

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

During its presidency in July, China plans to hold an open debate on “[Enhancing African capabilities in the area of peace and security](#)”.

The mandates of the UN missions in [Cyprus](#) (UNFICYP) and [Iraq](#) (UNAMI) will be renewed this month. The Council will be briefed by the heads of both missions ahead of the adoptions expected later in the month.

Following the Council’s visiting mission to [Haiti](#) in June, Special Representative and head of MINUSTAH Sandra Honoré is expected to brief the Council on recent developments and the latest Secretary-General’s report.

This month the Council will also consider whether to renew the authorisation of a UN police component for [Burundi](#), which the government of Burundi has refused to allow to be deployed.

Other African issues that will be considered this month are:

- [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), an update on MONUSCO;
- [Somalia and Eritrea](#), a briefing by the chair of the Somalia and Eritrea 751/1907 Sanctions

Committee;

- [South Sudan](#), an update on UNMISS; and
- [West Africa and the Sahel](#), an update on UNOWAS.

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

- [Israel/Palestine](#), the quarterly open debate;
- [Lebanon](#), an update on UNIFIL; and
- [Yemen](#), an update by the Special Envoy.

In addition, following a request by the government of [Colombia](#) and the FARC-EP, the Council expects to adopt a resolution establishing a second special political mission to be deployed in Colombia.

Finally, the Council will be watching developments in the [Central African Republic](#) and meetings may be scheduled if the situation deteriorates further.

In Hindsight: Council Action and Inaction on Yemen

On 15 June, the Council adopted a presidential statement on Yemen, which focused on the country’s humanitarian crisis and confidence-building measures related to Hodeidah port. It was the Council’s first product on the Yemen war in nearly 14 months, with the exception of the annual resolution that it adopts to renew the Yemen sanctions regime. In total, the Council has adopted five decisions on Yemen since the start of the Saudi Arabia-led intervention on 26 March 2015: resolution 2216, two resolutions to renew the sanctions measures and two presidential statements. This output contrasts with the Council’s activity regarding other major wars and humanitarian crises, such as those in South Sudan and Syria.

Resolution 2216, adopted on 14 April 2015,

remains the key Council decision on Yemen since the outbreak of full-scale war. Adopted shortly after the coalition intervention, the resolution established a targeted arms embargo against the Houthi rebel group and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh. It also subjected Houthi leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi and the son of the former president, Ahmed Ali Saleh, to financial and travel ban sanctions, bringing the number of individuals sanctioned to its current total of five.

Resolution 2216 placed a number of demands on the Houthis: notably to withdraw from all seized areas and to relinquish all arms seized from security and military institutions, including missile systems. These demands were frequently held

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In Hindsight: Council Action and Inaction on Yemen

up by the Yemeni government as conditions to be fulfilled before the government would enter peace talks, and later as actions to be carried out before discussing transitional governing arrangements. (President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi was elected in February 2012, on a single-candidate ballot, envisioned to manage a two-year transition that long ago collapsed.) However, resolution 2216 also demanded that “all Yemeni parties adhere to resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation”. Russia abstained in the vote on resolution 2216 as its proposal to call for a cease-fire was not included.

During the drafting and negotiation of resolution 2216, countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) exerted considerable—even exceptional—influence. GCC members prepared the draft that became the basis of negotiations. Jordan, which was the Arab Council member at the time, then functioned as penholder on the text. This was notable since the UK is the usual penholder on Yemen. Negotiations were mostly held among the GCC countries, Jordan and the P5, largely excluding the other elected members. At one point, Russia’s permanent representative Vitaly Churkin met with Saudi ambassador Abdallah al-Mouallimi to negotiate the text.

This was not without precedent. In the preceding two months, GCC countries prepared initial draft texts on which they consulted closely with the P5, which led to resolution 2201 of 15 February 2015 and a 22 March 2015 presidential statement on Yemen. In both these instances, the UK and Jordan jointly submitted the draft texts to the other Council members.

Not long after its adoption, some Council members became frustrated by some of the implications of resolution 2216. For example, members have noted that withdrawals and the disarmament of the Houthis could occur through a negotiated process over time, rather than being required to happen upfront. However, because of members’ bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, most have been reluctant to attempt a new resolution in the face of Saudi objections.

The Council’s approach has thus been to

adopt presidential statements, when possible in support of progress that emerges in the UN-brokered political process, and thereby gradually expand upon the framework for negotiations. Its 25 April 2016 presidential statement, adopted to welcome the start of the Kuwait peace talks, was apparently considered useful in encouraging the parties to engage beyond positions taken based on resolution 2216. An attempt to adopt a presidential statement in July 2016, during the recess in the Kuwait talks, failed to gain consensus in the Council. Last month’s presidential statement further reflects the view that a resolution is too sensitive.

At times, frustrated by the stalemate and worsening humanitarian situation, some members have pressed for a new resolution. New Zealand, supported by several other elected members, suggested a humanitarian resolution in early 2016. After members discussed elements for a text, Al-Mouallimi held a 4 March 2016 press conference stating that OCHA regarded a humanitarian resolution as unnecessary, and reiterating Saudi Arabia’s view that resolution 2216 provides the basis for a political settlement. As progress emerged in organising the Kuwait talks, proponents of a resolution backed off, not wanting to risk undermining the rare positive developments on the political front.

In October 2016, following airstrikes on a funeral in Sana’a that killed over 140 people, the UK announced that it would propose a new resolution. During a 31 October Council meeting on Yemen, UK Ambassador Matthew Rycroft outlined the elements of the resolution, which would call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and on the parties to return to negotiations on the basis of the UN Special Envoy’s roadmap, developed to revive a political process. However, a draft was never circulated, apparently after pressure from Saudi Arabia.

The Council has also been reluctant to insist on the proper enforcement of the arms embargo and that it not penalise civilian life. Since the start of the intervention, the coalition has maintained restrictions on commercial shipping and flights, requiring the inspection of ships by coalition forces and their

authorisation to proceed to Yemen. These policies have resulted in significant declines in essential imports to Yemen of food and fuel, as well as costly delays that have exacerbated a humanitarian crisis, which the UN has warned since June 2015 could turn into a famine. The measures have gone far beyond the Council mandate, which only authorises inspections when there are “reasonable grounds” to believe cargoes were in violation of the embargo. It also requires states to report all inspections to the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee, which with one exception (of several air shipments in June 2015) the coalition has never submitted.

An April 2017 study by the Yemen Panel of Experts contained several recommendations for the 2140 Sanctions Committee to address delays and obstacles for commercial shipping. These included having the Committee inform the coalition and the Yemeni government that regular denial and delays of shipping access could constitute obstruction of humanitarian assistance (which is among the designation criteria). It also proposed that the Committee establish a list of prohibited items to address the problems created by the Coalition denying shipments that it assesses contain dual-use military-civilian goods. Only one member spoke in favour of the recommendations at an 18 April Committee meeting, and the proposals gained little traction.

At a bilateral level or through formats such as the Group of 18 Ambassadors to Yemen and the “Quad” (comprised of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, UK and US), several Council members have pressed the coalition on a number of these issues, such as getting Saudi Arabia to agree to the creation of a UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism to facilitate commercial shipping or urging the coalition not to attack Hodeidah port. It has been suggested that these channels have relieved some of the burden on the Council.

It remains to be seen whether last month’s presidential statement, breaking a long silence on Yemen, previews more active Council engagement to revive peace talks and to address the humanitarian crisis.

Status Update since our June Forecast

Sudan (Darfur)

On 1 June, Council members issued a press statement condemning the attack on UNAMID peacekeepers by an unidentified group in a carjacking incident, which resulted in one peacekeeper being killed (SC/12851). On 8 June, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Fatou Bensouda, briefed the Council on the situation in Darfur and cooperation with the ICC's work pursuant to resolution 1593. Bensouda requested that the Council take action to respond to ongoing instances of non-compliance or non-cooperation relating to the situation in Darfur and the outstanding warrants (S/PV.7963). On 14 June, the Council was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, El-Ghassim Wane, on the joint AU-UN strategic review on UNAMID (S/PV.7969). Wane reported on the changes in UNAMID's operating environment and recommended the proposed restructure, redeployment and refocusing of UNAMID to reflect the mission's "new realities". Key changes to UNAMID's priorities discussed by Wane included the recommended increased focus on the effective implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and an increased focus on the protection of civilians in the greater Jebel Marra area. On 29 June, the Council adopted a resolution renewing the mandate for UNAMID for an additional year. The resolution decided the troop reduction recommended by the strategic review would be implemented over the coming six months, after which a review will be conducted.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 2 June, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNOCI Aïchatou Mindaoudou delivered her final briefing to the Council ahead of the mission's closure on 30 June. Mindaoudou commended the government of Côte d'Ivoire for the progress made so far including the successful holding of elections, the constitutional referendum, and economic growth. However, she also expressed concern over the recent cases of mutiny and called on the government to address this issue. Members of the Council commended the government, and some stressed that lessons learned in Côte d'Ivoire could be used for future UN peacekeeping operations (S/PV.7957). On 30 June, the Council adopted a presidential statement welcoming the closure of UNOCI.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 2 June, the Council adopted resolution 2356, condemning "in the strongest terms" the nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development activities, including missile launches, conducted by the DPRK in "flagrant disregard" of relevant Council resolutions since 9 September 2016, the date of Pyongyang's last nuclear test (S/PV.7958). The resolution added 14 individuals and four entities to the targeted sanctions list under the 1718 DPRK sanctions regime. After the adoption, all Council members spoke explaining their vote. The 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee announced on 1 June that it had amended four entries on its sanctions list (SC/12850), and on 5 June it announced the amendment of another two entries (SC/12855).

Iran

On 2 June, the Council received the quarterly report from the IAEA on Iran's implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme (S/2017/502). The report found that Iran had continued to comply with its nuclear-related commitments under the agreement. On 29 June, the Council held its semi-annual meeting on resolution 2231 (S/PV.7990). Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman presented the Secretary-General's latest report on implementation of the resolution (S/2017/515). Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi (Italy) briefed the Council in his capacity as the facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231, while the head of the EU delegation in New York, Ambassador João Pedro Vale de Almeida, spoke on behalf of the Joint Commission, the mechanism established by the parties to the JCPOA to oversee its implementation coordinated by the EU. The Council also received written reports from the Joint Commission (S/2017/495) and the facilitator (S/2017/537) ahead of the meeting, and held an expert level meeting on 23 June in the so-called 2231 format to discuss the Secretary-General's report. In a separate development, Council members issued a press statement on 7 June, condemning the terrorist attack perpetrated by ISIL in Tehran that same day in which more than 50 people were killed or injured (SC/12859).

Children and Armed Conflict

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict met on 2 June to discuss

the Secretary-General's report on Children and Armed Conflict in the Philippines (S/2017/294) and an update on the Secretary-General's annual report. On 22 June the Working Group met to adopt its conclusions on children and armed conflict in Sudan.

Conflict Prevention

On 6 June, the Council held a high-level briefing on "preventive diplomacy and transboundary waters" which was chaired by Bolivian President Evo Morales (S/PV.7959). Secretary-General António Guterres briefed, maintaining that "water, peace and security are inextricably linked." There was no formal outcome.

International Criminal Tribunals

On 7 June, the Council held its semi-annual debate on the ad hoc international criminal tribunals (S/PV.7960). The briefers included Carmel Agius, the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia; Theodor Meron, the President of the UN Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals; and Serge Brammertz, Prosecutor of the UN Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals. There was no formal outcome.

Libya

On 7 June, the Council received a briefing from Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNSMIL Martin Kobler (S/PV.7961). The Council was also briefed by the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee chair, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden). On 12 June, the Council adopted resolution 2357 renewing for an additional year resolution 2292 of 14 June 2016, which was aimed at ensuring implementation of the arms embargo on Libya (S/PV.7964). In particular, the resolution renews the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect, on the high seas off the coast of Libya, vessels bound to or from Libya when reasonable grounds exist to believe that they are violating the arms embargo. It further renews the authorisation for member states to seize and dispose arms and ammunition found during the inspection of these vessels. At press time the Council was expected to renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and the measures regarding attempts to illicitly export oil from Libya on 29 June.

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Central African Republic

On 12 June, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the CAR, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, briefed the Council on the implementation of MINUSCA's mandate (S/PV.7965). Onanga-Anyanga described the recent increase in violence in the CAR, particularly of violence directly targeting civilians and MINUSCA personnel, and insisted that MINUSCA would maintain a robust posture towards armed groups, although this would need to be accompanied by increased peacebuilding efforts. Onanga-Anyanga was joined by the President of the Community of Sant'Egidio, Marco Impagliazzo, who described his organisation's efforts to enhance inclusive dialogue by all groups.

UNOCA (Central Africa)

On 13 June, François Loucény Fall, the Special Representative and head of UNOCA, briefed the Security Council on the semi-annual report on UNOCA and the implementation of the UN regional strategy to combat the LRA (S/PV.7967). Fall warned that the "continued threat of the [LRA] to regional stability should not be underestimated" in light of the withdrawal of Ugandan and South Sudanese forces from the AU Regional Task Force, along with US special forces. He added that he was concerned about the LRA possibly exploiting the security vacuum created by the disengagement of the forces. The briefing was followed by consultations.

Mine Action

On 13 June, at the initiative of Bolivia, the Council held a briefing under the agenda item "maintenance of international peace and security" with the title "Comprehensive Approach to Mine Action and Explosive Hazard Threat Mitigation" (S/PV.7966). In its concept note for the meeting, Bolivia said that the cross-cutting nature of mine action and its relevance to promoting the peace and security agenda made it appropriate for the Council to hold a thematic briefing and adopt a resolution that would frame "a comprehensive approach to mine action and explosive hazard threat mitigation." The Assistant Secretary-General for the Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Alexander Zuev, briefed on the work of the UN related to mine action, with a focus on the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), while a representative of UNMAS in Colombia, Nathalie Ochoa Nina, spoke about her

experience in the field. At press time, the Council was scheduled to vote on Friday 30 June on the draft resolution proposed by Bolivia.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

On 15 June, Council members met with UNDOF TCCs. On 19 June, Council members held consultations on the Secretary-General's 8 June report on UNDOF, covering 2 March to 16 May (S/2017/486). On 29 June, the Council adopted resolution 2361 renewing UNDOF's mandate for an additional six months.

Mali

On 16 June, the Council received a briefing from Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MINUSMA Mahamat Saleh Annadif (S/PV.7975) based on the 6 June Secretary-General's report (S/2017/478). At press time, the Council was expected to renew MINUSMA's mandate before the end of June.

Arria-Formula Meeting on Famine

On 16 June, Security Council members held an Arria-formula meeting on the risk of famine in the conflict-affected areas of north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. The meeting was organised by Egypt, Ethiopia and Senegal in response to the Secretary-General's 21 February letter to member states, highlighting the global food crisis and the risk of famine in these four countries. Briefings were given by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed; Franck Bousquet, Senior Director of the Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group of the World Bank; and Andrea Tamburini, CEO of the NGO Action Against Hunger.

Peacebuilding

On 19 June, Ambassadors Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea) and Macharia Kamau (Kenya), the current and former chairs of the PBC, briefed the Council (S/PV.7976) to present the PBC's tenth annual report (S/2017/76). This was followed by an informal interactive dialogue on regional peacebuilding challenges focusing on the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin with Council members, representatives of the PBC, and Burkina Faso.

Sahel

On 21 June, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2359 welcoming the deployment by the Group of Five—Burkina Faso,

Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger—of a joint force throughout the territories of its contributing countries with a view to restoring peace and security in the Sahel (S/PV.7979).

Afghanistan

On 21 June, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNAMA Tadamichi Yamamoto briefed the Council on the latest Secretary-General report (S/2017/508) and recent developments (S/PV.7980). Yamamoto noted that Afghanistan is currently going through a political and security crisis and urged the National Unity Government to increase political inclusiveness, strengthen accountability and improve the government's credibility to avert deterioration of situation. Council members voiced concern regarding the recent surge of terrorist attacks in the country and expressed support for the government of Afghanistan in tackling ongoing political and security issues.

Counter-Terrorism

On 22 June, Council members held an Arria-formula meeting on "preventing terrorism and violent extremism in the Horn of Africa: Enhancing partnership for regional efforts". The meeting was co-hosted by Ethiopia and Italy with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. Also in June, one additional name was added to the ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee sanctions list (on 16 June), while two entries were amended (on 20 June).

Liberia

On 27 June, the Council held a briefing followed by the consultations on the situation in Liberia (S/PV.7984). Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNMIL Farid Zarif briefed on the latest Secretary-General's report (S/2017/510) and activities related to the mission's drawdown. Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), Chair of the Liberia Configuration of the PBC, briefed on his recent visit to the country and PBC-related developments. Both briefers as well as Council members emphasised the importance of holding free and fair presidential elections in October and a subsequent democratic transfer of power. Furthermore, they stressed the need for a smooth drawdown of UNMIL and transition to the UN country team.

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

On 27 June, Special Representative Petko

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Draganov briefed Council members in consultations on the work of UNRCCA. He covered a number of key regional issues, including the threat of terrorism and extremism, the impact of the situation in Afghanistan, drug-trafficking, transboundary water management, and tensions linked to border-related disputes. The Secretary-General's visit to Central Asia from 8-13 June was also discussed.

Non-Proliferation

On 28 June, the Council held an open debate

on “the global effort to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors” focusing on implementation of resolution 1540 and the work of the 1540 Sanctions Committee (S/PV.7895 and Resumption 1). It was held at the initiative of Bolivia, the chair of the Committee. In its concept note, Bolivia outlined as a focus for the debate “how to reinforce the preventive system to avoid the humanitarian, political, economic and environmental catastrophe that could result from the use of a nuclear, chemical and

biological weapon by non-state actors, particularly terrorists”, while taking into account resolution 2325 adopted on 15 December 2016 on the comprehensive review of the implementation of resolution 1540. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs briefed, along with Joseph Ballard, senior officer from the Office of Strategy and Policy at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In addition to Council members, more than 40 speakers participated in the debate.

AU-UN Cooperation

Expected Council Action

In July, the Council is planning to hold an open debate on “Enhancing African capabilities in the area of peace and security”.

Background

The importance of developing a strategic partnership between the AU and the UN was a key feature of the 2015 peace operations review. Throughout the years, the Security Council and the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC), as well as the UN Secretariat and the AU Commission, have strived to develop more systematic ways of cooperating with each other to overcome the limitations of a relationship that has often resulted in ad hoc arrangements.

In his 13 September 2016 report, the Secretary-General discussed efforts to strengthen AU-UN cooperation on peace and security. These include actions throughout the cycle of conflict: joint analysis, information-sharing and common understanding that would lead to early action, support to peace operations, and increased cooperation on tasks related to sustaining peace and the rule of law. The report underlined the value of the UN Office to the AU and recommended strengthening its capacity to address the multiple aspects of this growing partnership.

Resolution 2320 of 18 November 2016 stressed that the AU-UN partnership should be underpinned by mutual consultations between the Council and the AU PSC “based

on respective comparative advantage, burden sharing, consultative decision making, joint analysis and planning missions and assessment visits by the UN and AU, monitoring and evaluation, transparency and accountability”.

On 19 April, Secretary-General António Guterres and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, signed a joint UN-AU framework for enhanced partnership in peace and security. The framework identifies four essential themes of the partnership—preventing and mediating conflict and sustaining peace, responding to conflict, addressing root causes, and continuous partnership review and enhancement—and describes mechanisms to operationalise them.

Even though the Council has often identified the lack of flexible, sustainable and predictable funding for Council-authorized AU peace operations as a challenge, Council members have divergent views on how this should be addressed. In resolution 2320 the Council expressed its readiness to consider the AU proposals for future support by the Council to the AU peace support operations it authorises.

On 15 June, at the initiative of the African members of the Council (A3)—Egypt, Ethiopia and Senegal—Council members discussed the Secretary-General's 26 May report on options for authorisation and support for AU peace support operations with Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General; the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui;

and Donald Kaberuka, AU High Representative for the Peace Fund. They held an informal interactive dialogue after the briefing.

The Secretary-General's report describes the limitations of the current structures supporting AU peace support operations and identifies four options through which UN assessed contributions could be used to help meet their requirements, noting that no single option is appropriate for all situations:

- subvention in exceptional or emergency circumstances;
- joint financing of a jointly developed budget;
- establishment of a UN support office; and
- joint financing of a hybrid mission.

While the option of a jointly developed budget would require additional work by the Secretariat and the AU Commission before it could be put into practice, the Secretary-General strongly recommends that the Security Council endorse this option in principle. In addition to the issue of financing, the report proposes a decision-making framework aimed at making joint action more effective. Council members also discussed a 1 June report of the chairperson of the AU Commission including, among other issues, an update on the operationalisation of the AU Peace Fund.

Both the AU report and a 30 May communiqué of the AU PSC stressed the importance of securing a substantive Security Council resolution establishing that UN assessed contributions should, on a case-by-case basis,

UN DOCUMENTS ON AU-UN COOPERATION Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2359 (21 June 2017) welcomed the deployment of the G5 force. S/RES/2320 (18 November 2016) welcomed the AU Assembly decision to fund 25 percent of AU peace support operations. **Secretary-General Reports** S/2017/454 (26 May 2017) was on options for authorisation and support for AU peace support operations. S/2016/780 (13 September 2016) was on strengthening the AU-UN partnership on peace and security in Africa. **Security Council Letter** S/2017/248 (23 March 2017) was the joint communiqué agreed to after the tenth annual joint consultative meeting between members of the Council and the AU PSC. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.7971 (15 June 2017) was the discussion of the Secretary-General's report on AU peace support operations.

AU-UN Cooperation

finance Security Council-mandated AU peace support missions. At the Council briefing, the A3 jointly stated their intention to pursue this initiative. Ambassador Nikki Haley (US) stated that this may be premature in 2017 since “before considering moving forward on any framework resolution with regard to financial support through the United Nations, we will look for implementation and concrete results from the AU’s own benchmarks and timelines.” The upcoming debate is a further opportunity for Council members to continue discussing the contentious issue of financing, as well as other important aspects of the strategic partnership with the AU.

Council Dynamics

On 21 June, the Council adopted resolution

2359 welcoming the deployment by the Group of Five (G5)—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger—of a joint force in the Sahel. The positions of Council members during the negotiations of the resolution, which had been requested by the PSC, displayed a divergence of views on the Council’s role regarding operations carried out by regional or sub-regional organisations or groupings. While all members agreed on the importance of sending a strong political signal in support of the force, some Council members that are major financial contributors expressed concerns about the prospect of committing UN assessed contributions to fund it.

The tenth annual joint consultative meeting of Council members with members of the AU PSC took place in May 2016. At the time,

agreeing to the agenda for the meeting proved challenging as a result of the AU PSC proposal to discuss Western Sahara and Security Council reform in addition to several conflict situations. Furthermore, until March 2017, Council members were unable to reach agreement with members of the AU PSC on a joint communiqué over differences regarding the situations in Somalia and Burundi. The next annual meeting is now planned for September 2017 in Addis Ababa.

In the 2015 communiqué the AU PSC and the Security Council agreed to conduct a joint field mission that year, but this was never carried out. In March 2017, the chair of the AU PSC was invited to participate in the Security Council visiting mission to the Lake Chad Basin but this did not occur.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In July, Council members expect to receive briefings on political and humanitarian developments in Syria and on chemical weapons, including on the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

Key Recent Developments

On 4 May, the three ceasefire guarantors (Iran, Russia and Turkey) signed a memorandum establishing four de-escalation areas and security zones in Syria. This agreement has led to a localised reduction of violence. However, violence persists both within and outside these areas. This includes government military offensives in Dara’a (despite a short-lived ceasefire on 17-18 June) and in the eastern region known as Badia. Even though the memorandum established a 4 June deadline for the actual delimitation of the areas, no announcement has been made on this, nor on monitoring or enforcement mechanisms. The next meeting between the guarantors, the parties, and observer countries is scheduled for 4-5 July in Astana. 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.

De Mistura’s plan to convey an expert meeting on the consultative process on constitutional and legal issues in between rounds of the intra-Syrian talks was rejected by the Syrian government. However, de Mistura met with experts from opposition delegations on 15-16 June. On 17 June, he announced that the seventh round of the intra-Syrian talks would begin on 10 July in Geneva. Briefing the Council on 27 June de Mistura expressed his readiness to “seek to facilitate direct talks between the government and the opposition” either at a formal or technical level.

On 15 June, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, briefed Council members on progress in the elimination of Syria’s stockpile of chemical weapons. She stressed that there has been no change to the lack of safe access to the two above-ground stationary facilities that are to be destroyed with the supervision of

the OPCW. She also highlighted how longstanding issues related to Syria’s original stockpile declaration and subsequent amendments remain unresolved. The JIM, whose three-member leadership team (headed by Edmond Mulet with Judy Cheng-Hopkins and Stefan Mogl) is now complete, has started to investigate the 16 September 2016 incident where the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) found that mustard gas was used and is expected to start investigating the 4 April Khan Shaykhun attack upon completion of the FFM final report on that incident.

OCHA head Stephen O’Brien briefed the Council on 30 May on the humanitarian situation in Syria. Despite the drop in violence in some areas of the country, O’Brien stressed how the humanitarian conditions are worsening not due to insecurity or poor infrastructure, but to increasingly strict limitations by local authorities and non-state armed groups, as well as terrorist organisations, along with the actions of some neighbouring countries. He highlighted the delays in the approval of facilitation letters by the government for cross-line inter-agency convoys. O’Brien also denounced the “so-called ‘evacuation’ agreements” and the need for accountability for

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/ 541** (23 June 2017) was on the humanitarian situation. **Security Council Letter S/2017/469** (30 May 2017) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7973** (15 June 2017) was a briefing by Nakamitsu on the destruction of Syria’s stockpile of chemical weapons. **S/PV.7983** (27 June 2017) was a briefing by de Mistura.

starve and surrender tactics. At press time O'Brien was expected to provide his next briefing to the Council on 29 June.

The US has been involved in several incidents in reaction to threats to their forces or those of their partners. On at least two occasions (on 18 May and 6 June), the US attacked pro-government military convoys that were nearing the Tanf base close to the Jordanian border where the US trains Syrian opposition groups. The US also downed two Iranian drones near the base. On 18 June, the US shot down a Syrian jet that had attacked the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—a US-supported armed group involved in the offensive over Raqqa—near Tabqah. After the attack, the US Central Command stated: “The Coalition does not seek to fight Syrian regime, Russian, or pro-regime forces partnered with them, but will not hesitate to defend Coalition or partner forces from any threat.” On 19 June, the Russian Defence Ministry suspended its participation in the deconfliction line with the US as a result of the attack and announced that it considered airborne objects detected west of Euphrates River as legitimate targets.

The SDF's ongoing offensive against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Raqqa continues with the support of the US-led coalition. In a speech to the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 14 June, the chair of HRC's Independent International Commission of Inquiry, Paulo Pinheiro, described how the military campaign has resulted in staggering loss of civilian life and displaced more than 160,000 people in Raqqa. The Syrian government joined forces with Iraqi Shiite militias in their offensive towards ISIL-held Deir Ez-zor. On 21 June Secretary-General António Guterres appealed to all those conducting military operations in Syria to do everything in their power to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, as fighting continues in Raqqa and elsewhere.

Human Rights-Related Developments

At the 14 June interactive dialogue with the HRC, Pinheiro noted that following the establishment of the de-escalation zones there was a “discernible reduction” in levels of violence in the zones

around Idlib and western Aleppo, but that violence continued unabated in the zones around Homs, Damascus and southern Dara'a, and the zones had yet to bring any tangible improvement in the delivery of humanitarian aid. However, the commission argued that the establishment of the zones was a step in the right direction and could help the more comprehensive political discussions within the Geneva framework led by de Mistura. Outside of the de-escalation zones, the conflict continued to have disastrous consequences for civilians, with the commission calling for “meaningful accountability” for ongoing human rights violations. The commission emphasised that ultimately only an end to the war would bring an end to civilian suffering in Syria. On 23 June, the HRC adopted by 27 votes to 8, with 12 abstentions, resolution 35/26 on the human rights situation in Syria. The resolution demanded that the Syrian government cooperate with the HRC and the Commission of Inquiry by providing full access throughout the country, and also invited member states to provide financial support for the establishment and functioning of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism. (Of the seven Security Council members currently on the HRC, Japan, UK and US voted “yes”, Egypt and Ethiopia abstained, and Bolivia and China voted “no”).

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 2236 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.

Amid increasing tensions among international actors in Syria, preventing incidents that may lead to military escalation is a related issue.

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 be briefed by the ceasefire guarantors on the establishment of the de-escalation areas and their monitoring, the release of detainees, and demining.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The US has repeatedly expressed its concern regarding the role of Iran as a guarantor, particularly in the areas bordering the Golan Heights (disputed between Israel and Syria) and Jordan. Secret talks have reportedly been underway between Russia and the US to agree on the delimitation of a de-escalation zone in south-western Syria that would include Dara'a and Al-Quneitra. As part of these talks, on 17 June a 48-hour ceasefire was agreed to in Dara'a, although the government military offensive continued after the ceasefire expired. The talks happen as Syrian troops and Iranian-sponsored militias expand their influence in southern Syria. In June, the US deployed a high mobility artillery rocket system to the strategically-located base of Tanf.

A Russian draft resolution welcoming the memorandum agreed to in Astana in early May was never negotiated in the Council as a result of Council members' concerns regarding the limited information available to them in order to make a decision. In consultations on 22 May, several Council members asked questions regarding the enforcement of the memorandum and the monitoring of the de-escalation areas. Many Council members have highlighted the importance of ensuring humanitarian access in the areas. Even though Russia provided an update regarding the working group established by the guarantor countries, some questions remained unanswered as the work of the group was still ongoing. The Council might still consider these issues as further details are agreed to by the guarantors and accepted by the parties. If the monitoring mechanisms require the deployment of a third party, it is likely that such a decision would be dealt with in the Council.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council expects to be briefed by Maman Sambo Sidikou, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), on the Secretary-General's three-monthly report on the implementation of MONUSCO's mandate and most recent developments.

The mandate of MONUSCO expires on 31 March 2018.

Key Recent Developments

Violence has continued in the Kasai region in southern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Intercommunal clashes between militias and government forces began in August 2016, when the leader of the Kamwina Nsapu militia was killed in fighting with the DRC police. Over 1.3 million people have now been displaced from their homes, with the UN Refugee Agency reporting that over 30,000 have fled south to Angola. Beyond Kasai, the DRC remains highly unstable, and violence also continues across a number of locations in eastern DRC.

There has been little progress in the implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement on the electoral process; the government and the main opposition coalition, the "Rassemblement", have been unable or unwilling to form a transitional government. Opposition leaders have accused President Joseph Kabila of seeking to use the current crisis in the Kasai for political advantage, and of failing to comply with the 31 December 2016 agreement. The agreement attempted to address the political crisis created by Kabila's ongoing determination to remain in office beyond the conclusion on 19 December 2016 of his second and, according to the constitution, final term.

The intended establishment of a transitional government is envisaged to be the first step in preparation for the presidential, national and provincial legislative elections that the 31 December 2016 agreement stipulates will occur in 2017. In an interview with German newspaper Der Spiegel on 3 June,

Kabila reportedly declared that he had made no promises, but that he did wish to organise elections. The process of voter registration is reported to be facing long delays, and seems unlikely to be completed before November.

On 15 June, the Kofi Annan Foundation released an open letter signed by Kofi Annan and nine African former heads of state, expressing deep concern at the situation in the DRC, and identifying it as a threat to African stability, prosperity and peace. The letter's signatories called on Kabila and other Congolese leaders to implement the 31 December 2016 agreement as a means to ensure elections occur by the end of the year.

Moïse Katumbi, the former governor of Katanga province who fled into exile in 2016, has announced his intention to return to DRC to contest the presidential election. It is unclear when exactly Katumbi will return to DRC, or how he will be received on arrival. Katumbi has a strong base of support, particularly in Katanga. However, he faces charges of attempting to hire mercenaries and has been convicted in absentia for selling a house that he did not own. Katumbi contests both charges and says the accusations are politically motivated. His return may be a catalyst for protests and clashes between his supporters and security forces.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a 9 June statement, called on the Human Rights Council (HRC) to establish an international investigation into the widespread human rights violations and abuses that have occurred in the Kasai since August 2016, a call also made by a coalition of 262 Congolese and nine NGOs in a press release on 1 June. The High Commissioner said that the "scale and nature of these human rights violations and abuses, and the consistently inadequate responses of the domestic authorities, oblige us to call for an international investigation to complement national efforts."

On 23 June, the HRC adopted without a vote resolution 35/33 on technical assistance to the DRC and accountability concerning the events in the Kasai region. The resolution requests the High Commissioner to "dispatch a team of international experts, including experts from the region" to investigate "alleged human rights violations and abuses, and violations of international humanitarian law in the Kasai regions" in cooperation with

the DRC government, and to submit the conclusions of the investigation to the judicial authorities in the DRC. The High Commissioner is set to present an oral update to the HRC at its 37th session and submit a comprehensive report at its 38th session, with the investigative team also invited to participate in interactive dialogues with the HRC on both occasions.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The 1533 DRC sanctions regime was renewed on 21 June for an additional year by resolution 2360. The renewal is largely a technical rollover, however it did extend by two months the deadline for the final report by the Group of Experts, and introduced attacks on the Group of Experts as new criterion for the imposition of targeted sanctions against individuals. Both are in response to the murder of two members of the DRC Group of Experts, American Michael Sharp and Swedish-Chilean Zaida Catalán.

Key Issues

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

Another important issue is how to address the continued violence in the east and the emerging violence in Kasai, which remain a serious threat to peace and security.

Establishing facts and accountability for the murder of the two 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee's experts is an important issue for Committee members.

Options

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

- calls 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;
- threatens the use of sanctions against those who act to impede a solution to the political crisis; and
- condemns the mass violence in Kasai and elsewhere, and calls for accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Another option is for the Council to

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2360 (22 June 2017) renewed the DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts. **S/RES/2348** (31 March 2017) renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 31 March 2018. **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 the 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 the Kasai region. **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.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

establish clear implications if elections are not held before the end of 2017. Such implications could include targeted sanctions against those identified as having failed to implement the 31 December 2016 agreement. A resolution that includes benchmarks for implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement is one option for setting out potential consequences for spoilers.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain concerned about the ongoing political crisis and the potentially explosive ramifications if the 31 December 2016 agreement does not result in fair and timely elections and a peaceful transfer of power. Some Council members have expressed concern that the perpetuation of the violence in Kasai undermines the viability of inclusive and fair elections. The Council is divided on the importance of elections occurring this

year: some members emphasise the need for full implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement this year to move DRC beyond the current crisis; other members see all stakeholders as jointly responsible for carrying out the elections and believe the timing of them is less important than the elections occurring in a peaceful and inclusive manner.

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

UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel

Expected Council Action

In July, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), will brief the Council on recent developments and the semi-annual UNOWAS report.

Key Recent Developments

The crisis in The Gambia, stemming from President Yahya Jammeh's refusal to accept defeat in the 2 December presidential election, was ended peacefully. Forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) entered The Gambia on 19 January, the same day that challenger Adama Barrow was sworn in as its new president at its embassy in Dakar, Senegal. In New York, the Security Council adopted a resolution endorsing the decisions of ECOWAS and the African Union (AU) to recognise Barrow as president. Talks continued between Jammeh and President Alpha Condé (Guinea) and President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz (Mauritania) to avert a confrontation with ECOWAS forces. This led to Jammeh agreeing on 21 January to cede power and go into exile in Equatorial Guinea. A joint declaration, issued that day by ECOWAS, the AU and the UN, commended Jammeh's decision to transfer power to Barrow.

ECOWAS has since maintained around 500 troops in The Gambia, known as the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG). Legislative elections were successfully conducted on 6 April. On 2 June,

ECOMIG forces reportedly opened fire on protestors in Kanilai, the home village of Jammeh, resulting in one fatality and five people wounded. At a 4 June summit of ECOWAS heads of state and government, West African leaders extended ECOMIG's mandate for an additional year.

Terrorist group Boko Haram and the humanitarian crisis resulting from the insurgency have received increased attention. A donor conference in Oslo on 24 February for Nigeria and the Lake Chad region led to pledges of \$458 million for 2017 and a total of \$672 million over the next three years. OCHA has appealed for \$1.5 billion to meet emergency needs in the Lake Chad Basin during 2017, where 2.4 million people are displaced and 7.2 million people are food insecure.

The Security Council undertook a visiting mission to the four affected countries of the Lake Chad Basin—Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria—from 2 to 7 March. The Multinational Joint Task Force, comprised of these four countries and Benin, along with national forces have made notable gains against Boko Haram, taking back much of the territory Boko Haram held at its peak in 2015 and reducing much of its conventional military capability. The group, however, remains a threat. On 7 June, Boko Haram launched a series of raids in Maiduguri, killing 14 people, which constituted the group's largest attack in the capital city of Borno state in a year and a half.

On 31 March, the Council adopted

resolution 2349, its first on Boko Haram and the Lake Chad Basin crisis. The resolution outlines the security situation and protection needs of civilians, the humanitarian crisis, and the conflict's root causes and development challenges. During the mission, a common message pressed upon members was the need to bring under control the humanitarian emergency and the conflict's underlying causes, such as poverty, underdevelopment and poor governance, which have fostered radicalisation and unless addressed are likely to cause continued instability. Resolution 2349 requested the Secretary-General to submit a report within five months assessing the situation in the Lake Chad Basin with possible measures for the Council's consideration.

In February, the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel)—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger—announced the creation of a regional force to combat terrorism and transnational crime. On 21 June, the Council adopted resolution 2359 welcoming the deployment of the G5 force throughout the territories of its contributing countries. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to brief orally within two months, and in writing within four months, on the force's activities and its operationalisation as well as “on challenges encountered and possible measures for further consideration”. It further expressed the Council's “intent to review” the force's deployment after four months.

Demonstrating the Sahel's fragility, the security situation in northern Burkina Faso deteriorated earlier this year with the

UN DOCUMENTS ON WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2359 (21 June 2017) welcomed the deployment of the G5 Sahel force. S/RES/2349 (31 March 2017) was on the Lake Chad Basin region. S/RES/2337 (19 January 2017) endorsed the decisions of ECOWAS and the AU recognising Adama Barrow as president of The Gambia. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/2 (20 January 2017) recognised the important convening role of the PBC to support UNOWAS in implementing the UNISS.

UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel

emergence of extremist group Ansarul Islam. The group, with links to terrorist groups in Mali, has attacked police stations, military positions, villages and schools mostly in Soum province, causing the displacement of local residents.

Following the Council's January briefing on UNOWAS, it adopted a 20 January presidential statement that, inter alia, encouraged further implementation of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS). The statement emphasised the important convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), charging it with supporting UNOWAS in mobilising relevant actors to advance the implementation of the strategy, which was developed in 2013 to address the underlying causes of instability in the Sahel.

Among the PBC's activities since, PBC chair Ambassador Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea) attended the 14 June meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform of Sahel Strategies in N'Djamena, engaging G5 Sahel countries to further consider how to support implementation of the UNISS. A 19 June informal interactive dialogue between Council members and PBC representatives on peacebuilding challenges in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin took stock of the PBC's role in implementing the strategy. A joint PBC-UN Economic and Social Council meeting on 28 June focused on development aspects of the UNISS.

Key Issues

The West African and Sahel regions have occupied a significant proportion of the Council's attention in the first half of 2017. Developments in The Gambia and in the Lake Chad Basin as well as with the G5 Sahel

force are thus likely to continue to feature prominently. More broadly, the terrorism threat to West Africa and the Sahel represents an important issue for the Council.

Members are likely to be interested in discussing the steps that the UN and UNOWAS have taken towards implementing the UNISS since last year's independent evaluation of the strategy, as well as plans of the PBC to support implementation of the UNISS.

In addition to Chambas' good offices, UNOWAS is increasingly providing political support, not only for implementing the UNISS, but for a "sustaining peace" pilot strategy in Burkina Faso, and it is expected to do so as part of the Liberia peacebuilding plan. UNOWAS will further take on greater responsibilities in the monitoring of Côte d'Ivoire with the withdrawal of the peacekeeping operation there.

Options

An option for the briefing is to invite the PBC chair to brief on how the PBC is planning to support the implementation of the UNISS, and more broadly on PBC support to the region for sustaining peace.

Depending on the content of the Secretary-General's report and the discussion with Chambas, the Council may adopt a statement on the activities of UNOWAS and developments in West Africa and the Sahel.

Another option is for the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee to list the Burkinabe group Ansarul Islam on the Al-Qaida sanctions list.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Members value the good offices activities undertaken by Special Representative

Chambas and view the regional office as playing a significant conflict prevention role. During recent crises in Burkina Faso and The Gambia, Chambas strove to ensure close coordination in the messaging and actions of ECOWAS, the AU and the UN. Senegal was important in ensuring Council engagement on The Gambia. It was, however, among those critical of the agreement that led to Jammeh's stepping down and the joint ECOWAS-AU-UN declaration, feeling that there had not been sufficient coordination between the Guinean and Mauritanian presidents with ECOWAS.

The recent Council mission to the Lake Chad Basin seemed useful in developing a common understanding of the crisis affecting the region. This contributed to agreement on resolution 2349, which stands out among Council resolutions for the extent it focuses on the conflict's root causes and development needs.

Egypt has sought to revitalise implementation of the UNISS, including through the Council's decision to involve the PBC.

During negotiations on resolution 2359, the US and other major financial contributors objected to authorising the force, which they considered unnecessary, but also out of concern about the financial obligations such an authorisation could imply. France, which maintains counter-terrorism Operation Barkhane in the Sahel, supported the position of the G5 countries and the AU that the UN should consider providing assessed contributions.

Senegal is the penholder on West Africa and the Sahel.

Cyprus

Expected Council Action

In July, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for another six months, ahead of its 31 July expiry. Elizabeth Spehar, Special Representative and head of mission, is expected to brief on the latest UNFICYP

report. Espen Barth Eide, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus, may also brief on key developments in the negotiations between the Cypriot leaders.

Key Recent Developments

More than two years after the current round

of unification talks started, Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci are yet to reach an agreement on the final settlement. Despite the absence of a final agreement and several setbacks during the talks, both Cypriot leaders have maintained a relatively positive

UN DOCUMENTS ON CYPRUS Security Council Resolution S/RES/2338 (26 January 2017) extended UNFICYP's mandate for six months. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/20** (9 January 2017) was on Cyprus. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7869** (26 January 2017) was the vote on resolution 2338. **Security Council Press Statement SC/11894** (15 May 2015) welcomed the resumption of the settlement talks.

atmosphere during the talks. Since 15 May 2015, when Anastasiades and Akinci officially began the latest round of talks, the Cypriot leaders held over 70 meetings under the auspices of the UN Special Adviser while their technical teams met on over 150 occasions. Several important developments took place during the latest round of talks.

On 11 January, Eide joined Anastasiades and Akinci during a meeting in Geneva in which they exchanged maps containing their respective proposals regarding the territorial adjustments. Eide described this as a ground-breaking moment in the negotiations because it marked the first time the Cypriot leaders themselves presented their proposals on the issue of the territory.

On 12 January, the negotiations moved to the format of a high-level conference involving Cypriot leaders as well as the three guarantor powers, Greece, Turkey and the UK, together with the EU as an observer. The main issue discussed at the conference was the question of security and guarantees. The presence of guarantor powers was necessary given that any agreement on this issue would require their approval. Though no agreement was reached during the high-level segment of the conference, the participants decided to establish a working group composed of the experts from both Cypriot sides and the guarantor countries. The primary task of the group is to identify the main concerns regarding the issue of security and guarantees. The group met at the second session of the Geneva conference on 18 and 19 January but did not disclose details regarding their discussions.

The positions on security and guarantees seem to be fixed. The Greek Cypriot side seems to be in favour of ending the system of security guarantees with the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Cyprus, while the Turkish Cypriot side apparently holds the view that the system of guarantees should be maintained, at least for a certain period after unification.

Following the Geneva conference, the leaders continued to meet sporadically in an effort to find convergences on the core issues and pave the way for reconvening the conference. However, the negotiations stalled. Throughout May, Eide engaged in shuttle diplomacy between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders in an effort to bridge the divergences. Nevertheless, on 26 May he declared that there is no basis to continue the shuttle diplomacy efforts given that “the leaders were unable to find common ground”.

Striving to break the impasse, Guterres hosted a meeting between Anastasiades and Akinci in New York on 4 June. Addressing the media following the meeting, Guterres announced that the Cypriot leaders had agreed to resume the conference in June. He emphasised the importance of resolving the security and guarantee issues as crucial elements in reaching a final agreement but stated that the leaders will continue the negotiations on all issues interdependently. Guterres said that Eide would prepare a common document that would guide the discussions on the issue of security and guarantees. Subsequently, the Secretary-General announced that the conference on Cyprus would be held on 28 June and would include the participation of the guarantor parties.

In other developments, oil company Total announced that it will begin exploratory drilling for hydrocarbon resources off the coast of Cyprus in mid-July. The internationally-recognised Greek Cypriot Republic of Cyprus has granted drilling licenses to several international companies. The Turkish Cypriot side has maintained the position that offshore natural resources and all exploration thereof must benefit both communities on the island. Ever since their discovery in 2011, hydrocarbon resources have had an effect on unification talks. Most recently, in 2014 the negotiations between the Cypriot leaders came to a standstill due to disagreement on this issue.

Human Rights-Related Developments

At its 34th session in March, the Human Rights Council considered the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the question of human rights in Cyprus (A/HRC/34/15). The report, which covers the period from 1 December 2015 to 30 November 2016, noted some positive developments but concluded that the “persistent division of the island still hinders the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”. In this regard, the report welcomed the commitment to resume peace talks and said that addressing human rights issues should underpin the political dialogue. The report also encouraged further visits to Cyprus by special procedures mandate holders.

Key Issues

In addition to the UNFICYP mandate renewal, a main concern for the Council is how to assist in maintaining a constructive atmosphere and facilitate progress in the unification talks between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders.

In light of the ongoing negotiations between the leaders in Geneva and the possibility that they could reach a final agreement, the Council might need to consider reconfiguring UNFICYP’s mandate in relation to this possible development.

In the absence of major progress in unification talks, a persistent issue for the Council is the possibility of downsizing the mission.

Options

While the Council is most likely to renew UNFICYP’s mandate in its current configuration for an additional six months, further options may depend on the progress in the current phase of the unification talks.

Given that UNFICYP has been present in Cyprus for over 50 years, the Council could add a sense of urgency to the issue by renewing the mandate for a shorter period.

Should the current negotiations result in a major breakthrough, the Council could issue a statement welcoming the positive development. Furthermore, the Council could explore ways to adjust the mandate of the mission to better facilitate the implementation of the possible agreement.

Council Dynamics

The situation in Cyprus is generally followed closely by France, Russia and the UK in particular. In addition, the US has become increasingly engaged in finding a solution to the Cyprus question as the island has continued to gain importance due to its potential hydrocarbon resources and its strategic location vis à vis the ongoing fight against terrorism in the Middle East.

While the Council has been unanimous in its support for the negotiations between the leaders, divergences exist between some members regarding the conditions and timeframe related to the unification talks. Several Council members, the UK in particular, seem to have frustration at the protracted process. These members also seem to share the view that it would be useful to stimulate the negotiations by putting more pressure on both sides while stressing that this process cannot be open-ended. On the other hand, Russia has strongly opposed any attempt to speed up the negotiations or pressure both sides to reach a solution because of its view that the negotiations must be Cypriot-led and Cypriot-owned for the results to be effective.

The ongoing efforts by the US to review UN peacekeeping operations with the aim

Cyprus

of improving efficiency and reducing costs might impact Council dynamics in the upcoming period. (The government of Cyprus contributes one-third of the cost of the mission, and the government of Greece makes an additional contribution.) At the

moment, most Council members including the US share the view that there should be no modifications to UNFICYP's mandate given that this could negatively impact the ongoing negotiations. Should the unification talks result in a final agreement, new

dynamics could emerge in the Council regarding the role of the UN mission in its implementation. Likewise, should the unification talks fail, new dynamics could emerge regarding possible downsizing of the mission and reconfiguration of its mandate.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In July, Special Representative and head of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) Sandra Honoré is expected to brief the Council on recent developments and the latest Secretary-General's report which is due by 12 July.

Key Recent Developments

In April, the Council adopted resolution 2350 which extended the mandate of MINUSTAH for a final period of six months. In line with the recommendations of the assessment mission conducted by the Secretary-General, the resolution mandated the drawdown of the military component of the mission leading to its complete withdrawal by 15 October. Furthermore, the resolution established another, smaller peacekeeping mission, the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), to assist the government of Haiti in strengthening the rule of law institutions, reinforcing national police capacities, and engaging in human rights monitoring, reporting and analysis. The successor mission MINUJUSTH, whose six-month mandate will begin on 16 October, is envisioned to draw down after two years.

In early May, the members of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti visited Haiti and met with key political actors, civil society, and development agencies operating in the country. The group was initially established in 1999 to provide recommendations on how to ensure the most effective and coordinated approach regarding international assistance to Haiti. However, the group became inactive within months of its establishment. In 2004,

ECOSOC reactivated the group with the mandate to promote socioeconomic recovery and to ensure coherence and sustainability in international support to Haiti. On 9 June, at the request of Uruguay, the Council held an informal interactive dialogue with Ambassador Marc-André Blanchard (Canada), current chair of the advisory group. Blanchard briefed Council members on some of the main findings during the advisory group's visit to Haiti in May.

On 3 May, the Secretary-General submitted a report to the General Assembly providing an update on the UN's new, two-track approach to Cholera in Haiti. Track one involves intensifying the UN's support for efforts aimed at reducing and ultimately ending the transmission of cholera, improving access to care and treatment, and addressing the longer-term issues of water, sanitation and health systems in Haiti. Track two involves developing a package of material assistance and support to Haitians most directly affected by cholera, drawing on contributions from member states.

In the report, the Secretary-General announced his plan to appoint a special envoy who would be in charge of developing a comprehensive fundraising strategy. Furthermore, he called on member states to voluntarily allocate to a trust fund to support his new approach, assessed contributions amounting to a total of \$40.5 million which will remain unspent after MINUSTAH closes in October, and which would otherwise be returned to states. The Secretary-General has estimated that the new approach would require funding of \$400 million. The fund remains severely underfunded with a total of \$2.7 million received so far from several member states.

During a 14 June informal briefing to the General Assembly, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed said that due to insufficient funding, cholera response and control efforts cannot be sustained through 2017 and 2018. Mohammed used the opportunity to call on member states to contribute resources that would enable implementation of the new approach to cholera.

On 20 June, the Secretary-General appointed Josette Sheeran (US) as his special envoy for Haiti. In her new role, Sheeran will bear primary responsibility for overseeing and implementing the UN's new approach to cholera, as well as related fundraising activities.

From 22 to 24 June, the Council conducted a visiting mission to Haiti led by Bolivia. The stated purpose of the visit was for the Council to: reaffirm its support for the government and people of Haiti; conduct a review of the implementation of resolution 2350; and identify requirements necessary for successful implementation of the successor mission's mandate. Members met with various interlocutors including President Jovenel Moïse and members of his cabinet, Prime Minister Jack Guy Lafontant, parliamentarians, the senior leadership of MINUSTAH, the Higher Council of the National Police, members of civil society, and others. In addition to various discussions on the situation concerning the rule of law, judicial reform, the capacity of the Haitian National Police, and the mandate of MINUJUSTH, several interlocutors raised concerns about the UN's response to cholera. They also asserted that the UN must assist the fatherless children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN peacekeepers. On

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2350](#) (13 April 2017) renewed MINUSTAH's mandate for a final six-month period until 15 October and authorised the establishment of a smaller successor peacekeeping mission, MINUJUSTH. [Secretary-General's Reports A/71/895](#) (3 May 2017) provided updated information on implementation of the new approach to cholera in Haiti. [S/2017/223](#) (16 March 2017) was on MINUSTAH. [A/71/620](#) (25 November 2016) was on the new approach to cholera in Haiti. [S/2013/139](#) (8 March 2013) contained the 2013-2016 consolidation plan for MINUSTAH. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7924](#) (13 April 2017) was the vote on resolution 2350. [S/PV.7920](#) (11 April 2017) was the Council's debate on Haiti. [Security Council Press Statement SC/12666](#) (4 January 2017) welcomed the announcement of the election results.

Haiti

30 June, Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorentty Soliz (Bolivia) briefed the Council on the visiting mission.

Human Rights-Related Developments

At its 34th session in March, the Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted a presidential statement (A/HRC/PRST/34/1) which discontinued the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti, a decision in keeping with the desire of the Haitian government not to have it renewed. This was despite the call by the Independent Expert at the time, Gustavo Gallón, for the mandate to be extended for one year in order to assist Haiti with planning for the implementation of recommendations from human rights mechanisms, including those contained in Gallón's final report (A/HRC/34/73), and to allow the HRC to evaluate the mandate in order to identify best practices.

Key Issues

At the moment, the main issue for the Council is the ongoing drawdown of MINUSTAH's military component and the process of phased transition to the successor mission MINUJUSTH.

An ongoing issue for the Council is the need to develop the capacity of the Haitian National Police and to address the lack of progress in the areas of rule of law and

human rights-related reforms, in particular with regard to criminal justice and ensuring accountability for past abuses.

Another issue is the lack of funding for the new approach to cholera and the implications for the UN's credibility, especially in Haiti.

Options

The most likely option for the Council is to receive a briefing and take no action, given that the decision on the successor mission to MINUSTAH has already been taken. With the visit fresh in their minds, members are likely to follow closely developments leading up to the transition.

The Council could explore future options for the involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission in Haiti now that the country is transitioning to a smaller peacekeeping mission and further developing its own capacities.

Council Dynamics

Council members seem content with the progress Haiti has achieved recently. The presidential, legislative and municipal elections were all held in a peaceful manner and without major threats to overall security. Earlier this year, a new president, Moïse, was inaugurated, marking the restoration of

constitutional order. Against this backdrop, the Council adopted resolution 2350 which authorised the gradual drawdown and closure of MINUSTAH by 15 October followed by the establishment of a much smaller successor mission, MINUJUSTH. While the Council voted unanimously in favor of resolution 2350, some members expressed concern regarding certain aspects of the resolution. Most notably, Russia objected to the inclusion of a human rights mandate for the successor mission and it being established under Chapter VII. Furthermore, Russia has argued that some of the aspects of the MINUJUSTH mandate are not clear and would be hard to implement in practice. Bolivia also expressed reservations regarding invoking Chapter VII in the resolution, noting that this does not reflect the reality in the ground.

Council practice is that draft resolutions on Haiti are negotiated and agreed among the Group of Friends of Haiti, which comprises Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Guatemala, Peru, the US and Uruguay, before being circulated to all 15 Council members by the US, as the penholder.

Iraq

Expected Council Action

In July, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Ján Kubiš will brief the Council on the Secretary-General's report on UNAMI and the most recent developments. UNAMI's mandate, which expires on 31 July, is likely to be renewed for another year.

Key Recent Developments

The ongoing fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the situation in Mosul featured prominently in Kubiš's last briefing to the Council on 22 May. Given the expected defeat of ISIL in Mosul, Kubiš stressed that the safe return of displaced persons and the protection of

the rights of minorities remain core priorities. While most Council members welcomed government advances against ISIL in Mosul, they also voiced their concern about the worsening humanitarian situation. Furthermore, some members emphasised the need to establish an investigative body that would provide an accountability mechanism for crimes committed by ISIL and other terrorist groups.

Also on 22 May, at the request of the US, Council members discussed the humanitarian situation in Iraq, specifically in Mosul, in a meeting under "any other business". Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and head of OCHA Stephen O'Brien updated members on the humanitarian situation

in western Mosul and the current challenges regarding the growing number of internally displaced persons and civilian casualties.

Iraqi government forces, supported by Kurdish troops and Sunni tribal fighters with the US-led coalition providing air support, have continued their military operation to retake Mosul from ISIL. Over the past seven months, Iraqi forces regained control of eastern Mosul and have made significant advances into western Mosul. At press time, ISIL fighters controlled only about two square kilometres of territory in the Old City district of western Mosul. On 21 June, ISIL destroyed the eight and a half centuries-old Al-Nuri mosque in the Old City. Two years ago at the same mosque, ISIL leader Abu

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAQ Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2335 (30 December 2016) authorised the Secretary-General to continue to maintain the escrow account authorised by resolution 1958 until 30 June 2017. S/RES/2299 (25 July 2016) renewed the UNAMI mandate. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2017/258 (27 March 2017) was the "oil-for-food" escrow account report. S/2017/371 (28 April 2017) was on UNAMI. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.7945 (22 May 2017) was a briefing on the UNAMI report and the situation in Iraq. **Security Council Press Statement** SC/12870 (14 June 2017) was a statement on Iraq-Kuwait issues.

Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the creation of the “caliphate”. Over the past several years ISIL has destroyed numerous cultural heritage sites in Iraq.

Heavy fighting between the Iraqi security forces and ISIL fighters for control of the Old City continues to take a toll on the civilian population. According to the latest data from the UN humanitarian agencies, over 800,000 people have been displaced from Mosul since October 2016, when the Iraqi government offensive began. Since February, more than 600,000 were displaced from western Mosul alone. The UN Refugee Agency has estimated that over 100,000 people remain trapped in parts of western Mosul still under ISIL’s control. The rate of displacement continues to rise dramatically as government forces close in on western Mosul.

On 25 May, the US Department of Defense released the summary of its investigation confirming that the US carried out an airstrike on a house in western Mosul on 17 March which resulted in the deaths of over 100 civilians. However, the investigation found that ISIL fighters intentionally placed explosives inside the house, causing a secondary blast once the bomb hit the house. The investigation concluded that at least 105 civilians died as a result of the incident, while 36 people remain unaccounted for.

On 7 June, President of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) Masoud Barzani announced that a referendum on the independence of Kurdistan has been scheduled for 25 September. The central government in Baghdad has denounced unilateral actions by KRG authorities to hold the referendum. Following the announcement, the Iraqi government spokesman said that the fate of Iraq cannot be decided without the involvement of all concerned parties. The US State Department voiced its concern about the referendum and its potential impact on the ongoing fight against ISIL. Turkish Foreign Minister Binali Yildirim has said that a referendum would be

irresponsible and could create additional problems in the region.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a news release on 8 June, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights said that reports indicate that more than 231 civilians have been killed trying to flee western Mosul since 26 May alone, showing a significant escalation in ISIL’s use of civilians as human shields and its slaughter of civilians fleeing violence.

Key Issues

The key issue for the Council is promoting a genuinely inclusive government accountable to the Iraqi people. A related issue is determining how the Council and UNAMI can support Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi’s reform process and encourage greater cooperation on financial, security and humanitarian issues between Al-Abadi’s dominant Shi’a Dawa party and Kurdish and Sunni parliamentarians, and thereby build confidence in the central government and fortify Iraq’s response to ISIL.

Another issue is how to address the impact of the anti-ISIL military campaigns on the human rights, humanitarian, and security situations in Iraq.

Options

One option for the Council is to renew the existing mandate of UNAMI without any significant adjustment. The core elements of the UNAMI mandate have remained largely unchanged since the adoption of resolution 1770 in 2007.

Another option would be for the resolution renewing UNAMI:

- to call for the government to work towards enhanced security and humanitarian coordination with Kurdish and Sunni leaders, and for UNAMI to support the government in that effort;
- to condemn human rights violations by ISIL and by Iraqi security forces, including the Popular Mobilization Forces; and
- to urge the government to enhance its

cooperation with UNAMI with regard to human rights, humanitarian response, rule of law, security sector reform, stabilisation activities in areas liberated from ISIL, and best practices for child protection and gender policies.

The Council could consider the UK’s initiative for the Council to set up a mechanism for establishing accountability for the crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq, while requesting the government of Iraq to give its consent for such investigations.

Council Dynamics

Council members support UNAMI and some subscribe to the view held by the US and Iraq, as well as by Kubiš, that the mission’s mandate is sufficiently broad and flexible to support its good offices role. Other Council members believe that UNAMI would benefit from a resolution that updates and prioritises its tasks, given that the mandate has not changed since resolution 1770 was adopted almost ten years ago. Some members have previously expressed interest in incorporating stronger language in the mandate renewal resolution on issues such as the promotion of national reconciliation, accountability, security sector reform, deeper political and economic reforms, issues related to women, peace and security and to children and armed conflict, and the right of internally displaced persons to return to their homes. It seems that the US, the penholder, and Iraq, as the host country, are reluctant to make any substantial changes to UNAMI’s mandate. In addition, they also seem to be concerned that opening up the mandate will allow crossover issues with Syria to enter the mandate, which could bring further political divisions. Except through the lens of counter-terrorism, Council members have not approached the connected crises in Iraq and Syria holistically and have exhibited a strong preference to treat the two situations as discrete issues.

The US is the penholder on Iraq issues in general, and the UK is the penholder on Iraq-Kuwait issues.

Lebanon (1701)

Expected Council Action

In July, Special Coordinator for Lebanon Sigrid Kaag will brief Council members in consultations on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701, which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006.

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

Key Recent Developments

The Secretary-General transmitted his semi-annual report on the implementation of resolution 1559 on 28 April. (Resolution 1559 urged the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, the disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, and the extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory.) The report noted that on 27 December 2016, Lebanon's cabinet agreed on its ministerial statement in which, as in 2014, it reaffirmed Lebanon's commitment to resolution 1701 and its intention to address the needs of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and security services. The statement also emphasised that "Lebanese citizens have a right to resist Israeli occupation, ward off its attacks and recover occupied territories." The report also noted that Lebanese President Michel Aoun and Prime Minister Saad Hariri attended the summit of the League of Arab States in Amman on 29 March. Before the summit, five former presidents and prime ministers of Lebanon sent a letter to the League of Arab States in which they emphasised the commitment of Lebanon to international resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 1701, rejected illegal arms and expressed support for the Baabda Declaration and the disassociation policy. The report also stated that the participation of Hezbollah and other Lebanese groups in the conflict in Syria continued to breach the disassociation policy of Lebanon.

On 16 May, UNIFIL head of Mission and Force Commander Major General Michael Beary on met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon, Gebran Bassil, in Beirut. Beary expressed his appreciation for the commitment and continued

support by the government of Lebanon to the implementation of resolution 1701 and noted the government's commitment towards the extension of state authority and strengthening engagement in south Lebanon. Beary briefed Bassil on the overall situation in UNIFIL's area of operations, and reported that UNIFIL has successfully increased its outreach to the local population as well as intensified its engagement with local leaders and communities. They also discussed the strategic partnership between the LAF and UNIFIL, and the need for increased support to the LAF, UNIFIL's strategic partner. Beary reiterated UNIFIL's continued commitment to work with the LAF in supporting the LAF Capabilities Development Plan. He also highlighted the importance of UNIFIL's liaison and coordination mechanism, the tripartite forum, and reported that the parties have reaffirmed their commitment to resolution 1701 and have stressed their clear intent to continue working with UNIFIL to further strengthen security along the Blue Line.

The most recent tripartite meeting, chaired by Beary, was held on 20 April. Senior officials from the LAF and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) met at the UN position at Ras al-Naqoura. Discussions focused on issues related to the implementation of UNIFIL's mandate, air and ground violations, the situation along the Blue Line and its ongoing visible marking, and the issue of withdrawal of Israeli forces from northern Ghajar. Beary said that UNIFIL will continue to work closely with the parties in order to move the Blue Line marking process forward, "which will be in the long-term interest of both parties."

Ambassador Nikki Haley (US) visited the area of UNIFIL's operations on 8 June. According to media reports, Beary, when briefing Haley, told her that the situation in the border area was stable and did not require further intervention. An argument erupted when Israel's deputy chief of staff, Major General Aviv Kochavi, interrupted to say that UNIFIL was not doing its job properly and was afraid of entering the villages and towns of southern Lebanon and confronting Hezbollah. Kochavi then reportedly called on Haley

to help change UNIFIL's mandate to enable it to disarm Hezbollah. Israeli officials reportedly shared secret intelligence information with Haley regarding Hezbollah's presence south of the Litani River, in violation of resolution 1701; Beary denied the information. Reports also indicate growing discontent with UNIFIL on the part of Israeli officials.

On 14 June, Lebanon's cabinet approved a new law that extended its parliament's term by almost a year until next May, avoiding a legislative vacuum when the chamber's current term ends on 20 June. The law was approved by parliament two days later. The law was finally agreed to after months of debate among parliamentarians. According to the new law, among other changes, a proportional representation system will be created for parliament. The next elections, the first in eight years, are likely to take place next May.

Key Issues

The main issue is that while the situation is relatively calm, there has been little progress toward the key objectives of resolution 1701 nearly 11 years after its adoption, including a permanent ceasefire.

A central issue is that Hezbollah and other non-state actors continue to maintain weaponry that directly hinders the government's exercise of full authority over its territory, poses a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability, and contravenes its obligations under resolutions 1559 and 1701. In that context, the ongoing crisis in Syria, with Hezbollah's involvement on the side of the regime, and the flow of arms from Syria to Hezbollah remain of great concern.

Options

Given that the Council is set to adopt a resolution renewing the mandate of UNIFIL in August, it is likely that Council members will regard the July meeting as an opportunity to take stock of the situation on the ground and issues concerning the mission's operation in preparation for the August renewal.

Council Dynamics

The Council has been united in its position

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2305 (30 August 2016) renewed UNIFIL's mandate for an additional year and requested the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of UNIFIL by February 2017. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) expanded UNIFIL by 15,000 troops and expanded its mandate. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, the disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, the extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory, and free and fair presidential elections. Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2016/15 (1 November 2016) welcomed the election of President Michel Aoun in accordance with the Lebanese constitution and stressed that the formation of a unity government and the election of a parliament by May 2017 are critical for Lebanon's stability. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/374 (28 April 2017) was the semi-annual report on the implementation of resolution 1559. S/2017/201 (8 March 2017) was on the implementation of resolution 1701.

Lebanon (1701)

that UNIFIL contributes to stability between Israel and Lebanon, especially in the context of the current Syrian crisis. Council consensus includes support for Lebanon's territorial integrity and security, condemnation of acts of terrorism, and recognition of the

crucial role the LAF play in responding to security challenges.

The US appears to be increasingly interested in focusing the Council's attention on the threats posed by Hezbollah and Iran in the region. This, coupled, with the new

administration's staunch support of Israel, may provoke the US to re-examine UNIFIL's mandate, as requested by Kochavi during Haley's visit.

France is the penholder on Lebanon.

Israel/Palestine

Expected Council Action

In July, the Council will hold its regular quarterly open debate under the agenda item, "the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question."

Key Recent Developments

On 20 June, the Council held its monthly meeting on the Middle East. Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nikolay Mladenov briefed on the implementation of resolution 2334 on Israeli settlements, which requested the Secretary-General to brief on its implementation every 90 days. In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the occupation, president of the Council, Bolivia, invited additional speakers: Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul-Gheit and Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, who represented the Elders, an independent group of global leaders working together for peace and human rights. At the request of the US, Michael Doran, a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute, was also invited to brief.

Mladenov reported that while resolution 2334 had called on Israel to "cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem", there had been a sizeable increase in settlement-related announcements as compared with the previous reporting period, with plans for nearly 4,000 housing units moving forward and 2,000 tenders issued. While there had been a sharp drop in the number of Palestinian-owned structures demolished in Area C, the monthly average of demolitions in East Jerusalem since the beginning of 2017 remained at the same level as 2016, when demolitions reached a 15-year record. Mladenov reported that violence remained a hallmark of the conflict, and while during the reporting period the security situation on the

ground remained relatively calm—no rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel and the Israel Defense Forces had not conducted any airstrikes inside Gaza—according to OCHA, 17 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces in various incidents, while one Israeli soldier was killed in a car ramming attack on 6 April and an Israeli policewoman was killed in a shooting and stabbing attack on 16 June, among other incidents. He reported that Palestinian officials and media outlets affiliated with Fatah continued to commemorate perpetrators of past terror attacks against Israeli civilians, while Hamas leaders also continued what he described as their "deplorable practice" of celebrating recent attacks against Israeli civilians as heroic, while noting that some Israeli officials had also employed provocative rhetoric. On Gaza, he said that heightened intra-Palestinian tensions, resulting in an increasingly dangerous humanitarian situation, raised serious concerns about the prospect of another conflict. Gaza, he warned, "is a tinderbox," adding that "if and when it explodes, it will have devastating consequences for the population and derail all efforts at advancing peace."

Voting took place in the West Bank on 13 May, in local elections that a number of political factions, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine boycotted. Fatah, the ruling party of the Palestinian Authority (PA), maintained a majority of local council seats, although independent lists scored a higher number of votes. A 53 percent voter turnout was reported. Elections were held only in the West Bank, and not in the Hamas-governed Gaza Strip, as Hamas leaders had rejected the legitimacy of the poll on the basis that elections should only be held after reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah is achieved. Following the

May poll, the PA cabinet decided that supplementary municipal elections would be held on 10 October in the Gaza Strip, as well as on 29 July in 66 West Bank councils where elections were not held on the regular election day.

On 11 June, Israel's security cabinet approved a request by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to cut by roughly a third the electricity it provides to Gaza. The move is expected to shorten the daily average hours of electricity received by Gaza's two million residents, which is currently roughly four hours. The PA cited Hamas's failure to pay for power supplies as the reason for the cuts. The decision is causing concern that it could trigger a humanitarian crisis in Gaza and incite another armed conflict between Israel and Hamas. The day after the decision was made, Hamas warned that the cuts would be dangerous and would lead to an "explosion."

A mass hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails ended on 27 May, after Israel offered a compromise deal to meet some of the prisoner's demands. Marwan Barghouti, a Palestinian political figure convicted and imprisoned for murder by an Israeli court in 2002, led 800 hunger strikers for 41 days with two main demands: more frequent visits, and prisoners to be allowed to speak to their families on public phones under supervision. The strikers are among some 6,000 Palestinians held in Israeli jails for offenses related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On 6 June, Ambassador Nikki Haley (US) addressed the Human Rights Council (HRC) during its 35th session, reiterating that the US is still considering whether to withdraw from the Geneva-based body. The US accuses the HRC of having an anti-Israel bias and of allowing countries that violate human rights to gain membership. Asked at an event later that day, Haley refused to say whether the US would

UN DOCUMENTS ON ISRAEL/PALESTINE Security Council Resolution S/RES/2334 (23 December 2016) condemned Israeli settlements and was adopted with 14 votes in favour and a US abstention. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7977 (20 June 2017) was the briefing by Mladenov, Aboul-Gheit, Brahimi and Doran.

Israel/Palestine

commit to staying in or leaving the HRC.

In regional developments, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed financial embargoes on the Gulf state on 5 June. The countries accuse Qatar of providing support to groups they consider to be terrorist organisations, and object to Qatar's support of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, as well as its relations with Iran. Qatar provides strong financial aid to the OPT and is home to many Hamas leaders. The increased pressure on Qatar to cut ties with Hamas, and the rift between Qatar and Egypt, which borders Gaza, could worsen the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 35th session, the HRC considered the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the status of implementation of the recommendations addressed to all parties since 2009 regarding accountability and justice for violations of international law in the OPT, including East Jerusalem (A/HRC/35/19). The vast majority of the more than 700 relevant recommendations reviewed were made to Israel, with the report concluding that Israel's overall rate of full implementation was only 0.4 percent, 1.3 percent by Palestinian authorities, and 17.9 percent by the UN and the international community. In an accompanying statement on 19 June, the High Commissioner called the "extremely low implementation rate on all sides...discouraging." He reiterated that ongoing human rights violations and the non-implementation of the recommendations "are not merely symptoms of the conflict, but further fuel the cycle of violence" which can only be broken

by addressing the root causes, including ending the occupation and addressing Israel's security concerns.

In June, the HRC also considered the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, following her visit to the OPT/State of Palestine from 17 to 22 September 2016 (A/HRC/35/30/Add.2). The report concluded that while there have been improvements in efforts to combat and prevent violence against women, women are still subject to violence and discrimination from the Israeli occupation (both directly and indirectly) and a system of violence emanating from embedded patriarchal social norms and outdated legal frameworks.

Key Issues

The overarching issue is determining how the Council can encourage the resumption of direct negotiations between the parties to achieve a two-state solution, including promoting compliance with resolution 2334 to salvage prospects for this outcome.

Options

Given the difficult Council dynamics on this issue and the objection of the new US administration to much of the Council's engagement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the most likely option will be to merely receive the briefings and hold the open debate with no outcome.

Council Dynamics

The US has made it known that it plans to staunchly defend Israel at the UN; it fiercely

opposes resolution 2334, and what it deems to be a pervasive anti-Israel bias by the UN. Therefore, it is likely to prevent any Council action regarding the resolution's implementation as well as other efforts to produce outcomes in the Security Council and elsewhere in the UN system. The US is keen to turn the Council's attention towards Israel's foes: Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas. At the 20 June meeting, Haley proposed that Hamas should be condemned in a Council resolution, with consequences for anyone that continued to support it.

Several other Council members are attempting to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. France held the second meeting of its international conference on the conflict on 15 January, which brought together more than 70 foreign ministers and culminated in the adoption of a statement proclaiming support for a two-state solution. Also, Russia announced last year its intention to host direct talks between the parties. Among elected members, Egypt has voiced its willingness to act as a broker between the parties and is likely to play a leading role in any implementation of the Arab Peace Initiative. Sweden appointed an envoy in February to address the conflict.

Israel remains staunchly opposed to international initiatives on the issue, including involvement by the Council, preferring direct negotiations with the Palestinians, while the PA favours international participation.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In July, the Council expects to receive a briefing from the Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Key Recent Developments

The war in Yemen continues amidst stalled efforts to resume political talks. The country's humanitarian crisis as a result of the conflict, meanwhile, continues to worsen in the face of a cholera outbreak. The war pits the Houthis, a Zaydi Shiite rebel group, and forces loyal to

former President Ali Abdullah Saleh against the Yemeni government and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition.

In May, Ould Cheikh Ahmed sought to broker an agreement that would avert a possible coalition offensive against the critically important city of Hodeidah. Hodeidah's port, the largest in Yemen, takes in 70 percent of humanitarian aid and commercial goods imported into the country; thus a prolonged battle or the port's destruction would have a disastrous impact on the already severe

humanitarian crisis, according to UN officials.

From 22 to 24 May, Ould Cheikh Ahmed visited Sana'a to discuss his proposals for Hodeidah with the Houthis and the General People's Congress (GPC), the political party of Saleh. During the transfer from the airport to the UN compound following his arrival, Ould Cheikh Ahmed's convoy came under attack, with two vehicles apparently hit by gunfire. Over the three days the Special Envoy was unable to meet with the Houthi/GPC negotiation delegation.

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2216](#) (14 April 2015) established an arms embargo on the Houthis and forces loyal to Saleh. [Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2017/7](#) (15 June 2017) stressed the importance of keeping all of Yemen's ports functioning, including Hodeidah. [S/PRST/2016/5](#) (25 April 2016) welcomed the start of peace talks in Kuwait. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7954](#) (30 May 2017) was a briefing by Special Envoy and OCHA head Stephen O'Brien and Yemeni civil society representative, Radhya al-Mutawakel. [Security Council Letter S/2017/476](#) (5 June 2017) expressed the Yemeni government's support for the Special Envoy's proposals for Hodeidah port and to resume salary payments.

Yemen

The Special Envoy's proposal for Hodeidah, which he explained during his 30 May Council briefing and in remarks to the press after the session, entails two main components. On the security side, neutral Yemeni military officials would oversee Hodeidah. The proposal also envisions resuming payment of salaries to civil servants, millions of whom have not been paid for months, by placing all customs revenues collected at Hodeidah, along with revenues from other points of entry such as Aden, Mokha and Mukalla, and telecommunications revenues in Sana'a, into a dedicated salary fund. Ould Cheikh Ahmed noted that the proposals would address the Yemeni government and coalition's concerns of arms smuggling through Hodeidah and the Houthis' use of revenues collected from imports at the port, while ensuring that the port does not come under the control of the coalition alone.

On 5 June, a Yemeni government letter to the Council expressed the government's full support for the Special Envoy's recent proposals. That same day, the Houthis announced that they would no longer meet with the Special Envoy, who they accused of being biased.

Yemen's humanitarian crisis, which is the greatest in the world with 19 million people requiring humanitarian assistance and seven million at risk of famine, was made worse by the outbreak of a cholera epidemic that began in late April. On 15 May, authorities in Sana'a declared a state of emergency for the city and called for international help. A joint UNICEF-World Health Organization statement on 24 June said that the cholera outbreak had exceeded 200,000 suspected cases, increasing at an average of 5,000 a day. More than 1,300 people had died from the outbreak, which has affected almost all of Yemen's 22 governorates.

On 17 June, at least 22 civilians were reported killed or injured by airstrikes on a market in Sa'ada governorate. There were no reported military targets in the market's proximity, according to a 21 June statement by Yemen Humanitarian Coordinator Jamie McGoldrick. He also flagged damage caused by military activities to power lines to the main water supply system of Dhmar City on 19 June, affecting one million people.

Tensions continued between Yemeni President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi and local southern authorities considered close to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which the Yemeni government accuses of supporting secessionist groups. On 31 May, fighting led to UAE-backed forces reportedly taking control

of Aden's airport from government forces.

During the Council's 30 May briefing, Ould Cheikh Ahmed stated that the sides were not close to a comprehensive agreement. OCHA head Stephen O'Brien told the Council that "the situation on the ground has continued to spiral downwards towards total social, economic and institutional collapse". Yemeni civil society representative Radya al-Mutawakel of the Mwatana Organization for Human Rights also addressed the Council, calling on it to fulfil its responsibilities to protect civilians and to revive the peace process, while she outlined a number of urgent concrete actions that the Council could take. Following closed consultations, Council members issued "press elements", calling on the parties to ensure access through all of Yemen's ports, including Hodeidah.

On 15 June, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the humanitarian situation and confidence-building measures regarding Hodeidah port. The statement stressed the importance of keeping all of Yemen's ports functioning, including Hodeidah. The Council called on the parties to engage constructively with the Special Envoy on his proposal for increasing commercial and humanitarian shipments, including new arrangements for the management of Hodeidah, while urging an agreement for resuming payments of government salaries. The Council further encouraged rapid agreement on the timely installation of cranes at Hodeidah to increase the port's capacity, and increased access to Sana'a Airport for lifesaving humanitarian supplies and movement of urgent humanitarian cases.

Council members also discussed Yemen's humanitarian crisis at a 16 June Arria-formula meeting regarding the risk of famine in the conflict-affected areas of northeast Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 16 June, the Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteurs on water and sanitation, Léo Heller, and on health, Dainius Pūras, warned that urgent action by Yemen and the international community is needed to improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation in order to address the spiralling cholera outbreak in the country. According to Heller and Pūras, the breakdown of water and sanitation systems in Yemen has exacerbated the spread of the water-borne disease, forcing people to use unsafe water sources.

Key Issues

How the Council can support efforts to achieve a cessation of hostilities and convince

the parties to resume peace talks remains a key issue. Related to this are the implications of the Houthis' announcement that they will not engage with the Special Envoy, and therefore how to promote UN-brokered consultations with the rebel group and the GPC.

Yemen's humanitarian crisis and violations of international humanitarian and human rights law remains a key issue. This includes the functioning of Hodeidah port, obstructions on humanitarian aid and commercial goods into and throughout Yemen, and civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure.

Another issue is the expansion in Yemen of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as a result of the vacuum created by the war.

Options

The Council could closely monitor the parties' actions in accordance with its recent presidential statement, and be prepared to exert further pressure through a follow-up statement or resolution, if they fail to follow through with the Council's calls. In the case of an escalation of violence and a worsening of the humanitarian situation, the Council may adopt a resolution demanding, inter alia, an immediate cessation of hostilities.

In light of the lower level of Council attention on Yemen compared to other major wars and humanitarian crises such as Syria or South Sudan, the Council could decide to start receiving monthly briefings on Yemen's humanitarian crisis.

Another option, which may increase pressure on the parties to compromise and the Council's focus on the conflict, is a visiting mission to Yemen and the region.

Council and Wider Dynamics

While members agree that there is no military solution to the conflict and all express concern about the humanitarian crisis, bilateral interests and relationships, particularly with Saudi Arabia, has made the Yemen conflict difficult for the Council to address as members are cautious in taking positions that are contrary to Saudi preferences. These have included Saudi Arabia's opposition to any new Council resolutions on the conflict. Other than the annual resolution to renew the Yemen sanctions regime, the Council's 15 June presidential statement was its first decision on Yemen in nearly 14 months.

Within the Council, Egypt, as a member of the coalition, champions Yemeni government

Yemen

and coalition positions. Russia has, at times, highlighted Houthi perspectives, arguing that Council outcomes should be more even-handed, but has also sometimes raised this

conflict in the face of criticism regarding its role in Syria. Sweden has been keen to see the Council become more proactive and played an important role pressing for the recent

presidential statement.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen. Japan chairs the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee.

Burundi

Expected Council Action

In July, the Council may consider whether to renew the authorisation of a UN police component for Burundi, with a ceiling of 228 officers, as stipulated by resolution 2303 of 29 July 2016. The police component was intended to monitor the security situation and support the monitoring of human rights. However, it has never been deployed as Burundi has ignored the resolution and refused to allow the component to be established. The component proposal remains a divisive issue in the Council. Resolution 2303 was adopted with 11 votes in favour and four abstentions (Angola, China, Egypt and Venezuela).

Authorisation for the police component expires on 29 July.

Key Recent Developments

The security and political situation in Burundi, which deteriorated sharply after April 2015 when Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza announced that he would run for a controversial third term, remains dire. Serious human rights abuses continue to be committed daily with impunity, mainly by the government and the Imbonerakure, the youth group of the Nkurunziza's party.

Oppression and state control over Burundian society has reportedly increased, manifested by arbitrary deprivations of life, enforced disappearances, cases of torture, and arbitrary detention on a large scale. These actions are taking place in an environment where freedoms of expression, association and assembly are virtually non-existent. On the political front, Nkurunziza has set up a commission to propose a revision of Burundi's constitution; the commission is due to report within six months. Nkurunziza has indicated that he is not ruling out a fourth term.

Meanwhile, there seems to have been little

headway in the Inter-Burundian dialogue, led by the East African Community (EAC) and facilitated by former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa. Mkapa reported on difficulties mediating the Dialogue to an EAC heads of state summit that took place on 20 May, and has publicly criticised the Burundian government's unwillingness to engage with opponents.

On 13 March, Council members issued a press statement expressing their concern about the humanitarian and human rights situation in the country and the slow progress in the Inter-Burundian Dialogue.

The Secretary-General appointed Michel Kafando (Burkina Faso) as his Special Envoy on 5 May. His responsibilities include coordinating UN political efforts to promote peace and sustainable development in Burundi and assisting the EAC mediation efforts.

On 20 June, the Council was briefed on the situation in Burundi by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun. Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland) also briefed in his capacity as chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration. During his briefing, Zerihoun reported that the situation in Burundi remains volatile, human rights abuses are continuing to be reported, and there is increasing incitement of hatred and violence by and within the Imbonerakure. Only one Council member, Uruguay, spoke publicly following the briefing, with other members reserving their engagement for the consultations that followed.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 35th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on 15 June with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, which provided an oral briefing. The commission expressed regret at the lack of cooperation from Burundian officials and at not being able to visit the country, particularly given that Burundi is an

HRC member. Nevertheless, the commission's investigations were able to confirm human rights violations including extrajudicial executions, acts of torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary arrests and detention, and enforced disappearances. These violations are reinforced by hate speech delivered by state officials and members of the ruling party, ongoing impunity for perpetrators, and a climate of widespread fear. In addition, severe restrictions on civil liberties persist. The commission is set to present its final report to the HRC at its 36th session in September 2017.

Key Issues

The immediate issue for the Council is whether to reauthorise the police component established by resolution 2303, despite Burundi's continued blocking of the component's deployment.

A related issue, if the Council does not reauthorise the police component, is how to avoid perceptions that Burundi can ignore Council resolutions without consequences.

The larger issue is ensuring that the situation in Burundi does not descend into chaos and further violence, including ethnically motivated violence.

On the political front, a main issue is finding an avenue for renewed and productive engagement between the UN and Burundi in order to solve the political crisis.

Options

One option is for the Council to reauthorise the police component as set out in resolution 2303. In doing so the Council could:

- re-engage with Burundi on ways to implement resolution 2303, or find a new platform for engagement if that proves impossible; or
- adopt targeted sanctions against spoilers of the political dialogue, those responsible for human rights violations, and those

UN DOCUMENTS ON BURUNDI Security Council Resolution S/RES/2303 (29 July 2016) established a UN police component in Burundi of 228 officers for an initial period of one year. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/165** (23 February 2017) was on Burundi. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7978** (20 June 2017) was a briefing on the situation in Burundi. **Security Council Press Statement SC/12750** (13 March 2017) expressed concern about the humanitarian and human rights situation in the country and the slow progress in the Inter-Burundian Dialogue.

Burundi

that block the implementation of resolution 2303.

Another option would be for the Council to let the authorisation of the police component expire, and seek to engage Burundi on other ways to fulfil the role envisaged for the police component, for example supporting an expanded role for the African Union (AU) in human rights monitoring.

Other options to address the crisis in Burundi include:

- coordinating efforts with the AU and EAC in engaging with Burundi to advance the Inter-Burundian Dialogue and facilitate

both the UN and AU deployments in the country; and

- requesting the Secretary-General to engage with the Burundian government directly, and supporting Special Envoy Kafando in his efforts to provide for a greater UN role in the Inter-Burundian Dialogue.

Council Dynamics

With Burundi currently entrenched in its opposition to the implementation of resolution 2303—a position well known prior to the adoption of the resolution—the Council is at an impasse with respect to its engagement

with the country. Some Council members stress the need to establish a new basis for renewed engagement with Burundi. Other members are concerned that failing to reauthorise the police component would establish a precedent of Council resolutions being ignored with impunity. At the same time, Council members fear that the current state of affairs in Burundi—sporadic violence accompanied by severe human rights violations—could become a “tolerable” status quo for the international community.

France is the penholder on Burundi.

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In July, the Council is expected to consider the Secretary-General’s 30-day assessment of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the deployment and future requirements of the Regional Protection Force (RPF).

The UNMISS mandate expires on 15 December 2017.

Key Recent Developments

The onset of the rainy season in South Sudan has limited mobility and reduced large-scale military offensives, but the unilateral ceasefire declared by President Salva Kiir on 22 May has not been implemented and violence continues across the country. The Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) has consolidated its territorial control despite the rains. The humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains dire, as limits on humanitarian access, mass displacement, famine, and food insecurity are compounded by the rains and a cholera outbreak.

The lack of progress in the deployment of the Juba-based RPF—which was authorised on 12 August 2016 to use all necessary means to facilitate freedom of movement, to protect the airport, and to protect civilians—remains an ongoing problem. RPF infantry battalions

are set to arrive by late July. However, there has still not been agreement regarding the RPF’s mandate to protect Juba International Airport, with the government consistently reiterating that it needs to retain control over safeguarding the airport.

On 12 June, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) held an Extra-Ordinary Summit of Heads of State held in Addis Ababa. South Sudan was a major focus of the summit, and of the resulting communiqué in which IGAD:

- strongly condemned violence perpetuated by government forces and armed groups in South Sudan;
- decided to convene a meeting of RPF troop-contributing countries, the South Sudanese government and the UN, to resolve the impediments to the RPFs deployment; and
- decided to convene a High-level Revitalization Forum to “discuss concrete measures, to restore permanent ceasefire, to full implementation [sic] of the Peace Agreement and to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period”.

On 21 June, the Council was briefed by

Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom (via VTC). Lacroix began by emphasising that the current humanitarian crisis in South Sudan is the result of the decision by all parties to continue fighting. He emphasised that unless a ceasefire was implemented and the political process restarted, it would not be possible to hold free, fair and peaceful elections in 2018.

Haysom’s briefing focused on efforts to restart the political process. He welcomed the IGAD summit and communiqué and affirmed the UN’s support for the High-level Revitalization Forum. Regarding the national dialogue, Haysom emphasised that while it could be an important nation-building exercise, the dialogue must be preceded by an inclusive political process that ended the current fighting. Haysom reported that he was working on a joint action plan for South Sudan with the chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Festus Mogae, and the African Union (AU) High Representative for South Sudan, Alpha Konaré. Haysom hoped that the plan would be presented to regional leaders in the coming weeks.

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.7982** (21 June 2017) was a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom. [S/PV.7950](#) (24 May 2017) was a briefing of the Council by Special Representative for South Sudan David 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/2017/505** (15 June 2017) was the 90-day report 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

Key Issues

The immediate issue for the Council is whether it can support IGAD's efforts to revitalise the political process, either by exerting pressure on the South Sudanese government and opposition to implement a ceasefire and embrace an inclusive process, or by combining both incentives and disincentives.

Another issue is how to complete the 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 adopt a presidential statement that:

- strongly condemns violence perpetuated by government forces and armed groups in South Sudan, and calls for an immediate ceasefire;
- welcomes the communiqué of the 12 June IGAD Summit; and
- emphasises the Council's united support for the High-level Revitalization Forum.

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, possibility including logistical support, for the national dialogue. Conditions might include implementation of a ceasefire, the government's participation in a revived and inclusive political process, and confirmation that the national dialogue will have a neutral chairperson.

Council Dynamics

The Council remains divided on its approach to South Sudan. There is no consensus on the degree to which the Council should welcome the national dialogue as it is currently presented by the government of South Sudan. Some Council members are concerned that a focus on the national dialogue may come at the cost of reviving the inclusive political process. Council members also remain divided over whether to incentivise cooperation by the South Sudanese government, or whether the targeting of civilians by SPLA forces necessitates a strong response by the Council to push the South Sudanese government towards peace.

During the 21 June briefing, some Council members welcomed the IGAD communiqué and emphasised the need for all parties to commit to implementation of a ceasefire and participation in an inclusive political process.

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

Colombia

Expected Council Action

Following a request by the government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), in July, the Council expects to adopt a resolution establishing a second special political mission that will be deployed in Colombia.

The mandate of the UN Mission in Colombia expires on 26 September.

Key Recent Developments

Since the January 2016 request of the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP, the Council has been involved in supporting the final stages of the peace process in Colombia. The UN Mission in Colombia was established through resolution 2261 of 25 January 2016, and resolution 2307 of 13 September 2016 approved the Secretary-General's recommendations regarding the size, operational aspects, and mandate of the mission. The mission is tasked with monitoring and verifying the

laying down of arms and, as the international component of the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism along with the parties, monitoring the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. In an 11 May presidential statement, upon its return from its 3-5 May visiting mission to Colombia, the Council reiterated its determination to support Colombia's implementation of the agreement.

The 180-day deadline established by the agreement for the laying down of weapons was extended by the parties through a 29 May joint communiqué. In a press conference in La Guajira (Colombia) on 20 June, Jean Arnault, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Mission in Colombia, and Jeffrey Feltman, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, announced the beginning of the last stage of the laying down of weapons. A ceremony marking the completion of the laying down of individual weapons took place on 27 June. Most of the weapons and unstable explosive

material stored in 949 caches throughout the country will be extracted and destroyed by 1 September. The joint communiqué also established that the mission will extract the containers with weapons from the temporary camps by 1 August, when these camps will become "territorial spaces for training and reintegration". Arnault is expected to brief the Council on 30 June.

Challenges to the implementation of the agreement continue. Some of the supporters of the "no" vote in the October 2016 plebiscite have continued to criticise the agreement despite the changes made to it after the vote. This is particularly relevant given the upcoming legislative and presidential elections in 2018. Non-state armed actors, including paramilitary groups, have taken control of some of the areas vacated by the FARC-EP. A UN official was kidnapped on 3 May in Guaviare by a group of FARC-EP dissidents and at press time he had not been released. On 17 June, an unclaimed terrorist attack in Bogota killed three people.

UN DOCUMENTS ON COLOMBIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2307 (13 September 2016) approved the Secretary-General's recommendations on the size, operational aspects and mandate of the UN Mission in Colombia. S/RES/2261 (25 January 2016) established a political mission to monitor and verify the laying down of arms and the bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/6 (11 May 2017) followed the Council's visiting mission to Colombia. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/539 (23 June 2017) was the last report on Colombia. Security Council Letter S/2017/481 (7 June 2017) attached a letter by President Santos regarding the second special political mission.

Colombia

Over the last six months, the parties have emphasised their different priorities in implementing the agreement. While FARC-EP representatives urged progress on physical protection for their members as well as guarantees of their socioeconomic and political reintegration, the government emphasised the importance of delivering on the commitment to lay down weapons and abide by the established timelines.

In the agreement, and at the request of the FARC-EP, the parties asked the UN to deploy a second, follow-on political mission with a mandate to verify the political and socioeconomic reintegration of ex-combatants and their protection, including from paramilitary groups. According to the agreement, this mission, which would be deployed after the current mandate ends, would have a duration of three years. The sequencing and mandating for a second UN mission in Colombia was raised during the May visiting mission to Colombia. Several Colombian congress people raised with Council members the importance of starting the planning now for the second mission in order to avoid any gaps in between the two mandates. The sense of urgency was also echoed by the representatives of the FARC-EP. Civil society members suggested that the successor mission should deploy a strong field presence throughout Colombia and be given a mandate to monitor the implementation of the commitments in the agreement regarding human rights and women's participation.

Even though the agreement specifies (point 6.3.3.) that the mission is to be authorised by the UN General Assembly, the parties decided to make their request to the Security Council, as they did with the first mission. A 5 June letter from Colombia's President Juan

Manuel Santos to the Council conveyed the request of the parties to establish the verification mission, with a regional and local presence, by 10 July. A 23 June report of the Secretary-General stated that the current mission is in a position, if so authorised by the Council, "to initiate some tasks of the second mandate on a provisional basis, in order to satisfy the request of the parties to move forward the verification tasks to coincide with the start of the reintegration process."

Key Issues

Ensuring that the agreement is implemented in full, particularly in light of the need for congressional approval of peace-related legislation, is a key issue.

Seeking to mitigate the polarised political environment in Colombia is a relevant issue for the Council, whose members have emphasised the importance of securing the gains made as part of the peace process and ensuring their irreversibility.

The volatile security situation in some areas and the high level of impunity for violence against community leaders and human rights defenders in rural areas, often related to the presence of non-state armed groups in the territories vacated by the FARC-EP, is an important issue.

Options

The Council could adopt a resolution:

- establishing a UN verification mission in Colombia and authorising preparations for the mission to be initiated immediately;
- requesting the Secretary-General to provide recommendations regarding the mission's functions, size, structure and operational aspects; and

- authorising, on a provisional basis, the current UN Mission in Colombia to initiate some tasks of the second mandate regarding the verification of socioeconomic and political reintegration of FARC-EP members and security guarantees for them and the communities most affected by the conflict.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Even though the Council was not involved in the process that led to the November 2016 peace agreement, it has been united in supporting the verification of key measures within the agreement. The level of participation in the 3-5 May visiting mission to Colombia (with 13 permanent representatives participating) shows the degree of support for what Council members consider a "success story". During the visiting mission, Council members repeatedly emphasised the positive example that the Colombian peace process provides to countries around the world and indicated that the challenges it faces are common to the implementation of any peace agreement.

Following the recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations regarding the sequencing of mandates, resolution 2261 established the UN Mission in Colombia but requested the Secretary-General to present detailed recommendations regarding the size, operational aspects and mandate of the mission, including through preparations on the ground. The 23 June report recommends that the Council follows this example so that the Secretary-General can provide recommendations after an integrated planning process informed by practical experience on the ground is conducted.

Somalia and Eritrea

Expected Council Action

In July, the Chair of the Somalia and Eritrea 751/1907 Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), will deliver his 120-day briefing to the Council.

Key Recent Developments

The Council has begun discussions on a review of the sanctions measures on Eritrea, in line with its intentions outlined in resolution 2317 of 10 November 2016. This resolution was adopted following receipt of the final report

of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG), which for the third year in a row had found no evidence that Eritrea was supporting the Al-Shabaab terrorist group. During negotiations on the resolution, China proposed language requesting the SEMG to present

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA AND ERITREA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2317 (10 November 2016) was on Somalia and Eritrea sanctions with ten votes in favour. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7925** (13 April 2017) was a briefing by the Chair of the 751/1907 Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan). **Sanctions Committee Documents S/2016/920** (7 October 2016) was the report on Eritrea of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea. **S/2016/919** (7 October 2016) was the report on Somalia of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea.

Somalia and Eritrea

a report within 120 days to the Committee on recommendations for lifting sanctions imposed on Eritrea, including benchmarks and a timeframe. This proposal was supported by Angola, Egypt, Russia and Venezuela. However, this was not acceptable to some members. As penholder, the UK brokered a compromise text that included expressing the Council's "intention to review measures on Eritrea in light of the upcoming midterm update by the SEMG due by 30 April 2017 and taking into account relevant Security Council resolutions", which some members preferred as it did not prejudice the outcome of the review. Angola, China, Egypt, Russia and Venezuela all abstained, and the resolution was adopted with only ten affirmative votes.

On 17 May, Council members met in consultations to begin discussions on the review. The UK apparently wanted to take stock of the positions of all members in this meeting, with the intention of drafting a presidential statement that would enshrine a road map on the way forward on Eritrea sanctions. Council members held one subsequent meeting to brainstorm about potential elements of such a text. While this would probably not change existing requirements on Eritrea, it could include confidence-building measures and ideas for improving the Council's engagement with Asmara. At press time, a statement had not yet been drafted. Given that sanctions are imposed on Eritrea not only due to alleged support to Al-Shabaab, but also due to ongoing conflict between Eritrea and Djibouti, the process of drafting a presidential statement became complicated by developments in the situation between those countries.

Qatar, which had been mediating the conflict between Eritrea and Djibouti since 2010, withdrew its 450 peacekeeping forces from the border area on 14 June and announced that it was no longer going to mediate between the feuding countries. The Eritrean government has said that Qatar did not provide an explanation for its "hasty" withdrawal. On 16 June, Djibouti accused Eritrea of occupying disputed territory along the border after the Qatari withdrawal. The move by Qatar came after Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed financial embargoes, among other measures, on 5 June. The African Union (AU) Commission said in a statement the following day that Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat was available to Djibouti and Eritrea to help "normalise their

relations and promote good neighbourliness", and that the Commission, in consultation with the parties, had undertaken to deploy a fact-finding mission on the border. Security Council resolution 2317 had encouraged further mediation efforts by Qatar in order to resolve the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea and the question of Djiboutian combatants missing in action since the clashes in 2008, determining that their dispute continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region.

Ethiopia called for a 19 June briefing under "any other business" on the situation following Qatar's withdrawal. Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayé-Brook Zerihoun briefed Council members. Following the meeting, Council President Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorentty Soliz (Bolivia) delivered agreed elements to the press. He said that the members of the Council welcomed the intention of the AU to deploy a fact-finding mission, and looked forward to working with the AU to maintain an atmosphere of calm and restraint. He said that the members of the Council called on the parties to resolve the border dispute peacefully, in a manner consistent with international law, and said the Council would welcome the consideration of future confidence-building measures, and will continue to follow the situation closely.

The last Chair's briefing took place on 13 April. Umarov told the Council that the Committee had received notifications related to the arms embargo on Somalia and was working on the issues of sanctions violations and actions of armed groups. He announced a possible future visit of the Committee to the Horn of Africa. During the reporting period, the SEMG had again found no links between Al-Shabaab and Eritrea, he said, but it had raised concerns about disappearances of Djiboutian troops after the Djibouti-Eritrea border clashes and had examined Eritrea's compliance with relevant Council resolutions.

On 11 May 2017, UK, Somalia, the UN and the AU co-chaired a conference in London on Somalia, attended by 42 friends and partners of Somalia. The conference focused on the agreement of a Security Pact, adopted by Somalia and the international community, which will allow for long-term security based on mutual accountability. A subsequent communiqué addressed various issues including sanctions, in which it stated that while Somalia is able to import weapons and ammunition

under the terms of the partially suspended UN arms embargo, partners also committed to continuing to support Somalia's ongoing efforts to build stronger weapons management and control capacities. It stated that these actions are an important step towards creating the conditions for any further suspension of the arms embargo, on which the Federal Government of Somalia will continue to engage with the Security Council.

Key Issues

The key issue on sanctions is determining how to approach the review of Eritrea sanctions, especially in light of Qatar's withdrawal as mediator between Eritrea and Djibouti and its withdrawal of troops from the border. Relatedly, the Council must now ascertain whether the withdrawal necessitates any action on its part to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

Another issue is assessing the Federal Government of Somalia's management of arms and ammunition and implementation of maritime interdiction measures regarding arms and charcoal.

Options

One option for the Council would be to resume discussions on a presidential statement concerning the review of Eritrea sanctions. Such a statement could also provide an opportunity for the Council to address the new tensions between Eritrea and Djibouti. However, given the various complications with such a text, the Council could instead opt to adopt a statement focusing only on the Djibouti border issue and urging that specific confidence-building measures be taken by the parties.

Council Dynamics

Regarding sanctions, the Council is divided between those members who believe it should reconsider sanctions measures against Eritrea, in light of the absence of any findings by the SEMG of evidence of support to Al-Shabaab, and those who stress that Eritrea's other activities in the region also warrant sanctions. All Council members would like to see Eritrea increase its engagement with the UN, though some advocate a visit by the chair of the Sanctions Committee as a first step, and others view this as being insufficient and object to a potential solo visit by the chair, arguing that he must be accompanied by the sanctions coordinator.

Notable Dates for July

REPORT DUE	REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN JULY	REQUESTING DOCUMENT
26 May	SG report on options for authorisation and support for African Union peace support operations S/2017/454	S/2016/2320
27 June	OPCW report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (Syrian chemical weapons)	S/RES/2118
28 June	SG progress report on the Joint Investigative Mechanism (Syrian chemical weapons)	S/RES/2319
29 June	SG report on UNOWAS (UN Office on West Africa and the Sahel)	S/2016/1128 S/2016/1129
30 June	SG report on MONUSCO (DRC)	S/RES/2348
3 July	SG report on Iraq compensation fund	S/RES/1956
10 July	SG report on UNFICYP (Cyprus)	S/RES/2338
10 July	SG report on UNAMI (Iraq)	S/RES/2299
10 July	SG reports on implementation of resolution 1701 (Lebanon)	S/RES/1701
11 July	Iraq/Kuwait: missing persons and return of property	S/RES/2107
12 July	SG report on MINUSTAH (Haiti)	S/RES/2350
17 July	SG report on UNMISS (South Sudan)	S/RES/2327
20 July	SG report on the humanitarian situation in Syria	S/RES/2139

MANDATES EXPIRE		RELEVANT DOCUMENT
29 July	Burundi UN police officers component	S/RES/2303
31 July	UNAMI (Iraq)	S/RES/2299
31 July	UNFICYP (Cyprus)	S/RES/2338

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