

# Monthly Forecast

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## Overview

Bolivia takes on the presidency of the Council in June. A visiting mission to [Haiti](#) is planned in the second half of the month, followed by an oral briefing.

There will be two briefings under the agenda item “maintenance of international peace and security”. The first briefing will be at ministerial-level with Bolivian President Evo Morales presiding and will focus on “[Preventive Diplomacy and Transboundary Waters](#)”. Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief. The second is on a “[Comprehensive Approach to Mine Action and Explosive Hazard Threat Mitigation](#)” with Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefing.

Other briefings this month include: UN [counter-terrorism](#) efforts against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL); post-conflict [peacebuilding](#); and UN-AU cooperation.

There will also be an open debate on [non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction](#) focused on non-state actors.

The Council will follow closely developments in [Libya](#) with a briefing expected from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNSMIL, Martin Kobler. It will also renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, the authorisation to inspect vessels suspected to be violating the arms embargo, and the measures regarding attempts to illicitly export crude oil from Libya.

Meetings on several other African issues this month include:

- [Burundi](#), an update on the situation;
- [Central Africa](#), the regular meetings on the activities of UNOCA and MINUSCA;
- [Côte d'Ivoire](#), a final update and an adoption of a presidential statement marking the closure of UNOCI;
- [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), the

renewal of the 1533 sanctions regime and mandate of its Group of Experts;

- [Liberia](#), an update on UNMIL and the roll-out of the peacebuilding plan;
- [Mali](#), the renewal of MINUSMA;
- [Somalia](#), the renewal of UNSOM;
- [Sudan](#), the renewal of UNAMID and the semi-annual briefing by the ICC prosecutor; and
- [South Sudan](#), an update on UNMISS.

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

- [Golan Heights](#), the renewal of UNDOF;
- [Israel/Palestine](#), the regular monthly briefing; and
- [Iran](#), the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme.

Regarding Asian issues, the Council will meet on UNAMA in [Afghanistan](#) as well as on the activities of the 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, the General Assembly is scheduled to [elect](#) six non-permanent Security Council members on 2 June. Unusually, there are six candidates this year instead of five, as Italy will relinquish the seat it has held since 1 January 2017 after serving for one year, and a by-election will thus be held for one seat for the Western European and Others Group (WEOG). All six candidates—Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru and Poland—are currently running unopposed as sole candidates for their respective regional groups.

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## In Hindsight: Security Council Open Debates

In the past few years, the Security Council has devoted more and more time to open debates. From 90 hours in 2013, the cumulative duration went up gradually to more than 160 hours in 2016. Most open debates in the last several years have been thematic, with situation-specific ones, other than the quarterly Middle East open debate, being rare exceptions.

Open debates are welcomed by the UN membership at large as they afford member states not on the Council an opportunity to present their positions on particular matters on the Security Council agenda regardless of whether or not they are directly affected by the issue. Originally, open debates were mostly conflict-specific, held at the request of a member or group of member states, and usually organised quite quickly following the request. Nowadays, most open debates are held at the initiative of the presidency of the Council, and some are planned a year or more in advance.

The idea of a debate in which any member state could present its views on an issue before the Council stemmed from a broad concern on the part of the UN membership about specific situations, such as apartheid in South Africa or the Balkan wars of the early to mid-1990s. The Council's Provisional Rules of Procedure stipulate that "any Member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may be invited, as the result of a decision of the Security Council, to participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council when the Security Council considers that the interests of that Member are specially affected, or when a Member brings a matter to the attention of the Security Council in accordance with Article 35 (1) of the Charter." The interpretation of the rule was that only members with direct stakes in the issue would be allowed to participate in the discussion. Some departures from this interpretation occurred in the later years of the Cold War, with a number of public debates that saw the participation of non-Council members who were neither directly involved in the conflict nor in its geographical neighbourhood. These debates were relatively short, with only a few non-Council speakers, and not all Council members took the floor themselves.

The first debate that closely resembled what is today described as an open debate in terms of the number of speakers and its length was probably that held on 15-16 July

1992, with a focus on South Africa. It was organised in response to a 2 July request from the Organisation of African Unity, which was alarmed by a dramatic spike in violence in South Africa (including one massacre in which more than 300 victims were killed by police and the army) and a standstill in the negotiations to end apartheid that had been ongoing since October 1991. More than 30 member states—from all regional groups—asked and were invited to speak under Rule 37. All Council members took the floor at different points of the debate (some of them after non-members), and at the end of the second day the Council adopted a resolution condemning the violence and asking the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative. The debate contributed to the resumption of negotiations, culminating in South Africa's first democratic election in 1994.

Several debates with similar characteristics were held in the next few years. They were each focused on a specific dispute before the Council and tended to be requested by non-members (including in some cases a state which was party to the conflict) and were usually organised at very short notice. The first time the term "open debate" was used in a Council document was probably the 8 February 1994 letter from the ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the President of the Security Council with a "call for an emergency session of the Security Council with a formal meeting and the opportunity for open debate to the Member States of the United Nations" (S/1994/134).

During the General Assembly's general debate later that year, there were several calls for non-members to be afforded opportunities to address the Council. French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé said in his speech that the Council should increase its reliance on public debate in reaching decisions. As a follow-up, France organised a Security Council debate in December 1994 on the Council's working methods, with the issue of public debates of the Council and its greater transparency at the core of the concept note. The note suggested that when preparing to consider an important question, the Council should hold "orientation debates open to all Members of the Organization" (S/1994/1279).

At the end of that debate, held with the participation of several non-members, the Council adopted a presidential statement proclaiming that it was "the intention of the Council, as

part of its efforts to improve the flow of information and the exchange of ideas between members of the Council and other United Nations Member States, that there should be an increased recourse to open meetings, in particular at an early stage in its consideration of a subject" (S/PRST/1994/81).

Over the next few years, several open debates were held at the request of member states. Most, but not all, were focused on specific disputes. An early example of a thematic open debate was the 20 December 1995 debate on the relationship with troop-contributing countries, requested in an 8 December letter from 34 permanent representatives, including several Council members, both permanent and elected ones. In the late 1990s, these meetings started being referred to as "open debates", and also during that period, some Council presidents began taking the initiative of organising open debates, often with the country's foreign minister presiding, as centrepieces of their presidencies.

During the mid- to late 1990s, open debates tended to be country- or region-specific, but from around 2000 thematic open debates began to increasingly outnumber those focused on specific disputes.

Except for the open debates on the Middle East, held since 2006, conflict-specific open debates are currently very rare, and in recent years, when they have occurred, they have been held at the initiative of the presidency rather than at the request of the wider membership. Relatively recent examples include the March 2011 and March 2012 open debates on Somalia, organised by China and the UK, respectively; the March 2013 open debate on Afghanistan, organised by Russia; and the March 2016 open debate on the Great Lakes Region, organised by Angola.

The large amount of overall time devoted by the Council to thematic open debates, combined with the ever-growing Council workload, has prompted some members to forgo open debates. In 2013, four presidencies—Togo, Australia, China and France—chose not to hold an open debate. More recently, the US in 2015 and 2017 and New Zealand in 2016 did not organise an open debate. Only time will show whether the growing number of disputes on the Council's agenda will result in a return to holding open debates with a focus mainly on conflict-specific situations.

## Status Update since our May Forecast

### Colombia

From 3 to 5 May the Council carried out a visiting mission to Colombia in order to demonstrate its commitment to the peace process in the country. In a presidential statement adopted on 11 May (S/PRST/2017/6), the Council acknowledged the significant challenges involved in the implementation of the peace agreement and welcomed the progress made by the parties and their commitment to achieving peace. On 16 May, the UK and Uruguay briefed the Council as co-leads of the visiting mission (S/PV.7941).

### EU-UN Cooperation

On 9 May, Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, briefed the Council on cooperation between the EU and the UN (S/PV.7935). Among the issues discussed were the Middle East peace process and the situation in Syria, Libya, and the Central African Republic. Mogherini also updated the Council on EU-UN cooperation in various peacekeeping operations in Africa, on the Iranian nuclear issue, and on counter-terrorism.

### Guinea-Bissau

On 11 May, Council members received a briefing in consultations from Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman on Guinea-Bissau focusing on the ongoing political crisis. In a press statement following the meeting, Council members called on relevant stakeholders to strictly respect and comply with the Conakry agreement and the ECOWAS road map and expressed their readiness to take necessary measures to respond to a further worsening of the situation in Guinea-Bissau (SC/12818).

### Lebanon

On 11 May, Council members met in consultations to discuss the 28 April semi-annual report (S/2017/374) on the implementation of resolution 1559, which called for the disarmament of all militias and the extension of government control over all Lebanese territory.

### The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict met on 12 and 19 May to negotiate the conclusions on children and armed conflict in Sudan (S/2017/191).

### Sudan and South Sudan

On 15 May the Council adopted resolution 2352, extending UNISFA's mandate until 15 November 2017. Adoption had initially been scheduled for 10 May, but was delayed following a lack of consensus on a US proposal to suspend UNISFA's role in supporting the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) and to reduce the mission's troop ceiling from 5,329 to 4,170. As a compromise, resolution 2352 reduced UNISFA's authorised troop ceiling to 4,791. It also urged Sudan and South Sudan to resume direct negotiations in order to agree on a final settlement of the Abyei question, and decided that the extension of support to the JBVMM would be the last unless both parties demonstrated "clear commitment and steadfast guarantees" of implementation.

### DPRK (North Korea)

In a 15 May press statement, Council members condemned the missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on 28 April and 13 May (SC/12821). On 16 May, they received a briefing by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča during consultations. That same day, the DPRK sent a letter to the Secretary-General (S/2017/429) referring to the 13 May launch as a legitimate exercise of the right to self-defence and "categorically and totally" rejected the press statement. In a 22 May press statement, Council members condemned the DPRK's 21 May missile launch and called on the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee "to redouble its efforts to improve global implementation of all measures, including by implementing the relevant feasible recommendations of the Panel of Experts as soon as possible" (SC/12831). On 23 May, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed Council members during consultations on the missile launch. In that same meeting, the chair of the Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi (Italy), presented his 90-day report on the work of the Committee. The Committee held informal consultations on 10 May to discuss the recommendations contained in the latest report from its Panel of Experts (S/2017/150). It also continued the series of regional outreach meetings initiated in March as a follow-up to paragraph 44 of

resolution 2321, adopted in response to the 9 September 2016 nuclear test, which requested the Committee "to hold special meetings on important thematic and regional topics and member states' capacity challenges". The Committee met with the African Group on 1 May, the Western European and Others Group on 12 May, and the Asia-Pacific Group on 26 May. It had previously met with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries and the Eastern European Group.

### Women, Peace and Security

On 15 May, the Council held an open debate on sexual violence (S/PV.7938). The debate was chaired by José Luis Cancela, Vice Foreign Minister of Uruguay. The following speakers briefed the Security Council: Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed; Under-Secretary-General Adama Dieng, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, who is currently officer-in-charge of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; and Mina Jaf, Founder and Executive Director of Women's Refugee Route, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. The objective of the debate, as referred to in a concept note circulated by Uruguay (S/2017/402), was to raise awareness on the issue of sexual violence in conflict as a tactic of war and terrorism, focusing particularly on patterns and trends identified in the annual report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2017/249).

### Kosovo

On 16 May, Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNMIK, briefed the Council (S/PV.7940) on the latest Secretary-General's report (S/2017/387) and recent developments. Tanin told Council members that there had been a loss of trust between the two sides as well as an increase in nationalist rhetoric. Serbia's minister of justice, Nela Kuburović, and Kosovo's ambassador to the US, Vlora Çitaku, also spoke.

### Venezuela

On 17 May, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča briefed Council members on the situation in Venezuela under "any other business". The briefing had been requested by the US and focused on efforts by regional organisations to address

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the political crisis in the country.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

In a debate on 18 May (S/PV.7943), the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, briefed the Council on his latest six-month report on the implementation of the peace agreement (S/2017/379), expressing concern about the lack of progress in addressing the need for real reforms.

### Iraq

On 22 May, the Special Representative and head of UNAMI, Ján Kubiš, briefed the Council on the latest Secretary-General's report (S/2017/371) and provided an update on the government's efforts to retake Mosul from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (S/PV.7945). On 30 May, the US requested a meeting under "any other business" on the humanitarian situation in Mosul. OCHA head Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council members on the dire humanitarian situation in Western Mosul and a growing

number of internally displaced persons as a result of the offensive against ISIL.

### Peacekeeping

On 23 May, the Council held a briefing on UN peacekeeping (S/PV.7947) with the force commanders of MINUSCA (CAR), UNDOF (Golan Heights), MONUSCO (DRC), and UNMIL (Liberia). Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix also addressed the Council.

### Protection of Civilians

On 25 May, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/PV.7951). The meeting focused on the protection of civilians agenda, as outlined in the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2017/414), as well as on the implementation of resolution 2286, specifically on the protection of health care in armed conflict, which the Secretary-General is now required to brief on annually. Uruguayan Minister of Foreign Affairs Rodolfo Nin Novoa presided.

Briefers included Secretary-General António Guterres; Vice President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Christine Beerli; and Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy of Human Rights Watch Bruno Stagno Ugarte.

### Israel/Palestine

On 26 May, the Council held its regular monthly briefing on the situation in the Middle East, focusing on Israel/Palestine, with the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nikolay Mladenov (S/PV.7953). The meeting was followed by consultations.

### Yemen

On 30 May, the Special Envoy for the Secretary-General on Yemen, Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and the head of OCHA, Stephen O'Brien, briefed the Council. A Yemeni civil society representative, Radhya al-Mutawakel from the Mwatana Organization for Human Rights, also briefed. This was followed by closed consultations.

## Mali

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is due 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 of the Secretary-General and head of MINUSMA, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, followed by consultations.

MINUSMA's mandate expires on 30 June.

### Key Recent Developments

June marks the end of the two-year interim period stipulated by the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and many of the commitments that were expected to be carried out during this time have yet to be fulfilled. Briefing the Council on 6 April, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix underscored the significant delays and the fragility of the gains that have been made in implementing the agreement.

Interim authorities were established in

the five northern regions after the parties agreed to the appointment of the interim presidencies of Taoudeni and Timbuktu on 20 April, but these have yet to become operational. Despite efforts to organise mixed patrols in other regions, so far these have only been deployed in Gao. In addition to the slow pace of some of the government reforms, tensions among the coalitions of armed groups (the Coordination and the Platform) and within them (particularly the fragmentation of the Coordination) have significantly impeded progress. At a 2 May meeting of the Comité de Suivi de l'Accord (CSA)—the main follow-up mechanism to the agreement, chaired by Algeria—the parties and the mediators agreed to accelerate the process to appoint an independent observer to assess implementation as provided for by the agreement.

Security threats continue to undermine the political process and impose operational

constraints on MINUSMA. Since the mission was established in 2013, at least 72 peacekeepers have been killed as a result of hostile acts, 27 in 2016 alone. Terrorist groups, now part of the coalition Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin, have carried out attacks against MINUSMA as well as against French and Malian forces, including in the centre and south as well as the north of Mali. In May, three peacekeepers were killed as a result of attacks by this group. Given that the mission devotes a substantial part of its resources to protecting itself and that most of the additional personnel and capabilities for the mission authorised by resolution 2295 have not been deployed, in his 30 December 2016 report the Secretary-General urged the Council to actively engage with member states to ensure that the mission has the equipment, personnel and resources that it needs. A force generation conference took place in New York on 22-23 May and

**UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2295 (29 June 2016) renewed MINUSMA's mandate. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7917** (6 April 2017) was a briefing on the situation in Mali by Lacroix. **Security Council Press Statements SC/12837** (23 May 2017) condemned the terrorist attack near Aguelhoc, which caused the death of two Chadian peacekeepers and injured another. **SC/12810** (4 May 2017) condemned the attack against a MINUSMA camp in Timbuktu, which caused the death of a Liberian peacekeeper and injured others.



# Mali

resulted in commitments from some troop- and police- contributing countries (TCC/PCCs) to address current gaps.

The Group of Five Sahel (G5)—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger—continued its effort to create a regional force to combat terrorism and transnational crime. On 13 April, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) authorised the deployment of the G5 force for an initial period of 12 months. The PSC urged the UN Security Council to approve the deployment of the force and to authorise the Secretary-General to “identify the modalities of sustainable and predictable financial and logistical support to be provided to the Force, including through MINUSMA”. Council members received this request together with the force’s concept of operations, and are currently discussing the political, operational and financial implications of such a deployment.

## Key Issues

Since the renewal of MINUSMA’s mandate coincides with the end of the interim period, identifying key priorities for the mission at this new stage is an important issue for the Council. The gap between MINUSMA’s current mandate and the insufficient capacities and resources of the mission is a related issue.

An overarching issue is the slow implementation of the agreement and the potential for a relapse into conflict. Bridging divisions within the armed groups and between the parties, including by bringing on board new splinter groups and realistically adapting the timeline, are related issues.

The deterioration of the security situation

in northern and central Mali, the prevalence of organised crime, and the spate of inter-ethnic violence are urgent issues.

Addressing the grievances and frustrations of various constituencies that are not benefiting from the peace agreement in their daily lives, including youth at risk of being recruited by violent groups, is a related issue.

The frequent terrorist attacks and their reach, the deliberate targeting of MINUSMA and the safety concerns of TCCs/PCCs are further issues for the Council to consider.

## Options

The Council could:

- hold a frank and unscripted discussion among Council members ahead of the negotiation of any draft resolution to discuss the objectives that the mission can realistically achieve in the current circumstances, as well as to obtain an understanding of members’ positions on any possible changes to the mandate;
- further prioritise MINUSMA’s mandate based on the objectives it aims to achieve rather than focusing on personnel numbers alone;
- make full use of the meeting with MINUSMA TCC/PCCs to ensure that their views are heard and engage directly to ensure that the resources needed to implement the mandate are available;
- discuss the challenges of implementing the agreement and the need for a common political strategy in an informal interactive dialogue with the participation of Special Representative Annadif and Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra of Algeria,

the CSA chair;

- establish a group of experts to investigate the identity and activities of those involved in organised crime in Mali and the Sahel with a view to report its conclusions to the Council; and
- add Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin to the list of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da’esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and request the Monitoring Team to report on ways to curb the terrorist threat in Mali.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

Overall, Council members have expressed concerns about the slow pace of implementing the agreement. Despite threatening to impose sanctions in resolution 2295, Council members have so far failed to reach a common position to follow through on that threat.

The renewal of MINUSMA’s mandate comes at a time when the US has started a review of peacekeeping operations with the stated aim of modifying mission mandates to be more achievable while reducing their costs. At the 6 April briefing on MINUSMA, US Ambassador Nikki Haley announced her intention to take “a careful look at the force’s mandated tasks and the distribution of its personnel”. It has been difficult for Council members (including even the penholder) to anticipate the US position on recent mandate renewals since its proposals have not been based on the recommendations of the Secretary-General. Among Council members, Senegal is the seventh largest troop contributor to MINUSMA with 871 personnel deployed as of April, China has 399 personnel deployed, and Sweden 186. France is the penholder on Mali.

# Sudan (Darfur)

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to renew the mandate for the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), prior to its expiry on 30 June. The Council will also hold a briefing, followed by consultations, on UNAMID. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix is expected

to provide the briefing. The Council further expects to receive the semi-annual briefing of the ICC Prosecutor related to the court’s work on Darfur.

## Key Recent Developments

Sudanese government forces now dominate Darfur and occupy most of the territory

previously controlled by rebel groups. The unilateral ceasefire, declared by the government of Sudan in mid-2016 and extended for a further six months in January, reportedly continues to be largely observed. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) has also declared a ceasefire, having largely withdrawn from Darfur. While the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi

**UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2340 (8 February 2017) renewed the mandate of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee Panel of Experts until 12 March 2018. S/RES/2296 (29 June 2016) renewed the mandate of UNAMID for one year. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2017/250** (23 March 2017) was the most recent UNAMID report. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7912** (4 April 2017) was a UNAMID briefing. **Sanctions-Related Document S/2017/22** (9 January 2017) was the final report of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee’s Panel of Experts.

# Sudan (Darfur)

(SLA/MM) had declared a ceasefire, on 19 May it claimed that it had clashed with government forces in a number of locations across Darfur. Elements of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) remain active in the Jebel Marra region. The overall security situation is improving, but without a full cessation of hostilities and with intercommunal and criminal violence remaining widespread, an environment of instability persists.

The new Joint Special Representative for Darfur and head of UNAMID, Jeremiah Mamabolo, briefed the Council for the first time on 4 April. Mamabolo described Darfur as being “a very different place from what the region was in 2003”. However, the improving security situation in Darfur has not yet resulted in significant advances in efforts to reach a long-term political resolution.

There have been no reports of major displacements in 2017, but existing groups of internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to require significant protection and humanitarian assistance. The return of IDPs has been impeded by the reported occupation of villages and land by armed militia previously associated with government forces, particularly in Jebel Marra, as well as by general lawlessness.

The Sudanese government appears to be reducing impediments to the effectiveness of UNAMID, including restrictions on the mission’s movements. There are broader signs of improving cooperation between UNAMID and the government, though its slow clearance of mission equipment and supplies remains a point of contention.

During the week of 15 May, a delegation from the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) visited Darfur and met with Sudanese government representatives. The delegation welcomed the improvements in the overall situation in Darfur and the cooperation between the government and the PSC.

A strategic review of UNAMID was presented to the Council in May and will be considered as part of the mandate renewal in June.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 31 March, the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed regret that

Jordan, a state party to the Rome Statute of the ICC, had allowed Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to enter the country to participate in the Arab League summit. Recalling the ICC’s arrest warrant for Al-Bashir, the High Commissioner said that Jordan was “failing the ICC and weakening the global struggle against impunity, and for justice”.

The Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nononsi, undertook his fourth mission to the country from 11 to 21 May. Nononsi is set to present his findings and recommendations to the Human Rights Council at its 36th session in September 2017. At a press conference on 21 May, Nononsi expressed concern over detentions of civil society activists, harassment of media, and oppression of religious minorities.

## Key Issues

The key issue for the Council is what modifications to make to the mandate and force structure of UNAMID to better reflect the current realities and challenges facing the mission.

A related issue is how to support efforts to break the ongoing impasse in the negotiations between the government and Darfuri rebel movements, leading to a durable cessation of hostilities and a final settlement.

Another issue is the need to promote intercommunal reconciliation, given the high levels of intercommunal fighting in Darfur in recent years.

## Options

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

- acknowledge the increased cooperation by the government of Sudan and emphasise the need to end ongoing delays in issuing visas to UNAMID personnel and providing customs clearances for food and supplies destined for the mission;
- urge the SLA/AW to join the political process;
- ensure the mandate has the flexibility to allow the redeployment of UNAMID personnel and resources to reflect the improved security situation in some areas and the ongoing threats to peace and security in others, including the possible creation of a quick reaction force in recognition that recent improvements to stability

could be reversed;

- reduce the UNAMID personnel ceiling to reflect the new requirements for the ongoing implementation of UNAMID’s mandate, possibly with a “snap back” mechanism allowing the ceiling to be raised again if requested by the Secretary-General; and
- reiterate that the exit strategy for UNAMID remains conditioned on the mission’s achievement of benchmarks (that is 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.

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.

## Council Dynamics

There is longstanding division in the Council regarding Darfur. Some members, notably China and Russia, tend to emphasise the importance of upholding the sovereignty of Sudan, point to improvements in the security situation in Darfur, and refer to efforts by the government to bring peace to the region. Other members of the Council—including the P3—have consistently been highly critical of the government of Sudan for committing human rights violations, restricting the operations of UNAMID, and fostering a culture of impunity in Darfur.

Nevertheless, the improvements in stability in many parts of Darfur over the past year have created an opportunity for agreement amongst Council members on a redeployment of mission resources to match the current security situation. The US is expected to seek a reduction in the personnel ceiling in line with its current approach to mandate renewals of proposing drawdowns where it believes that is appropriate.

The UK is the penholder on Darfur, while Ukraine chairs the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

# Côte d'Ivoire

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to receive a final briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Aïchatou Mindaoudou, on the completion of the mission's mandate. The Council is also expected to adopt a presidential statement welcoming the successful termination of the mission. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix may also brief the Council.

The mandate of UNOCI expires on 30 June 2017, after which the mission is expected to be terminated.

## Key Recent Developments

Last April, the Council adopted resolutions 2283 and 2284, which respectively ended the Côte d'Ivoire sanctions regime and extended the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission for the final time, until 30 June. In line with resolution 2284, the military component of the mission completed its withdrawal on 30 April, and the mission is scheduled to complete the process of transition to the UN country team by the time UNOCI's mandate expires.

At her last briefing to the Council in February, Mindaoudou commended Côte d'Ivoire's government and its security forces for successfully organising the October 2016 constitutional referendum and December 2016 legislative elections. Mindaoudou also noted that ongoing economic growth, improvement in the security situation, and a decline in reports of human rights violations will facilitate the transition to sustainable peace in the country. However, Mindaoudou appealed to the government to increase its efforts on other fronts needing improvement, such as national reconciliation, transitional justice, security sector reform, and reintegration of former combatants.

Concerns about the security situation re-emerged on 11 May when some elements within the army rebelled against the government, demanding better pay and working conditions. In January, the second-largest city, Bouaké, was briefly the centre of a previous mutiny, which was resolved when the government agreed to pay bonuses to disgruntled soldiers. However, the government has struggled to fully satisfy the demands of the soldiers. In the renewed unrest in May, dissatisfied

soldiers, mainly former rebels integrated into the national army, blocked access to Bouaké. Media reports indicated that the mutiny had spread to other cities, including the commercial capital, Abidjan. On 14 May, violence erupted after rebel soldiers opened fire on residents of Bouaké who participated in protests against the mutiny. According to the reports, one person was killed and at least six others injured during the incident. The same day, the government launched a military operation to restore order in Bouaké. (On 15 May, Defence Minister Alain-Richard Donwahi announced that a deal had been reached with the soldiers to end the mutiny. However, the spokesman for the mutineers, Sergeant Seydou Kone, denied Donwahi's claims and said that the mutiny would continue until the government fulfilled the soldiers' demands.) The mutiny ended on 16 May when the government struck an agreement with the mutineers that includes paying them immediate bonuses and additional amounts at the end of June. In a 17 May statement, Secretary-General António Guterres commended the government for restoring order in Côte d'Ivoire and reiterated the UN's continued support for the country.

In other developments, a court in Côte d'Ivoire cleared Simone Gbagbo on 28 March of charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for her alleged role in the post-election crisis in 2011, which resulted in deaths of more than 3,000 people. Simone Gbagbo is the wife of former president Laurent Gbagbo, who is currently on trial by the ICC in The Hague for his alleged role in the 2011 violence, during which his forces clashed with supporters of current President Alassane Ouattara. Although the ICC issued an arrest warrant for her in 2012, the Ivorian government refused to transfer her to the Court and instead decided to try her on war crimes charges in Côte d'Ivoire.

In a separate trial in 2015, Simone Gbagbo was found guilty on charges of undermining state security and is currently serving a 20 year prison sentence.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 35th session in June, the Human Rights Council is set to hold an interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on capacity building and technical cooperation for Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights, Mohammad Ayat, to discuss his final report (A/HRC/35/43).

## Key Issues

The main issue for the Council is the termination of the mission by 30 June as mandated by resolution 2284, and confirming that the transition of remaining tasks to the UN country team or the government is completed before then.

A further issue is monitoring the ability of the government to maintain the security and political stability of the country in light of the renewed incidents of mutiny exposing potential risk factors, such as lack of cohesion in the military and inadequate command and control.

## Options

Considering that the mission will be closed down at the end of June, the Council could adopt a presidential statement commending Côte d'Ivoire and UNOCI on the completion of the mission's work.

However, should further unrest in the army threaten stability and security in the country, the Council could adopt a statement urging the relevant actors to defuse the tensions and resolve the issues through dialogue.

## Council Dynamics

Council members have maintained a common position on Côte d'Ivoire during the past several years. France, the former colonial power and penholder, has been the most prominent advocate for the UN to disengage from the country. In April 2016, France led the proposals in the Council to terminate the sanctions regime (resolution 2283) and extend for one last time the mandate of the UN mission (resolution 2284). In overwhelmingly supporting these actions, Council members indicated their belief that Côte d'Ivoire has become a well-functioning country with a vibrant economy and security forces capable of maintaining security in the country.

Côte d'Ivoire has been on the agenda of the Council for more than 13 years. The country is likely to serve as an elected member of the Council for the 2018/2019 term, given that it is running uncontested in Security Council elections on 2 June. It has expressed its intention to share its experience in hosting a successful peacekeeping operation when it joins the Council.

**UN DOCUMENTS ON CÔTE D'IVOIRE** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2284 (28 April 2016) extended the mandate of UNOCI for a final period until 30 June 2017. S/RES/2283 (28 April 2016) terminated the sanctions regime in Côte d'Ivoire. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/89 (31 January 2017) was on UNOCI. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7880 (8 February 2017) was on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.



# Counter-Terrorism

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council will be briefed by Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on UN counter-terrorism efforts in support of member states against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The briefing, which will be followed by consultations, will be based on the fifth strategic-level report of the Secretary-General requested by resolution 2253 of 17 December 2015, expected to be released at the end of May.

The Council is also expected to adopt a resolution updating the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions regime.

## Key Recent Developments

On 17 December 2015, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2253, strengthening the Al-Qaida sanctions regime and focusing on ISIL. The sanctions list was renamed the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List to reflect this focus. In the resolution, the Council decided to review the sanctions measures with a view to possibly strengthening them within 18 months, that is by 16 June 2017.

In more recent developments, the Council was briefed on 11 May by the chairs of its counter-terrorism-related committees: Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), chair of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee; Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC); and Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia), chair of the 1540 Committee, which focuses on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In a statement on behalf of all three chairs, Aboulatta emphasised the importance of cooperation among the committees and their expert groups in addressing the grave threats posed by terrorism and the risk that weapons of mass destruction might fall into the hands of non-state actors. He added that the committees and their respective groups of experts had synchronised efforts in conducting country visits. With respect to ISIL, he said the CTC Executive Directorate (CTED) and the

1267/1989/2253 Committee's Monitoring Team had thus far issued four Secretary-General's reports on the threat posed by the group.

Feltman presented the latest Secretary-General's report on the threat posed by ISIL on 7 February. The report noted that the group is adapting to military pressure by altering its communications methods. ISIL continues to encourage its followers and sympathisers outside conflict zones to perpetrate attacks including, in some cases, in their countries of origin.

On 26 April, the CTC, following consultations with CTED, provided the Council with a "comprehensive international framework" to counter terrorist narratives. (The framework was requested by the Council in a presidential statement of 11 May 2016.) On 24 May, the Council adopted a resolution welcoming the CTC proposal for a comprehensive international framework and providing guidelines for the implementation of the framework. The resolution directs the CTC, with the support of CTED, to include reporting on counter-terrorist narratives within its country assessment reports, identify good practices in the field and assist states in building their own capacity to develop counter-narratives.

On 8 May, Italy and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) co-chaired an Arria-formula meeting on "International Cooperation in Criminal Matters within the Peace and Security Pillar: the Role of Central Authorities". Karen Kramer, Senior Drug Control and Crime Prevention Officer at UNODC, and David Sharia, Chief of Branch at CTED, briefed members. Three prosecutors from Uganda, Spain and Italy also briefed on their experiences within their domestic jurisdictions. (Resolution 2322 of 12 December 2016 on international judicial cooperation in countering terrorism calls on states to cooperate on administrative, police and judicial matters to prevent the commission of terrorist acts, including preventing terrorists from making use of transnational organised criminal networks. Among other things, the resolution focuses on aspects of enhancing mutual legal assistance in criminal matters related to counter-terrorism.)

## Key Issues

The immediate issue for the Council is to review resolution 2253.

A continuing issue for the 1267/1989/2253 Committee and the CTC is to ensure that they are able to address, within their respective mandates, the widening scope and various facets of the Council's counter-terrorism agenda.

## Options

The Council is likely to adopt a resolution updating the 1267/1989/2253 sanctions regime, including:

- changing or updating the reporting requirements and cycles therein;
- in particular, on the strategic-level report on ISIL, requesting more in-depth reporting from the Secretary-General while reducing the frequency of the reports;
- consolidating counter-terrorism language from the various resolutions and presidential statements on counter-terrorism it has adopted since resolution 2253; and
- requesting the CTC, CTED and the Secretariat to focus on specific areas or trends related to counter-terrorism.

## Council Dynamics

At press time, it seemed that Council members had yet to fully consider the content of a new resolution on the 1267/1989/2253 sanctions regime. It appears, however, that several Council members expect the resolution to update the language of resolution 2253, taking into account both the Council's work on the issue over the last 18 months and developments on the ground, but not to alter its substantive aspects.

Some members believe that the reporting cycle for the Secretary-General's strategic-level report on ISIL (once every four months) is too frequent and has not proved particularly insightful. They suggest a longer gap between reports, allowing for more in-depth analysis in each one. The US is the penholder on the 1267/1989/2253 Sanctions Committee and Kazakhstan is the chair of the Committee.

**UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2354](#) (24 May 2017) was a resolution on a "comprehensive international framework" to counter terrorist narratives. [S/RES/2253](#) (17 December 2015) was a resolution strengthening the Al Qaida sanctions regime and focusing on ISIL. The sanctions regime was also renamed the "1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List" to reflect this focus. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2016/6](#) (11 May 2016) was a presidential statement focusing on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7936](#) (11 May 2017) was a briefing by the chairs of the counter-terrorism-related committees. [S/PV.7877](#) (7 February 2017) was a briefing by Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on UN counter-terrorism efforts in support of member states' fight against ISIL. [Security Council Press Statements SC/12845](#) (26 May 2017) condemned the terrorist attack that took place on a bus traveling to a monastery in Minya, Egypt, where at least 28 people were killed and dozens were injured, including children. [SC/12833](#) (23 May 2017) condemned the terrorist attack which took place in Manchester, UK, the night before, during which at least 22 people were killed and 59 injured. [Sanctions Committee Document S/2017/375](#) (26 April 2017) contained the CTC's proposal for a "comprehensive international framework" to counter terrorist narratives.



## Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to receive a briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Martin Kobler.

The Council is expected to renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, the authorisation to inspect vessels suspected to be violating the arms embargo, and the measures regarding attempts to illicitly export crude oil from Libya. The Council is also likely to be briefed by the Sanctions Committee's chair, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden).

The mandates of the Panel of Experts and UNSMIL expire on 31 July and 15 September, respectively.

## Key Recent Developments

Deep divisions between the parties remain despite the growing consensus regarding the need to amend some provisions of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). The issues that are being discussed have to do with the structure of the Presidency Council and the authority of the supreme commander of the armed forces. While the eastern-based House of Representatives and the Tripoli-based High State Council have appointed dialogue delegations, these are not inclusive or representative of key stakeholders in Libya. Over the last two months meetings involving key regional actors, including Algeria, Egypt, Italy, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have been initiated in an attempt to try to address the political stalemate. On 21 April, the President of the House, Ageelah Saleh, met with the head of the High State Council, Abdurrahman Swehli, in Rome. On 2-3 May, following several frustrated attempts, the head of the Presidency Council Faiez Serraj met with Khalifa Haftar, who commands the Libyan National Army (LNA), in the UAE. However, these meetings have so far failed to overcome the political deadlock. On 23 May, the Quartet (the AU, the EU, the League of Arab States and the UN) reiterated its support for the coordination role of the UN and encouraged the UN to take the lead in any effort to facilitate a limited amendment of the LPA.

The security situation has continued to

deteriorate. The Secretary-General's 4 April report highlighted the fragility of the situation in the south, particularly the continued build-up of rival military forces, including a Misrata-based militia known as the Third Force, the LNA, and tribal armed groups, competing for the control of strategic infrastructure amid ongoing tribal tensions. A 12 April statement by P5 ambassadors to Libya in reaction to violence near Tamanhint warned against the risk of escalating violence turning into renewed conflict and underlined the difference between acts against the terrorist threats and acts that can lead to further deterioration of the situation in Libya. (The LNA has repeatedly justified its military operations, including against rival militias, as fighting terrorist groups.) On 18 May, the Third Force, which supports the Presidency Council, attacked the Brak al-Shati air base held by the LNA, killing some 140 people. As a result of the attack, Serraj, the head of the Presidency Council, suspended its Defence Minister-designate Mahdi al-Barghathi and Third Force commander Jamal Traiki while an investigation is conducted. At the request of the UK, Council members met in consultations on 24 May and were briefed by Kobler on the risks of further military escalation, not only in the south but also in Tripoli. A press statement adopted after the meeting called on all parties in Libya to exercise restraint, reiterated that there can be no military solution, and urged all parties to express their support for national reconciliation.

The situation of migrants and refugees in Libya, which was characterised in December 2016 as a "human rights crisis" by UNSMIL and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, continues to be critical. In April, the International Organization for Migration denounced the existence of "slave markets" for migrants in Libya. On 21 May, Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, announced during a visit to Libya that the organisation was stepping up its presence and programmes in Libya given the dire humanitarian needs.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

The final report of the Panel of Experts contained several recommendations addressed to the members of the Council. These include:

- reverting to the obligation of notifying supplies of non-lethal military equipment for the Libyan government;
- extending the measures targeting crude oil being exported illicitly from Libya to other oil derivatives extracted and refined in Libya or other oil products previously imported to Libya; and
- listing individuals who meet the sanctions regime's designation criteria (which include planning, directing or committing acts that violate human rights law or international humanitarian law) in order to contribute to ending the current climate of impunity.

In May, Operation EUNAVFOR Med interdicted the first vessel violating the arms embargo in the high seas off the coast of Libya as authorised by resolution 2292.

## Key Issues

A continuing overarching issue is to ensure that the parties agree on a consensual solution to end the political deadlock that addresses the issues raised by those refusing to support the LPA.

Related issues are maintaining the relevance of UN mediation efforts, and pressing external actors to exercise leverage to encourage engagement in the political process and to ensure the coherence of their mediation efforts with a Libya-led process under the aegis of the UN.

A further issue is ensuring that the sanctions regime is aligned with the efforts to restrain violence and promote a political settlement.

## Options

Regarding sanctions, Council members could adopt a resolution incorporating the above-mentioned recommendations of the Panel of Experts.

Once the strategic assessment review of the UN presence in Libya is completed in June, the Council could adopt a resolution, without waiting until the September mandate renewal, prioritising a limited set of tasks that UNSMIL can realistically achieve to align the mission's mandate with the political, security and operational realities on the ground.

Council members could also organise a visit to Libya and the region to hold discussions with the parties, including spoilers, and regional stakeholders to help overcome the political deadlock.

**UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2323 (13 December 2016) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2017. S/RES/2292 (14 June 2016) authorised member states to inspect vessels bound to or from Libya suspected to be violating the arms embargo. S/RES/2278 (31 March 2016) renewed the measures in relation to attempts to illicitly export crude oil from Libya and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 31 July 2017. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/283** (4 April 2017) was the report of the Secretary-General on UNSMIL. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7927** (19 April 2017) was a briefing by Kobler. **Security Council Press Statement SC/12846** (26 May 2017) condemned the military escalation in southern Libya and Tripoli.

## Council Dynamics

In response to the current deadlock, there seems to be a consensus among Council members about the need to amend the LPA. Council members generally support UNSMIL's mediation efforts but have arguably failed to

set a clear direction to reach and support a political settlement. Despite divisions over the origins of the Libyan conflict, the recent trend of issuing P5 statements can constitute a signal of unity if translated into coherent actions on the ground. UNSMIL's strategic

review, which has for the first time included an independent component, is expected to be completed in June.

The UK is the penholder on Libya.

## Conflict Prevention

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Council will hold a high-level briefing on "Transboundary Waters and Preventive Diplomacy". Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief. Bolivian President Evo Morales will preside. No Council product is anticipated.

### Key Recent Developments

When the General Assembly adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in September 2016, it included water security as one of the agenda's core goals. In particular, goal 6 calls for sustainable water management, including by "implement[ing] integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate".

In November 2015, a group of 15 countries launched the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace. The panel, which is chaired by former Slovenian President Danilo Türk, seeks to develop proposals to strengthen the global architecture to prevent and resolve water-related conflicts and to facilitate the role of water management as a factor in building peace. It is expected to complete a final report by September, proposing concrete measures for the prevention and resolution of conflicts related to water and to promote the use of water as a peacebuilding tool.

At the initiative of Senegal, the Council held an open debate on 22 November 2016 on Water, Peace and Security. Although Senegal hosted an Arria-formula meeting on 22 April 2016 on this issue, this debate marked the first time the connection between water and security was addressed in a formal meeting of the Council.

At the debate, the Council was briefed by Türk; then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; ICRC Vice-President Christine Beerli; and

Sundeep Waslekar, president of the Strategic Foresight Group. Ban underscored the potential for states to cooperate over access to water, noting that "more than 200 water treaties were successfully negotiated" in the second half of the 20th century. Türk said that mechanisms for managing the transboundary use of water are still relatively limited, maintaining that "political support for additional cooperation in this domain is needed" and that "much of that political support can be generated by the United Nations, in particular by the General Assembly and the Security Council." Noting that the protection of water resources is a component of international humanitarian law, Beerli urged the Council to facilitate dialogue between parties engaged in disputes over water. Waslekar called on the Council to consider adopting a resolution focused on the protection of water resources, citing as a precedent resolution 2286 on the protection of health care in armed conflict adopted in May 2016.

### Key Issues

One key issue is how much impetus the briefing can provide to the Council's engagement with issues related to climate, development and security.

Another important issue is to determine the best role for the Council in supporting cooperation and mediation on disputes over water resources and how its efforts relate to those of other UN entities, including regional offices such as the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia, regional organisations, and member states working on water security issues.

### Options

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

- recognises the linkages between water,

peace and security;

- highlights examples of good practice with regard to cooperation over water resources;
- encourages states to refer transboundary water disputes to the International Court of Justice (ICJ);
- requests the Secretary-General to address water security issues, as appropriate, in country-specific reporting; and
- encourages the work of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace.

In addition, a possible option is to request the Secretary-General to produce a report highlighting current and potential disputes related to water security issues in order for the Council to determine whether and how it can engage on these issues, including in a preventive capacity.

Another option would be for Bolivia to produce a chair's summary of the meeting to capture the most salient points.

### Council Dynamics

The Council has on several occasions held meetings on the general link between conflict, development, natural resources, and climate change. Most members recognise the security implications of water-related disputes and believe that it is appropriate for the Council to discuss this matter. France, Kazakhstan and Senegal are among the 15 states that launched the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace.

Bolivia, which is hosting the briefing, and Chile have had long-standing disputes both over usage of the Silala River and over Bolivia's call for access to the Pacific Ocean. Both of these matters are currently being adjudicated as separate cases in the ICJ.

Russia in the past has expressed concerns about discussing water, peace and security

# Conflict Prevention

issues in the Council. In last September's debate on this issue, it maintained that water itself was not a root cause of conflict, but

rather how it is managed that could exacerbate conflict; it maintained that the relationship between water, peace and security

should be addressed not in the Council but in other parts of the UN system.

## International Criminal Tribunals

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Security 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 (ICTY) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals—established in 2010 to carry out a number of the essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the ICTY after the completion of their respective mandates—are expected to brief and may meet with the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals prior to the debate.

### Key Recent Developments

The ICTY has concluded proceedings against 154 of the 161 persons indicted, with 83 individuals sentenced, 19 acquitted, 13 referred to a national jurisdiction, 37 whose indictments were withdrawn or who are deceased, and two with retrials to be conducted by the Residual Mechanism. There is one remaining trial, of Ratko Mladić, and one remaining appeal, the Plić et al. case against six accused. Judgements in these cases are expected by November 2017, after which the tribunal will be closed. There is also one remaining contempt case, Jojić et al. The latest ICTY report of 17 May notes that the three indictees in the latter contempt case are yet to be arrested and transferred to the Tribunal as Serbia continues to fail to cooperate in this case.

Council members received a letter from the ICTY president on 11 November 2016, requesting extensions of the terms of seven permanent judges and one ad hoc judge until 30 November 2017 and the term of the ICTY president until 31 December 2017, to perform functions required to close the tribunal. In transmitting the letter to the Council, the Secretary-General further requested that the

ICTY prosecutor, Serge Brammertz, be reappointed until the closure of the ICTY.

In response, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2329 on 19 December 2016, taking note of the ICTY's request for a final extension of judges' terms and extending their terms in accordance with the request. The Council also reappointed Brammertz until 30 November 2017. The Council strongly emphasised that the extensions and reappointment should be final and took note of the ICTY's commitment to complete its work no later than 30 November 2017.

In its explanation of vote, Russia reiterated its concern over what it views as unacceptable delays in the judicial proceedings of the ICTY and the prolongation of its work beyond the limits set by previous Council resolutions. Russia emphasised that its vote in favour of resolution 2329 was due to the resolution's provisions "ensuring that the current extension of the mandates of the judges and prosecutors will be the last".

Regarding the work of the Residual Mechanism, the president and its judges have conducted a wide variety of judicial activities, issuing 152 decisions and orders between 16 November 2016 and 15 May. A 17 May assessment reports that the Mechanism and the ICTY continue to work closely to ensure a smooth and efficient transition of the remaining functions of the ICTY to the mechanism by the end of 2017. The report adds that the Mechanism is seeking to maximise its effectiveness and efficiency while maintaining relatively low staffing levels, conscious of the temporary nature of its mandate. In accordance with resolution 2256 of 22 December 2015, the report provides detailed projections of the duration of functions entrusted to the Mechanism.

In addition, the Mechanism's president notes in the report that Judge Aydın Sefa Akay (Turkey), arrested by Turkish authorities on or

around 21 September 2016 in relation to allegations concerning the attempted July coup to overthrow the government, continues to be detained despite the UN's formal assertion of his diplomatic immunity in accordance with the Mechanism's Statute and the issuance of a judicial order by the Mechanism to Turkey to cease all legal proceedings against Judge Akay and release him.

### Key Issues

A continuing issue is overseeing the completion of the ICTY's work by 30 November.

Another issue is Akay's arrest and ongoing detention in Turkey and what pressure the Council could put on the Turkish government for his release.

### Options

The Council could adopt a presidential statement or issue a press statement calling for Akay's immediate release from detention and the cessation of all legal proceedings against him.

The Council could adopt a presidential statement or issue a press statement calling on Serbia to comply with the ICTY arrest warrants.

The Council could consider monitoring the work of the ICTY more frequently until November, including through its Informal Working Group on International Tribunals.

### Council Dynamics

According to the relevant Council resolutions, the ICTY was expected to complete its caseload in 2010 or, failing that, by the end of 2014. In the few years prior to the adoption of resolution 2329, Russia had routinely abstained on resolutions for extension of judges' terms and insisted on granting shorter extensions than those sought, commenting that the situation regarding the

**UN DOCUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2329 (19 December 2016) extended the ICTY judges' and the prosecutor's terms until 30 November 2017. **Security Council Letter S/2016/959** (11 November 2016) requested extensions of ICTY judges' terms. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7842** (19 December 2016) was the meeting during which resolution 2329 was adopted. **S/PV.7829** (8 December 2016) was the semi-annual debate. **Other S/2017/436** (17 May 2017) was the ICTY's assessment report. **S/2017/434** (17 May 2017) was the Residual Mechanism's assessment report.

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# International Criminal Tribunals

Tribunal's exit strategy had not improved and that costly trial delays continued. Russia is also critical of the ICTY's jurisprudence, claiming that it has not done justice on behalf of Serbian victims of the Yugoslav conflict. If the ICTY does not finish its caseload by

November 2017 and a further extension of judges' terms is requested, these issues are likely to resurface.

Though several Council members would like to see the issue of the Turkish judge resolved swiftly, at present there does not

seem to be any appetite among members to have the Council address the issue.

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

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## Central African Republic

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, will brief the Council on the implementation of MINUSCA's mandate. The briefing may also include a civil society representative.

The mandate of MINUSCA expires on 15 November 2017.

### Key Recent Developments

There has been a resurgence in violence in the CAR since February, primarily centred around Ouaka province. Clashes have continued between ex-Séléka factions, primarily the Union for Peace in the Central African Republic and the Popular Front for the Renaissance in the Central African Republic, and between the Muslim-dominated ex-Séléka factions and Christian-dominated anti-balaka armed groups. In addition to fighting between armed groups, there have been numerous reports of attacks against civilians.

Attacks against civilians appear to be increasingly along sectarian lines, with some predominantly Christian anti-balaka groups reportedly targeting Muslim communities. Over the weekend of 13-14 May, anti-balaka militants launched a concerted attack on Bangassou, which included the use of heavy weapons against the MINUSCA base, and against a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood. The attack included deliberate measures to trap MINUSCA personnel and cut road access to the town, creating a period during which the Muslim population was defenceless. MINUSCA, employing an attack helicopter, subsequently retook the

town. The Red Cross reported that at least 115 people had died in the fighting.

The attack against the MINUSCA presence in Bangassou is part of an increase in the deliberate targeting of MINUSCA personnel by anti-balaka militants. May marked MINUSCA's highest casualty rate since the mission's inception in 2014. On 9 May, five peacekeepers—four Cambodians and one Moroccan—were killed and eight others were wounded during an ambush on a MINUSCA convoy. In the attack on Bangassou, a Moroccan peacekeeper was killed on 13 May, and another was wounded the next day. The Council issued a press statement on 15 May strongly condemning that violence and the attacks on peacekeepers.

Law and order remains limited across most of the CAR and is largely maintained by MINUSCA. The government, led by President Faustin Archange Touadera, has minimal control outside the capital, Bangui. Disarmament efforts have made only limited progress, and factions of the ex-Séléka and anti-balaka groups remain armed and in control of large areas of the country.

On 16 March, President Touadera and then Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous briefed the Council on the situation in the CAR. The briefing followed an informal interactive dialogue on 13 March held with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission and head of the AU Mission for the CAR and Central Africa, Mohamed El Hacen Lebatt. The meeting, initiated by France, was an opportunity for Council members to receive information on a new mediation initiative for the CAR led by the AU and supported by the Economic Community of

Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Angola, Chad, and the Republic of Congo.

The March discussions on the CAR were followed on 4 April by a presidential statement reaffirming the Council's support for CAR President Touadera, expressing concern at the ongoing violence between armed groups, acknowledging reconciliation efforts, and condemning attacks against civilians. The delay between the March briefing and the issuing of the presidential statement was reportedly due to scheduling rather than any significant disagreement amongst Council members.

During the 23 May briefing on peacekeeping operations by force commanders, the MINUSCA Force Commander, Major General Balla Keïta, called for the Council to ensure that robust mission mandates were "translated equally into the political, administrative and legal arenas" and to adopt more tailored sanctions regimes.

### Sanctions-Related Developments

On 30 April, the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee received a report on the arms embargo requested by Resolution 2339. The report outlined benchmarks to assess the arms embargo measures according to progress in the area of security sector reform, as well as additional information on the arms embargo working group that the Panel of Experts recommended be potentially established within MINUSCA by the Security Council.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

On 21 March, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue at its 34th session with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the CAR, Marie-Thérèse Keita Bocoum, who provided an oral briefing following her eighth visit to the country. While commending institutional and legislative progress, including

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2339 (27 January 2017) renewed the CAR sanctions regime until 31 January 2018 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 28 February 2018. S/RES/2301 (26 July 2016) renewed the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 November 2017. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/5** (4 April 2017) condemned ongoing violence and called for international support for peacebuilding efforts. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/94** (1 February 2017) was on MINUSCA. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7947** (23 May 2017) was a briefing on peacekeeping operations by force commanders. S/PV.7901 (16 March 2017) was a meeting on the CAR.



# Central African Republic

the appointment of the prosecutor to the special criminal court, Keita Bocoum stressed that the situation in the country remained very fragile, with insecurity being the greatest problem facing the civilian population. She noted that there had been no progress in expanding the effective authority of the government beyond Bangui and that the impunity enjoyed by armed groups represented a structural cause of violence in the country. Bocoum will present a written report at the HRC's 36th session in September 2017, as mandated by HRC resolution 33/27.

In a statement on 16 May, the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed alarm at attacks by armed groups against civilians and UN peacekeepers in recent months, including in areas that had previously remained largely unaffected by violence and human rights abuses. According to MINUSCA's human rights division, between March and early May more than 121 civilians and six peacekeepers were killed. The High Commissioner strongly condemned the violence, including the killing of peacekeepers, and labelled its spread "highly worrying", saying it "should set off loud alarm bells".

## Key Issues

The immediate priority for the Council is to respond to increased attacks against civilians along sectarian lines and the apparent targeting of MINUSCA personnel by anti-balaka fighters, and to ensure the safety and security of UN and humanitarian personnel.

The longer-term priority for the Council

remains assisting the CAR in establishing security and state authority throughout the country and rebuilding basic infrastructure and institutions.

## Options

The Council could issue a presidential statement that:

- condemns the attacks against UN peacekeepers, humanitarian personnel and civilian populations and reaffirms the Council's support for MINUSCA's response to such threats; and
- calls on countries in the region to cooperate and implement the sanctions regime in order to eliminate illicit arms trafficking to rebel groups and the funding of their operations through illicit exploitation of natural resources.

Another option for the Council, acting through the Sanctions Committee, is to sanction additional individuals and entities, particularly those with links to recent attacks.

A further option is for Council members to hold an informal meeting with MINUSCA troop- and police-contributing countries to hear their views and get a better understanding of what is needed to implement the mandate and ensure the safety of peacekeepers in the current security situation.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

The optimism that followed the formation of the elected government in April 2016 has been eroded by the ongoing violence, by the lack of momentum towards improved governance, and by the government's inability to project law and order beyond Bangui.

In this context, several Council members are concerned by the difficulty MINUSCA has had in establishing and maintaining control over widespread areas, which, accompanied by the lack of state authority, has resulted in an unsustainable situation. Council members recognise that achieving peace and stability in the CAR will require a long-term effort, but the lack of progress in addressing root causes and in reconciling divided communities as well as the recent mission casualties leave Council members unsure about the best means to pursue this goal.

Against the backdrop of the Council's busy agenda and numerous high profile crisis, the CAR remains a low priority for the Council and for most Council members. This lack of attention is to the detriment of efforts to restore peace and stability in the CAR and risks allowing the threats to peace in the CAR and to MINUSCA to continue to grow.

France is the penholder on the CAR, and Ukraine is the chair of the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee.

# Mine Action

## Expected Council Action

At the initiative of Bolivia, the Council is expected to hold a meeting in June on mine action and explosive hazard threat mitigation, with a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and possibly one other speaker who would offer a perspective from the field. Bolivia is expected to circulate a concept note ahead of the meeting and has signalled its intention to propose a draft resolution that would recognise the increasingly complex nature of the threat posed by improvised explosive devices and similar hazards, reaffirm relevant obligations under international humanitarian law,

and support the work of the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), which was established 20 years ago.

## Background

The Council regularly addresses issues related to mine action and the threat posed by improvised explosive devices in the context of mission mandates, but has on very few occasions considered mine action as a thematic issue. It held an open debate on 15 August 1996 followed by the adoption on 30 August of a presidential statement on demining in the context of UN peacekeeping. On 19 November 2003, it adopted another presidential statement on

the importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations. In this statement, the Council expressed its grave concern at the harmful impact of landmines and unexploded ordnance on civilian populations, humanitarian workers, and UN staff, and welcomed the effective coordination of mine action activities, highlighting in particular the important role played by UNMAS. The Council requested the Secretary-General to provide information on the scope and humanitarian impact of the mine and unexploded ordnance problem in all relevant reports and expressed its readiness to consider mine action concerns in country-specific situations. It also

**UN DOCUMENTS ON MINE ACTION** Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2003/22 (19 November 2003) was on the importance of mine action in peacekeeping operations. S/PRST/1996/37 (30 August 1996) was on demining in the context of UN peacekeeping. General Assembly Documents A/71/187 (25 July 2016) was the Secretary-General's report on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices. A/RES/70/80 (9 December 2015) was the resolution on assistance in mine action. A/RES/70/46 (7 December 2015) was the resolution on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices. A/70/207 (3 August 2015) was the latest Secretary-General's report on assistance in mine action.

## Mine Action

noted the importance of ensuring that mine action is reflected in the mandates and personnel planning for peacekeeping operations.

Located in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNMAS serves as a focal point for UN efforts to ensure an effective and coordinated response to the problems of landmines and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions and leads the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action. UNMAS also sets up and manages mine action coordination centres in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian emergencies or crises. It is currently present in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Syria, as well as Abyei, Palestine and Western Sahara.

UNMAS was established by the General Assembly, which has traditionally been the main forum for discussing mine action and

how to counter the growing threat posed by improvised explosive devices. In recent years, it has adopted a resolution every two years on assistance in mine action that has included a request for a Secretary-General's report. The most recent resolution, adopted on 9 December 2015, urged states to provide support to mine-affected countries and assistance to victims, while emphasising the importance of "explicitly incorporating references to mine action...in ceasefire and peace agreements as well as in the mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions".

In 2015 the General Assembly also adopted a resolution on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices. In the resolution, adopted on 7 December, the General Assembly expressed concern over, among other things, the devastation caused by the increasing use of such devices by illegal armed groups and terrorists, resulting in thousands of casualties. It noted that attacks with improvised explosive attacks

have caused serious harm to UN staff and peacekeepers and to humanitarian workers. The resolution also encouraged states "to respond to the needs of today's peacekeepers to operate in new threat environments involving improvised explosive devices", including by providing the appropriate training, capabilities and financial resources. As a follow up, it requested a report from the Secretary-General with recommendations for ways forward. A similar resolution was adopted in 2016.

According to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, there was a sharp increase in the number of people killed and injured by mines, improvised explosive devices, and explosive remnants of war in 2015, the latest year for which data has been published. Compared with 2014, the number of casualties increased by 75 percent to 6461, mostly due to more casualties recorded in Libya, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen, but also due to greater availability of casualty data.

## Syria

### Expected Council Action

In June, Council members expect to receive briefings on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria and on chemical weapons. Council members will also be following closely the seventh round of the intra-Syrian talks, which are expected to be convened in Geneva in June.

### Key Recent Developments

At a 3-4 May international meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan, the ceasefire guarantors (Iran, Russia and Turkey) agreed on the establishment of four de-escalation areas and security zones in Syria. A memorandum established the areas with the stated aim of ending violence, improving the humanitarian situation, and creating favourable conditions to advance a political settlement. The areas are as follows:

- Idlib province and certain parts of neighbouring provinces (Latakia, Hama and Aleppo provinces);

- certain parts in the north of Homs province;
- eastern Ghouta; and
- certain parts of southern Syria (Deraa and Al-Quneitra provinces).

According to the memorandum, security zones are to be established along the lines of the de-escalation areas to prevent incidents and military confrontations between the parties. After the meeting, Russia circulated a draft resolution on 5 May welcoming the memorandum and calling on all member states to contribute in good faith to its implementation. Several member states said they needed time to consult with capitals and required further information to make a decision on the draft. Japan and Sweden proposed holding an informal interactive dialogue with the guarantors, but they did not receive a positive response. The meeting in Astana also resulted in progress in addressing the issues of detainees, abductees and missing

persons, and humanitarian demining. During consultations on 22 May, Russia updated Council members on an 18-19 May meeting of a joint working group composed of guarantor representatives and efforts to implement the memorandum.

Briefing the Council on 22 May, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura assessed the memorandum as a promising development and stressed the UN's readiness to provide technical expertise. He also highlighted that there were still important details to clarify and warned against the parties taking advantage of existing ambiguities to make territorial gains or divert resources to other battlefronts.

The sixth round of intra-Syrian talks was convened by de Mistura in Geneva between 16-19 May. At the talks, de Mistura announced an initiative to establish a technical consultative process of expert meetings to address constitutional and legal issues in the context of the intra-Syrian talks. This process, which is

**UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2336](#) (31 December 2016) welcomed efforts by Russia and Turkey to end the violence in Syria and promote a political process. [S/RES/2319](#) (17 November 2016) and [S/RES/2118](#) (27 September 2013) were on chemical weapons. [S/RES/2254](#) (18 December 2015) was on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/445](#) (22 May 2017) was on the humanitarian situation. [Security Council Letters S/2017/440](#) (18 May 2017) was an update report from the OPCW FFM mission on the Khan Shaykhun attack. [S/2017/400](#) (4 May 2017) was a report by the OPCW FFM on a chemical weapons attack in Um-Housh in September 2016. [S/2017/373](#) (28 April 2017) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7946](#) (23 May 2017) was a briefing by Nakamitsu on the destruction of Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons. [S/PV.7944](#) (22 May 2017) was a briefing by de Mistura after the sixth round of the Geneva talks.

not aimed at making decisions, is expected to feed into the formal Geneva talks through the discussion and definition of options.

De Mistura's efforts to get the delegations of the Cairo and Moscow platforms to join the opposition delegation announced on 11 February for these expert meetings were unsuccessful. Despite these difficulties, de Mistura stressed at the 22 May briefing that the sixth round of talks faced fewer obstacles related to "possible walk-outs, procedural objections or long statements attacking each other or even the questioning of the other side's legitimacy".

Despite the announcement of the four de-escalation areas and a general decrease in levels of violence, clashes have continued both inside and outside the areas, which have yet to be precisely defined. In addition to violence in Hama and Homs, government offensives in May on strategic locations adjacent to eastern Ghouta near Damascus resulted in the besiegement and forced displacement of thousands of civilians in Barzeh, Qaboun and Tishreen towns.

Ensuring rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access continues to be an issue for 4.5 million people in need in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. Given the bureaucratic challenges and the security situation, only 17 inter-agency humanitarian convoys had been carried out in 2017 as of 17 May. At press time, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien was scheduled to brief the Council on 30 May.

The military campaign by the coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its partners on the ground in April resulted in scores of civilian casualties and displaced more than 66,000 people in the Raqqa governorate alone. On 8 May, the US announced that it would supply arms to the Kurdish militia YPG, which is part of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), in the offensive to take Raqqa, an ISIL stronghold.

The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) shared with Council members a 12 May update on its investigation of the 4 April Khan Shaykhun attack. An analysis of biomedical samples in

OPCW-designated laboratories confirmed the use of sarin or a sarin-like substance in the attack. Once the final report is issued, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) is expected to investigate the attack to identify the perpetrators.

In a 2 May report, the FFM confirmed the use of sulfur mustard in a September 2016 attack in Um-Housh near Aleppo, which had been denounced by the government of Syria. On 23 May, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, in briefing Council members on progress in the elimination of Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons reiterated the OPCW's belief that Syria's initial declaration remains incomplete.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 35th session in June, the Human Rights Council (HRC) is set to hold an interactive dialogue with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, which will provide an oral briefing as mandated by HRC resolution 34/26. The HRC is also expected to consider the summary report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the high-level panel discussion on the situation of human rights in Syria held during its 34th session in March (A/HRC/35/15).

### Key Issues

More than six years since the start of a war, the essential issue is how the Council can rise above P5 divisions and exert leadership in promoting efforts to reach a political solution.

Enforcing the ceasefire that Council members took note of in resolution 2336 of 31 December 2016 and ensuring that the current de-escalation initiative has sustained impact on the ground, including on humanitarian access, is an important issue that could contribute to progress in the Geneva talks as well as to improve the living conditions of the millions of Syrians affected by the conflict.

### Options

The Council has many options at its disposal—such as imposing an arms embargo or targeted sanctions, referring Syria to the International Criminal Court, or authorising a no-fly zone to deter the Syrian government

from using its aerial capacity—but P5 divisions make these unlikely options.

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

Council members could discuss with the ceasefire guarantors the establishment of the de-escalation areas, the release of detainees, and demining in an informal interactive dialogue.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

Over the last few years, Council members' engagement in the Syrian political negotiations has been limited to following the lead taken by key actors outside the Council. This was again the case when Russia circulated a draft resolution welcoming the memorandum agreed to in Astana. In this instance, however, several Council members voiced concerns regarding the limited information available to them in order to make a decision. These concerns have to do with the role of the guarantor countries in the enforcement of the memorandum, in ensuring that the parties respect the deal, and in monitoring the de-escalation areas. At press time, no negotiations had been held on the draft resolution. The memorandum states that third parties could be deployed to monitor the de-escalation areas if there is consensus among the guarantors, but Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem rejected a role for the UN or other international forces in monitoring the agreement.

In a 4 May statement, the US State Department expressed its concern regarding the role of Iran as a guarantor. Particularly critical for the US is Iran's potential presence in areas bordering the Golan Heights (Al-Quneitra province), which is disputed by Israel and Syria, as well as on the border with Jordan. On 18 May, the US conducted an airstrike on an Iranian-backed military convoy that it said had ignored warning signals and was nearing a base close to the Jordanian border where the US trains Syrian opposition groups.

## Expected Council Action

In June, François Loucény Fall, Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), is expected to brief the Security Council on the Secretary-General's semi-annual 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

Fall last briefed the Council on 7 December 2016. He noted that Equatorial Guinea and Gabon had agreed to submit their border dispute to the International Court of Justice, based on an UN-mediated agreement signed in Marrakech, Morocco, on 15 November 2016. He further said that the efforts of the Lake Chad Basin countries to fight terrorism had "resulted in substantial military and security successes". He maintained, however, that defeating Boko Haram would be a long-term effort requiring "sustained determination and vigilance, coupled with a holistic approach aimed at tackling the root causes of violent extremism, including marginalization and extreme poverty". Fall expressed concern that Uganda's announcement that it would withdraw from the African Union (AU) Regional Task Force (RTF) would result in a security vacuum that the LRA could exploit. He reported a rise in piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea in 2016 compared to 2015.

In late March, the US announced that it would withdraw its forces, numbering some 150 troops, from the international effort to fight the LRA. In a 29 March statement, the US Africa Command (Africom) said that the AU RTF against the LRA had significantly weakened the capacities of the group. The LRA's membership was now below 100 fighters, and although its leader, Joseph Kony, was still in hiding, the RTF had captured several key LRA leaders. The statement said that the US effort against the LRA, known as Operation Observant Compass, would "transition to broader-scope security and stability activities". In a 20 April press briefing, Africom Commander General Thomas Waldhauser said that his country would continue to provide training and intelligence-sharing, as

required, to the task force against the LRA.

Also in mid-April, Uganda announced that it would withdraw its 1,500 troops engaged in counter-LRA operations in the Central African Republic. Brigadier Richard Karemire, a spokesman for the Uganda People's Defence Forces, asserted that the LRA no longer represents a threat to Uganda.

On 12 May, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) adopted a communiqué renewing the mandate of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA) for one year. It urged partners of the AU—i.e. the US, the EU and the UN—to enhance their support for the RCI-LRA "with a view to enabling the RTF to pursue and intensify its actions towards the elimination of the threat that the LRA continues to pose to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region." The communiqué expressed concern that the departure of US and Ugandan troops would create a security vacuum that could lead to the revival of the LRA. It urged the UN Security Council to "take into account the disarmament of the LRA" in considering the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

Since late 2016, protests have taken place in Anglophone parts of western Cameroon against Cameroonian government policies viewed as discriminating against English-speakers. Of particular concern to protestors is the employment of non-English-speaking judges and teachers. The government has been accused of violently repressing the protests, and in January, it shut down internet services in Anglophone southwest and northwest Cameroon. Fall has been trying to mediate a solution to the crisis, travelling to Cameroon four times between November 2016 and April, engaging with government officials, civil society representatives and opposition leaders. On 20 January, Cameroonian President Paul Biya announced the restoration of Internet services to English-speaking areas. In a 21 April statement, Fall welcomed the decision, saying he hoped it would "help reduce tension and... create conditions conducive to the resolution of the crisis in the two regions."

## Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is determining whether the withdrawal of Ugandan and US troops will enable the LRA to regenerate, leading to greater insecurity in the region, and how the Council would address such potential instability.

Another key issue is the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic, marked by fighting among ex-Séléka factions and among anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka and other rebel groups. How the Council and UNOCA could support the AU-led initiative to mediate with armed groups to find a sustainable political solution is a matter for consideration. (For background on developments in CAR, please see our separate brief in this *Forecast*.)

Given overlapping challenges related to terrorism, under-development and displacement in Central and West Africa, an important issue is how the Council can promote coordination and sharing of best practices in the work of UNOCA and the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). Along these lines, resolution 2349 on the Lake Chad Basin, adopted on 31 March, requested a written report from the Secretary-General within five months discussing, among other things, "possible measures...with respect to achieving greater coherence of effort in the context of overlapping regional strategies".

## Options

An option for the Council is to issue a presidential 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 concerns reflected in the PSC's 12 May communiqué about a potential security vacuum; and
- expresses support for UNOCA's efforts in addressing the increasing political and security challenges in Central Africa.

Another option would be to have a discussion with AU representatives in the ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa on how the Council could best support the AU-led mediation initiative in the Central African Republic.

Members could also consider holding an Arria-formula meeting with experts on the



LRA and regional security to get their assessment of the current capacities of, and threats posed by, the LRA.

## Council Dynamics

Some members are concerned about the

possible security vacuum that could result from Uganda's departure from the RTF and the withdrawal of US troops supporting the effort. This view is consistent with those expressed in the PSC's 12 May communiqué. There are also ongoing concerns about

the security situation in the Central African Republic, and some members are keen to learn more about the efforts of the AU-led mediation efforts and whether and how the Council can support these efforts.

The UK is the penholder on the LRA.

## Somalia

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), which expires on 16 June.

### Key Recent Developments

The strategic assessment of the UN presence in Somalia, requested in resolution 2275, was transmitted to the Council on 5 May. The process was initiated at the end of 2016, followed by the deployment of a strategic assessment mission to Somalia and the region from 5 to 15 March, after the completion of the electoral process. It recommends that over the next four years, the UN should focus on three priority areas—federalism and challenges to state-building; security strategy; and strengthening resilience and promoting socio-economic change—and that the new government should define its own clear priorities, including in the national development plan that will guide UN support.

Concerning UNSOM, the assessment concludes that its overall concept as a political mission should remain, with its core tasks being to provide good offices and strategic advice on peacebuilding and state-building, to coordinate international support, to build the capacity of federal and state institutions, and to monitor and report violations. However, it advises that the mandate should be adapted to integrate support at the level of federal member states in all areas of the mandate and that the functions of the mission's presence at federal and state levels should be clarified. There should also be a stronger emphasis on conflict resolution at the federal, regional and local levels. Advice on a comprehensive security strategy will be a priority task, according to

the assessment. In addition, the women, peace and security agenda should be better integrated into the mandate to reflect progress made on women's participation in peacebuilding and state-building; the mandate should also reflect the youth, peace and security agenda. The assessment concludes that the capacity-building role of UNSOM should be expanded to the police sector and that UNSOM's human rights due diligence policy should be clarified in the mandate to ensure adequate prioritisation and integrated implementation across the UN's presence in Somalia.

On 11 May, the London Conference on Somalia was held. The conference—co-chaired by the UK, Somalia, the UN and the African Union (AU), and attended by 42 friends and partners of Somalia—focused on a security pact, adopted by Somalia and the international community, that will allow for long-term security based on mutual accountability. In the pact, Somalia's leaders committed to taking a lead on providing security, including securing recovered areas and supply routes, and security for the 2021 elections. The international community acknowledged the need to commit more support, including through better-coordinated mentoring, training and capacity-building of police and military forces. It was further agreed that such commitments from the international community, including financial commitments, would be made at a follow-up conference planned for October.

The conference also adopted a New Partnership for Somalia, recommitting the delegations to working together and holding each other accountable in order to deliver the vital support and reforms that Somalia needs over

the next four years.

A communiqué released after the conference noted political gains made in Somalia, but also highlighted several challenges, including terrorism; constitutional issues; the slow pace of security sector reform; the continuing threat of piracy; the need for further progress on democratisation, human rights, and rule of law; corruption; poverty; and the risk of famine. At the conference, the Federal Government of Somalia set out its plans to address these challenges, and the international community committed to support these plans.

The most recent Secretary-General's report on Somalia said that attacks by Al-Shabaab continue, despite the 6 April call by President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo" for members of the group to lay down their arms taking advantage of a 60-day offer of amnesty. The report also notes the increased activity of a group affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terror organisation. During the reporting period, 287 civilians were killed, including 54 deaths attributed to Somali national forces and 20 to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Concerning the ongoing drought, the report said it has devastated the economy, with 6.2 million people facing acute food insecurity and 3 million needing urgent life-saving assistance. There have also been more than 570,000 drought-related displacements since November 2016 and a related increase in sexual violence. Additionally, there are more than 36,000 cases of cholera, and insecurity continues to impede humanitarian access.

On 26 May, the Council adopted

**UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2355](#) (26 May 2017) extended AMISOM's authorisation until 31 August 2017 with no changes. [S/RES/2346](#) (23 March 2017) was a technical rollover of UNSOM's mandate until 16 June 2017. [S/RES/2317](#) (10 November 2016) was on Somalia and Eritrea sanctions with ten votes in favour. [S/RES/2275](#) (24 March 2016) extended the mandate of UNSOM. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/408](#) (9 May 2017) was on Somalia. [Security Council Letter S/2017/404](#) (5 May 2017) transmitted the strategic assessment of the UN's presence in Somalia. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7924](#) (17 May 2017) was a briefing by Deputy Special Representative Raisedon Zenenga and AU Special Representative for Somalia Francisco Madeira. [S/PV.7925](#) (13 April 2017) was a briefing by the Chair of the 751/1907 Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan).

# Somalia

resolution 2355, which rolled over the mandate of AMISOM until August to allow Council members time to consider the forthcoming recommendations of the joint AU-UN review of the mission, which is expected to be received in July.

## Sanctions-Related developments

On 17 May, Council members met in consultations to begin the review of sanctions measures on Eritrea requested by resolution 2317. The UK proposed developing a road map on Eritrea that would be enshrined in a presidential statement. Members met again at expert level to brainstorm further on 25 May. (In resolution 2317 of 10 November 2016 the Council expressed its intention to review measures on Eritrea, in light of the midterm report of the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group, which it received in April). At press time, the UK had not yet circulated a draft presidential statement.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 11 May at the London Conference on Somalia, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour said there were still major human rights problems in Somalia, largely because of the “horrific abuses” committed by Al-Shabaab. Gilmour asserted that the idea

that repressing rights and freedoms would bring greater security was a “dangerous myth” and that the opposite was true. He emphasised that more must be done to strengthen measures to prevent human rights violations and to push for accountability, while urging the international community to commit to grounding its initiatives in Somalia in human rights.

## Key Issues

Ensuring that UNSOM is properly equipped to support the Somali government on the three priority areas outlined by the strategic assessment—state-building, security strategy, and socio-economic reform—is the key issue.

Another pressing issue is ensuring an appropriate humanitarian response to the drought, the looming famine and the outbreak of cholera.

## Options

The most likely option is for the Council to reauthorise UNSOM for one year, using the observations and recommendations of the strategic assessment as a basis for any alterations to the mandate.

Another option would be to hold consultations with Special Representative for Somalia and head of UNSOM Michael Keating to discuss how the mission can best help the government in facilitating key political processes, such as the constitutional review, preparations for one-person, one-vote elections and establishing a functional federal state, as well as advising and assisting the government on security matters and promoting economic development.

## Council Dynamics

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

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

# Peacebuilding

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Council expects briefings by Ambassadors Macharia Kamau (Kenya) and Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea), the former and current chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for the presentation of the PBC’s tenth annual report.

On the same day, an informal interactive dialogue is planned, involving Council members, the chairs of PBC country configurations, and ambassadors of countries on the PBC agenda.

## Key Recent Developments

Over the past year, the PBC has focused much of its work on implementing and carrying forward the relevant recommendations of the 27 April 2016 substantively identical Council and General Assembly resolutions on the peacebuilding review. There has also

been a broader effort among the Secretariat and member states to advance the “sustaining peace” agenda, described in the two resolutions as activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflicts. Sustaining peace places an emphasis on conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of conflict and is seen as a responsibility of the entire UN system.

As a result of the review, the PBC has sought to revitalise the role of its Organizational Committee (OC). This has involved further developing the initiatives of the past two years to have the OC consider country situations that are not formally on the PBC agenda, as well as focusing more on the regional dimensions of peacebuilding and enhancing cooperation with regional organisations and international financial institutions. From 17 to 19 October 2016, Kamau, together with

the vice-chairs of the PBC and Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, visited the African Union’s (AU) headquarters in Addis Ababa to further enhance cooperation with the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. A PSC communiqué following a meeting with the PBC delegation called for greater collaboration and coordination between the two bodies, deciding, inter alia, to hold an annual meeting with the PBC and undertake joint visits to conflict and post-conflict areas in Africa.

From 20 to 21 March, Cho visited The Gambia, travelling with Ambassador Mamadou Tangara (The Gambia) and Fernandez-Taranco to explore opportunities for the PBC to support The Gambia’s peacebuilding needs following the country’s recent political crisis. The OC was briefed on the visit and

**UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEBUILDING** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2282 (27 April 2016) was adopted concurrently with a General Assembly resolution on the UN peacebuilding architecture review. Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2017/2 (20 January 2017) recognised the important convening role of the PBC to support UNOWAS in implementing the UNISS. S/PRST/2016/12 (28 July 2016) was on peacebuilding in Africa with a focus on institution-building. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7857 (10 January 2017) was an open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. S/PV.7750 (28 July 2016) was an open debate on peacebuilding in Africa. Other S/2017/282 (4 April 2017) was a letter from the Secretary-General to the Council president transmitting the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan. S/2017/76 (27 January 2017) was the PBC’s tenth annual report.

# Peacebuilding

the priorities of The Gambia's new government during a 19 April meeting. As another example of the PBC's focus on a more diverse array of country and regional issues, it is considering ways to support the implementation of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), holding an initial meeting of the OC on the Sahel on 6 March. The meeting and PBC engagement was prompted by the Council's 20 January presidential statement on the situation in West Africa and the Sahel, which emphasised the important convening role of the PBC and charged it with supporting the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) in mobilising relevant actors to advance the implementation of the UNISS.

In early April, PBC members agreed on the creation of focal points on thematic aspects of peacebuilding. Belgium was designated the focal point on youth; Bangladesh and Canada, gender; Russia, national ownership; Indonesia and Norway, financing for peacebuilding; and Japan, institution-building with a focus on judicial reform, border control, and financial structures. The focal points are expected to ensure attention to these dimensions of peacebuilding in the PBC's consideration of different situations.

As part of UN efforts to advance a "sustaining peace" approach in the field, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, the UN Development Programme, and the Peacebuilding Support Office collaborated last year to develop a "sustaining peace" pilot strategy for Burkina Faso, still emerging from its 2014 and 2015 crises and political transition. The strategy seeks to address the main risks to Burkina Faso's stability, with UNOWAS providing political support and capacities to the UN country team's engagement. A sustaining peace pilot has also been developed for Sri Lanka.

In another new development, the Council requested the Secretary-General to provide within 90 days a peacebuilding plan for Liberia in its 23 December 2016 resolution renewing the mandate of the UN Mission for Liberia (UNMIL), which will be withdrawn in March 2018. This was the first time the Council had sought such a plan ahead of the departure of a peacekeeping operation and for an upcoming transition. In a 4 April letter, the Secretary-General transmitted the Liberia

national peacebuilding plan to the Council. The plan is divided into two phases. The first phase runs until the exit of UNMIL, while the second covers longer-term peacebuilding activities until approximately 2020. Notably, the plan seeks to address remaining structural fragilities and economic development needs, and envisions improved coherence and integration of UN agencies, funds and programmes and good offices capacities of the UN country team. It also highlights future roles for UNOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the World Bank, with the PBC participating in joint monitoring of the plan's implementation.

On 21 April, a stock-taking session of Council members on the PBC, PBC agenda countries, and the PBC chairs group was convened. The sessions, which are currently coordinated by Egypt, are held periodically to review the PBC's advisory function and consider areas where the PBC and its country configurations can best support the Council. The April meeting focused on the Central African Republic (CAR), Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and the UN Sahel strategy.

## Developments in PBC Country Configurations

The chair of the Burundi country configuration, Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), visited Tanzania and Burundi from 27 to 31 March. The mission focused on the socio-economic situation and the political process facilitated by Benjamin Mkapa, the former president of Tanzania, on behalf of the East African Community.

The CAR configuration, chaired by Ambassador Omar Hilale (Morocco), is focusing its support around three areas of the CAR's National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017-2021: security and reconciliation, the social contract between the state and its citizens, and economic recovery. Addressing the configuration on 16 March, CAR's president Faustin Archange Touadera flagged a funding shortage for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, and security sector reform.

The Guinea-Bissau configuration, chaired by Ambassador Mauro Vieira (Brazil), has sought to align the messaging from the PBC and the Council to demonstrate the international community's unity in support of ECOWAS mediation efforts to end Guinea-Bissau's ongoing political crisis.

In recent months, the Liberia configuration, chaired by Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), has focused on supporting the roll-out of Liberia's peacebuilding plan and preparations for the October 2017 presidential and legislative elections.

The country configuration for Sierra Leone, chaired by Ambassador Marc-André Blanchard (Canada), received a briefing from UNOWAS head

Mohammed Ibn Chambas on 3 March. The configuration has focused on considering how it can marshal resources for the March 2018 general elections.

Last autumn, a review of the Guinea configuration, which has been chaired by Luxembourg, was initiated to consider the country's future engagement with the PBC. The review recommended ending the configuration, while noting Guinea's interest in continuing to engage in a more flexible manner with the OC.

## Key Issues

A key issue in the Council-PBC relationship continues to be identifying the type of "specific, strategic and targeted advice", as stipulated in last year's resolutions that can add value to the Council's consideration of issues on its agenda, particularly during the formation, review and drawdown of peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

More generally, despite recent initiatives to strengthen the PBC, how the PBC can concretely help conflict-affected or fragile countries remains a challenge for the body.

## Options

The Council could issue a statement following the briefing and interactive dialogue that welcomes recent initiatives within the PBC to increase the effectiveness of its advisory role; reiterates the Council's intention to draw upon the PBC's advice; and encourages continuing efforts to explore ways that the PBC can specifically support the Council, while summarising the main messages expressed during the two sessions.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

The adoption of the Council and General Assembly resolutions on the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture created new momentum to strengthen the PBC and the focus given to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In the Council, Egypt, Japan and Sweden in particular have taken initiatives in trying to include language on the PBC within Council resolutions and presidential statements. The P5 have long been sceptical of the value the PBC adds to the Council, though recently they have seemed more open to improving Council cooperation with the PBC, such as during transitions and the drawdown of operations. Notwithstanding this momentum since last year and recent initiatives, it remains to be seen how the UN system and member states will apply the intentions of the



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## Peacebuilding

resolutions, and whether this will allow for a more constructive relationship between the Council and the PBC.

In addition to the informal Council-PBC

stock-taking sessions, the Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa has also become a forum where the PBC chair has engaged

with Council members, as the chairs of the working group (Angola in 2016 and Ethiopia in 2017) have sought to exchange views on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa.

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## UNDOF (Golan Heights)

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights for a period of six months. UNDOF was established in 1974 to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria. Its mandate expires on 30 June.

### Key Recent Developments

On 23 May, Head of Mission and Force Commander for UNDOF Major General Jai Shanker Menon (India) briefed the Council during a meeting on peacekeeping operations. Menon spoke about various challenges facing Chapter VI peacekeeping missions. Concerning missions that conduct monitoring of peace agreements, and UNDOF specifically, he addressed challenges that arise when third party belligerents begin to shape the situation in the area of operations, and the need for missions to be flexible enough to respond to such developments. For 40 years until 2011, UNDOF operations were based on parameters agreed to by Israel and Syria. However, he said, these methods are no longer suitable. He spoke of the mission changing from a light infantry force to one with armoured protection and firepower as critical force protection measures, and stressed that due to the constantly evolving nature of peacekeeping, the UN must be agile, learn quickly, and respond accordingly, including through increasing peacekeeping budgets when necessary.

The December 2016 UNDOF report noted that the limited redeployment of UN personnel to Camp Faouar on the Bravo side represented a major achievement for the mission. The latest UNDOF mandate renewal in resolution 2330 of December 2016 welcomed the phased redeployment conditioned on favourable security and operational conditions. The security situation on the Bravo

side remained unstable, though there was no direct threat to Camp Faouar.

On 23 April, Israel attacked a Syrian government military camp at Camp Faouar near Al-Quneitra in southwest Syria, close to the Golan Heights. Three fighters were killed and two others injured. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) said that it had targeted the positions inside Syria after three Syrian mortars fell in the Golan two days earlier. The IDF released a statement saying that the mortars seemed to be spillover from fighting within Syria and were not a deliberate attack targeting Israel. Retaliation, however, would be consistent with Israeli policy on cross-border fire.

On 27 April, Israel shot down what it described as "a target" over the Golan Heights; the object was reportedly a drone. This occurred just after Israel was accused of launching a missile strike at a military site near the Damascus international airport; Syrian rebels reportedly said the strike hit an arms depot maintained by the Lebanese Shi'a militia Hezbollah.

On 7 May, Israeli Transportation and Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz called on US President Donald Trump to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, asserting that developments in Syria emphasise the threat posed by the Iranian axis in the region and that, in his view, the US and Israel should reach an understanding concerning Syria beginning with the recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the annexed territory. In a meeting with Trump on 15 February, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had asked him to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the area. (The Golan Heights was captured in the 1967 Six-Day War and annexed by Israel. Under international law, it is considered an occupied territory.) Council members had previously voiced their concern about this issue in consultations on 26 April 2016, following Netanyahu's remarks that the

Golan Heights would remain forever under Israeli sovereignty. In elements to the press, the Council president stressed that the status of the Golan Heights remained unchanged.

### Key Issues

A key issue is the mission's ability to carry out its monitoring tasks. As a result of the spillover of the Syrian civil war into UNDOF's area of operation, most of the mission's peacekeepers were relocated from the Bravo (Syrian) side to the Alpha (Israeli) side of the ceasefire line in September 2014. The majority of UNDOF's 829 uniformed personnel continue to be stationed on the Israeli side, which hinders the capacity of the mission to achieve full mobility and operational capacity. Considering the security situation in the Golan, the full return of UNDOF to the Syrian side seems unlikely in the foreseeable future.

An ongoing issue for the Council is the violation of the ceasefire on numerous occasions, including the presence of Syrian heavy weapons in the area of separation monitored by UNDOF and Syrian and Israeli airstrikes. No military forces other than those of UNDOF are allowed in the area of separation.

### Options

The Council is somewhat constrained in its options for UNDOF. It was established as a Syria-based mission, and how it operates is subject to the disengagement agreement, with any changes requiring consent by Israel and Syria.

Nevertheless, in the resolution renewing UNDOF's mandate the Council could:

- reiterate the need for all parties to exercise restraint;
- reiterate support for the incremental return of UNDOF forces, as the security situation allows, to positions and observation posts in the area of separation and the



## UNDOF (Golan Heights)

area of limitation vacated in 2014;

- 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 for UNDOF's force protection capabilities;
- urge Israel and Syria to agree to establish more UNDOF crossing points between the Alpha and Bravo sides; and
- urge Israel to allow UNDOF to establish more temporary observation posts on the Alpha side, given the mission's limited mobility there.

### Council Dynamics

There is general agreement within the Council that UNDOF contributes to stability in the region, given the absence of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria. The mission's observation role has been limited since its September 2014 relocation to the Alpha side of the ceasefire line. However, the mission's liaison function continues to be considered important for avoiding further negative developments in the region.

Israel and Syria value UNDOF's presence and want to see the mission return to the Bravo side. At the moment, the security situation on the Syrian side is still not conducive to full redeployment of UNDOF troops.

Council members continue to support the eventual complete return of UNDOF to the Bravo side. However, they are mindful that this would require a favourable security environment, which is important for maintaining the confidence of UNDOF's troop-contributing countries.

Council members have expressed concern regarding the fighting in the area of operations as well as the tension between Israel and Syria along the ceasefire line, which have been exacerbated by the presence of Hezbollah.

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

## Afghanistan

### Expected Council Action

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

UNAMA's mandate expires on 17 March 2018.

### Key Recent Developments

With no reliable agreement on the peace process and an ongoing Taliban offensive, the insurgency continues to take a heavy toll on the civilian population and Afghan security forces. During the first four months of 2017, UNAMA documented 2,181 civilian casualties, of which 715 were fatal. This casualty count is slightly lower compared with the same period last year. However, there has been a 21 percent increase in child deaths during the same period, with 283 fatalities in total, while more than 700 children have been injured. After a 14 May explosion in Laghman province that killed five children, Yamamoto again called on all parties to the conflict to take necessary precautions to avoid harming civilians and children in particular.

With NATO assistance, Afghan security forces have continued to counter the

activities of the Taliban, Al-Qaida, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the eastern parts of the country. The US Central Command announced on 13 April that US forces had dropped the most powerful non-nuclear bomb (GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast) ever used in military operations in Afghanistan. The bomb targeted a series of underground tunnels used by ISIL fighters in Achin district in Nangarhar province. The strike was aimed at minimizing the risk to Afghan and US forces conducting clearing operations in the area. According to Afghan officials, the strike killed at least 36 ISIL fighters and did not cause any civilian casualties. On 7 May, the US military confirmed that the leader of the ISIL branch in Afghanistan was killed in a joint US-Afghan military operation conducted in April in Nangarhar province.

In late April, the Taliban announced the start of the annual spring offensive, vowing attacks on the government and foreign forces in Afghanistan. During the past few months, the Taliban has claimed responsibility for a series of deadly attacks throughout the country. On 21 April, Taliban fighters wearing Afghan military uniforms attacked the military base Camp Shaheen in northern Balkh province, reportedly killing more than 140 and wounding more than 100 Afghan soldiers. Approximately ten Taliban fighters,

some of whom activated suicide bombs, infiltrated the base and shot at the soldiers. Following several hours of fighting, Afghan forces retook control of the base. Five attackers were killed and one was arrested.

In May, Taliban and ISIL fighters intensified their attacks, targeting Afghan security forces and civilians throughout the country. On 21 May, Taliban fighters launched multiple rocket attacks on Afghan police forces in Zabul province, killing at least 20 policemen. In a separate incident in Kabul the same day, a German aid worker and a local security guard working for the Swedish aid organisation Operation Mercy were killed and a Finnish woman working for the organisation was kidnapped. On 19 May, 11 people, including five children, were killed by a roadside bomb in Logar province. The same day in Kapisa province, at least ten policemen were killed in two separate attacks by the Taliban. ISIL claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on the national radio and TV station in Jalalabad on 17 May, which resulted in at least six dead and more than 16 injured, among whom were some of the TV station's staff.

On 22 May, Russia requested a meeting under "any other business" to raise the issue of alleged activity by unmarked helicopters over Afghan airspace and asked that the Secretariat provide more information on this.

While there has been no substantial

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2344 (17 March 2017) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2018. [Secretary General's Report S/2017/189](#) (3 March 2017) was on UNAMA.

# Afghanistan

progress in reconciliation efforts with the Taliban, the government has continued to engage with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Hezb-i-Islami militant group, with whom it reached a reconciliation agreement in the fall of 2016. On 29 April, Hekmatyar made his first public appearance in Afghanistan after 20 years of hiding when he spoke at a rally for his supporters in Laghman province. He called on the Taliban and other opposition groups to join the reconciliation efforts. Hekmatyar repeated that message on 4 May during a ceremony hosted by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in the presidential palace in Kabul. On 16 May, Yamamoto hosted a meeting with Hekmatyar as a part of UNAMA's role in supporting Afghan efforts towards peace and reconciliation. Yamamoto expressed appreciation for Hekmatyar's commitment to achieve peace through negotiations and his call for all parties to join in the reconciliation.

In addition to extending the UNAMA's mandate for another year, resolution 2344, which was adopted in March, requested the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of the mission with the aim of examining mandated tasks, priorities, and related resources. In May, the review team headed by Under-Secretary-General Ján Kubiš visited Afghanistan and held meetings with national and international stakeholders. During his meeting with Kubiš in Kabul on 9 May, Ghani said that Afghanistan still needs the cooperation of the UN but its current status of mission and assistance should change fundamentally to improve effectiveness. The final report of the strategic review is due in July.

In other developments, Afghan and Pakistani military forces exchanged fire in early May on the border between the two countries. Each side accused the other of provoking the confrontation. Casualties, including fatalities, were reported though the exact numbers seem to be disputed.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 24 April, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNAMA released a joint report on Afghanistan's treatment of conflict-related detainees, covering the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016. The report noted that despite "genuine efforts" by the government to address concerns over the treatment of detainees, including taking steps to implement its 2015 National Plan on the Elimination of Torture, detainees continue to face torture and ill-treatment, and a lack of accountability for such acts persists.

During its 35th session in June, the Human Rights Council is set to consider the report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, following his visit to Afghanistan from 11 to 20 October 2016 (A/HRC/35/27/Add.3). The report concludes that internal displacement has become a "regular occurrence or a permanent feature" of life for many Afghans, with more than 600,000 displaced in 2016. With the trend worsening, the report calls for a more effective government-led response and for the international community to remain focused on providing support and assistance, noting that a serious escalation of the conflict and the displacement crisis would overwhelm the collective capacity to respond.

## Key Issues

The principal issue for the Council is how to address the worsening security situation, including its damaging impact on Afghanistan's stability and the toll the conflict is taking on the civilian population.

A related issue is how to generate momentum for reconciliation efforts, given the continued heavy fighting between the insurgents and government forces.

The link between the insurgents and drug production and trafficking and illicit exploitation of natural resources is another ongoing issue.

Rising cross-border tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan is also an issue for the Council.

## 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;
- underscores the need for the international community, and particularly neighbouring countries, to continue to support and cooperate with Afghanistan;
- emphasises the importance of development assistance in promoting Afghanistan's stability; and
- calls for accountability for alleged crimes committed.

The Council could also decide to visit Afghanistan to show its support for counter-insurgency, reconciliation, and anti-corruption efforts and to learn how it could further assist efforts on the ground.

## Council Dynamics

Council members remain concerned about the deteriorating security environment and in particular its impact on the civilian population. Furthermore, there are concerns regarding the lack of progress in the peace process. Several Council members, most notably France, Egypt, Russia and Kazakhstan, continue to raise concerns regarding the connection between the insurgency and drug production and trafficking. During the past several meetings, Russia has warned that ISIL continues to pose a serious threat that should not be downplayed. Kazakhstan and Russia have also emphasised the role of regional organisations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in addressing the situation in Afghanistan.

Japan is the penholder on Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan chairs the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee.

# Democratic Republic of the Congo

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is likely to extend the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts assisting the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee for a few months in a technical rollover.

The Council will continue to monitor the security and political situation in the DRC and may meet on this depending on how events in the country unfold.

## Key Recent Developments

Implementing the 31 December 2016 agreement on the electoral process and a transitional government continues to elude the DRC government and the main opposition coalition, the “Rassemblement”. The agreement was part of a last-minute effort to address the political crisis precipitated by President Joseph Kabila’s resolve to remain in office beyond the conclusion of his second and—according to the constitution—final term on 19 December 2016.

The conference of Catholic bishops, the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), which helped mediate the agreement, withdrew from its mediation role in late March, blaming both sides for the impasse. Kabila then unilaterally appointed former opposition leader Bruno Tshibala as prime minister on 7 April, a move criticised by CENCO and the Rassemblement. In accordance with “special arrangements” agreed between Kabila and smaller opposition parties, Kabila appointed a new government on 9 May, consisting mostly of appointees of his previous government and some from the opposition, a move rejected by the Rassemblement.

In a 4 May press statement, Council members took note of the appointment of Tshibala and of the responses of the Rassemblement and CENCO. They noted that the signatories of the 31 December agreement were unable to reach a consensus on the special arrangements and called on all parties to remain committed to the agreement and the overarching objective of organising peaceful, credible, free, fair and inclusive elections by the end of 2017. The Secretary-General

submitted a report to the Council on 17 May on the implementation of the agreement as requested in resolution 2348.

Meanwhile, violence caused by rebel groups in eastern DRC persists, and the situation in the Kasai region continues to deteriorate. The region has suffered from inter-communal violence and clashes between militias and government forces since August 2016, when the leader of the Kamwina Nsapu militia was killed in clashes with the DRC police. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Maman Sidikou, said on 5 April that possibly over 400 civilians have been killed as well as many members of government forces. The UN humanitarian coordinator in the DRC, Mamadou Diallo, has said that more than a million people have been displaced and 11,000 have fled to Angola.

Both the militias and government forces have been accused of human rights and international humanitarian law violations. In the 4 May press statement, Council members reiterated the importance of prompt and transparent investigations into these violations. In addition, they stressed the need for a full investigation into the killing of two members of the Group of Experts, Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalan, whose bodies were discovered on 24 March in Kasai. They welcomed the Secretary-General’s establishment of a UN Board of Inquiry into the matter.

Sidikou last briefed the Council on the latest MONUSCO report on 21 March. The president of CENCO, Marcel Utembi, and Marie-Madeleine Kalala of the NGO Common Cause Network also briefed the Council.

On 31 March the Council adopted resolution 2348 renewing the mandate of MONUSCO until 31 March 2018 and lowering its authorised troop ceiling to 16,215 personnel. In response to a recommendation from the Secretary-General to increase the number of formed police units in light of the political situation, the resolution requests the Secretary-General to explore the possibility of inter-mission cooperation from other peacekeeping

operations and to report back to the Council with any further recommendations. The resolution also requests the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of MONUSCO by 30 September. The review is to provide options for a reduction of MONUSCO’s military and civilian components to be made after the successful implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement, culminating in elections by the end of the year, and sustainable progress in reducing the threat of armed groups. After the agreement is implemented, the Secretary-General is to advise the Council on a phased exit strategy for the mission. (For more background information on this resolution, see our What’s in Blue story of 30 March.)

On 12 April, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, briefed the Council on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

On 20 March, Sidikou and Djinnit briefed the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee. Representatives of the DRC, Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda participated in the meeting.

The annual report of the Group of Experts was to be presented to the Council by 15 June, after consideration by the Committee. However, following the killing of two members of the Group, the report is now expected to be delivered to the Council in August.

On 17 May the Secretary General’s report on the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016 was submitted to the Council. The report outlined a range of issues that continue to hamper implementation of the 31 December political agreement, including the fragile security situation, deteriorating socio-economic conditions, and restrictions on political and civil rights.

Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed Council members under “any other business” on 23 May, regarding the UN board of inquiry into the killing of the two Group members. In elements to the press after the meeting, Council members reiterated the importance of a swift and full investigation and expressed concern over the closure of the investigation by the Congolese authorities.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 22 March, the Human Rights Council (HRC)

**UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2348](#) (31 March 2017) renewed MONUSCO’s mandate until 31 March 2018. [S/RES/2293](#) (23 June 2016) renewed the DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts. [Security-General’s Reports S/2017/435](#) (17 May 2017) was on the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016. [S/2017/208](#) (10 March 2017) was on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement. [S/2017/206](#) (10 March 2017) was on MONUSCO. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7923](#) (12 April 2017) was a briefing by Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region Said Djinnit on the situation in the Great Lakes Region. [S/PV.7903](#) (21 March 2017) was a briefing by the Special Representative and head of MONUSCO, Maman Sidikou. [Security Council Press Statement SC/12809](#) (4 May 2017) expressed Council members’ concern at the challenges facing the implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement and stressed the importance of investigations into recent violence in Kasai. [Sanctions Committee Document SC/12784](#) (7 April 2017) was on the 20 March meeting of the Committee with regional countries and a briefing by Sidikou and Djinnit.



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# Democratic Republic of the Congo

held an interactive dialogue on the DRC during its 34th session. In his statement, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour said that the human rights situation in the DRC deteriorated in 2016 and the first months of 2017, with an increase in human rights violations resulting from the restriction of democratic space and the resurgence of armed groups. Gilmour labelled the violations committed in Kasai and Lomani provinces in the context of the Kamwina Nsapu crisis a "serious threat to peace in the country", and reiterated a call for the HRC to "urgently establish" an international commission of inquiry to investigate the violence and abuse that has spread since August 2016.

Following the discovery of at least a further 17 mass graves in Kasai central province, which brought the total discovered in the Kasai region since August 2016 to 40, the High Commissioner for Human Rights said in a 19 April statement that it was vital for the government of the DRC to conduct a "prompt, transparent, independent investigation" into alleged human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by government soldiers and members of the Kamwina Nsapu militia. The High Commissioner noted that in the absence of an "effective national investigation", he would "not hesitate to urge the international community to support an investigation by an international mechanism, including the International Criminal Court".

During its 35th session in June, the HRC is set to hold an interactive dialogue on the DRC in which the Office of the High Commissioner will provide an oral briefing on the human rights situation as mandated by HRC resolution 33/29.

## Key Issues

The immediate key issue for the Council is to renew the sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts.

Another key issue for the Council is seeking to ensure that the 31 December 2016 agreement is implemented and that elections take place in 2017.

Also an important issue is how to address the continued violence by rebel groups in the east and emerging violence in Kasai, which remain a serious threat to peace and security.

## Options

The Council may extend the current sanctions regime and mandate of the Group of Experts in a technical rollover for a few months in light of the Group's delayed annual report. A less likely option is for the Council to renew the regime for a full year prior to receiving the final report.

When adopting the resolution, the Council could:

- call on stakeholders to cooperate and swiftly implement the 31 December 2016 agreement and resolve all outstanding issues in order to hold free and fair elections;
- consider the use of sanctions against those who act to impede a solution to the political crisis; and

- condemn the mass violence in Kasai and call for accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

## Council Dynamics

There seems to be a consensus among Council members about the renewal of the sanctions regime and the mandate of the group of experts. Given the delay in the reporting of the Group of Experts, Council members feel that a technical rollover is warranted to allow time to consider the annual report properly.

Council members continue to be concerned about the ongoing political crisis in the DRC and the potentially explosive ramifications if the 31 December 2016 agreement fails to bring about fair and timely elections and a peaceful transfer of power. Some Council members emphasise the need for the government to uphold the agreement and to hold elections by the end of the year; other members are less concerned with the timeframe and see all stakeholders as jointly responsible for carrying out the elections, including finding ways to overcome difficulties in implementation and logistics.

France is the penholder on the DRC, and Egypt chairs the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee.

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# South Sudan

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to consider the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and his 30-day assessment of the deployment and future requirements of the Regional Protection Force (RPF). The Secretary-General is also expected to provide a review of the progress made by the parties towards ceasing hostilities, returning to the path of dialogue, and achieving inclusiveness within the government, as well as to recommend any relevant adjustments to the UNMISS mandate.

The UNMISS mandate expires on 15 December 2017.

## Key Recent Developments

On 22 May, President Salva Kiir declared a unilateral ceasefire and promised to release political prisoners. At press time it remained unclear how widely it will be adhered to. At the same time, the government of South Sudan announced that the national dialogue committee had officially begun its work. Against the context of the government's recent military offensives, these announcements appear

to be part of a broader strategy to bring some groups into the government camp while eliminating others. President Kiir remains the chair of the dialogue, leading some groups to maintain that the dialogue will not be a genuine effort at reconciliation.

On 24 May, the Council was briefed by the Special Representative for the Secretary-General for South Sudan and head of UNMISS, David Shearer, on the Secretary-General's 30-day assessment of the deployment and future requirements of the RPF, obstacles to setting up the force, and

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2353 (24 May 2017) extended the mandate of the South Sudan sanctions regime until May 2018. S/RES/2327 (16 December 2016) extended the mandate of UNMISS for one year and reauthorised the Regional Protection Force. S/RES/2304 (12 August 2016) authorised the Regional Protection Force. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/4 (23 March 2017) emphasised the need for a political solution to the conflict in South Sudan. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7950 (24 May 2017) was a briefing of the Council by Shearer. S/PV.7930 (25 April 2017) was a briefing of the Council by Shearer. S/PV.7906 (23 March 2017) was a high-level briefing on South Sudan. S/PV.7897 (10 March 2017) was a briefing on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and the Lake Chad Basin. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/224 (16 March 2017) was on UNMISS. Other S/2016/1085 (23 December 2016) was the draft resolution on an arms embargo and targeted sanctions that failed to receive the necessary support to be adopted. It received seven affirmative votes (France, New Zealand, Spain, Ukraine, Uruguay, the UK and the US) and eight abstentions (Angola, China, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, Russia, Senegal and Venezuela).



# South Sudan

impediments to UNMISS in carrying out its mandate. Shearer noted that initial elements of the RPF have begun to arrive in Juba, including a number of engineers to prepare base locations in advance of the full deployment of the force. Shearer welcomed the government's declaration of a ceasefire, and said there would be close scrutiny on whether it is maintained.

Prior to the declaration of the ceasefire, government offensives across the country had continued to displace tens of thousands of civilians. In the Upper Nile region, UNMISS responded to the risks to civilians by reinforcing its presence around Aburoc, where approximately 20,000 civilians have sought shelter. Fighting around Wau has pushed 22,000 civilians to seek shelter in the town. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that 20,000 refugees have crossed into Sudan and estimated that tens of thousands more may seek to enter Sudan before the onset of the rains in the coming weeks makes travel difficult. More than 900,000 people have already fled to Uganda from ongoing violence across the southern Equatorias region.

On 4 May, UNMISS announced that an operating base in Leer, in former Unity state, had been attacked with small arms fire from an unknown party. The attack was repulsed by a Ghanaian contingent without reported casualties to UNMISS or amongst the civilians who have sought protection adjacent to the base.

On 9 May, President Kiir announced the firing of the SPLA army chief, Paul Malong. Malong had previously maintained a position of dominance in the SPLA, and no reason was given for his dismissal. Malong initially reacted to his dismissal by departing Juba, reportedly accompanied by personal bodyguards and a number of SPLA officers, raising fears that he would declare himself in rebellion. These fears were partially reduced by his return to Juba on 13 May, and his reported reconciliation with President Kiir, although his intentions remain unclear.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 4 May, the High Commissioner for Human Rights urged the government of South

Sudan to refrain from further military offensives towards Aburoc, citing concerns that civilians would be caught between government and opposition forces, with military commanders on both sides having consistently shown a lack of regard for the protection of civilians.

On 19 May, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNMISS released a joint report on human rights violations and abuses in and around Yei, Central Equatoria, between July 2016 and January 2017. The report concluded that the "vast majority" of violations were committed by the SPLA and allied forces, including 114 cases of arbitrary killing of civilians believed to be opposition supporters and detention and treatment that "could amount to torture". At the same time, the report found that armed opposition groups, including the SPLA-IO, were implicated in human rights abuses, such as murder, rape and abductions.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

On May 24 the Council renewed the mandates of the 2206 South Sudan sanctions regime and the South Sudan Panel of Experts for another year without significant changes or additions. Informal discussions continued between Council members on the question of whether to impose additional targeted sanctions or an arms embargo. At press time, however, a draft resolution proposing such measures had yet to emerge.

## Key Issues

The immediate issue for the Council is how to respond to the government's declared ceasefire, whether by encouraging this gesture, by exerting pressure on the government to back its declaration with concrete actions, or by combining both incentives and disincentives.

Another issue is how to achieve deployment of the RPF and ensure that it enables the redeployment of other UNMISS elements to areas where civilian populations are threatened by ongoing violence.

The larger issue for the Council remains how to encourage greater cooperation by the government, including ending the ongoing violence against civilians and removing impediments to both humanitarian access and UNMISS's ability to carry out its mandate.

## Options

One option would be for the Council to demonstrate consensus on the need for a resolution to the conflict by adopting a presidential

statement that:

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

Another option for the Council is to impose an arms embargo on the country and/or an assets freeze and travel ban on key figures responsible for the ongoing violence.

An alternative option would be for the Council to attempt to incentivise cooperation by the South Sudanese government by offering conditional support, possibly including logistical support, for the national dialogue. Conditions might include adherence to the ceasefire, the government's commitment to participating in a revived and inclusive political process, and agreement that the national dialogue be chaired by someone other than President Kiir.

## Council Dynamics

The Council is divided on its approach to South Sudan. Some Council members, including France, the UK, and the US, believe that the reported targeting of civilians by SPLA forces requires a firm response, including the imposition of an arms embargo and the application of targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for perpetuating violence. Other Council members, most prominently Russia, argue that additional sanctions would antagonise the relationship between UNMISS and the government, reducing UNMISS' ability to implement its mandate, and undermine efforts to reach a political solution. At present there appears to be little prospect of agreement on a unified approach.

The US is the penholder on South Sudan, while Senegal chairs the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee.

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Secretary-General is due to report on the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme. In addition, reports are expected from the Joint Commission, the mechanism established by the parties to the JCPOA to oversee its implementation, and from the Council's 2231 facilitator, Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi (Italy). The Council is scheduled to hear briefings by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, Cardi, and a representative of the EU in its capacity as coordinator of the Joint Commission.

## Key Recent Developments

The Council last considered the implementation of resolution 2231 on 18 January when it was briefed by Feltman, Cardi and the head of delegation of the EU to the UN, Ambassador João Vale de Almeida. The meeting took place just ahead of the 20 January inauguration of Donald Trump as US President; during his campaign Trump had seemed to call for the US to withdraw from the JCPOA. Feltman underscored that the international community must continue to support the full implementation of the JCPOA and asserted that the agreement would ensure that Iran's nuclear programme remained exclusively peaceful.

Feltman also noted that, "as guided by the Security Council", the report focused on the implementation of the provisions contained in annex B to resolution 2231 (which deals with the restrictions concerning Iran) and did not cover the implementation of annex A (which addresses the lifting of sanctions). In an 18 January letter to the Secretary-General, however, Iran wrote that exclusively focusing on annex B was a "misinterpretation of the mandate given by the Security Council" in its 16 January 2016 presidential note, and asserted that a report on the implementation of resolution 2231 could not be considered complete and balanced in the absence of reporting on annex A.

At the request of the US, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča briefed Council members in consultations on 31 January on a ballistic missile test conducted by Iran on 29 January. In a

10 February letter to the Council, Israel condemned the test as "yet another flagrant violation" of resolution 2231. On 3 February, the US announced that it was imposing sanctions on several entities and individuals for their involvement in activities supporting Iran's ballistic missile programme or its Quds force.

Meanwhile, the IAEA, which is responsible for monitoring Iran's nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, reported to the Council on 24 February that Iran had continued to implement its commitments.

On 19 April, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson announced that the Trump administration was conducting a review of its Iran policy. While he had sent a letter to the US Congress a day earlier confirming that Iran was complying with the JCPOA, Tillerson said the agreement "fails to achieve the objective of a non-nuclear Iran" and would only delay the country's goal of becoming a nuclear state.

On 17 May, the US announced the sanctions designation of another seven entities and individuals connected to Iran's ballistic missile programme but also renewed the waiver on its sanctions against Iran's crude oil exports, as required under the JCPOA.

On 19 May, Hassan Rouhani was re-elected as president of Iran for another four years with 57 percent of the vote. The result was seen as a victory for the moderates and also as an expression of support for the JCPOA.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 22 March, during its 34th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) considered the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in Iran (A/HRC/34/40). The report, which covers the period from July to December 2016, expressed concern about the continuing high rate of executions, ongoing restrictions on public freedoms, and the persistent discrimination and persecution faced by minority groups. It welcomed the government's invitation to the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Iran, and encouraged it to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, Asma Jahangir, by allowing her access to the country.

On 24 March, the HRC adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for one year and requesting her to report to the HRC at its 36th session and to the General Assembly at its 72nd session.

## Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is whether any of the parties to the JCPOA or any other member state has failed to comply with resolution 2231 and, if so, what the appropriate response should be.

A further issue is whether the Secretary-General should report on the implementation of annex A.

## Options

One option for Council members is to use the upcoming meeting as an opportunity to express concern about any intentions to undermine the JCPOA while also responding to the Trump administration's criticism of the agreement. They could also address some of the issues raised by Iran with regard to the Secretary-General's reporting, perhaps by highlighting progress on the lifting of sanctions or expressing support for the view that he should report on the implementation of both annex A and annex B. Another option is to encourage Iran to participate in the meeting.

A further option is to adopt a statement expressing concern about Iran's missile launches and the reported violations of the travel ban and conventional arms-related restrictions.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members remain divided on the question of whether Iran's missile launches are inconsistent with resolution 2231. Following the 31 January briefing on the missile launch two days earlier, it was agreed that discussions about the launch would continue at expert level in the so-called 2231 format and that the facilitator would report back about the outcome of those discussions. The 2231 format meeting was held on 2 March, during which two US ballistic missile technology experts gave a presentation in support of the US view that the missile systems used by Iran are inherently capable of delivering nuclear weapons due to their range and payload capacity and that the 29 January launch was therefore inconsistent with resolution 2231. Cardi reported on the discussions during informal consultations on 25 April under "any other business", concluding that there was no agreement among members on the nature of the launch.

With regard to Iran's continuing complaints

**UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAN** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2231 (20 July 2015) was on the JCPOA. **Secretary-General's Report S/2016/1136** (30 December 2016) was the last report on resolution 2231. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7865** (18 January 2017) was the most recent Council briefing on resolution 2231. **Other S/2017/234** (20 March 2017) was the most recent IAEA report on Iran. **S/2017/123** (10 February 2017) was the letter from Israel regarding Iran's ballistic missile test. **S/2017/51** (18 January 2017) was Iran's letter to the Secretary-General regarding his 30 December 2016 report. **S/2017/49** (17 January 2017) was the most recent report from the 2231 Facilitator. **S/2016/1113** (27 December 2016) was the most recent report from the Joint Commission. **S/2016/44** (16 January 2016) was a note by the Council president regarding tasks related to resolution 2231.

about the Secretary-General's reporting, some Council members, most notably China and Russia, are supportive of Iran's views. During the 18 January meeting, Russia was highly critical of the Secretary-General's report,

referring to it as "one-sided and equivocal", while asserting that the presidential note of 16 January 2016 referred to the entire resolution 2231 and not only to annex B. For its part, China said it had taken note of Iran's

"legitimate concerns with regard to the content of the reports" submitted to the Council. The P3 seem equally clear that the Secretary-General's reporting mandate is limited to annex B, with the US seen as the most vocal on this.

## 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, will brief Council members in consultations on key regional issues, including the threat of terrorism and extremism, the impact of the situation in Afghanistan, drug-trafficking, trans-boundary water management, and tensions linked to border-related disputes. He is also expected to brief on the Secretary-General's visit to Central Asia due to take place in the first half of June.

UNRCCA was established in 2007 for an open-ended time period.

### Key Recent Developments

Since his last briefing on 2 February, Draganov has continued to engage bilaterally with the countries of the region. He was in Moscow for consultations with officials from the Russian foreign ministry, the Secretariat of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Together with Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, he met with Deputy Foreign Ministers Grigory Karasin and Oleg Syromolotov. In addition, he held bilateral meetings with the Special Envoy of the President of Russia for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, and took part in a CTSO working group meeting on Afghanistan.

On 27-28 April, Draganov visited Tajikistan for meetings with Minister of Foreign Affairs Sirojiddin Aslov and First Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources Sulton Rahimzoda. He visited Kyrgyzstan on 11-12 May, during which he held consultations with Vice Prime Minister Jenish Razakov and Deputy Foreign Minister Dinara Kemelova and met representatives of the diplomatic corps and the UN country team.

UNRCCA hosted a number of regional conferences and workshops on relevant topics. On 3-5 April, UNRCCA and the Academy for Public Administration in Kazakhstan organised regional training on capacity-building in mediation and conflict prevention in Astana. On 5 April, it held a training seminar in Ashgabat on the main legal principles and substantive norms in international water law.

### Key Issues

An overall issue is how the Council could better utilise UNRCCA's conflict prevention experience, and what more the Council could do to support UNRCCA's role in preventive diplomacy and regional cooperation.

Another issue is whether the Council could better incorporate discussion of the interlinkages between Afghanistan and the Central Asian states in its debates on Afghanistan.

Regarding UNRCCA, an issue is whether the 10-year mandate of UNRCCA needs to be reviewed in light of new developments, including the rise of terrorism and extremism in Central Asia.

### Options

One option is to invite the UNRCCA Special Representative to occasionally participate in the quarterly debates on UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in order for the Council to gain a broader understanding of the regional impact of the situation in Afghanistan.

A related option is to include in the UNAMA report a more comprehensive and integrated analysis of the regional impact using contributions from UNRCCA.

The Council could request a review of UNRCCA's mandate and activities to determine whether there is a need to change the scope of its activities as well as to assess the effectiveness of the regional office.

Given the difficulty of getting agreement for a press statement (as described below), an option that would allow Council members to publicly support the work of UNRCCA is to change the format of the briefing from a closed to an open meeting, perhaps followed by consultations.

### Council Dynamics

Members are generally supportive of the work of UNRCCA, but there have been tensions between Russia and the P3 regarding language on cooperation with specific regional organisations that have prevented the issuance of a press statement for the last two years. From the establishment of UNRCCA in 2007 until January 2015, the semi-annual briefings were followed by a press statement commending the centre's conflict prevention role. These statements simply encouraged increased cooperation and coordination between the Central Asian countries, UNRCCA and "relevant regional organisations" to strengthen the region's capacity to overcome challenges to peace, stability and sustainable development. In 2015, however, Russia, which is the penholder on this issue, added specific references to cooperation between the Central Asian countries and CIS, CSTO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the EU. The P3 mistrust the CIS, CSTO and SCO, as they see them as vehicles for spreading Russian influence in the region and were adamant that they not be included.

At the last briefing, Kazakhstan, which has a direct interest in the work of UNRCCA and in the region, tried to bridge the differences by suggesting two possible alternatives to Russia's formulation, but a compromise was not possible.

## Notable Dates for June

REPORT DUE	REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN JUNE	REQUESTING DOCUMENT
30 May	Report on options regarding benchmarks to assess the CAR arms embargo	S/RES/2339
30 May	OPCW report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (Syrian chemical weapons)	S/RES/2118
30 May	SG report on UNOCA and the LRA (Central Africa)	S/PRST/2015/12
31 May	SG report on the implementation of resolution 2253 regarding ISIL	S/RES/2253
31 May	ICTY Assessment Report	S/RES/1534
1 June	Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals Assessment Report	S/RES/1966
1 June	SG report on MINUSCA (CAR)	S/RES/2301
5 June	SG report on MINUSMA (Mali)	S/RES/2295
8 June	SG report on UNDOF (Golan Heights)	S/RES/2330
8 June	SG report on Burundi	S/RES/2303
14 June	SG report on UNAMID (Darfur)	S/RES/2296
14 June	SG report on UNAMA (Afghanistan)	S/RES/2344
14 June	SG report on UNMISS (South Sudan)	S/RES/2327
15 June	SG report on UNMIL (Liberia)	S/RES/2333
15 June	Final report of the Panel of Experts of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee	S/RES/2278
19 June	SG report on implementation of resolution 2231 (Iran)	S/RES/2231
21 June	SG report on the humanitarian situation in Syria	S/RES/2139

MANDATES EXPIRE	RELEVANT DOCUMENT	
14 June	Authorisation to inspect vessels suspected to be violating the Libya arms embargo	S/RES/2292
16 June	UNSOM (Somalia)	S/RES/2346
30 June	UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire)	S/RES/2284
30 June	MINUSMA (Mali)	S/RES/2295
30 June	UNAMID (Darfur)	S/RES/2296
30 June	UNDOF (Golan Heights)	S/RES/2330
1 July	DRC sanctions and Group of Experts of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee (Group of Experts expires on 1 August but will likely be renewed in June.)	S/RES/2293
31 July	Measures regarding attempts to illicitly export crude oil from Libya and Panel of Experts of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee (Although crude oil measures do not expire until 31 July, they will likely be renewed in June along with the Panel of Experts.)	S/RES/2278

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