
- 19 Syria
- 21 Yemen
- 23 Afghanistan
- 25 UNDOF (Golan Heights)
- 26 Democratic Republic of the Congo
- 28 Notable Dates

Overview

During France's presidency of the Security Council in June, there will be two open debates, one at ministerial level on the issue of [protection of civilians in the context of peace operations](#) and another with a focus on [women, peace and security](#), particularly on the Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence.

There will also be three briefings, one on [UN counter-terrorism](#) efforts against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL); another on post-conflict [peacebuilding](#); and one on [UN-EU cooperation](#).

The Council will be closely following developments in [Burundi](#) and [Western Sahara](#), and may consider the strategic review of the UN Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR in June, though no formal meetings are scheduled. There will be discussions on several other African issues this month, some ahead of mandate renewals, others updates on activities, including:

- [Central Africa](#), the regular meeting on the activities of UNOCA;
- [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), the renewal of the 1533 sanctions regime;
- [Libya](#), the renewal of UNSMIL and an update on the 1970 sanctions regime;

- [Mali](#), the renewal of MINUSMA;
- [Somalia](#), the renewal of AMISOM's authorisation after last month's short, technical rollover; and
- [Sudan](#), the renewal of UNAMID and the semi-annual briefing by the ICC Prosecutor.

Council members will continue to monitor developments on the [Syria](#) political, humanitarian and chemical weapons tracks and the [Yemen](#) peace talks. Other Middle East issues that will be considered this month are:

- [Golan Heights](#), the renewal of UNDOF; and
- [Israel/Palestine](#), the regular monthly briefing.

The Council will meet on UNAMA in [Afghanistan](#) as well as on the activities of UNRCCA in [Central Asia](#).

The Council's semi-annual debate on the ad hoc [international criminal tribunals](#), including the ICTY and the Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals, will be held in June.

Finally, Council members will also be following developments on the peace process in Colombia.

The General Assembly is scheduled to [elect five non-permanent Security Council members](#) on 28 June.

In Hindsight: Voting for a Secretary-General

The Security Council is beginning to turn its attention to the task of selecting the next Secretary-General. In contrast to previous appointments, following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/321 on 11 September 2015, and the 15 December 2015 joint letter from the Council and General Assembly presidents, a more clearly defined process of nomination is in place this year, along with greater involvement of the General Assembly. In mid-April, the General Assembly held three days of hearings with the nine candidates who had been formally

nominated, and further hearings are expected in early June. The activity in the General Assembly appears to have prompted Council members to begin informal discussions on the next steps for the Council in the Secretary-General appointment process.

The UN Charter provides little guidance on the process. Article 97 of the UN Charter simply says that "The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council". Rule 48 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure states that

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In Hindsight: Voting for a Secretary-General (con't)

the Council's recommendation to the General Assembly "be discussed and decided at a private meeting". There has therefore been room for innovation in how this recommendation is arrived at. Only on one occasion was the Council unable to agree, culminating in the General Assembly voting to reappoint Secretary-General Trygve Lie (Norway) without a Council recommendation.

A key step in the process is the establishment of a list of candidates. In the past, the genesis of the list of candidates was quite opaque. The first three Secretaries-General—Trygve Lie (Norway), Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden) and U Thant (Burma)—emerged from an ad hoc process where candidates were suggested by P5 members, with the US and the USSR putting forward most of the candidates. Generally, names of potential candidates were floated during informal discussions, followed by formal votes in a private meeting. This decision is deemed a matter of substance which under Article 27 (3) of the Charter requires "an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of permanent members". If no candidate garnered enough votes or received a veto, the process would continue until a candidate acceptable to all P5 members emerged. For example, when Lie resigned in November 1952, the first four candidates to be voted on either did not receive enough votes or were vetoed. Four more candidates were proposed with only one, Dag Hammarskjöld, being acceptable to the Soviet Union, and therefore put to a final vote.

A significant innovation in the selection process was made as a result of the deadlock in 1981 between Kurt Waldheim (Austria), who after serving two terms as Secretary-General had chosen to run for an unprecedented third term, and Salim Salim (Tanzania), who had been endorsed by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). In 1971, China had vetoed Waldheim twice, before abstaining during the third formal vote which led to Waldheim being appointed Secretary-General. It had also vetoed Waldheim in the first round of votes for his reelection in 1976 but moved to an abstention in the second ballot. In 1981, China used its veto to block Waldheim, supporting Salim Salim, who was blocked by Western veto. This led to

16 inconclusive ballots. Finally, Ambassador Olara Otunnu (Uganda), who was Council president in December, persuaded the two candidates to step aside and devised a way to determine which new candidates would not be vetoed by any of the P5. The permanent members were given a blue survey form with a list of nine new candidates and asked to indicate which ones they would "discourage". All 15 members were given a white form with the list of names and asked to indicate which candidates they would "encourage". Using this system the Council identified Javier de Cuéllar (Peru) as generally acceptable, and he went forward to be elected Secretary-General in a formal vote on 11 December.

This informal survey of members' opinion developed into a system of "straw polls" that has been used in every subsequent election.

The 1991 election saw an evolution of the straw poll system with colour-coded ballot papers being used to differentiate between permanent and elected members in the same poll. For the first time, a regional claim was made on the position: by Africa, with the OAU endorsing six candidates. In the first straw polls held on 21 October, all 15 members were given a list of names and asked to indicate with an "x" those they wished to support. A blank ballot paper allowed members to add new candidates. At the second straw poll, names newly suggested in the first poll were first voted on, followed by individual ballots for the combined list of names, which included several non-African candidates. Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt) and Bernard Chidzero (Zimbabwe) emerged as the leading candidates. Following an undifferentiated third straw poll, in order to determine if there would be a veto, in the fourth round permanent members were given a red ballot sheet and elected members a white one. Having established that neither of the leading candidates was opposed by any of the P5, the Council proceeded to vote formally on each of the two candidates, with Boutros-Ghali emerging as the victor.

Five years later, following two straw polls where he was the only candidate, Boutros-Ghali was formally vetoed by the US. This led to four new African candidates entering the race. In the first round of straw polling held on 10 December 1996, Kofi Annan (Ghana),

then Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, and Amara Essy (Côte d'Ivoire) each received a high number of favourable votes. A second round, held on the same day, where colour-coded ballots were used, revealed that a permanent member, generally believed to be France, was opposing Kofi Annan, and two other permanent members opposed Essy. The veto against Annan was sustained until—after seven rounds of straw polls—Annan had the support of all fourteen other members, and the veto was then dropped.

Straw polls were used again in 2006, but this time with the addition of an abstention or "no opinion" option. Ban Ki-moon (Republic of Korea) was selected after four straw polls, with colour-coded ballots used in the last of these. Although Ban had received one "discourage" vote in the first three straw polls, in the fourth, which used colour-coded ballots, he received 14 "encourage" votes and one "no opinion" from an elected member.

While an unwritten understanding had developed over the years with regard to the selection process, the first attempt to create written guidelines was in 1996. Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti (Indonesia), at the start of his term as president of the Council in November 1996, submitted a note which came to be known as the "Wisnumurti Guidelines". It set out general principles, the legal/procedural basis and the decision-making process, using colour-coded straw polls. It also spelt out that candidates needed to be submitted by member states and that the final decision would take place in a private meeting. These guidelines have formed the backbone of the Secretary-General selection process ever since. With the innovations in the selection process this year, members are aware that the Wisnumurti Guidelines need to be amended.

Thus, the Council has continuously revised its practice according to circumstances. Key issues which Council members will need to decide in this year's context include the timing of its decision-making; whether following the hearings in the General Assembly the Council will itself meet candidates, and if so in what format; and whether to operate the straw ballot process as in the past, including colour-coded ballots to identify possible vetoes.

Status Update since our May Forecast

South Sudan

On 4 May, Council members issued a press statement welcoming the formation of the transitional government of national unity (S/12350). The statement further underscored the importance of the transitional government in implementing the August 2015 peace agreement. At press time, members were negotiating a resolution to renew the mandate of the 2206 South Sudan sanctions regime.

DPRK

On 4 May, the chair of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Román Oyarzun (Spain), briefed Council members in consultations on the work of the Committee.

Counter-Terrorism

On 4 May, the Council was briefed by the chairs of its counter-terrorism-related committees: Ambassador Gerard van Bohemen (New Zealand), chair of the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida/ISIL Sanctions Committee; Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee; and Ambassador Román Oyarzun (Spain), chair of the 1540 Committee, which focuses on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (S/PV.7686). On 11 May, the Council held an open debate focusing on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism (S/PV.7690). The meeting was an initiative of Egypt, which circulated a concept note ahead of the debate (S/2016/416). Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, Secretary-General of Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy Mohi El-Din Afifi, and Vice President and Deputy General Counsel of Microsoft Steven A. Crown briefed. At the meeting—which was chaired by Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry—the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/6).

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 5 May, the Council held its semi-annual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/PV.7688). High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Valentin Inzko presented his office's latest report (S/2016/395).

Israel/Palestine

On 6 May, Egypt, together with Angola, Malaysia, Senegal and Venezuela, held an Arria-formula meeting on the protection

of the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which was open to all member states. On 25 May, Special Coordinator Nikloday Mladenov briefed the Council during the regular monthly meeting on the Middle East, which was followed by consultations (S/PV.7697).

Iraq

On 6 May, Special Representative Ján Kubiš presented the Secretary-General's reports on UNAMI (S/2016/396) and on Iraq/Kuwait missing persons and property (S/2016/372) to the Council (S/PV.7689). He reported on Iraq's deepening political crisis and challenges to Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's reform efforts; the financial crisis resulting from corruption, plunging oil prices and the high cost of fighting ISIL; and the deteriorating humanitarian situation with needs expected to increase in 2016 in the context of counter-ISIL operations. Separately, on 12 May, Council members issued a press statement condemning the ISIL terrorist attacks in Baghdad (SC/12361).

Sudan/South Sudan

The Council adopted resolution 2287 on 12 May, renewing the mandate of UNISFA until 15 November (S/PV.7691). Council members were briefed in consultations the same day via video teleconference by Haile Menkerios, Special Representative to the AU, on Sudan/South Sudan issues.

Haiti

On 12 May, at the request of the US, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous briefed Council members in consultations on the electoral crisis in Haiti. In a press statement issued the following day, Council members expressed "their deep disappointment" that Haitian leaders had failed to meet the election deadlines agreed on 5 February and called on them to ensure "the prompt return to constitutional order" (SC/12364). The statement also welcomed Ladsous's planned field visit to Haiti (expected in June) to convey Council members' sense of urgency and to assess the role of MINUSTAH and options for its future reconfiguration.

Lebanon

On 13 May, Special Envoy Terje Rød-Larsen

briefed Council members on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559 on the disarmament of militias and the extension of government control over Lebanese territory (S/2016/366). On 24 May, which marked two years of a vacancy in the presidency, members of the Council issued a press statement that underscored their deepest concern over the vacancy and expressed their intention to continue following related developments with a particular sense of urgency (SC/12371).

Boko Haram

On 13 May, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/7) welcoming Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's initiative to convene a high-level Regional Security Summit to evaluate the regional response to Boko Haram (S/PV.7692). It stated that Boko Haram continues to undermine peace and security in West and Central Africa and expressed alarm at its linkages with ISIL. The statement further highlighted the humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin region created by the conflict.

Liberia

On 13 May, Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko (Ukraine), chair of the 1521 Liberia Sanctions Committee, briefed Council members in consultations on the committee's activities and the final report of the Panel of Experts (S/2016/348). On 25 May, the Council adopted resolution 2288 that terminated the Liberia sanctions regime, including remaining arms measures, the mandate of the Panel of Experts and the 1521 Sanctions Committee.

Guinea-Bissau

On 13 May, Council members issued "elements to the press" following President Jose Mario Vaz's decision to dismiss the government of Carlos Correia. Council members called for leaders to resume dialogue to bring political stability; urged international interlocutors to continue their efforts to resolve the ongoing political impasse; and reaffirmed the importance of the continued non-interference of the defence and security forces in the political situation. There was a further expression of their commitment to monitor the ongoing situation and readiness to take all necessary measures to overcome the current situation. On 26 May, following

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

a request from Senegal, Council members received a briefing in consultations from Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayé-Brook Zerihoun on the ongoing political crisis.

Kosovo

On 16 May, Special Representative Zahir Tanin presented the most recent UNMIK report (S/2016/407) to the Council (S/PV.7693). Tanin conveyed that while UNMIK no longer administered the territory, it remained an important bridge between the Security Council and the people of Kosovo and the wider region. He also said that the recent inauguration of the new president of Kosovo and the general elections in Serbia provide an opportunity to move beyond a time marked by infighting.

Council Visiting Mission

From 17-22 May Council members undertook a visiting mission to Somalia, Kenya and Egypt after agreeing on the terms of reference for the mission (S/2016/456). On 19 May, Council members had meetings in Mogadishu with officials from the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia, the UN Support Office for Somalia, the AU Mission in Somalia, Somalia's president and other political leaders and civil society. The following day, they had discussions in Nairobi with Kenya's president and other Kenyan officials, focusing on AMISOM and the refugee situation in Kenya in light of the government's recent announcement that it would close down all refugee camps. They also met with UN entities involved in the humanitarian response in Somalia. Council members spent the last day of the mission on 21 May in Cairo, where they had a "consultative meeting" with the League of Arab States, the first ever of its kind, focusing on the Israel/Palestine peace process, Somalia, Libya and issues related to refugees, immigrants and

internally displaced persons, and also saw the foreign minister of Egypt. On 25 May, the Council held a briefing on the visiting mission (S/PV.7696).

Peace Operations

On 18 May, Council members held an informal interactive dialogue with heads of military components of UN peace operations. The topics discussed included information and intelligence (Maj Gen Lollesgaard, MINUS-MA), protection of civilians (Lt Gen Yohannes Gebremeskel Tesfamariam, UNMISS), use of technology (Lt Gen Derick Mbuyiselo Mgwebi, MONUSCO) and sexual exploitation and abuse (Lt Gen Balla Keita, MINUSCA).

Somalia

On 23 May, Council members issued a press statement that welcomed the electoral process set out in the decree issued by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on 22 May 2016, which they noted should enable necessary technical preparation and implementation without further delay (SC/12369). On 27 May, the Council adopted resolution 2289 authorising a short technical rollover of AMISOM until 8 July. This short rollover will allow Council members time to assess the results of their 17-22 May Somalia-focused visiting mission to the Horn of Africa and the possible implications for the AMISOM mandate.

UN-AU Cooperation on Peace and Security

On 23 May, members of the Security Council and members of the AU Peace and Security Council held their tenth joint annual consultative meeting in New York. The formal section of the meeting focused on Somalia and Burundi, while an informal discussion took a strategic look at their partnership, as well as the impact on their cooperation resulting from the three 2015 UN peace and security review processes. At press time, a joint

communiqué was still being negotiated. On 24 May, the Council held an open debate on "UN-AU cooperation: Chapter VIII application and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture" (S/PV.7694). AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui, newly-appointed Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission Ambassador Macharia Kamau (Kenya), Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous, and the head of the UN Office to the AU, Haile Menkerios, briefed the Council. Egypt circulated a concept note (S/2016/428) ahead of the open debate at which a presidential statement was adopted (S/PRST/2016/8).

Secretary-General Selection Process

On 25 May, Council members met under "any other business" regarding the next steps for the Security Council in the Secretary-General selection process. They discussed a number of issues, including whether to meet with candidates nominated for the position and the timing of the start of the straw polls.

Sahel

On 26 May, the Council held a briefing on challenges in the Sahel, which focused on the impact of climate change and desertification to peace and security in this region. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the head of UNOWAS briefed via video teleconference. Other briefers included Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification; Jean-Paul Laborde, Executive Director of CTED; and Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad (S/PV.7699).

EU-UN Cooperation

On 27 May, Council members held their annual informal meeting with members of the EU Political and Security Committee to discuss issues of mutual interest related to counter-terrorism, Libya and Syria.

Security Council Elections

Expected General Assembly Action

On 28 June, the General Assembly is scheduled to elect five states to two-year terms on the Security Council beginning on 1 January 2017. (Please see our 3 June report, *Security Council Elections 2016*, for more detailed information.)

Background

The five seats available for election in 2016 will be distributed as follows:

- one seat for the African Group, currently held by Angola;
- one seat for the Group of Asia and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (Asia-Pacific Group), currently held by Malaysia;
- one seat for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), currently held by Venezuela; and
- two seats for the Western European and Others Group (WEOG), currently held by New Zealand and Spain.

(The Eastern European Group seat comes up for election every other year and is held by Ukraine through 2017.)

At press time, the elections for the African and GRULAC regional groups were running unopposed, with one candidate put forward by each regional group—Ethiopia and Bolivia, respectively. Both countries have previously served on the Council on two occasions.

Races for the Asia-Pacific Group and WEOG seats are being contested this year. Kazakhstan and Thailand are competing for one seat within the Asia-Pacific Group, while Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden are competing for two WEOG seats. With the exception of Kazakhstan, all candidates have served on the Council in the past: Thailand on one occasion, Italy on six, the Netherlands on five and Sweden on three.

Voting Procedures

A country must obtain the votes of two-thirds of the member states present and voting at the General Assembly session in order to secure a seat on the Council, regardless of whether the election is contested. This means that 129 positive votes are required to win a seat if all 193 UN member states are present.

Elections to the Council, as with other principal organs of the UN, require formal balloting, even if candidates have been endorsed by their regional group and are

REGION	SEATS AVAILABLE IN THE 2016 ELECTION	STATES RUNNING AND PREVIOUS TERMS ON THE COUNCIL
African	1	Ethiopia (1967-1968 and 1989-1990)
Asia-Pacific	1	Kazakhstan (none); Thailand (1985-1986)
Latin America and Caribbean States	1	Bolivia (1964-1965 and 1978-1979)
Western European and Others	2	Italy (1959-1960, 1971-1972, 1975-1976, 1987-1988, 1995-1996 and 2007-2008); The Netherlands (1946, 1951-1952, 1965-1966, 1983-1984 and 1999-2000) Sweden (1957-1958, 1975-1976 and 1997-1998)

running unopposed. In theory, it is possible, although unlikely, that a country running unopposed might not garner the requisite votes of those present in the General Assembly in the first round of voting. Such a country may then be challenged in subsequent rounds by a new candidate and ultimately not obtain a seat.

This will be the first time that elections will be held in June. In previous years, elections were held in October; however, as a result of concerns that elected members did not have enough time to prepare for their terms, the General Assembly decided to hold the elections about six months before new members assume their responsibilities. Resolution 68/307 of 18 September 2014 decided that this would start during the 70th session of the General Assembly.

Potential Council Dynamics in 2017

Existing divisions within the Council over issues such as Ukraine, Syria and Israel/Palestine are likely to remain regardless of the arrival of five new elected members. While it is difficult to assess how Council dynamics in 2017 will develop, especially without knowing the full composition of the new membership, the interests of current candidates provide some perspective on a few general patterns that might emerge.

Some of the candidates could be expected to have a strong national interest in the conflicts in their region that are on the Council's agenda. Ethiopia shares borders with three countries—Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan—that are on the Council's agenda and is likely to devote significant attention to these issues. Given its geographical location, Kazakhstan would be likely to have a particular interest in developments in its region,

including Afghanistan, Iran and possibly frozen conflicts in the North Caucasus. Given its historical ties to Libya and its exposure to the migration crisis, Italy would be likely to devote particular attention to that country.

Regarding thematic issues, several candidates—including Italy and Ethiopia—have stated their interest in efforts to counter terrorism and transnational organised crime. Given its focus in promoting the international legal order, the Netherlands would be interested in advancing cooperation between the UN and international courts and tribunals. The Netherlands could also pursue its interest in reviving efforts to establish accountability for the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, in which many Dutch citizens were killed. As a result of its experience, Kazakhstan would be likely to seek a role in non-proliferation issues. Thailand has also expressed interest in non-proliferation, as well as in women and peace and security. Considering its emphasis and experience regarding UN peacebuilding, Sweden would be likely to make this a priority.

All of the candidates contribute troops to UN peacekeeping missions. Ethiopia is currently the single largest troop contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, with 8,311 military and police deployed as of 31 March, while Italy is the largest troop contributor among EU and NATO members, with 1,128 military and police personnel currently deployed. Also as of 31 March, the Netherlands had 514 deployed peacekeepers in five missions; Sweden had 272 peacekeepers deployed in seven missions; Thailand had 33 peacekeepers deployed in four missions; Bolivia had 21 peacekeepers deployed in six missions; and Kazakhstan had six peacekeepers deployed in two missions.

Security Council Elections (con't)

Next year, there could be an increase in the number of elected members that are keen to further advance conflict prevention and peacebuilding measures. In addition, all candidates for 2017 have emphasised various aspects of sustainable development and its interconnectedness with peace and security. This could create friction with some Council members that advocate narrowing the Council's agenda to issues that predominantly involve situations of armed conflict.

Additionally, the majority of the candidates seem to have a strong desire to improve the transparency and inclusiveness of the Council's work. The commitment to transparency is also understandable for countries in campaign mode as most candidates have pledged to listen to interested stakeholders that are not seated on the Council and to take their perspectives into account. One candidate, Sweden, is a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group (ACT), an initiative launched in May 2013

by a group of member states that focuses on the Council's working methods, in particular those that enhance non-members' interaction with the Council. (ACT member New Zealand is leaving the Council at the end of this year. Uruguay, also a member of ACT, will remain on the Council in 2017. The goals of ACT also resonate with other Council members that are not members of the group but are nonetheless committed to enhancing the accountability, effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council.)

Some elected members of the class of 2016 have been particularly active in drafting resolutions. Two departing members—New Zealand and Spain, along with Egypt, which will remain on the Council in 2017—led on outcomes on the humanitarian situation in Syria. In a departure from current practice of most outcomes being drafted by one of the P3 (France, UK and US), these countries, along with Uruguay and Japan, took the initiative to draft and negotiate what became

resolution 2286 on health care in armed conflict. In addition, Spain has been the penholder on Afghanistan as well as on non-proliferation and weapons of mass destruction, while another outgoing member—Malaysia—took a lead on children and armed conflict. It remains to be seen whether incoming Council members will take the initiative to draft Council outcomes and further challenge the existing penholder arrangements.

Among the departing Council members are the chairs of six of the 14 existing sanctions committees. Over the past two years, there has been a general trend toward increased transparency in the work of sanctions committees, including public briefings by the chair, engagement with regional actors and several field visits. Given the significance of the chair's personal engagement and how it impacts the work of sanctions committees, it is unclear to what extent the trend toward increased transparency and outreach will continue.

Protection of Civilians

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council will hold a ministerial-level open debate on the protection of civilians in the context of peacekeeping operations. Jean-Marc Ayrault, the French minister of foreign affairs and international development, will preside. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President Faustin-Archange Touadéra of the Central African Republic and ICRC President Peter Maurer are expected to address the Council. It is possible that a high-level representative from the UN Children's Fund will brief as well. At press time, no immediate Council outcome was anticipated.

Key Recent Developments

In mid-May, the Secretary-General issued his most recent report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Covering the 2015 calendar year, the report paints a grim picture of the current needs of civilians in

armed conflict, noting that humanitarian needs are at their highest level ever and that more than 60 million people have been displaced by conflict. It describes the patterns of violence against civilians in several country-specific cases, including Afghanistan, Nigeria, Libya, Iraq, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, among others. In the report, the Secretary-General outlines several priorities with regard to the protection of civilians, including strengthening compliance with international law, promoting accountability for violations, enhancing efforts to protect civilians from explosive weapons in densely populated areas, improving humanitarian access and strengthening collective efforts to address displacement.

With regard to peace operations, the Secretary-General specifically references the observation in the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) report and in his own follow-on report

that the protection of civilians has military, police and civilian elements. He says that he directed the deployment of dedicated senior protection-of-civilians advisors "in all missions with explicit protection mandates, with a direct reporting line to the Head of Mission, to advise on the development of protection-of-civilians strategies and coordinate implementation". The Secretary-General further highlights the importance of community engagement in promoting the protection of civilians, noting the usefulness of community alert networks and community liaison assistants "in understanding perceptions of threat at the community level, including how communities seek to reduce risk and how peace operations can address them". He further underscores the need for peacekeepers to act when civilians are under threat.

On 19 January, the Security Council held an open debate on the protection of civilians, which was intended to focus on themes

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS Security Council Resolution S/RES/2286 (3 May 2016) condemned attacks on health care workers and facilities in armed conflict. **Security Council Presidential Statements** S/PRST/2015/26 (31 December 2015) underscored the importance of sustained cooperation among the Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries on peacekeeping. S/PRST/2015/23 (25 November 2015) requested that reports of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians be submitted to the Council every 12 months, thus departing from past practice of producing these reports every 18 months. S/PRST/2015/22 (25 November 2015) took note of the recommendations of the HIPPO report and the Secretary-General's implementation report. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2016/447 (13 May 2016) was the 12th report on the protection of civilians. S/2015/453 (18 June 2015) was the 11th report of the protection of civilians. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.7685 (3 May 2016) was a briefing on the protection of health care in armed conflict. S/PV.7606 (19 January 2016) was the Council's most recent open debate on the protection of civilians.

Protection of Civilians (con't)

underscored in the Secretary-General's June 2015 report on the protection of civilians, as well as the HIPPO report and the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the HIPPO recommendations. Briefers included Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, ICRC Vice-President Christine Beerli and Oxfam Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor Eveline Rooijmans. Statements were made by 64 member states and two regional organisations.

Eliasson said that peacekeeping operations must respond quickly and with determination when civilians are threatened. Beerli underscored the need for parties in conflict situations to uphold international humanitarian law. Rooijmans said that troop- and police-contributing countries "must fully subscribe to and implement their mandate and be willing and allowed to act, and use force if need be, in the face of threats to civilians".

The Council held a briefing on health care in armed conflict on 3 May. The briefers included UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Peter Maurer, the president of the ICRC; and Joanne Liu, the president of Médecins Sans Frontières. During the debate, the Council adopted resolution 2286, which emphasises the unacceptability of violations of international humanitarian law arising from attacks against medical and humanitarian workers exclusively engaged in medical duties in conflict situations.

Key Issues

Key issues for the Council with regard to this debate include the following:

- how to ensure that protection of civilians mandates provide sufficient clarity and guidance to peacekeeping missions;
- how to ensure that there is adequate discussion among the Secretariat, the troop-contributing countries and the Council in the design and implementation of

protection mandates;

- how to improve the Council's monitoring of the implementation of protection mandates;
- how to ensure that the Council can quickly adapt to changing circumstances by, for example, ensuring that mandates are reconfigured accordingly when there is a heightened threat to civilians in environments in which UN peace operations are employed;
- how to ensure that non-military protection tools—including political engagement, human rights monitoring and advocacy and rule-of-law development—are adequately integrated into relevant mandates; and
- how to protect civilians in contexts in which the armed forces of the host government are responsible for attacking civilians.

Options

One option is for the Council to adopt a resolution or presidential statement that:

- urges troop- and police-contributing countries to ensure that their personnel have requisite pre-deployment training in protection issues and that they are not restricted by additional caveats beyond any explicitly accepted by the Secretariat before deployment;
- requests the development of a common system to record civilian casualties to strengthen efforts to monitor and report violations of international human rights and humanitarian law; and
- condemns the use of explosive weapons in populated locations.

Another option would be to consider using the informal expert group on the protection of civilians to monitor the implementation of protection mandates and make suggestions on adapting these mandates as necessary. Currently, the expert

group meets prior to mandate renewals, but it could also meet on a less predictable basis, as dictated by evolving conditions in country-specific situations in which the protection environment deteriorates.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are acutely aware of the devastating impact that armed conflict has had on civilians in recent years. As a result, they realise that more needs to be done to translate advances at the normative level into effective country-specific strategies. However, there are divisions among members regarding the Council's approach to protecting civilians. These differences have hindered the Council's ability to protect civilians in South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and other crises. They also affected the negotiations on the 25 November 2015 presidential statement when a permanent member expressed reservations about the revised Aide Memoire, referring in particular to language in the document on small arms, the ICC and sanctions.

While there is widespread appreciation that the protection of civilians is a holistic concept with military, police and civilian elements, there are different views among Council members and troop- and police-contributing countries regarding the appropriate use of force. Some tend to emphasise the importance of upholding the long-standing principles of peacekeeping, which include the use of force only for self-defence or in defence of the mandate, as well as host country consent and impartiality. Others, while espousing these principles, tend to have a more flexible interpretation of protection of civilians mandates, emphasising that the use of force is required to protect civilians when they are under attack or threatened with attack.

The UK is the penholder on the protection of civilians.

Women, Peace and Security

Expected Council Action

In early June, the Secretary-General and Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura will brief the Council on the annual report on conflict-related sexual violence. At press time, no outcome was planned.

In addition, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, the Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, will address the Council. Fatima Ahmed, who heads the organisation Zenab Women in Development in Sudan, will be the civil society briefer on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Key Recent Developments

The Secretary-General's 2015 report emphasises that conflict resolution and counter-terrorism strategies cannot be separated from efforts to protect and empower women and girls. Conflict-related sexual violence occurs in situations where there is also systemic gender-based discrimination, such as the exclusion of women from political life, economic marginalisation and discriminatory systems of both formal and informal law. Furthermore, survivors of sexual violence often face double victimisation through intimidation against reporting, including accusations of "adultery", "honour", or "morality" crimes, as a result of reporting to unresponsive or predatory security officials, faced with reporting to the national forces that perpetrated the sexual violence or through forced marriage to the perpetrator as a form of traditional settlement. The report also underlines the Council's recognition of sexual violence as a tactic of war in resolution 1820 and as a tactic of terrorism in resolution 2242.

The report focuses on sexual violence in the contexts of: violent extremism and terrorism; state forces or government-aligned militias participating in targeted sexual assaults based on actual or perceived political affiliation; and lax command and control with impunity for the perpetrators compounded by victims' lack of confidence in the justice sector.

The report details how sexual violence is used to achieve tactical objectives, such as terrorising communities into compliance, mass

displacement of populations from strategic areas and, in the case of Boko Haram and ISIL, generating revenue through trafficking, slave trade and ransoms. The report also highlights the vulnerability of displaced or refugee women and girls to sexual exploitation, such as human trafficking, early marriage and forced marriage.

The focus on trafficking and the slave trade is deepened in this year's report with analysis of how the commodification of women and girls has become part of the political economy of war, in both the recruitment of fighters and financing of ongoing conflict. This phenomenon was initially addressed by the Council in a December 2015 briefing and adoption of a presidential statement.

This is the first year that the conflict-related sexual violence report is inclusive of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by UN peacekeepers. In the past, it has been argued that this was a conduct and discipline issue and therefore outside the mandate of the Office of the Special Representative. However, the inclusion of this issue in the 2015 report is a result of what is now considered an essential response to the serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Central African Republic (CAR) by MINUSCA personnel and French parallel forces, as well as an overall environment in the CAR that has resulted in women and girls being extremely vulnerable to ever-increasing incidents of human trafficking, sexual violence and transactional sex. While this issue has received public attention because of the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse in the CAR, it is a pervasive issue in many peace operations involving both civilian and military staff.

In other developments, the 2242 Informal Experts Group on women, peace and security discussed many of the issues raised by the 2015 conflict-related sexual violence report in its February meeting on Mali and its April meeting on Iraq, and is likely to do so in its forthcoming June meeting on the CAR.

The Secretary-General's Report

The report provides information in three categories:

- **Sexual violence in conflict-affected**

settings: Afghanistan, the CAR, Colombia, the DRC, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan/Darfur, Syria and Yemen;

- **Sexual violence in post-conflict situations:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Nepal and Sri Lanka; and
- **Other situations of concern:** Burundi and Nigeria.

In 2015, Burundi was added to the report as a new situation while Liberia was removed.

Since 2012, these reports have also included an annex listing parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the Council's agenda. Other than the addition of Sudan to the 2015 annex, the mix of parties remained relatively unchanged with Boko Haram and other state and non-state actors listed in the CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Iraq, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria.

Key Issues

A key issue for the open debate will be how to deal with extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISIL, which do not operate in just one country, are difficult to approach and are unlikely to respond to the usual forms of pressure. Another issue will be how to deal with state actors who have also not responded to the usual forms of pressure, such as Burundi, Sudan and Syria.

Related issues include:

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

A continuing issue is the reluctance of Council members to use sanctions to pressure

UN DOCUMENTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015) addressed women's roles in countering violent extremism and terrorism and noted the need for improving the Council's own working methods, including convening meetings of an informal experts group on women, peace and security. S/RES/1325 (31 October 2000) was the first resolution on women, peace and security. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/25 (16 December 2015) addressed trafficking in persons in situations of conflict, with a particular focus on ISIL and the impact on women and children. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7585 (16 December 2015) was a briefing on the trafficking of persons in situations of conflict, with a particular focus on ISIL. S/PV.7533 and Resumption 1 (14 October 2015) was the annual open debate on women and peace and security. S/PV.7428 (15 April 2015) was the annual open debate on conflict-related sexual violence. Secretary-General's Reports S/2016/361 (20 April 2016) was on conflict-related sexual violence. S/2015/716 (17 September 2015) was the annual report on women, peace and security that included recommendations from the Global Study on the implementation of resolution 1325.

Women, Peace and Security (con't)

many of the groups listed in the Secretary-General's annex, in particular to address trafficking in relation to sexual violence.

A further issue is the reluctance of the Council to give due consideration to UN-identified risk factors of sexual violence as an early warning indicator that could enable the Council to better fulfil its conflict prevention role, as in the case with Burundi.

Other issues are how the Council can encourage the UN system and member states:

- to better implement the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peace operations; and
- to develop and implement a gender-sensitive humanitarian response to the needs of displaced women and girls.

Options

An option for the Council regarding perpetrators includes directing relevant sanctions committees—including the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida and ISIL Sanctions Committee—to engage with the Special Representative and consider whether parties in the annex should be subject to existing sanctions or whether designation criteria should be expanded to include sexual violence and human trafficking. Another option is ensuring the inclusion of gender expertise in expert groups that report to relevant Security Council sanctions committees.

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

- ensuring that a gender lens is applied in processes devoted to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, security sector reform and justice reform;
- ensuring the deployment of gender expertise in missions, both gender advisers and women's protection advisers; and
- calling for the inclusion of sexual violence concerns in mediation and peace processes, particularly in the context of security arrangements and transitional justice mechanisms.

Options for the Council on sexual exploitation and abuse include:

- adopting a statement or resolution that endorses the Secretary-General's recommendation to not allow national forces listed in the annex of the conflict-related sexual violence report to be police or troop contributors to UN peace operations; and
- continuing to publicly support the Secretary-General if there is a decision to repatriate a particular military unit or formed police unit of a contingent when there is credible evidence of widespread or systemic sexual exploitation and abuse by that unit, as endorsed in resolution 2272.

Council Dynamics

Between 2013 and 2015, the Council did not adopt a resolution on women, peace and security, leaving dynamics on this issue largely untested for two years. However, familiar divisions quickly re-emerged during negotiations of resolution 2242 in October 2015, particularly around operational language related

to the convening of an informal expert group of Council members on women, peace and security; improving how this thematic agenda is incorporated into the Council's sanctions regimes; language describing an improved gender architecture in the UN system; and how the women, peace and security agenda should be integrated into strategies to counter violent extremism and terrorism.

In subsequent negotiations on Council outcomes on human trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse, similar issues emerged with China and Russia, and in some instances Egypt. They resisted many elements that they interpreted as an expansion of the women, peace and security agenda or perceived as infringing on state sovereignty or the competencies of other parts of the UN system.

At press time, Council members were negotiating a presidential statement on women's role in conflict prevention in Africa, largely based on previously agreed language. Nevertheless, negotiations were difficult, in particular in relation to early warning indicators that could enhance the Council's conflict prevention role, strengthening linkages between the women, peace and security and counter-terrorism agendas, and language regarding gender perspectives in mediation and peace operations.

The UK is the penholder on women, peace and security in the Council. The US is the penholder on sexual violence issues. Spain and the UK co-chair the 2242 Informal Experts Group on women, peace and security.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) which expires on 15 June. UNSMIL head Martin Kobler will brief on recent political developments and the Secretary-General's latest report.

The Council also expects a briefing by the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee,

Ambassador Ramlan Ibrahim (Malaysia).

The mandate of the Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts expires on 31 July 2017.

Key Recent Developments

Despite the arrival of seven of the nine members of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli on 30 March and the relatively calm security

situation in the capital, the Presidency Council has failed to secure the endorsement of the GNA by the Tobruk-based House of Representatives. According to the Libyan Political Agreement, the House has to conduct a formal vote on the composition of the proposed GNA and amend the Constitutional Declaration. (UNSMIL continues its efforts to bring on board boycotting members of the

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2278 (31 March 2016) renewed the sanctions regime for a year. S/RES/2273 (15 March 2016) renewed the mandate of UNSMIL until 15 June 2016. Secretary-General's Report S/2016/452 (16 May 2016) was the most recent report on Libya. Security Council Letter S/2016/275 (21 March 2016) was from Libyan Ambassador Ibrahim O. Dabbashi, calling for the Council to explicitly allow the reinvestment of assets frozen under sanctions in order to protect their value. Security Council Press Statements SC/12334 (22 April 2016) deplored the maritime tragedy that resulted in up to 500 deaths. SC/12313 (1 April 2016) encouraged the Presidency Council to immediately begin its work in Tripoli to broaden the basis of its support. Sanctions Committee Documents S/2016/210 (3 March 2016) transmitted the recommendations of the Monitoring Team on measures that could be taken to strengthen monitoring of global implementation of resolutions 2199 and 2178. S/2016/209 (4 March 2016) was the final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya.

Libya (con't)

Presidency Council Ali Al-Qatrani and Omar Al-Aswad.)

House members have been repeatedly prevented by its president, Aguila Saleh, from holding a vote on a list of GNA candidates, submitted on 15 February by the Presidency Council. A majority of House members declared on 21 April their intention to convene in a different location to endorse the GNA while reiterating reservations about article 8 of the Agreement regarding the transfer of military power. To date, the vote has not taken place, nor has the House convened outside Tobruk. On 13 May, the US imposed sanctions on Saleh for repeatedly blocking votes by the House needed to support Libya's political transition.

Although the Presidency Council has taken control of several ministries, the Tripoli-based "National Salvation Government" continues to reject peacefully transferring authority. Members of the General National Congress voted to amend the Constitutional Declaration and reconstituted themselves as the State Council—a consultative institution provided for by the Agreement—but questions remain regarding the legality of this move.

The security situation continues to be critical, particularly in the east. In Benghazi, General Khalifa Haftar launched a new military offensive with the stated objective of evicting the Shura Council and its allies from the city, taking over some neighbourhoods. UNSMIL recorded a high number of civilian casualties in Benghazi as a result of attacks by the different parties and their failure to allow safe and voluntary evacuation of civilians. The situation in Tripoli is largely calm, despite episodes of violence among rival militias. The Presidency Council is currently protected in Tripoli by Libyan army and police units under the command of the Temporary Security Committee and by armed groups that are nominally subordinate to the Ministry of Interior.

The presence of terrorist groups continues to be a threat to Libya and the region. Despite losses sustained in Sabratha and Derna, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) still controls a 250-kilometre stretch of the coastal area around Sirte in central Libya. A 3 March report by the Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Dae'sh)/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee highlighted the substantial risk that ISIL could attempt to

raise funds by looting the cultural heritage of Libya and said awareness of this risk should be raised.

According to the 16 May Secretary-General's report, there has been a steady in-country presence since 30 March of UNSMIL staff focused primarily on supporting the Presidency Council and its Temporary Security Committee. However, UNSMIL has not been able to re-establish its Tripoli office and permanently redeploy staff on the ground. The deployment of a sizeable armed UN security team—a guard unit—is a precondition for the permanent return to Tripoli of the mission.

The International Organization for Migration recorded 631 deaths on the Mediterranean routes to Europe in April alone. According to OCHA, the number of internally displaced persons across Libya has reached 417,000, in addition to 100,000 refugees and 135,000 migrants. The Humanitarian Response Plan for Libya continues to be severely underfunded.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 31 March, the Council adopted resolution 2278, extending until 31 July 2017 the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and the measures addressing the illicit exports of crude oil from Libya. The resolution contained language affirming the Council's readiness to consider changes to the sanctions regime (namely the assets freeze and the arms embargo) at the request of the GNA when appropriate.

At the request of Libya's ambassador to the UN, Ibrahim Dabbashi, the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee on 27 April approved the designation of an Indian-flagged tanker carrying crude oil illegally exported from eastern Libya in defiance of the measures under resolution 2278 of 31 March. On 12 May this entry was deleted from the sanctions list following the return of the crude oil to Libya.

After a ministerial meeting aimed at garnering support for Libya's Presidency Council held in Vienna on 16 May, the participant governments and international organisations (a group of the main stakeholders, including the five permanent Council members) issued a joint communiqué supporting the Presidency Council's intention to submit arms embargo exemption requests to the Committee to combat ISIL in Libya. On 23 May, the Council of the EU extended the mandate of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia to build the capacity of the Libyan coastguard and Navy and to support the implementation of the arms embargo on the high seas.

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 change the behaviour of spoilers actively undermining the political process or to isolate them.

A key issue is ensuring that military actors commit to implementing 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 resolution extending UNSMIL's mandate for six 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;
- visiting Libya or the region or both to hold discussions with the parties, including spoilers, and regional stakeholders to generate momentum for the endorsement of the GNA, and to discuss with Libyan stakeholders the Council's support for Libya and the sanctions in place; and
- considering imposing sanctions on spoilers, including member states identified as violating the sanctions regime.

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 ISIL in Libya. Some Council members emphasise the importance of a formal endorsement of the GNA by the House as per the political agreement. However, other Council members are already interacting bilaterally with the Presidency Council of the GNA as the legitimate government of Libya. This dynamic has been reflected recently in how to refer to the GNA and its Presidency Council in the negotiations on resolutions 2273 and 2278, of 15

Libya (con't)

and 31 March respectively, and in a 1 April press statement.

In May, EU Council members started negotiating a draft resolution that would authorise EU Operation Sophia to interdict ships on the high seas off the coast of Libya to ensure strict implementation of the arms

embargo. In the past it has been difficult to negotiate resolutions authorising the interception of vessels on the high seas or in the territorial waters of a third country, whether in the context of fighting human trafficking, the implementation of sanctions or counter-piracy measures.

On a separate note, even though it is expected that EU Operation Sophia will eventually operate in the territorial waters of Libya, this is contingent upon an invitation by the government.

The UK is the penholder on Libya.

International Criminal Tribunals

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council will hold its semi-annual debate on the ad hoc international criminal tribunals. The presidents and prosecutors of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals are expected to brief. No outcome is anticipated.

The Informal Working Group on International Tribunals may meet with the presidents and prosecutors prior to the debate.

Key Recent Developments

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)

The ICTR officially closed on 31 December 2015 after delivering its final judgment on appeal on 14 December 2015. During its two decades, the ICTR sentenced 61 people to terms of up to life imprisonment, acquitted 14 and referred ten others to national jurisdictions. The Council issued a press statement on 31 December, acknowledging the ICTR's substantial contribution and calling upon all states to cooperate with the Residual Mechanism now responsible for the arrest and prosecution of the eight remaining ICTR-indicted fugitives.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)

The Council adopted a resolution on 22 December 2015, extending the terms of 17 ICTY judges and the prosecutor for varying lengths of time not beyond 31 December 2016, with Russia abstaining. The resolution reiterated continued concern over repeated delays in the conclusion of the ICTY's work, which the Council had requested in a 2010

resolution be completed by 31 December 2014. In this regard, the resolution called for the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to carry out an evaluation of the methods and work of the ICTY in implementing its completion strategy. The report, covering 2010-2015, offered a mixed assessment. It found that "the ICTY has adequately developed the structures, mechanisms and operational activities to implement the completion strategy" and "has been somewhat effective in planning and carrying out its case work". The report said the Court had "introduced notable measures to expedite judicial activities...but evidence to demonstrate it is working in the most efficient manner from 2010-2015 is weak, and there is inadequate accountability for the conduct of judges." In addition, voluntary separation, not downsizing, posed a major challenge to the timely completion of judicial activities. The report made four recommendations to the ICTY: monitor progress toward internal benchmarks; ensure that planning and monitoring mechanisms are tracking efficiency results; develop a code of conduct and disciplinary mechanism for judges; and develop a centralised information system on staff separations and an improved human resources analysis.

At press time, the ICTY had concluded proceedings against 151 of the 161 persons indicted, with two trial cases, involving two individuals, and two appeal cases, involving eight individuals, ongoing. Judgement in one of the appeal cases is expected by the end of June, and completion of the remaining cases is expected in November 2017. On 24 March, the ICTY convicted Radovan Karadžić, the former President of Republika

Srpska and Supreme Commander of its armed forces, of genocide, crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war. He was sentenced to 40 years' imprisonment. Karadžić is currently appealing the judgement. On 31 March, the ICTY acquitted Vojislav Šešelj, President of the Serbian Radical Party and a former member of the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, of all charges. The Office of the Prosecutor has appealed the decision. In both cases, appeal proceedings fall under the jurisdiction of the Residual Mechanism.

The Residual Mechanism

The Residual Mechanism, established in 2010, is mandated by the Council to carry out certain essential functions of the ICTY and ICTR after completion of their respective mandates, including tracking and prosecuting remaining fugitives and conducting appeals proceedings. The Council emphasised, in its 22 December 2015 resolution, that the Mechanism was established to be a small, temporary and efficient structure. The resolution also noted the conclusion of the Council's initial review of the progress of the Mechanism and requested the Mechanism to take into account certain views and recommendations to further enhance its efficiency and effective and transparent management, including more focused completion projections, disciplined adherence to those projections and further reduction of costs.

On 25 February, Council members were briefed under "any other business" on the Secretary-General's nomination of ICTY prosecutor Serge Brammertz (Belgium) as prosecutor of the Residual Mechanism after

UN DOCUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2269 (29 February 2016) appointed the prosecutor of the Residual Mechanism. S/RES/2256 (22 December 2015) extended the terms of ICTY judges and the prosecutor and dealt with the Residual Mechanism. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7636 (29 February 2016) was the meeting to adopt the resolution appointing the prosecutor of the Residual Mechanism. S/PV.7574 (9 December 2015) was the most recent semi-annual briefing. Security Council Press Statement SC/12188 (31 December 2015) marked the ICTR's closure.

International Criminal Tribunals (con't)

some countries expressed opposition. On 29 February, the Council adopted a resolution appointing Brammertz until 30 June 2018. Angola, Egypt, Senegal and Russia abstained. In their explanation of vote, Angola, Egypt and Senegal expressed their view that the replacement of prosecutor Hassan Jallow (The Gambia) with Brammertz resulted in a lack of equitable geographical distribution among the Mechanism's leadership. Russia abstained because, since Brammertz will also remain the ICTY prosecutor, it was concerned about "the reproduction and continuation in the Mechanism of the significant flaws that were characteristic of the ICTY". Effective 1 March, Judge Theodor Meron (US) was re-appointed by the Secretary-General as president of the Mechanism until 30 June 2018.

The presidents and prosecutors of the ICTY, ICTR and Residual Mechanism last briefed the Council on 9 December 2015.

Key Issues

The main issue is the continuing review by the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals of the completion strategy of the

ICTY as well as following the work of the Residual Mechanism.

Options

The Council will likely hold the debate without taking further action.

Council Dynamics

Delays in the ICTY's completion of its activities have been a source of some tension in the Council. According to the relevant Council resolutions, the ICTY was expected to complete its caseload in 2010 or, failing that, by the end of 2014. Currently, the ICTY expects completion in late 2017. The most recent resolution, adopted in December 2015, extended ICTY judges' and the prosecutor's terms to no later than 31 December 2016. As it did in previous years, Russia abstained, commenting that the situation regarding the tribunal's exit strategy had not improved and that costly trial delays continued. Russia is also critical of the ICTY's jurisprudence, arguing that it has not done justice on behalf of Serbian victims of the Yugoslav conflict. As no requests for extending judges' terms are expected in June, these

differences should not have practical effect until the end of the year when further extension requests will be made.

Council members, including Russia, have so far generally assessed the Residual Mechanism positively with the caveat that it must continue to fulfil its mandate expeditiously and cost-effectively. While Angola, Egypt and Senegal abstained from the resolution appointing Brammertz as prosecutor, this was related mainly to the resulting decrease in African representation at key UN posts, and not to the work of the Residual Mechanism itself. Similarly, Russia's abstention was motivated by its dissatisfaction with the ICTY and not with the Mechanism directly.

During the debate, Council members will likely focus on the ICTY's completion strategy, including the OIOS's evaluation report and the handover of activities to the Residual Mechanism. The eight remaining ICTR-indicted fugitives and the relocation of persons released or acquitted by the ICTR may also be discussed.

Uruguay is the penholder and chair of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals.

Counter-Terrorism

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to receive a briefing from Jeffrey Feltman, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on UN counter-terrorism efforts against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), followed by consultations.

Background

Resolution 2253 of 17 December 2015 requested the Secretary-General to present a strategic-level report that reflects the gravity of the threat posed to international peace and security by ISIL and its associates and to provide updates to the Council every four months thereafter. The first such report was published on 29 January. In it,

the Secretary-General acknowledged that ISIL (also known as Da'esh) represents an unprecedented threat to international peace and security that is able to adapt quickly to the changing environment and to persuade or inspire like-minded terrorist groups around the world to facilitate and commit acts of terrorism. In particular, the report highlights the evolution of the threat in the previous 18 months, including ISIL's growing sphere of influence, the increasing complexity of recent attacks (in terms of planning, coordination and sophistication) and the steady stream of foreign terrorist fighters joining ISIL and its affiliates.

The Council's counter-terrorism framework targets the financing of terrorism,

through the ISIL/Al-Qaida sanctions regime and the implementation of resolution 1373, which obliges states to criminalise the financing of terrorism. It focuses on cutting off the financial sources of terrorism, particularly regarding ISIL and Al-Qaida, targeting oil and gas smuggling, traffic of cultural relics, ransoms and external donations, among other assets. On 18 January, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) published a global implementation survey of resolution 1373 that identified several gaps in efforts to disrupt funding sources and issued recommendations for member states to enhance their domestic action to counter money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. Despite the Council's focus on

UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM Security Council Resolution S/RES/2253 (17 December 2015) renamed the sanctions regime to feature ISIL (Da'esh) in its title. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2016/6** (11 May 2016) requested the CTC to present a proposal to the Council for a "comprehensive international framework" to counter the use of narratives by ISIL, Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. **Secretary-General's Report S/2016/92** (29 January 2016) was 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. **Security Council Letters S/2016/50** (18 January 2016) was the global implementation survey of resolution 1624. **S/2016/49** (18 January 2016) was the global implementation survey of resolution 1373. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7690** (11 May 2016) focused on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. **S/PV.7686** (4 May 2016) was a joint briefing by the chairs of the counter-terrorism-related bodies. **S/PV.7670** (14 April 2016) was an open debate on efforts to strengthen international counter-terrorism cooperation and coordination. **S/PV.7618** (9 February 2016) was a briefing by Feltman on UN counter-terrorism efforts against ISIL, followed by consultations.

Counter-Terrorism (con't)

the financing of ISIL, the 29 January report underlines ISIL's rapid and effective mobilisation of financial resources in the service of recruitment and territorial expansion, characterising ISIL as "the world's wealthiest terrorist organisation".

Despite Council action targeting foreign terrorist fighters, the 29 January report notes how their numbers have risen to an unprecedented level (around 30,000 fighters originating from more than 100 member states) as a result of the increasing number of ways potential recruits can access information on how to join ISIL, including through the Internet. Briefing the Council on 4 May, the chair of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh)/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Gerard van Bohemen (New Zealand), elaborated on some of the ways in which foreign terrorist fighters avoid scrutiny, such as the use of indirect travel routes to reach their destinations. Van Bohemen also briefed the Council on the shifting centre of gravity of ISIL and the expansion of the geographical scope of its actions, including its increasing influence in places such as Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen.

Also briefing the Council was Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), who said its priorities in 2016 include holding two special meetings, one on countering the financing of terrorism and another one on preventing terrorists from exploiting the Internet and social media. As part of the ongoing work of the Committee to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, Aboulatta also highlighted some of the recommendations included in the three reports prepared by CTED in 2015 on the implementation of resolution 2178, including thematic and regional recommendations to address this phenomenon. The recommendations covered issues such as criminalisation of foreign terrorist fighters and international cooperation on border control, intelligence sharing and capacity-building.

Although most of the Council's counter-terrorism-related work has taken place for some time at the subsidiary level, several

formal discussions have been held in the chamber in recent months. In addition to some of the regular briefings mentioned above, open debates were held in April and May at the initiative of China and Egypt, respectively. Briefing the Council on 14 April in a meeting on efforts to strengthen international counter-terrorism cooperation, the Secretary-General stressed that "too often, government counter-terror strategies are so heavy-handed and discriminatory that they end up being counterproductive, generating further alienation among targeted communities and even more terrorists than there were beforehand".

On 11 May, the Council held an open debate focused on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. At that meeting, it adopted a presidential statement requesting the CTC to present a proposal to the Council by 30 April 2017 for a "comprehensive international framework" to counter the use of narratives by ISIL, Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups that encourage, motivate and recruit members to commit terrorist acts. This proposal is expected to include a counter-narrative campaign and options for coordinating the implementation of the framework and mobilising resources as necessary.

The current discussions on counter-terrorism are also expected to provide momentum on this issue as the General Assembly reviews the UN global counter-terrorism strategy, which is expected to be completed in June.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is to ensure overall implementation of the ISIL/Al-Qaida sanctions regime, including through targeting those violating the regime by helping terrorist groups improve their operational capabilities.

Mitigating the humanitarian impact of these measures is a key issue to ensure their effectiveness.

Avoiding the politicisation of counter-terrorism discussions is a key issue to ensure the effectiveness of Council action.

Options

Although no outcome is anticipated following the briefing, the Council could issue a statement that:

- calls on all member states to ensure overall implementation of the ISIL/Al-Qaida sanctions regime, threatening those violating it with secondary sanctions;
- calls on all member states to strengthen their capacities to ensure the implementation of other legal obligations imposed by the Council regarding issues such as the financing of terrorism and the travel and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters and others;
- encourages further listings by the ISIL/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee of individuals and entities engaging in activities in support of these terrorist groups or their affiliates; and
- requests the Secretary-General to provide recommendations on how better to address the links between terrorist groups and transnational organised crime.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Despite some divergences over the politicisation of the issue in the Middle East, counter-terrorism continues to have overall unanimous support among Council members, as well as high visibility of Council action. Efforts to continue curbing the capabilities of ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliates seem to be a priority for Council action. Although the idea behind these new regular briefings by Feltman is to place more emphasis on strategic thinking and less on implementation measures, it remains to be seen how useful Council members will find this new reporting track.

The Secretary-General has highlighted the need to engage earlier and address the drivers of violent extremism, but the Council has so far stopped short of welcoming his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, released in January. In the 11 May presidential statement, the Council merely takes note of the Secretary General's plan, further noting that it will be considered during the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review in June.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council will hold a briefing, followed by consultations, on the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous is expected to provide the briefing. The Council needs to renew the mandate of UNAMID, which expires on 30 June. Also during the month, ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda is expected to provide the semi-annual briefing to the Council on the Court's work on Darfur. It further seems that Council members will meet with the AU's Open-ended Ministerial Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the ICC. The ICC's case against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir will probably be raised in this meeting.

Key Recent Developments

A referendum on the administrative status of Darfur was conducted between 11 and 13 April to determine whether the Darfur region would remain as five administrative units (i.e. North Darfur, South Darfur, East Darfur, West Darfur and Central Darfur) or become one administrative unit. On 24 April, the Darfur Referendum Commission announced the results, reporting that almost 98 percent of the participants chose the status quo (i.e. five states). Analysts have maintained that the Sudanese government prefers the status quo, as this enables it to continue to exert greater control over an administratively divided region. Opposition forces argued against holding the referendum, expressing concerns that ongoing fighting and displacement in the region would make participation difficult for many potential voters. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), one of the key Darfur rebel groups that boycotted the vote, refused to accept the results and called the poll fraudulent.

The 11th meeting of the Implementation Follow-up Commission of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) was convened on 9 May in Khartoum. During the meeting, Joint AU-UN Special Representative for Darfur Martin Ihoeghian Uhomibhi underscored the negative humanitarian impact of this year's fighting in Darfur's Jebel Marra region. Deputy Prime Minister of Qatar Ahmad bin Abdullah Al Mahmoud,

who heads the Follow-up Commission, urged the movements that have not signed the DDPD to join the peace process. He said that inter-communal violence and the spread of arms remain obstacles to peace in Darfur.

The humanitarian crisis in South Sudan has continued to spill over into Sudan. Since late January, more than 55,500 refugees from South Sudan have fled to Sudan's East Darfur, South Darfur and West Kordofan states "mainly due to conflict and reported food shortages in [South Sudan's] Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap states", according to OCHA. From the start of the civil war in South Sudan on 15 December 2013 through 31 March, more than 224,000 refugees have fled to Sudan from South Sudan.

Five civilians were killed and several others were wounded on 10 May when armed nomads opened fire near a site for internally displaced persons in Sortony, North Darfur. Marta Ruedas, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, said that the incident occurred "after a reported rise in tensions between displaced and armed tribesman over cattle raiding". On 12 May, the violence was condemned in a joint statement issued by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

On 13 May, the Council received a note from the Secretariat regarding customs clearances for supply containers at Port Sudan to be shipped to UNAMID. While the note was confidential, it apparently said that customs clearances for several containers of food and equipment continued to be held up by Sudanese authorities.

On 19 May, Sudanese State Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamal Ismail reiterated his government's position that UNAMID should withdraw from Darfur, claiming that the situation there was "stable."

On 22 May, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Sudan announced that the Sudanese government had decided not to renew the work permit of OCHA Head of Office Ivo Freijsen, which expires on 6 June. According to an HCT press statement, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided no official explanation in writing for this decision," although Sudan's Humanitarian Affairs Commission reportedly said that

Freijsen had a "negative attitude towards the Sudanese government" and Sudanese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour complained about Freijsen's reporting on the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

In February, Erastus Mwecha, the AU Commission's Deputy Chairperson, sent a letter regarding the ICC to Ambassador Rafael Ramirez (Venezuela) in his capacity as President of the UN Security Council for that month. In the letter, Mwecha referred to decisions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU that requested the suspension of ICC proceedings against President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan and urged the Council to withdraw its referral of Sudan to the Court.

On 12 May, President Bashir attended the inauguration of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni in Kampala. Uganda, a state party to the ICC, was obligated under the Rome Statute to arrest Bashir, who has been indicted by the court on charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. During his inaugural address, however, Museveni disavowed his country's support for the court, referring to the ICC as "a bunch of useless people".

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 3 May, Ambassador Ramirez, chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, briefed Council members in consultations on the work of the Committee. During the meeting, it was noted that, because of holds by Russia on the final report of the 2015 Sudan Sanctions Committee Panel of Experts and on the proposed slate of candidates for the 2016 Panel, the 2015 report had yet to be released and the Panel of Experts had yet to be appointed for this year.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The independent expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan, Aristide Nononsi, released a statement on 29 April, after his second mission to the country from 14 to 28 April, that urged the Sudanese government "to enable a conducive environment for a free and inclusive national dialogue by respecting the basic fundamental rights of Sudanese people, including the rights to freedoms of expression and association and of the press". The statement expressed concern about a number of human rights problems in the country, such as arbitrary arrests, detention and ill-treatment of human rights defenders and political activists by security forces, including the National Intelligence and Security Service; ongoing censorship of newspapers; and increased

Sudan (Darfur) (con't)

restrictions on journalists. The statement also recalled that, in the preceding weeks, Sudanese government authorities had prevented four Sudanese human rights defenders from attending the pre-briefing session of the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva.

Key Issues

The underlying issue for the Council is the continuing instability of the security and humanitarian environment in Darfur, with no progress on the political front.

An ongoing key issue is the limited level of cooperation that Sudan accords to the mission. Delays in issuing visas to mission staff and in providing customs clearances, as well as restrictions on the movement of UNAMID peacekeepers, have been a hindrance to UNAMID's operations in recent months. As reflected by Foreign Minister Ismail's recent statement, the government of Sudan has been outspoken in its calls to expedite the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID.

Another important issue is the continuing impasse in the Council with regard to the ICC's work in Darfur and whether the Council can develop a strategy to overcome this stalemate.

Options

The most likely option is for the Council to renew the mandate of UNAMID for an additional year. In doing so, the Council could:

- underscore the need for the government of Sudan to enhance cooperation with

the mission, including by issuing visas to UNAMID personnel and providing customs clearances for food and supplies destined for the mission in a more expeditious manner;

- reiterate that the exit strategy for UNAMID is conditioned on the mission's achievement of benchmarks (i.e. an inclusive peace process, the protection of civilians, unhindered humanitarian access and the prevention or mitigation of community conflict) and the government's cooperation with UNAMID; and
- call on the three mediation tracks (the UNAMID Joint Special Representative, the AUHIP and the UN Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan) to coordinate their efforts to pursue a holistic strategy regarding the conflicts in Sudan.

The Council could also consider establishing a co-penholder system on Darfur, whereby the current penholder, the UK, shares the pen with an African member of the Council, thus heightening African engagement on this issue in the Council and possibly bringing a fresh perspective to the matter.

Regarding the ICC, the Council could hold an informal interactive dialogue meeting with the Office of the Prosecutor to constructively discuss next steps.

Council Dynamics

There have been different views among Council members on the UNAMID exit strategy that could resurface during the

negotiations on this year's mandate renewal. During last year's negotiations on the UNAMID resolution, members such as France, the UK and the US underscored the conditionality of the exit strategy for UNAMID, noting that it must be firmly linked to significant progress on the mission's benchmarks. Other members, including Angola and Russia, preferred not to emphasise the conditionality of the exit strategy.

Given the ongoing stalemate in the peace talks, some members continue to suggest that rebel groups in Darfur should be targeted for sanctions by the Council. Russia reiterated this position during consultations on the 1591 Sanctions Committee's work on 3 May. Similarly, at the same meeting, Egypt reportedly expressed the view that the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid faction, which has engaged in heavy fighting with government forces in the Jebel Marra region this year, should be designated for sanctions.

Regarding the work of the ICC on Darfur, sharp divisions remain among Council members. Eight members of the Council are state parties to the Rome Statute (France, Japan, New Zealand, Senegal, Spain, the UK, Uruguay and Venezuela), although Venezuela shares the AU position that the Court's work has been politicised. Seven countries (Angola, China, Egypt, Malaysia, Russia, Ukraine and the US) are not state parties; however, the US has been supportive of the Court's work in Darfur.

The UK is the penholder on Darfur.

UNOCA/LRA

Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council will be briefed by Abdoulaye Bathily, Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), on the Secretary-General's report on UNOCA and the implementation of the UN regional strategy to combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The mandate of UNOCA expires on 31 August 2018.

Key Recent Developments

Although the LRA is no longer at its height of activity, the start of 2016 saw an increase in activity attributed to the group, particularly in the south-eastern part of the Central African Republic (CAR). According to a report issued by the NGOs Invisible Children and Resolve, the LRA abducted 296 people in the CAR and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in the first quarter of this

year, reportedly the most in any three-month period since the third quarter of 2010.

Also in the CAR, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) has reported that several villages in Bria region have been abandoned since LRA attacks increased at the end of December 2015.

On 18 April, Council members issued a press statement condemning the killing of

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNOCA/LRA Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/12 (11 June 2015) expressed concern at the grave security situation in parts of Central Africa, in particular the ongoing crisis in the CAR and its regional impact, the continuing threat of the LRA and the terrorist activities of Boko Haram. **Secretary-General's Report S/2015/914** (30 November 2015) was on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of UNOCA. **Security Council Letters S/2015/554 and S/2015/555** (16 and 21 July 2015) was an exchange of letters between the Secretary-General and the Security Council in which the mandate of UNOCA was renewed until 31 August 2018. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7572** (8 December 2015) was a briefing on UNOCA and the Secretary-General's report. **Sanctions-Related Documents SC/12272** (7 March 2016) was a press release announcing the addition of the LRA and Joseph Kony to the CAR sanctions list.

a MINUSCA peacekeeper. According to a statement by the Secretary-General, the incident occurred when a MINUSCA patrol was dispatched to Rafai in response to an attack on the nearby village of Agoumar by alleged elements of the LRA.

According to the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC (UNJHRO), LRA combatants were responsible for at least 38 cases of human rights violations in the DRC during the month of April. UNJHRO noted that these figures are particularly worrying given that in March no violations by LRA combatants were documented.

Tension has been mounting in the Republic of Congo (ROC) since President Denis Sassou Nguesso's re-election on 20 March, extending further his rule of 18 consecutive years (and 32 years in total). The runner-up, Guy-Brice Kollélas, conceded defeat, saying he wanted to avoid further violence, but he and other candidates maintain the polling was rigged. Opposition parties led protests against the referendum of October 2015 that allowed Sassou Nguesso to change the constitution and run again. Security forces killed at least 18 people during opposition demonstrations against the referendum changes.

After relative calm, 17 people were killed on 4 April in fighting between government forces and armed assailants in a neighbourhood called "the Pool", an opposition stronghold in Brazzaville. The government issued an arrest warrant for Frederic Bintsamou for assassination and illegal possession of weapons in connection with the fighting. Bintsamou, leader of the "Ninjas" (a former rebel group active in the 1997-1999 civil war and a 2002 insurgency against Sassou Nguesso) and the father of Kollélas, has denied involvement in the attack. Recent media reports suggest that the authorities have been in contact with Bintsamou, who is still at large, through interlocutors close to him, to resolve the crisis.

During his monthly luncheon with Council members on 17 May, the Secretary-General brought to the attention of members the situation in the ROC, to encourage discreet contacts with the ROC government to calm the situation. One Council member

recognised that UNOCA could play a role by talking to political actors in the ROC and the region as part of this effort.

The Secretary-General telephoned Sassou Nguesso the following day, stressing the need for political dialogue to foster national unity following the recent elections and for allowing humanitarian actors to have access to the areas concerned.

In a statement on 13 April, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein cited reports of mass arrests and torture in detention, as well as killing and displacement. He added, however, that these reports had been difficult to verify, given the lack of access to "the Pool" area by independent actors.

Another regional threat is that of piracy. Based on a report by the organisation Oceans Beyond Piracy, the Washington Post reported that due to the fall in oil prices, pirate kidnappings of seamen in the Gulf of Guinea have become more common. A total of 15 kidnappings were reported in 2015, while 2016 has already seen an equal number of kidnappings for ransom.

In a presidential statement adopted on 25 April, the Council encouraged both UNOCA and the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel to continue to assist regional efforts to tackle piracy in the Gulf.

Bathily last briefed the Council on 8 December 2015. Jackson Tuwei, Special Envoy of the AU for the Lord's Resistance Army, also addressed the Council via video teleconference from Nairobi.

Sanctions-Related Developments

After years of activity in the region, the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee on 7 March added the LRA and its leader, Joseph Kony, to the CAR sanctions list at the request of France, the UK and the US.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council will be to get an updated analysis regarding implementation and effectiveness of the UN's regional anti-LRA strategy and the wider impact of the LRA on the region.

Monitoring instability and potential deterioration in other areas in the region is a major concern for the Council.

Options

As in the past, an option for the Council is to issue a presidential or press statement that:

- expresses support for UNOCA and encourages member states to contribute more resources toward anti-LRA efforts and regional cooperation, especially in light of the turmoil in countries in the region;
- commends the LRA-affected states for their cooperation and encourages further cooperation to overcome the LRA threat once and for all;
- expresses concern over reports of LRA cooperation with rebel groups in the CAR and over the increasing threat of the Islamist group Boko Haram to the region; and
- expresses support for UNOCA's efforts in addressing the increasing political and security challenges in Central Africa.

On the ROC, the Council may consider putting the issue on its agenda and closely monitoring the situation.

Council Dynamics

Council members are largely in agreement on LRA-related issues. Council members have also been supportive of UNOCA's continued shift to focus its efforts on the region as a whole, rather than on the LRA as its main objective.

The request for regular reporting from UNOCA in the presidential statement of 11 June 2015 reflected the view of several Council members that in the absence of particular developments or new concerns, adopting a semi-annual presidential statement on UNOCA is not very productive. At the same time, several Council members insisted that regular reporting by UNOCA continue.

Thus, while Council members maintain interest in LRA activities and other sub-regional developments, the Council will be less likely to adopt an outcome document following next month's briefing without a new and specific issue to address. Members are likely to follow events in the ROC, but at this time it does not seem as though the Council will take up the issue.

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

Expected Council Action

In June, the Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), Petko Draganov, is due to brief Council members in consultations on the work of the centre.

Key Recent Developments

In the period since his last briefing to the Council on 4 February, Draganov visited Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. He was in Kyrgyzstan from 22 to 24 March, where he met the president, Almazbek Atambaev, the speaker of parliament, Asylbek Jeenbekov, and the foreign minister, Erlan Abdyldaev, as well as civil society representatives. Discussions focused on elections, judicial reform, and human rights and inter-ethnic relations, in addition to regional challenges that UNRCCA is mandated to deal with, such as terrorism, religious extremism, management of natural resources and border-related issues. Draganov praised Kyrgyzstan's efforts aimed at democratic development, notably the recently held parliamentary elections, while stressing the need to further promote and protect human rights. (The OESC electoral observer mission for the 5 October 2015 parliamentary elections concluded that they "were competitive and provided voters with a wide range of choice" and were "unique in the region". Local elections will be held later this year while presidential elections are scheduled for 2017.)

During his visit to Afghanistan, which took place from 19 to 21 April, Draganov had meetings with the deputy foreign minister, Hekmat Khalil Karzai, senior officials from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the UN Office for Drugs and Crime, as well as ambassadors from Central Asia and other key countries. Discussions focused on current developments in Afghanistan and the region, regional cooperation and the engagement of Central Asian countries in the stabilisation of Afghanistan. Joint efforts to counter security threats and support human development were also discussed.

The main event hosted by UNRCCA during the period was a regional seminar held on 29–31 March, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, entitled "Recognizing and Responding to Radicalization that Can Lead to Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Central Asia". The seminar,

which was co-organised with the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), aimed to support implementation of the joint plan of action for Central Asia under the UN global counter-terrorism strategy. It aimed to help participants gain a better understanding of the causes of radicalisation and develop strategies to more effectively prevent and combat this growing threat.

UNRCCA also hosted a regular meeting in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on 25 April of the mini-Dublin group, an informal coordination group of like-minded countries focused on the fight against illicit drugs. The meeting was attended by representatives of Turkmenistan law enforcement agencies, embassies and international organisations based in Ashgabat. Participants shared information about their activities related to the fight against illicit drugs in order to better coordinate their efforts.

In other developments, there was heightened tension between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan over a disputed border area between the two countries. On 18 March, according to news reports, two Uzbek armored personnel carriers and some 40 soldiers suddenly appeared near the area, prompting Kyrgyzstan to send two of its own armored personnel carriers and a similar number of troops the following day. Kyrgyz officials said the deployment by Uzbekistan was a violation of bilateral agreements between Bishkek and Tashkent not to militarise a tense situation along their common border. The standoff ended on 26 March with the two sides pulling back. The majority of the 1,314-kilometer-long Uzbek-Kyrgyz border is still undefined, and conflicts on and near border crossings in recent years have often been violent and led to civilian casualties.

Key Issues

Key issues include the rising threat of terrorism and extremism, ongoing tensions linked to border-related disputes, trans-boundary water management and drug trafficking. The regional impact of the situation in Afghanistan also remains a key issue, with recent reports of increased fighting along the Turkmen-Afghan border and Tajikistan taking steps to bolster its forces along the Afghan border due to the deteriorating security situation in northern Afghanistan.

With regard to UNRCCA, a key issue is whether UNRCCA's role as a tool for preventive diplomacy could be further developed.

Options

One option for Council members is to issue a press statement, as they have done in the past, reaffirming the importance of conflict prevention, expressing support for UNRCCA's activities in the region and reiterating other key elements from previous statements, such as highlighting the centre's role relating to regional trans-boundary water management, counter-terrorism, drug trafficking and regional engagement with Afghanistan.

Another option is to change the format of the briefing from a closed to an open meeting, perhaps followed by consultations, as is the case for the semi-annual briefings by the UN Office for West Africa and the UN Regional Office for Central Africa.

Council Dynamics

Since the establishment of UNRCCA in 2007, the semi-annual briefings on its work have normally been welcomed by Council members in a press statement commending the important role played by the centre as a conflict prevention tool, with Russia as the penholder. Following the last two briefings, however, in September 2015 and February 2016, Council members were unable to agree on a statement although they are generally supportive of the centre and agree that it plays a useful role.

It seems that in both cases the lack of consensus was mostly due to the fact that Russia proposed new language relating to UNRCCA's cooperation with regional organisations. While recent statements simply encouraged increased cooperation and coordination between the Central Asian countries, UNRCCA and "relevant regional organizations" to strengthen the region's capacity to overcome challenges to peace, stability and sustainable development, Russia proposed adding specific references in this context to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), OSCE and the EU. This was unacceptable to some other members, however, in particular France, the UK and the US, who saw

UNRCCA (Central Asia) (con't)

it as an attempt by Russia to gain greater legitimacy through the UN for organisations they perceive as tools for spreading Russian influence in the region, notably CIS, CSTO

and SCO. They, therefore, asked Russia to instead use agreed language from previous statements referring to cooperation with regional organisations more generally. Other

members, however, were more flexible. At press time, it was unclear whether Russia intended to propose a press statement following the briefing in June.

Mali

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The Council also expects to receive a briefing from the Special Representative and head of MINUSMA, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, followed by consultations.

MINUSMA's mandate expires on 30 June.

Key Recent Developments

Despite some progress in the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, key challenges remain one year after its signing. The legal framework for the decentralisation process continues to develop. Following the establishment of two new regions in January—Taoudenni and Ménaka—the National Assembly adopted a law on 31 March modifying the territorial municipalities' code. Along with other decisions, this process is expected to provide for the implementation of the transitional local and regional administrations in the north (which will be composed of representatives of the government and of the coalitions of armed groups). On 5 May, the constitutional court upheld the 31 March law, which had been challenged by opposition parties and it was promulgated on 10 May. However, the implementation of this legal framework, its acceptance by the opposition and the provision of basic services in the north remain challenging. The coalitions of armed groups had until then expressed the need to see advances on the decentralisation process by the government before moving ahead on the security provisions of the agreement—such as cantonment, the deployment of joint patrols and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of armed combatants (DDR)—which were considered prerequisites by the government.

Briefing the Council on 5 April, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous said that despite the creation of new committees on integration and DDR and advances in the establishment of pre-cantonment sites, progress regarding the security forces remains too slow. Following advances on the decentralisation process, at the 18 May meeting of the Commission Technique de Sécurité—a follow-up mechanism to the agreement chaired by MINUSMA and focused on security-related issues—armed groups committed themselves to engage in confidence-building measures such as the deployment of joint patrols.

Efforts to advance on national reconciliation continue to drag. A peace forum, which was expected to convene representatives of armed groups and the government in Kidal, ended up hosting only representatives of the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad coalition of armed groups. The work of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, which was first established in January 2014, has until now mostly focused on discussions over its commissioners, budgetary issues and internal structure instead of the substance of its work. A national reconciliation conference provided for in the peace agreement is one of the outstanding issues in its implementation.

Terrorism in Mali continues to be a threat to the stability of the country and the region. The mission continues to be a target: more than 60 MINUSMA peacekeepers have now died as a result of malicious acts against the mission since its establishment in 2013. In his 5 April briefing, Ladsous emphasised how “each day that passes without the peace agreement being implemented is a day gained for extremist and terrorist groups, which are betting on the failure of the peace process

in Mali”. On 18 May, five Chadian peacekeepers were killed and three were seriously injured in an attack by unidentified assailants in the Kidal region. That day, in a previously scheduled meeting, MINUSMA's force commander, Major General Michael Lollesgaard, briefed Council members on the importance of improving intelligence and situational awareness so as to ensure informed decision-making in a context with asymmetric threats. He particularly highlighted the added value of the All-Source-Information-Fusion-Unit established within MINUSMA, giving the mission an unprecedented capacity to gather and process actionable information on threats to civilians and UN personnel. Kidnappings have also been a serious security concern. In a recent development, three ICRC staff members who had been kidnapped on 16 April by the terrorist group Ansar Eddine were released on 22 April.

Insecurity is also fed by existing tensions, including intercommunal conflicts that continue to increase, especially in the areas of Gao and Mopti. MINUSMA has also been the target of popular discontent. On 18 April demonstrators clashed with MINUSMA forces at the Kidal airport. The violence resulted in the deaths of two demonstrators. An internal investigation concluded that there was no evidence to ascertain whether the deaths were as a result of MINUSMA's actions. A second investigation is expected to take place.

Since March, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations has been leading a strategic review of MINUSMA. The review is expected to provide guidance on such issues as prioritisation of the mission's good offices mandate, increasing the troop ceiling and whether to change the posture of the mission and its force layout. In a meeting with Council members during their March visit to Bamako,

UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2227](#) (29 June 2015) renewed the mandate of MINUSMA. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7665](#) (5 April 2016) was a briefing on the latest MINUSMA report. [Security Council Press Statement SC/12366](#) (19 May 2016) condemned the 18 May terrorist attack on a MINUSMA convoy that killed five Chadian peacekeepers and injured three others.

Mali (con't)

Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop elaborated on the need for MINUSMA to prepare its exit strategy. Diop proposed establishing benchmarks to assess performance and provide for an exit for the mission once commonly agreed objectives have been attained. During a 16 May luncheon of Council members with the Secretary-General, some discussion took place about the early conclusions of the strategic review, including the need to increase the mission's military personnel, the importance of enabling the extension of state authority in the north and implementing measures to bridge the current capacity gaps within the mission.

Key Issues

An overarching issue is the slow implementation of the agreement and the lack of progress in such areas as confidence-building measures, reconciliation and return of basic services to the north. Ensuring that cantonment and DDR take place within a broader context of security sector reform and accountability for human rights violations is an important issue.

Addressing the grievances and frustrations of different communities that are not seeing the impact of the peace dividends in their daily lives, including youth at risk of being recruited by violent groups, is a related issue.

The limited mobility of MINUSMA and its insufficient capacities and resources to fulfil its mandate in the current context are also key issues.

The marked increase in terrorist attacks and their reach, the deliberate targeting of MINUSMA and the safety concerns of troop- and police-contributing countries are further key issues for the Council to address.

Options

In the resolution renewing MINUSMA's mandate the Council could:

- prioritise the tasks that can be achieved during the mandate cycle;
- increase the troop ceiling;
- adapt the force's layout to address the increasing reach of terrorist groups and widespread banditry in places like Mopti in central Mali;
- call on troop- and police-contributing countries and, more widely, member states to supply key capacities that the mission is lacking, including armoured personnel carriers;
- call on the parties to act in good faith and with the spirit of compromise in the discussions regarding the implementation of the agreement and threaten to impose sanctions on spoilers;
- reiterate the Council's support of MINUSMA's good offices mandate to encourage and support the full implementation of the peace agreement; and
- request the Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh)/Al-Qaida Sanctions

Committee to report on ways to curb the magnitude of the terrorist threat in Mali, including from non-listed groups such as the Macina Liberation Front.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members remain united in support of accelerating the implementation of the agreement. As a result of their visiting mission in March, Council members might be amenable to the recommendations of the MINUSMA strategic review regarding the need to match and adapt MINUSMA's mandate to the needs currently identified on the ground. It remains unclear, however, how these recommendations might be perceived, given some Council members' concern at rising peacekeeping costs and in light of the government's call for a mission exit strategy. Despite calls by Malian stakeholders for a more robust mandate for the mission, Council members seem to be of the opinion that the mandate is already exceptionally robust and that the mission cannot engage in counter-terrorism activities.

Council members continue to be worried about attacks targeting MINUSMA in northern Mali. MINUSMA's exceptionally high number of fatalities and casualties has led to an increasing divide between the troop contributors willing to deploy their forces in the most dangerous territory and other, more risk-averse contributors.

France is the penholder on Mali.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In June, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura is expected to brief Council members on the intra-Syrian political process that, at press time, was facing serious challenges due to the unravelling cessation of hostilities and the ongoing lack of humanitarian access.

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

Key Recent Developments

On 3 May, the Security Council adopted resolution 2286 condemning attacks on health care workers and facilities and demanding compliance with international humanitarian law. While the resolution was not country-specific, many Council members viewed it as relevant to Syria in light of ongoing attacks against medical facilities there, in particular the air-strike targeting a hospital in rebel-held Aleppo

in late April and the shelling of a maternity ward in government-held Aleppo in early May.

On 4 May, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council on the escalation of hostilities around Aleppo. Government forces, supported by Russian air power and the Lebanese Shi'a militia Hezbollah, were targeting armed rebel groups,

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA **Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/2268 (26 February 2016) endorsed the cessation of hostilities. S/RES/2254 (18 December 2015) was on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.7701 (27 May 2016) was a briefing on the humanitarian situation. S/PV.7687 (4 May 2016) was a briefing on the situation in Aleppo. **Security Council Press Statements** SC/12372 (24 May 2016) condemned the ISIL attacks in Jableh and Tartous as well as indiscriminate attacks by all parties, called for the resumption of talks and expressed support for Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. SC/12360 (12 May 2016) expressed outrage at attacks against civilians and civilian objects. **Security Council Letter** S/2016/438 (12 May 2016) was the joint statement of Russia and the US that reconfirmed their commitment to Syria's cessation of hostilities. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2016/460 (19 May 2016) was on the humanitarian situation. S/2016/391 (26 April 2016) was on chemical weapons.

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS **ISSG Members:** Australia, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Netherlands, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey, UAE, UK, and the US and the Arab League, EU, OIC and the UN

Syria (con't)

ostensibly fighting in coordination with Al Nusra Front, which is not a party to the cessation of hostilities.

In early May, Russia and the US declared so-called “regimes of calm”, or local and temporary truces, to try and shore up the failing cessation of hostilities in Aleppo as well as in government-controlled Latakia and rebel-held Eastern Ghouta outside of Damascus. On 9 May, Russia and the US, in their capacity as co-chairs of the International Syria Support Group’s (ISSG) ceasefire task force, issued a joint statement that they would intensify efforts to implement a nationwide cessation of hostilities, enhance efforts to promote humanitarian assistance, and redouble efforts to reach a political solution. The statement also committed to delineating areas controlled by Al Nusra Front and by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), to ensure a common understanding of which areas were afforded protection by the cessation of hostilities and which areas were not—a task originally set out in resolution 2268 in February, but with unclear results, as any such agreement between Russia and the US on delineation has not been shared with others.

The situation on the ground over the course of May did not provide any evidence that commitments in the 9 May statement were being observed. The Syrian regime pressed on with two key objectives: to encircle Aleppo and break rebel control of areas around Damascus. There were escalating government airstrikes in Aleppo, including targeting the last road into rebel-held parts of the city. Outside of Damascus, airstrikes had allowed government forces to advance into rebel-held areas in Eastern Ghouta by 19 May.

On 12 May, despite having received clearance from government authorities, a UN aid convoy was denied access to government-besieged Darraya, a suburb of Damascus that had not received aid since 2012. The convoy was refused entry by the 4th Division of the Syrian Army, controlled by President Bashar al-Assad’s brother Maher, because it included medical and nutritional supplies, with the government arguing it had only approved vaccines, school supplies and baby formula. After the convoy turned back, government forces launched a mortar attack at the area where civilians had gathered to receive the aid, reportedly killing a father and his son and injuring five others.

Following the aborted aid delivery, media reports indicated that rebel fighters feared an imminent assault on Darraya, citing the deployment of increased numbers of government troops and equipment near the town. A government offensive over the weekend of 21–22 May was repelled. The rebel Free Syrian Army, on behalf of 40 armed opposition groups, announced on 22 May that they would no longer abide by the cessation of hostilities unless Syrian forces ceased attacks on Aleppo and around Damascus.

On 23 May, US Secretary of State John Kerry spoke with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, urging him to use his influence to halt Syrian government attacks on Aleppo and the suburbs of Damascus. At press time, Russia had called for another “regime of calm” to be extended to the Damascus suburbs of Darraya and Eastern Ghouta and had said its military would hold off on strikes for a limited period of time to allow rebel groups to withdraw from Al-Nusra Front positions.

Meanwhile, in mid-May, Al Nusra Front, in coordination with rebel groups and other extremist groups, seized Khan Touman, a village south of Aleppo. There were also reports of insurgents killing and abducting civilians when they advanced into the government-controlled Alawite village of Al Zara. Attacks by ISIS on 23 May killed 160 people in the government-controlled towns of Jableh and Tartous.

At press time, the situation in Syria was grim, with the cessation of hostilities on the cusp of falling apart, leaving the political process in limbo. At the end of the last round of intra-Syrian talks in late April, de Mistura said that the parties had agreed on the need for a “transition” but remained far apart on how to achieve it. The government proposed a national unity government, but explicitly rejected the opposition’s position to form a transitional governing body with full executive powers (in line with the June 2012 Geneva Communiqué), and insisted that Assad’s presidency was not subject to negotiation.

Indeed, there were no political talks held in May, though the ISSG met on 17 May, resulting in yet another statement reaffirming the need for a full cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access. The statement welcomed the new Russian-US Coordination Cell in Geneva that was set up to investigate, respond to and mitigate the effects of the violations of the cessation of hostilities. Regarding

aerial bombardment, the statement recalled the Syrian government’s March commitment not to “arbitrarily” use weapons, presumably in reference to strikes against civilian targets. The statement added that if a party was persistently non-compliant it could then be excluded from the cessation of hostilities, but the approval process to determine such exclusion as described was arduous and opaque. On humanitarian issues, the statement said that if the UN continues to be denied access to besieged areas after 1 June, then the World Food Programme should deliver humanitarian aid via air bridges and air drops, as it does in ISIL-controlled Deir ez-Zor. Finally, the statement underscored that, as per resolution 2254, 1 August remained the deadline for the parties to reach an agreement on a framework for a genuine political transition and welcomed the Special Envoy’s 27 April Mediator’s Summary.

Unlike in past statements, the ISSG could not reach agreement on when talks might resume. However, by welcoming the Mediator’s Summary, the ISSG signaled agreement that the basis for the next round of talks would include issues such as the powers of the presidency in a transitional government, security sector reform, constitutional issues, justice sector reform and issues related to UN-supervised elections. The opposition umbrella group, the High Negotiations Committee (HNC), has reiterated the need for a full cessation of hostilities and the delivery of humanitarian aid before they would return to talks. At press time, de Mistura was scheduled to brief Council members on 26 May and was expected to echo the need for substantially less violence and substantially more aid, and reiterate that, despite agreement on an agenda for the talks, without appropriate conditions the credibility of any future talks would be in jeopardy.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, OCHA head O’Brien was expected to brief Council members on 27 May and report that ongoing indiscriminate attacks, the slow-down in aid delivery, the continued removal of medical supplies from convoys by government forces and the lack of access to government-besieged suburbs of Damascus, particularly Darraya, continued to undermine independent humanitarian action.

On chemical weapons, Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on 5 May.

Syria (con't)

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 20 April, the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida/ISIL Sanctions Committee added five individuals to its list (SC/12332). Separately in late April, Russia requested that Ahrar al-Sham and Jaish al-Islam be added to Al-Qaida/ISIL sanctions list. But the request was blocked in early May as consensus among all 15 Council members could not be reached.

Key Issue

The essential issue for the Council, entering the sixth year of a war that has exacted a death toll of 470,000 and displaced half of the Syrian population, including 4.84 million refugees, is to exert effective leadership in supporting a cessation of hostilities and efforts to reach a political solution.

Options

The ISSG and resolutions 2254 and 2268 have identified roles for the Council in the event that talks in 2016 produce concrete results towards a national ceasefire and a parallel political process, including elections. In the near term, however, Council options are limited as the day-to-day oversight of resolutions 2254 and 2268 has been outsourced to the ISSG broadly, and Russia and the US in particular.

Council Dynamics

Many Council members are of the view that the government's recent offensives, particularly around Aleppo and the suburbs of Damascus, confirm the regime's preference for

prolonged armed conflict over a negotiated settlement. There is also a broad recognition that if fighting in Syria cannot be controlled then it will be difficult for UN mediation between the government and the opposition to resume with any chance of success.

There is a palpable sense of frustration among many elected members over spending time and energy deciding questions of meeting formats and arguing over press statements rather than grappling with the substantial issues at hand. Two draft press statements in May were blocked by Russia: one on attacks against hospitals in Aleppo, and another addressing an attack against a camp for internally displaced persons near the Turkish border. Finally, on 12 May, Council members were able to agree on a press statement that generically expressed outrage at attacks directed towards civilians and civilian objects, but did not detail specific incidents. The day-to-day oversight of forging a political solution to the Syrian crisis has been outsourced to the ISSG broadly, and specifically to P5 members Russia and the US, and has left very little space for the Council to bring new thinking or energy to help resolve the situation.

Russia and the US have invested a great deal of political capital in the Geneva talks and still seem to be on the path of engagement. However, some Council members are concerned that the contours of any deal the parties might be pressured to accept will be so far removed from the spirit and intent of

the June 2012 Geneva Communiqué that it will be destined to fail. Some are also of the view that the Russian-US cooperation on Syria has reached its limits, resulting in familiar divisions reoccurring in New York in the Security Council. Russia's request to add Ahrar al-Sham and Jaish al-Islam to the Al-Qaida/ISIL sanctions list was blocked by the P3 and Ukraine. Both Ahrar al-Sham and Jaish al-Islam are parties to the cessation of hostilities and listing them would, de facto, broaden the range of legitimate targets for government offensives, since groups sanctioned by the UN Security Council are not included in the cessation of hostilities.

Tensions have also re-emerged on the chemical weapons track, where the P3 and many other Council members have blocked China and Russia's draft resolution that would expand the mandate of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism's (JIM)—the body mandated to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria—to also monitor and investigate the use of chemical weapons by non-state actors more widely. While all Council members agree this is a serious issue, the P3 and many other members believe it is a broad threat that should not be tied to the mandate of the JIM, which is a mechanism specific to Syria with limited capacity.

Most outcomes on Syria are agreed between Russia and the US prior to agreement by the Council. Egypt, New Zealand and Spain lead on humanitarian issues.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In June, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed, is expected to brief the Council.

Key Recent Developments

Yemen has seen a lull in fighting over the last two months amidst ongoing peace talks being held in Kuwait, which at press time had entered their fifth week. In the lead-up to the new round, Yemen President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi dismissed Vice

President and Prime Minister Khaled Bahah on 3 April. In his place, Hadi named General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar as Vice President and Ahmed bin Dagher as Prime Minister. Bahah decried the move as unconstitutional on the grounds that the government must be approved by the parliament.

On 10 April, a cessation of hostilities commenced in advance of the new round of peace talks between the Yemen government and Houthi rebels and their allies in the General People's Congress (GPC). However, talks

did not start as scheduled on 18 April. The Houthi and GPC delegation remained in Sana'a, citing heavy fighting and airstrikes by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition. Following assurances from Kuwait and Oman that the cessation of hostilities would be respected, the Houthi/GPC delegation arrived in Kuwait on 21 April. That evening the opening ceremony for the new round was held.

The talks have been focused around five areas—withdrawal of militias and armed groups, handover of heavy weapons to the

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2266 (24 February 2016) renewed the Yemen sanctions measures until 26 February 2017 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 27 March 2017. S/RES/2216 (14 April 2015) demanded the Houthis to withdraw from all seized areas and relinquish all seized arms and established an arms embargo against the Houthis and forces loyal to former President Saleh. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2016/5 (25 April 2016) welcomed the start of peace talks and requested the Secretary-General to provide a plan on how the Special Envoy's office can further support the Yemeni parties. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7672 (15 April 2016) was a briefing by the Special Envoy and OCHA deputy head Kyung-wha Kang.

Yemen (con't)

state, interim security arrangements, restoration of state institutions and the resumption of inclusive political dialogue, and how to deal with prisoners and detainees—with three working groups created to address these issues. Separately, a De-escalation and Coordination Committee has been constituted and is made up of representatives from both sides to address reported violations of the cessation of hostilities. On 15 May, the Special Envoy said that an agreement had been reached “in principle” to free half of all prisoners and detainees before the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in the first week of June. Fundamental differences between the sides seem to exist over transitional governing arrangements and the timing of armed groups’ withdrawals and disarmament.

The government twice suspended its participation in the talks. First, it suspended its participation from 1 to 4 May, claiming the Houthis violated the cessation of hostilities by seizing a base in Amran governorate from a military unit that had remained neutral in the conflict. It did so a second time on 17 May. At a news conference on 18 May, Foreign Minister Abdul-Malik al-Mekhlafi said that the decision to suspend the government’s participation was due to the Houthis’ unwillingness to recognise the legitimacy of President Hadi, and he objected to the group’s seeking a power-sharing arrangement. “We will not return until we get a letter from them that commits them to the U.N. Security Council resolutions, the Gulf [Cooperation Council] initiative and the outcome of the [national] dialogue,” Al-Mekhlafi said. “The issue of legitimacy is not subject to discussion.”

According to a UN press release, during a 21 May meeting with the Amir of Qatar Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani and Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in Doha, Hadi confirmed that the government delegation would return to the talks as requested by the Amir and the Secretary-General.

During the cessation of hostilities, the Saudi-led coalition and Yemen government turned their attention to Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Yemeni and coalition forces took back the port city of Mukalla in Hadramawt governorate, which AQAP had held since April 2015, shortly after the start of the Saudi-led intervention. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has since taken responsibility for several deadly attacks in Mukalla. ISIL

attacks killed 15 Yemeni soldiers on 12 May. On 15 May, at least 31 people were killed when an ISIL suicide bomber attacked police recruits queuing up outside a police station in Mukalla. On 23 May, ISIL suicide bombers killed at least 40 army recruits at a base in Aden, which has suffered from insecurity since Yemen government and coalition forces took back the city from the Houthis last July.

Yemen continues to endure a severe humanitarian crisis. According to OCHA Operations Director John Ging, speaking at a 17 May press conference following a recent trip to Yemen, 10 million people require basic healthcare support and 7.6 million are severely food insecure, a classification that is one step below a famine situation. Moreover, the \$1.8 million humanitarian response plan for Yemen was only 16 percent funded. The cessation of hostilities and the de-escalation of fighting have had the positive effect of stemming civilian casualties.

On 2 May, the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) finally became operational. Efforts to create the UNVIM had been underway since June 2015 in order to improve commercial goods imports to Yemen, such as food and fuel. These had significantly declined, due in large part to restrictions on shipping imposed by the Saudi-led coalition, which it says were meant to enforce the arms embargo established in resolution 2216 against the Houthis and forces loyal to former President Ali Abudallah Saleh. The UNVIM has responsibility for reviewing the manifests of commercial ships and approving shipments within 48 hours to proceed to Yemeni ports not under the government’s control or flagging a cargo for inspection.

A worrying development for the Yemen economy and the population’s ability to purchase essential goods was the sudden devaluation of Yemen’s currency in mid-May. The government announced that the Central Bank was close to depleting all of its reserves. Ensuring the Central Bank’s continued functioning and reactivating the Social Welfare Fund has been one of the considerations in peace talks.

The Council reacted to ongoing developments in the political process by adopting a presidential statement on 25 April, welcoming the start of peace talks in Kuwait. The Council called on the parties to develop a roadmap for implementing interim security

arrangements, withdrawals, the handover of heavy weapons, restoring state institutions and resuming political dialogue. In a 24 May letter, the Secretary-General sent the Council a plan on how the Special Envoy’s Office could further support the parties, as requested in the April statement. The Secretary-General proposed significantly expanding the office in order to provide greater support to the negotiations, the De-escalation and Coordination Committee and the implementation of any agreements emerging from peace talks such as disarmament or other security sector issues. On 25 May, Ould Cheikh Ahmed briefed Council members in consultations, providing an update on the talks in order for them to further consider the Secretary-General’s proposals. In a 26 May letter to the Secretary-General, the Council took note of his proposals for the Special Envoy’s Office. OCHA head Stephen O’Brien briefed on the humanitarian situation via video-teleconference in consultations on 27 May.

Key Issues

Advancing peace talks, including in such areas as transitional governing arrangements and withdrawals and disarmament, and how the Council can support this process remain key issues.

A related issue is how to address the increasing perception of the obstructionist role of Hadi towards the talks. Hadi was elected in 2012 on a single candidate ballot to initially serve a two-year term as transitional president, and could probably not be part of a new consensus government.

Addressing Yemen’s humanitarian crisis continues to be critical. Ensuring the UNVIM’s effectiveness is a related issue.

The threat posed by AQAP and ISIL amidst the security vacuum created by the war remains a key concern.

Options

One option is for the Council to monitor developments in peace talks and adopt an outcome supporting new agreements emerging from the talks.

If current political initiatives do not produce results, the humanitarian situation does not improve, or if heavy fighting resumes, then the Council could return to its consideration of a humanitarian resolution. Elements for a resolution were proposed by New

Yemen (con't)

Zealand in the beginning of March, and such a resolution could, inter alia, call on all parties to allow unhindered humanitarian access and ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel, urge parties to cooperate fully with the UNVIM and demand that they adhere to international human rights and international humanitarian law, including taking all precautions to avoid civilian casualties.

An option for the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee is to seek regular briefings from OCHA on the operations of the UNVIM to monitor its proper functioning.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members agree that the conflict can

only be solved through political negotiations. They also share concerns over the humanitarian crisis and the need for the parties to do more to uphold international humanitarian law and protect civilians. The close relations of many members, particularly the P3 and Egypt, with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries has restrained the Council's ability over the past year to address these issues more forcefully. In general, since adopting resolution 2216, the Council has relied on the Special Envoy's mediation efforts, with members hoping for progress on a political process that the Council can then support. Members agreed to put on hold consideration of a politically sensitive humanitarian

resolution (opposed by Saudi Arabia) as prospects emerged to organise new talks.

During the current round of talks, the Group of 18 Ambassadors to Yemen, which includes the P5 and Council members Egypt and Japan as well as Gulf countries, has been united on the need for the two sides to remain in the negotiations. Kuwait, as host of the talks, has been playing a particularly active role in pressuring the parties to remain engaged.

During the most recent consultations with the Special Envoy, members supported the Secretary-General's proposals to expand the Office of the Special Envoy, as formally conveyed in a 26 May letter to Secretary-General.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council will hold its quarterly debate on Afghanistan, during which it will consider the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Nicholas Haysom, the outgoing Secretary-General's Special Representative in Afghanistan and head of UNAMA, is expected to brief.

UNAMA's mandate expires on 17 March 2017.

Key Recent Developments

The insurgency continues to take a heavy toll on the population and Afghan security forces. The Taliban's increased activity and military gains in the country—as well as activity by Al-Qaida and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in various areas in the east—have been met with resistance by Afghan security forces with the assistance of NATO. In April, the Taliban announced its annual spring offensive, vowing large-scale attacks against government strongholds to oust the government from power. Reacting to one such attack targeting civilians, Council members issued a press statement on 19 April, condemning a terrorist attack in Kabul by the Taliban that claimed at least 28 lives and injured more than 300 people.

The 9,800-strong US military presence assisting Afghan security forces is currently scheduled to be reduced to 5,500 by the end of the year. However, the commander of NATO and US forces in Afghanistan, General John Nicholson, is expected to make a recommendation to US President Barack Obama in the near future as to whether current troop levels should be maintained beyond 2016. The US is the main troop contributor to the NATO mission in Afghanistan, which numbers roughly 13,000 troops.

Reconciliation efforts have made little progress. The Taliban has so far been reluctant to engage in talks with the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG), which consists of Afghan, Chinese, Pakistani and US officials.

On 21 May, a US drone strike in Baluchistan province, Pakistan, killed Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour, the leader of the Taliban. US President Barack Obama said in a statement that “Mansour rejected efforts by the Afghan government to seriously engage in peace talks” and that the Taliban should enter the reconciliation talks. Pakistan, which apparently was informed of the attack only after the fact, issued a statement on 22 May denouncing the attack as a violation of the country's sovereignty.

While reconciliation efforts with the

Taliban have stalled, the government reached an agreement on 18 May with insurgent leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, head of the Hezb-i-Islami militant group. The group was at the height of its power before the Taliban took over the country in 1997 but has been less active in recent years. The proposed agreement would reportedly grant Hekmatyar and his group amnesty for past offences (the group is accused of numerous human rights abuses) and the release of specified Hezb-i-Islami prisoners. In addition, the government would pledge to make efforts to remove Hekmatyar from international sanctions list. Hekmatyar has been listed on the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida sanctions list since 20 February 2003.

The Council held its last quarterly debate on Afghanistan on 15 March. Briefing the Council, Haysom, who will soon take on the role of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, said bluntly that it would be an achievement for the Afghan national unity government not to collapse in 2016. He said the main challenges facing the Afghan leadership include an intensifying insurgency, poor economic growth and high unemployment, an increasingly divided political environment and the need to make progress towards sustainable peace. He emphasised the vital importance of securing continued

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2274 (15 March 2016) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2017. **Secretary-General's Report S/2016/218** (7 March 2016) was on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7645** (15 March 2016) was the quarterly debate on Afghanistan. **Security Council Press Statement SC/12331** (19 April 2016) condemned a terrorist attack in Kabul by the Taliban that claimed at least 28 lives and injured more than 300 people.

Afghanistan (con't)

international support for Afghanistan, including at the upcoming July NATO summit in Warsaw and the ministerial conference on Afghanistan in Brussels in October. At the Warsaw summit, NATO is expected to reaffirm its commitment to Afghanistan; donors are expected to make financial commitments to the country at the Brussels conference. As Afghanistan relies on external funding for 69 percent of its expenditures, Haysom said that a drop in international support would have a devastating effect on the country's economy. Finally, Haysom noted that in 2015 more than 11,000 Afghan civilians, a quarter of whom were children, were killed or injured in the continuing fighting with insurgents.

During the debate, the Council adopted resolution 2274, renewing the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2017. UNAMA's tasks continue to be, among other things, to focus on providing good offices, promote peace and reconciliation, monitor and promote human rights and the protection of civilians and promote good governance.

The resolution expresses support for Afghanistan in its fight against terrorism and violent extremism and welcomes the government's cooperation with partners in the region to fight extremists, criminal groups and other armed groups. (These new elements mirror parts of the 2015 General Assembly resolution on Afghanistan.) On the initiative of New Zealand, the resolution also strongly condemns the flow of small arms, light weapons and improvised explosive device (IED) components to the Taliban and encourages states to share information, develop partnerships and create national strategies and capacities to counter IEDs.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee met on 20 April, focusing on counter-narcotics efforts. Afghanistan's deputy minister of the interior, Baz Mohammed Ahmadi, addressed the Committee, as did the Committee's Monitoring Team, which discussed the efforts of the Combined Maritime Force in the Arabian Sea (consisting of the forces of 26 NATO states and Thailand) to track narcotic flows from Afghanistan.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The special rapporteur on summary executions, Christof Heyns, and the special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan Méndez, released a joint statement on 10 May, condemning the execution on 8 May of six alleged members of illegal armed groups in Afghanistan for "serious crimes and crimes against civilians". The executions were the first to take place in Afghanistan since February 2015, breaking the unofficial moratorium implemented by the government. They were carried out despite the absence of fair-trial guarantees and the continued practice of torture to obtain confessions, the statement said. The statement also expressed a concern shared with UNAMA that executions will not contribute to peace in Afghanistan, and strongly urged the government of Afghanistan to return to a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

Key Issues

The key issue for the Council is how to address the deteriorating security situation, 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 ongoing heavy fighting between the insurgency and government forces.

The links between drug production and trafficking and the insurgency is an ongoing issue.

Options

The Council could adopt a resolution or presidential statement that:

- deplores the high number of civilian casualties and demands that all sides avoid killing and injuring civilians, recalling that targeting civilians is a war crime;
- encourages efforts by the international community to support reconciliation in Afghanistan; and
- emphasises the importance of development assistance in promoting Afghanistan's stability.

The Council may also decide to visit Afghanistan to show its support for

anti-insurgency, reconciliation and anti-corruption efforts, and to learn how it can further assist efforts on the ground.

Council Dynamics

There is widespread concern among Council members about the extreme fragility of the security environment and the toll that the conflict continues to take on civilians. These issues will likely be a major focus of several members' interventions during the June UNAMA debate.

Several Council members also recognise that the upcoming Warsaw NATO summit and Brussels conference are pivotal in continuing international support for Afghanistan. During the last debate, China, New Zealand and the UK emphasised the need for the government to tackle corruption and to ensure that aid assists the country in developing a viable and self-sustaining government.

There is also broad emphasis in the Council on the importance of the reconciliation process in bringing stability to Afghanistan. Members realise the difficulty of promoting reconciliation at the present time, in a context in which the Taliban has stepped up its violence and demonstrated little interest in negotiations. At the same time, they see no alternative for achieving peace in the country.

Several Council members, in particular France and Russia, and more recently, also Egypt, have regularly raised concerns about the connection between drug production and trafficking and the insurgency.

During the 15 March briefing, Japan suggested a Council visiting mission to Afghanistan. (Japan is a key donor to Afghanistan, most recently focusing on the enhancement of Afghanistan's security forces through capacity-building programs and providing the salaries of the Afghan National Police.) Council members have held preliminary talks for making such a visit, which will face logistical and security-related difficulties, in July.

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

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to extend for six months the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which expires on 30 June. A representative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will brief Council members in consultations on the UNDOF report, due on 13 June.

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

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. 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 March 2016 UNDOF report detailed a somewhat calmer situation since January in the northern sector of UNDOF's area of operations because of a local truce between the Syrian government and armed opposition groups. The forthcoming UNDOF report is expected to state that this truce is holding, resulting in less fighting, albeit with sporadic exchanges of fire. In the southern sector there are ongoing clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups, and also fighting between rebel groups, particularly Al Nusra Front and the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade.

The civil war in Syria continues to adversely affect UNDOF's ability to function. Despite lower levels of violence in certain areas of UNDOF's area of operations, the overall security situation is not yet conducive to UNDOF's return to the Bravo (Syrian) side. The situation in the Golan increases the possibility of escalating tensions not only between Israel and Syria but also between Israel and Lebanon because of the overt presence in the Golan of Hezbollah—the

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

On 10 May, Israel struck a weapons convoy in Syria near the Lebanese border. Israel has a neutral policy vis-à-vis the Syrian crisis except to interdict weapons shipments via Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israel neither confirms nor denies specific incidents of striking Hezbollah targets in Syria, but in December 2015 Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a rare public admission, said, "We [Israel] occasionally carry out operations in Syria to prevent that country from becoming a front against us."

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. Media reports indicate that Russia has fired on Israeli military aircraft on at least two occasions, without specifying dates, locations or whether Israeli aircraft had been hit. Neither country has confirmed these allegations, but Netanyahu met Russian President Vladimir Putin on 21 April to seek enhanced coordination to avoid "unnecessary confrontations".

On 26 April, the Department of Political Affairs briefed Council members on the Golan Heights under "any other business". Egypt, on behalf of the Arab League, requested the briefing following remarks by Netanyahu that the Golan Heights would remain forever under Israeli sovereignty. Netanyahu's remarks were a response to the inclusion of the return of the Golan Heights to Syria as a "point of commonality" between the parties at the intra-Syrian political talks facilitated by the UN in Geneva. Israel captured the Golan Heights in the 1967 Six-Day War and annexed it illegally in 1981. Under international law, the Golan Heights is considered an occupied territory. In elements to the press, Council members stressed that the status of the Golan Heights remains unchanged.

On 13 May, Mustafa Badreddine—a Hezbollah commander believed to be directing the group's Syria operations—was killed in Damascus. Badreddine was one of the four people being tried in absentia by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon for the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Hezbollah said

Badreddine was killed near the Damascus airport in artillery shelling by Sunni rebel groups. At least one Hezbollah official suggested Israel might be responsible. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said there had been no shelling near the airport at the time of the blast that killed Badreddine. Israel declined to comment.

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. In this respect, an issue for the Council is whether Israel should be asked to allow UNDOF more mobility for its patrolling tasks on the Israeli side of the ceasefire line, especially access to hilltops for enhanced observation. There is also the issue of whether UNDOF may use new technologies, such as unmanned, unarmed aerial vehicles or satellite imagery, to carry out observation tasks. The use of such technology would require permission from both Israel and Syria, which neither party has yet granted.

The other primary concern for the Council remains the ceasefire violations. The presence of Syrian armed forces and heavy weapons in the area of separation monitored by UNDOF, 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 any changes require agreement by Israel and Syria, which is unlikely to be forthcoming.

In the resolution renewing the UNDOF mandate, the Council could:

- reiterate the need for all parties to exercise restraint;
- urge Israel and Syria to allow the use of new technologies so UNDOF could better fulfil its observation tasks;
- urge Israel and Syria to allow the use of enhanced equipment to better enable UNDOF's force protection capabilities;

UNDOF (Golan Heights) (con't)

- urge Israel and Syria to agree to establish more UNDOF crossing points between the Alpha and Bravo sides, since the Quneitra crossing was lost to rebel groups in September 2014; and
- urge Israel to allow UNDOF to establish more temporary observation posts on the Alpha side, given the mission's limited mobility there.

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 and about the tension between Israel and Syria along the armistice line, which has been

exacerbated by the presence of Hezbollah.

The Council has 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.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is expected to renew the 1533 Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts assisting the DRC Sanctions Committee, both of which expire at the end of June.

The annual report of the Group will be presented to the Council by the Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt).

The mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) expires on 31 March 2017.

Key Recent Developments

On the political front, the presidential elections scheduled for November continue to be a deeply divisive issue in the DRC, given the absence of an agreed electoral calendar or a budget for the elections. The DRC's electoral commission warned in January that it would take at least 13 months to conduct a census to update the voter register ahead of the vote, pushing any presidential election into 2017. Many fear that President Joseph Kabila intends to stay in power after the second of his constitutionally-mandated two terms expires at the end of 2016, and that the impractically dense electoral calendar and consequent delays are part of a strategy

dubbed by rivals as "slippage". While Kabila has not commented publicly on his political future, the government's official line is that Kabila will abide by the constitution. In any event, as preparations for elections are at a standstill, it seems less likely that presidential elections can or will be held on time.

Tensions are also high regarding the ability of opposition parties to participate in political activities leading up to the elections. Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MONUSCO Maman Sambo Sidikou and others have warned 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.

On 4 May, DRC Justice Minister Alexis Mwamba announced a probe into the conduct of presidential candidate Moïse Katumbi, accusing him of recruiting US mercenaries as part of his security detail. The former governor of Katanga province and a wealthy businessman, Katumbi resigned in September 2015 and left Kabila's party after accusing him of attempting to delay the presidential elections.

Katumbi appeared before the Lubumbashi court a total of three times between 9 and 14 May accompanied by supporters, both outside and within the court room.

DRC police dispersed those outside the courtroom with tear gas. Katumbi denied the accusations made against him. (Apparently, Katumbi wrote a letter to MONUSCO requesting protection the day after announcing his candidacy, but MONUSCO leadership decided it could not get involved with a candidate in this way.)

More tensions arose when the DRC Constitutional Court decided on 11 May that the constitution permits the president to remain in office until the installation of the newly-elected president. The decision could allow Kabila to retain his position beyond the end of 2016. Opposition leaders view the decision as "unconstitutional" and continue to maintain that Kabila lacks authority to remain in power beyond his current term.

On 17 May, reports in the media suggested that leaders from the G7 opposition coalition (a group of seven opposition groups in the DRC) visited the US in an attempt to persuade the Obama Administration and members of Congress to impose sanctions on Kabila to force him to abide by the constitution and hold the presidential elections as scheduled. Deputy spokesperson of the US department of state, Mark Toner, said on 22 May that the US is reviewing the possibility of imposing sanctions.

While attention is focused on the political situation, rebel groups continue to spread

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2277 (30 March 2016) renewed the mandate of MONUSCO for a year. **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 Reports S/2016/232** (9 March 2016) was the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC. **S/2016/233** (9 March 2016) was on MONUSCO. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7654** (23 March 2016) was a briefing on the Secretary-General's MONUSCO report.

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 March 2016:* 16,936 troops (including 456 military observers and 1,245 police), 816 international civilian personnel, 2,654 local civilian staff and 399 UN volunteers. *Approved budget* (1 July 2015-30 June 2016): \$1.33 billion *Mission duration:* July 2010 to present

Democratic Republic of the Congo (con't)

violence in eastern DRC. The operations of the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) against the Force Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) continue, though questions regarding their effectiveness remain. According to the annual report of the Group of Experts assisting the DRC Sanctions Committee, the operation has disrupted FDLR channels of financing and more than 1,000 FDLR fighters have surrendered. However, the FARDC's use of local militias to engage the FDLR means that the civilians are still affected by armed groups, even in areas vacated by the FDLR. During a routine police check in Goma, the FDLR chief of staff, Leopard Mujyambare, was arrested. He has been transferred to Kinshasa, where authorities will decide whether to try him or extradite him to Rwanda.

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamist Ugandan group, continues to wreak havoc in North Kivu. On 4 May, suspected ADF members killed 17 civilians in North Kivu's Beni territory. Nine other civilians were killed in an ADF attack on three villages on 6 May, according to local authorities.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee was briefed by Sidikou and Sebastian Fasanello, chief of MONUSCO's Joint Mission Analysis Centre, on 1 March on MONUSCO's arms embargo-monitoring mandate. Paul Heslop, chief of the UN Mine Action Service Programme Planning and Management Section, briefed on issues of weapons management in the DRC.

On 13 May, the Group of Experts briefed the Committee on their annual report. Though the report is yet to be made public, media reports suggest that Rwanda continues to provide training, financing and logistical support for Burundian rebels seeking to overthrow Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza, who won a controversial third term in June 2015. Rwanda has repeatedly denied such accusations. The DRC and Burundi have sent letters to the Council in the past calling for action against Rwanda for assisting Burundian rebels operating in the DRC.

Media reports also suggest that the Group states that FARDC Brigadier General Muhindo Akili Mundos, commander of the FARDC offensive against the ADF between August 2014 and June 2015, financed and equipped ADF elements

with weapons, ammunition and FARDC uniforms. Mundos denies the accusations. Apparently the Group added that other FARDC officers serving in the area have also been cooperating with ADF elements.

The Group's report also discusses violations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) sanctions regimes. The DPRK has supplied the FARDC and Congolese police with pistols, which are also available on the black market in Kinshasa, and sent 30 instructors to provide training for the presidential guard and special forces. The DRC denies these reports.

While much attention was given to these issues in the media, the report apparently focuses more on the illegal trade in natural resources, and particularly gold. The funding of rebel groups through illicit trade has been documented for several years by the Group and continues to be a focus for their reports. In the current report, attention is also given to the role of criminal networks in illicit trade, which endangers the security and livelihood of civilians in the DRC where the minerals are extracted. Specifically, it seems that illicit gold from the DRC has found its way to markets in Burundi, Uganda and Dubai.

Another element apparently raised in the report concerns what is known about the ADF. The report suggests that while the ADF is known as an anti-Ugandan Islamist group, over time its structure has changed and it has incorporated local DRC groups in its ranks, changing its structure, organisation and goals. Thus, in reality, there is much unknown regarding the affiliation of local groups with the ADF and the connection between various rebel groups in Beni with the ADF.

Key Issues

The key issue for the Council in June is renewing the sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts.

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

The continued violence of rebel groups still suffered by the population in North Kivu remains a serious threat to peace and security.

Wider regional stability in the Great Lakes region and its relation to the DRC are also matters of concern.

Options

The Council will adopt a resolution renewing the sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group. In addition, the resolution could:

- condemn human rights abuses related to the pre-election developments and urge the government to ensure that free, fair and credible elections are held as soon as possible;
- urge the Secretary-General to appoint a mediator to help facilitate a DRC national dialogue and support the work of AU Special Envoy Edem Kodjo to facilitate such dialogue;
- call on all political actors to abide by the constitution and its term limits;
- call on opposition parties to enter immediately into a national dialogue in order to reach consensus on an electoral calendar and hold elections on time or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- call on neighbouring states to cease assistance to rebel groups operating in the region.

The Council (or a representative group of Council members) may also consider visiting the country during the electoral period to take stock of the situation and deliver a strong political message to interlocutors.

Council Dynamics

While Council members all share concerns over the political tensions surrounding the issue of elections and related human rights abuses, they are split in their attitudes towards the approach to be taken by the Council on the issue. As with divisions regarding Nkurunziza's third term in Burundi, some view this issue mainly as an internal constitutional matter that should be dealt with through local institutions and regulations such as the Constitutional Court. Other states have a more negative view of actions that seemed to have been taken to override the constitutional order, which may erode the relatively calm security situation in western DRC and result in violence between the government and its opposition. These countries note that the unfolding political situation in the DRC is part of a wider regional trend of leaders unwilling to relinquish power.

France is the penholder on the DRC and Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt) chairs the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee.

Notable Dates for June

REPORT DUE	REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN JUNE	REQUESTING DOCUMENT
20 April	SG report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361)	S/RES/2106
13 May	SG report on the protection of civilians	S/PRST/2015/23
16 May	SG report on UNSMIL (Libya)	S/RES/2273
27 May	OPCW report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (Syrian chemical weapons)	S/RES/2118
30 May	SG report on UNOCA and the Lord's Resistance Army (Central Africa)	S/PRST/2015/12
31 May	SG report on the implementation of resolution 2253 regarding ISIL	S/RES/2253
31 May	Assessment Report of the Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals	S/RES/1966
31 May	ICTY Assessment Report	S/RES/1534
2 June	SG report on UNAMID (Darfur)	S/RES/2228
7 June	SG report on MINUSMA (Mali)	S/RES/2227
10 June	Report of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (Syrian chemical weapons)	S/RES/2235
13 June	SG report on UNDOF (Golan Heights)	S/RES/2257
13 June	SG report on UNAMA (Afghanistan)	S/RES/2274
15 June	Final report of the Group of Experts of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee	S/RES/2198
17 June	SG report on the humanitarian situation in Syria	S/RES/2139

MANDATES EXPIRE	RELEVANT DOCUMENT
1 June	South Sudan sanctions S/RES/2280
15 June	UNSMIL (Libya) S/RES/2273
30 June	MINUSMA (Mali) S/RES/2227
30 June	UNAMID (Darfur) S/RES/2228
30 June	UNDOF (Golan Heights) S/RES/2257
1 July	DRC sanctions and Group of Experts of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee (Group of Experts expires in August but will likely be renewed in June) S/RES/2198

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