

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Egypt holds the presidency in August and has scheduled one open debate and three briefings. The open debate will be on [peacekeeping operations and sustaining peace](#). The first briefing is on [preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons](#), with briefers expected from CTED, UNODC and INTERPOL; the second on the [evaluation of sanctions regimes](#) where Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayè-Brook Zerihoun is expected to brief; and the third on the [cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations](#) focused on the League of Arab States with a briefing by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, and possibly also UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

Regarding African issues there will be a briefing and consultations on the activities of the joint force of the [Group of Five for the Sahel](#) (G5 Sahel) as requested in resolution 2359. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed will brief on her recent joint visit to the DRC and Nigeria with the African Union Special Envoy on [Women, Peace and Security](#), Bineta Diop.

There will be discussions on several other African issues this month, including:

- [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), on the 1533 Sanctions Committee;

- [Guinea-Bissau](#), on the activities of UNIOGBIS, the 2048 sanctions regime and the PBC country-configuration on Guinea-Bissau;
- [Sudan and South Sudan](#), on the progress in implementing UNISFA's mandate;
- [Libya](#), update on UNSMIL and the 1970 Sanctions Committee; and
- [South Sudan](#), update on UNMISS.

In addition, an adoption is anticipated to reauthorise AMISOM in [Somalia](#).

A number of Middle East issues are on the programme of work. Members are expecting the monthly [Syria](#) briefings on the humanitarian and political situations and on chemical weapons. There will also be the regular briefing and consultations on Israel/Palestine, as well as consultations on UNIFIL and a renewal of the mission's mandate in [Lebanon](#).

Regarding European situations, the Council will hold its quarterly meeting on UNMIK in [Kosovo](#).

The chair of the 1718 Sanctions Committee is expected to provide the quarterly briefing on the [DPRK](#). In addition, a draft resolution may be adopted strengthening sanctions against the DPRK.

Over the month the Council will closely follow events in [Burundi](#), [CAR](#) and [Yemen](#) and additional meetings may be scheduled.

The Security Council and Climate Change: An Ambivalent Relationship

The year 2017 marks the tenth anniversary of the Security Council's earliest consideration of climate change. During the past decade, it has been a matter of some controversy whether or not the Council is an appropriate body to address this issue. Numerous Council members have underscored the security implications of climate change, but China, Russia and other countries have expressed concern that the Council's engagement on this matter encroaches on the prerogatives of other UN organs, notably the General Assembly

and the Economic and Social Council. Despite the political tensions associated with addressing climate change, the Council has over time managed to engage with this issue in two open debates, in formal meetings covering a wide range of emerging threats to peace and security, and in informal Arria-formula meetings.

The first time the Council focused explicitly on climate change was on 17 April 2007 during a ministerial-level open debate on the relationship between energy, security and climate, which was

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The Security Council and Climate Change: An Ambivalent Relationship

convened by the UK and included a briefing by then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (S/PV.5663). Sharp divisions coloured the debate. The UK representative said that “an unstable climate will exacerbate some of the core drivers of conflict, such as migratory pressures and competition for resources”, a view echoed by other members who drew a clear linkage between climate change and the Council’s conflict prevention responsibility. However, Council members China, Russia and South Africa questioned the compatibility of the issue with the Council’s mandate under the UN Charter, with China saying that although “climate change may have certain security implications... generally speaking it is in essence an issue of sustainable development”. Both the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77+China sent letters to the Council expressing concern about infringement on the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The statements of the wider membership (38 member states spoke in addition to the 15 Council members) largely mirrored the divisions among Council members.

The Council again took up climate change on 20 July 2011, in an open debate initiated by Germany that featured a briefing by Secretary-General Ban and the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (S/PV.6587). As in 2007, differences of opinion regarding whether the Council was the appropriate forum to discuss climate change were again on display among the 15 Council members and the 47 non-Council members participating. While several countries supported Council discussion of the issue, China and Russia—as well as countries such as Argentina (on behalf of the G77), Egypt (on behalf of the NAM), and India—reiterated their concerns about encroachment on the prerogatives of other UN entities they perceived as more appropriate to address the issue.

One interesting element of both the 2007 and 2011 debates was the view of the Pacific Islands small island developing states. While most of these states are G77 members, they did not share the same level of concern about encroachment as other G77 members. Countries making statements on behalf of this group emphasised that rising sea levels induced by climate change threaten their very existence. For example, in the 2011 debate, while expressing understanding and concern about encroachment, President Marcus Stephen of

Nauru said, “we are more concerned about the physical encroachment of the rising seas on our island nations.” He proposed that the Council should request the appointment of a Special Representative on climate and security, and “an assessment of the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to such impacts [of climate change] so that vulnerable countries can be assured that it is up to the task.” The Council has pursued neither measure.

The divisions among Council members on this issue were highlighted by Germany’s efforts to negotiate a presidential statement in the lead-up to the July 2011 debate. Negotiations continued during the meeting in an effort to adopt the statement for the occasion, an outcome that was not clear for much of the debate. Early in the meeting, the Ambassador Susan Rice (US) complained about the inability of the Council “to reach consensus on even a simple draft presidential statement that climate change has the potential to impact peace and security in the face of the manifest evidence that it does.” Rice added that the Council’s failure to reach agreement “is pathetic, short-sighted and... a dereliction of duty.”

Ultimately, agreement was reached by the end of the proceedings (S/PRST/2011/15). The statement reaffirmed that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change “is the key instrument for addressing climate change”. At the same time, it expressed concern that possible adverse effects of climate change may in the long run aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security. The statement further noted the importance of including conflict analysis and contextual information on the possible security implications of climate change in the Secretary-General’s reports, “when such issues are drivers of conflict, represent a challenge to the implementation of Council mandates or endanger the process of consolidation of peace”.

The difficult nature of the July 2011 debate and negotiations was instructive to members who wanted to address climate change in the Council. This was the last time the Council held a formal meeting specifically on climate change. Since then, one common strategy has been to hold briefings or debates focusing broadly on non-traditional threats to peace and security, including climate change and other issues. For example, on 23 November 2011, Portugal convened a high-level briefing on a number of inter-related issues

constituting “New challenges to international peace and security and conflict prevention”, including HIV/AIDS, climate change, and transnational organised crime (S/PV.6668). Likewise, on 30 July 2015, New Zealand held an open debate on “peace and security challenges facing small island developing states”, during which climate change, transnational organised crime, drug and human trafficking, and piracy were among the issues raised (S/PV.7499). And on 22 November 2016, Senegal chaired an open debate on “water, peace and security” (S/PV.7818) which explored such issues as the relationship between climate change and water scarcity, the management of transboundary waters, and the harmful impact that conflict can have on access to clean water.

Another way in which Council members have addressed climate change is through Arria-formula meetings. Since these are not formal meetings of the Council, the political tensions about discussing the issue are dampened, allowing members to hear the views of a diverse and informed group of stakeholders in an informal setting. On 15 February 2013, the UK and Pakistan co-hosted an Arria-formula meeting on the “security dimensions of climate change” that included the participation of civil society as well as member states from outside the Council. Ban, who championed efforts to combat climate change during his two terms, was one of the briefers, particularly noteworthy since it is highly unusual for a Secretary-General to brief in this format. Similarly, Spain and Malaysia co-hosted an Arria-formula meeting on 30 June 2015 on the role of climate change as a threat multiplier for global security.

The future of the Council’s engagement with climate change is uncertain. Political divisions persist and may be magnified by the position of the current US administration, which recently announced its decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on climate change. However, there are indications of a growing willingness in the Council to recognise the security implications of climate change. For example, resolution 2349 on the Lake Chad Basin, adopted shortly after the Council’s visiting mission to the region in early March, included a paragraph recognising the negative impact of climate change, as well as other factors, on stability in the region. The US was the only member that expressed discomfort with the paragraph, but it agreed to accept it with some modification.

Status Update since our July Forecast

Sudan (Darfur)

On 3 July, the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee met to discuss the report of the chair, Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko (Ukraine), on his 14 to 18 May 2017 visit to Sudan (SC/12903). Yelchenko briefed Council members in consultations on the work of the committee on 24 July.

Children and Armed Conflict

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict met on 6 July to discuss its draft conclusions on the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict in the Philippines (S/2017/294). It met again on 13 July to adopt its conclusions on Somalia (S/AC.51/2017/2). The Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, briefed Council members on 6 July under "any other business" on the impact of the conflict in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on children.

Counter-Terrorism

In a press statement on 7 July, Council members condemned a terrorist attack at a checkpoint in Rafah, Egypt, where at least 26 officers and soldiers from the Egyptian armed forces were killed and injured (SC/12905). On 20 July, the Council adopted resolution 2368 renewing and updating the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions regime. The resolution included a number of updates intended to better reflect and counter the evolving threat presented by Al-Qaida and ISIL (S/PV.8007). These focused on addressing foreign terrorist fighters returning to their respective countries of origin; trafficking in persons and kidnapping for ransom by Al-Qaida and ISIL; and measures to restrict Al-Qaida and ISIL financing. The resolution also provided updates concerning the Office of the Ombudsperson, including regarding communications among the Ombudsperson, the Sanctions Committee and petitioners. Through an annex to the resolution, eight individuals or organisations were added to the ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List. On 24 July, Council members issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attack in Lahore, Pakistan that occurred that same day and resulted in more than 80 people killed or injured, with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan claiming responsibility (SC/12925).

Colombia

On 10 July, the Council adopted resolution 2366 establishing the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, a successor mission to the current UN Mission in Colombia (S/PV.7997). The adoption followed a 5 June letter (S/2017/481) to the Council and the Secretary-General from Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón conveying the request of the parties to establish the mission in accordance with the Final Agreement. The resolution also calls on the UN Mission in Colombia to start "provisional work anticipated by the Verification Mission...within its current configuration and capacity" up until the time its mandate ends on 25 September.

Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

On 12 July, the Working Group convened to discuss the AU roadmap for "silencing the guns," a plan to end conflict in Africa.

Yemen

On 12 July, the Council was briefed via video teleconference by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and in person by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien (S/PV.7999). The director-generals of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and of the Food and Agricultural Organization, José Graziano da Silva also briefed by video teleconference. After further discussion in consultations, Council members issued elements to the press, which reiterated members' support for the Council's 15 June presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/7) and recognised the need for all parties to convert the words of the text into action.

Central African Republic

In a meeting on 13 July (S/PV.8001), the Council adopted a presidential statement that "expresses concern at the ongoing clashes between armed groups in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the targeting of civilians from specific communities, UN Peacekeepers and humanitarian workers" (S/PRST/2017/9). At the subsidiary level, the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee met on 21 July to discuss the six-monthly report of the committee's Panel of Experts. In a press statement on 24 July Council members

condemned the attack on a MINUSCA convoy in Bangassou (Mbomou) on 23 July by anti-Balaka elements that resulted in one peacekeeper killed and three injured (SC/12926). On 27 July, Council members discussed recent developments in the CAR under "any other business".

UNOWAS

On 13 July, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative and head of UNOWAS, briefed the Council (S/PV.8002) on recent developments in the region and the semi-annual UNOWAS report (S/2017/563). After public statements by Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uruguay, further discussions followed in consultations. On 24 July, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/10), initiated by Senegal, in follow-up to the briefing (S/PV.8009). The statement, inter alia, welcomed developments in The Gambia and Côte d'Ivoire, highlighting the role for UNOWAS to support, as necessary, Côte d'Ivoire following the recent withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping operation to the country. The statement highlighted the terrorism threat in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin and regional efforts through the Multinational Joint Task Force to combat Boko Haram, and the initiative of the Group of Five for the Sahel to establish a joint force. The presidential statement, among other elements, also encouraged further progress in implementing the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. In this regard, it emphasised the importance of the UN and partners enhancing their programmatic capacity and focus on cross-border challenges, as well as reiterating the importance of UNOWAS's collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission.

Iraq

On 13 July, Council members issued a press statement in which they welcomed the announcement by the Iraqi authorities on the liberation of Mosul (SC/12911). The statement also called on the government of Iraq to stabilise liberated areas across the country and called on all Iraqis to work towards national reconciliation. On 14 July, the Council adopted resolution 2367, extending the mandate of UNAMI for another year (S/PV.8003). The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to conduct an independent external assessment of the structure

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and staffing of UNAMI and related resources in an effort to ensure that the UN mission and the UN country team fulfil their mandated tasks more efficiently. On 17 July, Special Representative and head of UNAMI Ján Kubiš briefed the Council on the latest developments in Iraq and on the situation in Mosul (S/PV.8004).

Cyprus

On 18 July, Council members met in consultations on the situation in Cyprus. Elizabeth Spehar, Special Representative and head of UNFICYP, briefed on the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/586) and on developments related to the UN mission. Espen Barth Eide, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus, briefed on the latest developments in the unification talks. On 27 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2369 which extended the mandate of UNFICYP for another six months (S/PV.8014). The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of the mission and provide, within four months, recommendations on how the mission should be optimally configured to implement its mandate.

Haiti

On 18 July, Sandra Honoré, Special Representative and head of MINUSTAH briefed the Council on the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/604) and recent developments (S/PV.8005). Honoré called on the Haitian authorities to restore the country's judiciary and to bolster its independence.

Council members emphasised the importance of the smooth transition to a successor mission in October. Council members also addressed the issue of cholera and some also called on the international community to contribute to the cholera fund.

Peace and Security in Africa

On 19 July, the Council held an open debate on "Enhancing African capacities in the areas of peace and security" (S/PV.8006 and Resumption 1). The open debate focused on policies and procedures that can provide concrete and effective support for building the capacities of African countries in the field of peace and security. The Council was briefed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smaïl Chergui. The basis for the open debate was a concept note circulated by China (S/2017/574) as well as the 26 May report of the Secretary-General that identified four options through which UN assessed contributions could be used to help meet the requirements of supporting AU peace support operations (S/2017/454).

Liberia

On 24 July, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/11) on the Liberia peacebuilding plan and upcoming presidential elections (S/PV.8010). The statement, which was drafted by both the US, the penholder on Liberia, and Sweden, which chairs the Liberia country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, was intended to represent a sign of continued

Council support for Liberia in its peacebuilding efforts. It commended the progress made in restoring peace, security and stability in the country and the commitment of the people and government of Liberia to developing democracy.

Afghanistan

In a press statement on 24 July, Council members condemned the terrorist attack that took place in Kabul that same day, which resulted in more than 70 people killed or injured, for which the Taliban claimed responsibility (SC/12924).

Israel/Palestine

On 25 July, the Council convened for its regular quarterly open debate on the Middle East (S/PV.8011 and Resumption 1). Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov briefed, focusing on the increased tensions around the Haram al-Sharif compound in Jerusalem and related violence. A day earlier, Mladenov briefed Council members on the same issue under "any other business", at the request of Egypt, France and Sweden. He also briefed under "any other business" on 12 July on the situation in Gaza, at the request of the Secretariat.

Burundi

On 26 July, the Council received a briefing, followed by consultations, on the situation in Burundi from Special Envoy Michel Kafando and Ambassador Jürg Lauber of Switzerland, the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration (S/PV.8013).

Sanctions

Expected Council Actions

Egypt has scheduled a briefing in August under the agenda item "General issues relating to sanctions". A representative of the

Department of Political Affairs will brief, and a resolution addressing a number of matters applicable to sanctions across the board is expected to be adopted as the briefing's

outcome. At press time, the draft resolution was being negotiated.

UN DOCUMENTS ON SANCTIONS **Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/1732 (21 December 2006) welcomed the report of the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions. S/RES/1730 (19 December 2006) established "a focal point" within the UN Secretariat to process submissions for delisting under Council resolutions involving targeted sanctions. S/RES/1699 (8 August 2006) addressed the desirability of increased cooperation with Interpol in the context of UN sanctions. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.7620 (11 February 2016) was a debate on sanctions organised by Venezuela. S/PV.7323 (25 November 2014) was a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman and Interpol Secretary-General Jürgen Stock regarding sanction organized by Australia. S/PV.4713 (25 February 2003) was a debate on sanctions organised by Germany. S/PV.4394 and Resumption 1 (22 and 25 October 2001) was an open debate on sanctions organised by Ireland. S/PV.4128 (17 April 2000) was an open debate on sanctions organised by Canada. **Note by the President of the Security Council** S/2000/319 (17 April 2000) contained the mandate of the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues of Sanctions. **Other** S/2017/534 (21 June 2017) was a letter from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the President of the Security Council requesting the circulation, as a document of the Security Council, of the annexed assessment of the High Level Review. S/2016/102 (2 February 2016) was a concept note for a debate on sanctions organised by Venezuela. S/2015/432 (12 June 2015) was a letter from the Permanent Representatives of Australia, Finland, Germany, Greece and Sweden to the Secretary-General requesting the circulation, as a document of the Security Council, of the annexed compendium of the High Level Review of United Nations Sanctions. S/2014/793 (5 November 2014) was a concept note for a briefing on sanctions organised by Australia. S/2006/997 (18 December 2006) was the final report of the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions.

Sanctions

Key Recent Developments

Leading up to the briefing during its August presidency, Egypt organised an Arrria-formula meeting on 5 July on “Enhancing the Design Process of UN Sanctions: Perspectives from All Stakeholders”. According to a concept note, the meeting was called to provide an “opportunity for a discussion on the enhancement of UN sanctions design process, including perspectives of previously or currently targeted countries” and to “bring together representatives from permanent and non-permanent members of the UNSC, wider United Nations membership, and Regional Organizations”. The meeting was held in an open format and was webcast by UNTV. The briefers included ambassadors of two countries for which Security Council sanctions have been terminated recently, Lewis G. Brown of Liberia and Amadu Koroma of Sierra Leone, and of one member state currently under sanctions, Ignace Gata Mavita wa Lufuta of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Representatives of civil society also briefed.

Both ambassadors of states formerly under sanctions expressed their conviction that Security Council sanctions contributed to their respective countries’ return to democracy. In the two-hour discussion that followed, most members of the Council took the floor. The broad range of topics covered included aspects of the working methods of sanctions committees; common threads running through different sanctions regimes, such as the need for flexibility and periodic adjustments of sanctions measures; and the uneven and sometimes faulty implementation of the sanctions. Several members stressed the need for sanctions to be part of an overall broader strategy for the Council’s approach to a given situation.

A considerable number of non-members of the Security Council attended the meeting. Several addressed the gathering, including some who spoke on behalf of groups of states particularly interested in specific aspects of sanctions.

Developments over the Years

The Security Council considers sanctions—as envisaged in Article 41 of the UN Charter—an important tool to enforce its decisions. In the UN’s first several decades, Chapter VII sanctions were imposed only twice, on Rhodesia in 1966 and South Africa in 1977, but

following the end of the Cold War their use has become quite extensive.

There are now 13 active sanctions regimes; the all-time high, from March 2015 until January 2016, stood at 16. Collectively, the work of sanctions committees, all of which are currently chaired by permanent representatives of elected Council member states, accounts for a significant portion of members’ time and resources. Sanctions are nowadays discussed virtually every month, in briefings, consultations and meetings of the different sanctions committees, but almost always in the context of a specific sanctions regime.

Following a period in the 1990s when several sanctions regimes were created very quickly and in an ad hoc fashion, members realised that the Council lacked methodology and sometimes even consistent terminology that would ensure clarity and coherence from one sanctions resolution to another. In early 1997, the eight elected members chairing the sanctions committees at the time started meeting informally to share experience and expertise, and to discuss the possibilities of devising more uniform guidelines and procedures, rationalising the use of existing resources and achieving better sanctions implementation. In consultations in November of that year, the Council discussed sanctions thematically for the first time, rather than only considering one sanctions regime at a time. This in turn led to the Council’s adopting a number of documents on working methods related to sanctions.

Sanctions became a thematic issue on the Council’s agenda when Canada, during its April 2000 presidency, organised an open debate on the topic. On the same day, the President of the Council issued a note in which members of the Council decided to establish an informal working group of the Council to develop general recommendations about how to improve the effectiveness of UN sanctions.

In the 17 years since adding to its agenda the thematic item “General issues relating to sanctions” the Council has held a few meetings under this item; two of them as open debates.

After the first open debate in 2000, Ireland organised an open debate on sanctions on 22 October 2001 during its presidency with a focus on the design of targeted sanctions. (Numerous members at large asked to speak, and the debate resumed on 25 October.)

Germany held a follow-up to the two open debates in a Council debate on 25 February 2003. More recently, Australia held a briefing in November 2014 and Venezuela held a debate in February 2016.

Much of the methodological work on and discussions of UN sanctions unfolded outside the Council. Starting with a March 1998 meeting in Switzerland, different member states hosted international meetings in quick succession, addressing specific aspects of sanctions. The Swiss meetings, held in Interlaken in 1998 and 1999, were focused on the design and technicalities of financial sanctions. In November 1999, a meeting focusing on arms embargoes and targeted sanctions was held in Bonn, and its follow-up took place in December 2000 in Berlin. The next large international initiative on sanctions was undertaken by the Swedish government with meetings in April and November 2002. Each of these meetings was attended by government representatives, experts, and members of civil society, and they became known, after the locations where the seminars were held, as the Interlaken, the Bonn/Berlin, and the Stockholm processes. Each produced a handbook-type report intended for use by the Council and other relevant actors. Building on these efforts, the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions transmitted its final report on 18 December 2006, which the Council, on 21 December, welcomed in resolution 1732, deciding “that the Working Group has fulfilled its mandate”.

Several more government-driven initiatives, aimed at improving sanctions effectiveness while also addressing their side effects, followed. These included the 2005/2006 study of targeted sanctions and enhancing due process of sanctions regimes led by Germany, Sweden and Switzerland; the ongoing work of 11 Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions; and, in 2014–2015, a High Level Review of UN Sanctions, initiated by Australia, Finland, Germany, Greece and Sweden, with its compendium containing 150 recommendations published in 2015, followed by an assessment document published this June.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Since the late 1990s, there has been an interesting pattern to the dynamics surrounding UN sanctions. Most methodological exercises, as described above, originated outside

Sanctions

the Council, and although most Council members participated in these meetings, the Council as a whole kept a certain distance from these discussions. Also, the Council never formally took on board the results of these processes, though several of their respective outcomes were published as Council documents in the form of annexes to a letter to the Secretary-General or the president of the Security Council. Taken together, the different series of initiatives played an important role in the development of the Council's sanctions methodology, and the presentation

of their outcomes provided the opportunities for most of the Council's public discussions of the general issues of sanctions.

Elected members have tended to lead on these initiatives, such as organising public discussions; they also led the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions from 2000 through 2006.

On the whole, permanent members have seemed more reluctant to engage in initiatives aimed at establishing sanctions methodology applicable to all sanctions regimes. They have, however, often taken the lead in designing or

modifying specific sanctions regimes.

The Egyptian initiative appears to reflect a desire for the Council, when needed, to be able to address issues common to all or most sanctions regimes, such as the methodology of sanctions committees or their monitoring bodies, or the Council's ability to adjust sanctions in accordance with the changing environment. It is also partly a response to concerns from the wider UN membership about states' capacity to implement sanctions and their need for assistance and guidance in this respect.

DPRK (North Korea)

Expected Council Action

In August, the chair of the 1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi (Italy), is due to brief Security Council members in consultations on the Committee's work. In addition, the Council may adopt a resolution in response to the DPRK's 4 July missile test. At press time, bilateral negotiations on the draft text were ongoing between China and the US. Additional meetings may be called for if there is another missile launch during the month.

Key Recent Developments

There has been an increase in the pace of missile tests conducted by the DPRK this year, with signs of significant technological advances in the development of intermediate-range and submarine-launched missiles. The most recent test, on 4 July, is believed to have been an intercontinental ballistic missile, although Russia has disputed this. As the below table shows, the Council has reacted to almost all of the DPRK's 2017 missile tests by issuing a press statement condemning the launches and calling on members to increase their efforts in implementing sanctions. Generally, stronger action such as additional sanctions or

listing new individuals and entities has been taken only after major new violations or a quick succession of several violations. The day after the 4 July test, the Council broke with its practice of meeting in closed consultations and held a public meeting with a briefing by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča. Members were unanimous in their condemnation of the missile launch, but some members stressed the need to combine sanctions with dialogue, while others referred to the DPRK as a global threat and focused on the need for further significant measures.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, who were meeting in Moscow on 4 July, issued a joint statement reiterating their desire for the DPRK, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the US to begin negotiating a solution to the regional crisis. They suggested that the US should refrain from military exercises that could inflame tensions on the Korean peninsula. On 5 July, the ROK and the US conducted a joint exercise and fired missiles into the ROK's territorial waters in reaction to the DPRK's missile launch.

On 28 April, the Council discussed the denuclearisation of the DPRK at a high-level meeting chaired by US Secretary of State Rex

Tillerson, who said in his national statement that the time had come "to put new pressure on North Korea to abandon its dangerous path." He urged the Council to act and said there was a need to work together to adopt a new approach.

The most recent resolution, adopted on 2 June, added 14 individuals and four entities to the 1718 consolidated sanctions list. It condemned "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.

On 17 July, the ROK proposed re-opening inter-Korean communication channels, including military contacts, and encouraged the DPRK leadership to respond positively.

A report released on 21 March by 13 UN agencies and international NGOs operating in the DPRK called for \$114 million to meet the urgent needs of half of the population (13 million). Donations to the DPRK for humanitarian aid have been affected by the sanctions due to complications created by banking restrictions and some donors' perceptions that such aid allows the government to focus its resources on building weapons rather than spending on its population.

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2356](#) (2 June 2017) condemned the nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development activities, including missile launches by the DPRK. [S/RES/2345](#) (23 March 2017) extended the Panel of Experts' mandate. [S/RES/2321](#) (30 November 2016) strengthened sanctions on the DPRK in response to its 9 September 2016 nuclear test. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7996](#) (5 July 2017) was a public meeting on the situation in the DPRK. [S/PV.7932](#) (28 April 2017) was a meeting on the situation in the DPRK chaired by US Secretary of State Tillerson. [Security Council Press Statements SC/12831](#) (22 May 2017) condemned the DPRK's 21 May missile launch. [SC/12821](#) (15 May 2017) condemned the DPRK's 28 April and 13 May missile launches. [SC/12801](#) (20 April 2017) condemned the DPRK's 15 April missile launch. [SC/12780](#) (6 April 2017) condemned the DPRK's 4 April missile launch. [SC/12763](#) (23 March 2017) condemned the DPRK's 19 March engine test and 21 March failed missile launch. [SC/12741](#) (7 March 2017) condemned the DPRK's 5 March missile launches. [SC/12716](#) (13 February 2017) condemned the DPRK's 19 October and 11 February missile launches. [Other S/2017/337](#) (18 April 2017) was the concept note for the 28 April Council meeting. [S/2017/150](#) (27 February 2017) was the report from the Panel of Experts under its previous mandate.

DPRK (North Korea)

DATE	TEST	COUNCIL REACTION
11 February	Medium-range ballistic missile; landed in the Sea of Japan	Press statement on 13 February
5 March	Four Scud missiles; three falling in Japan's EEZ	Press statement on 7 March
19 March	Ballistic missile engine test	
21 March	Missile launched but immediately exploded	Press statement on 23 March condemning the 19 March engine test and 21 March missile launch
4 April	Medium-range ballistic missile	Press statement on 6 April
15 April	Medium-range ballistic missile that exploded	Press statement on 20 April
28 April	Missile that disintegrated	
13 May	Ballistic missile	Press statement on 15 May condemning the 28 April and 13 May launches. Met in consultations for a briefing on 16 May.
21 May	Medium-range ballistic missile	Press statement on 22 May. Met in consultations for a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman on 23 May.
28 May	Scud-class ballistic missile	Adopted resolution on 2 June listing new individuals and entities.
8 June	Surface-to-ship missiles	
4 July	Ballistic missile, possibly an intercontinental missile.	Public briefing on 5 July. Unsuccessfully attempted a press statement.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 23 May, the chair of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Cardí, presented his 90-day report on the work of the Committee. On 10 May, the Committee held informal consultations to discuss the recommendations in the latest report from its Panel of Experts. It also continued the series of regional outreach meetings initiated in March as a follow-up to paragraph 44 of resolution 2321, adopted in response to the 9 September 2016 nuclear test, which requested the Committee "to hold special meetings on important thematic and regional topics and member states' capacity challenges". The Committee met with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on 31 March; the Eastern European Group on 10 April; the African Group on 1 May; the Western European and Others Group on 12 May; and the Asia-Pacific Group on 26 May.

The Committee announced on 1 June that it had amended four entries on its sanctions list, and on 5 June it announced the amendment of another two entries.

The latest report from the Panel of Experts is due in early August. Although usually only the final report is made public, it is possible this mid-term report may be made public so that member states will have access to the recommendations from the Panel that might be relevant to their implementation of the sanctions regime.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Catalina Devandas-Aguilar, travelled to DPRK from 3 to 8 May in what was the first visit to the country by an independent expert mandated by the Human Rights Council (HRC). In a statement on 15 May she welcomed a number of positive steps taken by the DPRK on disability issues but maintained that "there is still a long way to go to realize the rights of persons with disabilities in the DPRK". Devandas-Aguilar is set to submit a report to the HRC in March 2018.

In a statement on 21 July, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, Tomás Ojea Quintana, said that the protection of human rights should be central to the ROK's policy of rapprochement with the DPRK, noting ongoing allegations of arbitrary detention, human trafficking, and enforced disappearances. He also expressed alarm at the surge in detentions and forced repatriations of North Koreans caught in China. In addition, Ojea Quintana noted that many observers he met with, both in the ROK and elsewhere, reminded him of "the need to consider the impact of international as well as unilateral sanctions on the [North Korean] population, and the extent to which they integrate human rights protection concerns." Ojea Quintana's statement came at the conclusion of his visit to Seoul from 17 to 21 July. Denied access to the DPRK since his appointment in March 2016, Ojea Quintana visited the ROK to engage

with its new administration and to collect human rights information, including from people who have recently fled the DPRK. Ojea Quintana will report to the General Assembly in October 2017

Key Issues

In the face of the flagrant violations of Council resolutions and the fact that the DPRK has continued to upgrade its nuclear capabilities and ballistic missiles, the effectiveness of the Council's approach is an issue. A related issue is whether serious consideration should be given to other options, such as making a greater effort to engage with the DPRK, combined with the sanctions approach.

An issue following the 4 July missile launch is the different interpretations by Council members as to what sort of missile was launched. The US almost immediately confirmed the DPRK's claim that it had fired an intercontinental ballistic missile, but Russia has disputed this claim. In a letter sent to the Council shortly after the launch, Russia described the North Korean projectile as an intermediate-range rocket. As a result of this difference, it was not possible to issue a press statement following the launch, and negotiations on a draft resolution

DPRK (North Korea)

are likely to also be affected.

In the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, ensuring strict implementation of the sanctions continues to be a key issue. A forthcoming issue is likely to be getting agreement on recommendations in the Panel's mid-term report given the heightened sensitivity of this issue.

A further issue is the potential humanitarian impact of the sanctions, which might be exacerbated if further sectoral sanctions are imposed.

Options

One option is to continue to use sanctions as the main approach in responding to the DPRK's missile launches. A resolution imposing additional measures, such as an oil embargo, a ban on hiring DPRK workers abroad, and further restrictions on transportation and exports would be a possibility in this context.

Another option for the Council is to request the Secretary-General to play a good offices role in bringing together the key actors.

The potential for this issue to escalate beyond the region could prompt some

members to consider informal discussions on new approaches as a possible option.

In search of a new approach, exploring possible forums for discussing new regional security mechanisms is a possible option.

An option related to the briefing of the chair of the sanctions committee is a wider discussion of implementation of the Council's resolutions on the DPRK and the potential impact of further sanctions.

For the Committee, making the Panel of Experts mid-term report public and moving toward getting agreement on its recommendations are both immediate options.

Council Dynamics

The administration of US President Donald Trump has made the DPRK a priority issue, with involvement at the highest levels of government. The DPRK was discussed when Council members met with Trump earlier this year. Trump told members that the status quo was unacceptable and that the Council must be prepared to impose additional sanctions. There has also been a discernible

shift to stronger public statements, with US Ambassador Nikki Haley most recently stating during the 5 July meeting that the US would be willing to use the full range of its capabilities, including military means. Other Council members have stressed the importance of a peaceful and diplomatic solution rather than a military one.

China has long promoted a dual-track approach of denuclearisation and the establishment of a peace mechanism on the peninsula. It has also been pushing a "suspension-for-suspension" proposal that would allow for the suspension by the DPRK of its nuclear and missile-related activities and the suspension by the ROK and the US of any joint military exercises. Russia, which has been supportive of the Chinese position, is showing signs of wanting to play a greater role on the DPRK. It also appears to be more resistant to further sanctions on the DPRK following the imposition of US sanctions on two Russian firms for aiding the DPRK's weapons programme.

The US is the penholder on the DPRK.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In August, Council members expect to receive the monthly briefings on political and humanitarian developments in Syria as well as on chemical weapons.

Key Recent Developments

Despite the announcement in early May by Iran, Russia and Turkey of the establishment of four de-escalation areas in Syria, a 4-5 July meeting in Astana ended without agreement on the delineation of the areas or their monitoring mechanisms. On 7 July, the US and Russia, along with Jordan, announced the establishment of a ceasefire agreement in southwestern Syria. While details regarding the implementation of the agreement are still being discussed, Russian military police units have deployed along the perimeter of the de-escalation zone. On 22 July, Russia and Egypt

brokered a ceasefire agreement in Eastern Ghouta. Despite the deployment of Russian military police, the government reportedly conducted airstrikes the next day. Taking control of Eastern Ghouta has been a longstanding objective of the government given its strategic location near Damascus. The different actors on the ground, which include Al-Nusra Front's latest iteration Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) along with moderate opposition groups, make it challenging to separate out the armed groups protected by the terms of the ceasefire.

Although violence has subsided in some parts of Syria, the situation has continued to deteriorate in other areas including the east of Al-Sweida. Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura has repeatedly warned against the parties taking advantage of existing ambiguities to make territorial gains or divert resources to other strategic battlefronts. During consultations

on 14 July, de Mistura also emphasised the need to ensure that the de-escalation areas are a temporary measure and highlighted the importance of preserving the national unity and territorial integrity of Syria.

From 10 to 14 July, de Mistura convened the seventh round of the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva. Briefing Council members on 14 July via video teleconference, de Mistura described incremental progress, particularly regarding the holding of joint meetings with opposition delegations before and during the last round of talks in which common positions were identified. He also described how the government has so far not provided concrete thinking on issues in the different baskets, particularly on a proposal regarding the schedule for drafting a new constitution.

During the sixth round of talks, de Mistura had proposed the establishment of a technical

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/2017/623 (21 July 2017) was on the humanitarian situation. Security Council Letters S/2017/567 (30 June 2017) was the FFM's report on the Khan Shaykhun attack. S/2017/564 (29 June 2017) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. S/2017/552 (23 June 2017) was the JIM's sixth report. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8015 (27 July 2017) was a briefing by Mueller. General Assembly Document A/RES/71/248 (21 December 2016) established the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism.

Syria

process of expert meetings to address constitutional and legal issues, but the government has refused to participate in these meetings between rounds. De Mistura conveyed his intention to address these issues and to push for direct engagement by the parties in the next round of talks in early September. On 13 July, France proposed the establishment of a contact group composed of permanent members of the Council and regional actors to support UN efforts to broker a political settlement.

The investigation of the 4 April attack in Khan Shaykhun conducted by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), while not able to visit the site given security considerations, concluded that a large number of people, some of whom died, were exposed to sarin or a sarin-like substance used as a chemical weapon. On 29 June, the OPCW informed the Council that with the destruction of an aircraft hangar in June, the OPCW has verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by Syria. However, the OPCW continues to consider Syria's initial declaration as incomplete.

On 6 July, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Edmond Mulet, the head of the three-member leadership panel of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), briefed Council members in consultations. Final substantive reports are expected in October, but Mulet presented a progress report regarding incidents involving the use of chemicals as weapons in two incidents: in Um Housh (on 16 September 2016) and Khan Shaykhun. Speaking to the press after the meeting in consultations, Mulet said that the JIM has been under pressure from some member states, telling them how to do their work and otherwise threatening not to accept their conclusions. He appealed to all member states to allow the JIM to perform its work in an impartial, independent and professional manner.

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council on 29 June on the humanitarian situation in Syria. Despite the drop in violence in some areas of the country, humanitarian convoys continue to be delayed and blocked by bureaucratic restrictions that limit their ability to get to civilians living in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. O'Brien stressed how even if the most egregious restrictions come from the Syrian government, other groups operating in

areas not controlled by the government are also implementing procedures that slow the process or impinge upon humanitarian principles. The creation of the de-escalation areas has so far not resulted in a sustained increase in humanitarian access. According to the 21 July report of the Secretary-General, the number of people displaced across northeast Syria due to the counter-terrorism offensive near Raqqa has grown in June alone to almost 20,000, many of whom were displaced more than once. (It is estimated that 190,081 persons have been internally displaced since 1 April.) At press time Ursula Mueller, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, was expected to brief the Council on 27 July.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—which include the Kurdish armed group YPG—continue their offensive against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Raqqa with the support of the US-led coalition. In a 10 July statement, de Mistura stressed how stabilisation efforts in parts of Syria, particularly the management of areas recovered from ISIL, should not undermine the agenda for a political process guided by resolution 2254. Clashes have occurred between the Turkey-backed Free Syrian Army and the SDF over strategic locations in northern Syria. Turkey has strongly criticised the provision of support by the US to the YPG, which it considers a Syrian offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

After months of increasing tension and direct clashes between HTS and Ahrar al-Sham as well as other moderate opposition groups in Syria, HTS took control of the northern city of Idlib and a strategic border crossing (Bab al-Hawa) in late July. HTS also incurred in territorial losses near the Lebanese town of Arsal, in the border with Syria, after a military operation led by Hezbollah. The area shelters several thousands of Syrian refugees.

On 3 July, the Secretary-General appointed Catherine Marchi-Uhel as head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for international crimes committed in Syria since March 2011.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 28 June, the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed grave concern about the fate of up to 100,000 civilians effectively trapped by the air and ground offensive against ISIL in Raqqa. The High Commissioner noted that the large number of civilian casualties, with conservative estimates of at least 173 killed between 1

and 28 June, "indicates that much more needs to be done by the parties to ensure protection of the civilian population". He further stressed that "civilians must not be sacrificed for the sake of rapid military victories".

Key Issues

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

An important issue is to ensure that the expectations raised by the ceasefire and de-escalation initiatives are fulfilled and improve the living conditions for 13.5 million civilians in need, without promoting a de facto partition of the country. Bringing on board regional actors with influence on the parties but diverging agendas is a related issue.

As the international efforts against ISIL continue, ensuring coherence of stabilisation initiatives with UN efforts aimed at brokering a political settlement is a relevant issue. While some regional and international actors may prioritise expediting the return of refugees to Syria, preserving the right for all Syrians to seek asylum and enjoy refugee protection until conditions are conducive for voluntary return in safety and in dignity is a fundamental issue.

Options

The options at the disposal of Council members are limited because of P5 divisions.

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

Once details are worked out by the countries involved, Council members could be informed about the operationalisation of the ceasefire and de-escalation agreements and discuss whether there is any UN role to play in supporting the monitoring mechanisms needed to enforce them.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The ceasefire agreement in south-western Syria was partly motivated by the priority of the US to protect Israel and Jordan, specifically opposing any role for Iran or its allies near both countries. However, Israel, which occupies the Golan Heights, has expressed its dissatisfaction with the arrangement. On 16 July, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly opposed the ceasefire agreement, claiming that it did not do enough to prevent Iran

Syria

from perpetuating its presence in Syria. Iran has for a long time aimed at establishing a land corridor between Iran and Lebanon through southern Syria, which is perceived as a strategic threat for both Israel and Jordan. Despite difficulties in hammering out an agreement, Iran continues to engage with Russia and Turkey

over the delineation of other de-escalation areas and confidence-building measures.

As has been the case in the past on Syria, Council members' engagement has been limited to following the lead taken by key actors outside the Council. However, if progress on the establishment of de-escalation areas leads

to the deployment of third-party monitoring mechanisms, it is likely that such a decision would be dealt with in the Council. Furthermore, France's initiative to create a contact group to support efforts for a political solution may lead to an increased multilateralisation of actions by member states regarding Syria.

Women, Peace and Security

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council expects a briefing by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed following her 19-28 July joint visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Nigeria with the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop. Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, who were also on the mission, will participate in the briefing.

The UN-AU Visit

The joint UN-AU July visit focused on the importance of women's participation in peace and security processes. Other objectives of the visit included fostering stronger women's mobilisation and bringing greater visibility to the consequences of conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls.

In Abuja, members of the delegation met with acting Nigerian President Yemi Osinbajo and called on the government to intensify its investment in women in the promotion of peace. They also met with the heads of key ministries and with conflict-affected girls, including some of the Chibok girls rescued from Boko Haram. During the visit, the Deputy Secretary-General stressed that urgent action was needed on the meaningful participation of women in peace processes. She also highlighted the importance of advancing gender equality as a precondition for sustainable development for all. Mlambo-Ngcuka and Diop also visited an internally-displaced persons (IDP) camp in Maiduguri, northern Nigeria.

In the DRC the UN-AU delegation focused on strengthening the meaningful participation

of women in peace and security and elections. The delegation met with Vice-Prime Minister Léonard She Okitundu and with women leaders from civil society where they stressed the importance of women's participation in peace making and conflict prevention for sustainable peace. They also visited an IDP camp in North Kivu province, and met with the National Elections Institute authorities.

Recent UN Activity

Deputy Special Representative Lisa Grande and representatives of UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Iraq country team briefed the 2242 Informal Experts Group (IEG) on 14 June. Among the issues covered were the abuses committed against women, including being used as human shields, being executed in public, and being abducted and sold. The overall regression of women's rights in cities occupied by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) was also covered, together with the low participation by women in national reconciliation efforts.

The IEG met on the Lake Chad Basin crisis on 27 February ahead of the Council's visiting mission to Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The members were briefed by the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Edward Kallon, and representatives of the UN country team, UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), and the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). There was particular interest in the demobilisation and reintegration of women and girls who had been associated with Boko Haram, and in early warning and national and regional counter-terrorism efforts to prevent violent extremism. Other

issues that were covered included solutions for forcibly displaced persons and how their return is being managed, and the training of security forces to respond to sexual violence.

In line with resolution 2242—which expressed the Council's intention to invite civil society, including women's organisations, to brief the Council in country-specific situations—civil society representatives from the DRC, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen have briefed the Council during country-specific briefings so far in 2017.

On 2 June, UN Women, the AU Commission, and Germany launched the African Women Leaders Network. This initiative seeks to enhance the leadership of women in the transformation of Africa with a focus on governance, peace and stability.

Council Dynamics

This briefing will be held under the agenda item "Peace and Security in Africa". Women, peace and security issues, particularly around women's participation and sexual violence, are regularly raised during the Council's country-specific discussions on the DRC and Lake Chad Basin, partly due to the work of the IEG. The briefing by the Deputy Secretary-General would be an opportunity for Council members to deepen their understanding of these issues in the DRC and Nigeria.

The Council visiting mission to the Lake Chad Basin is still fresh in members' minds, and the Secretary-General's report on the Lake Chad Basin is expected to be published at the end of August, followed by a presentation to the Council this fall. Members may want Mohammed's assessment of how the role of women and gender inequality have shaped the conflict

UN DOCUMENTS Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2349 (31 March 2017) was on the Lake Chad Basin. S/RES/2348 (31 March 2017) renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 31 March 2018. S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015) addressed women's roles in countering violent extremism and terrorism, improving the Council's own working methods in relation to women, peace and security, and taking up gender recommendations made by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the Global Study. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.7895 (9 March 2015) was the briefing following the Council visiting mission to the Lake Chad Basin

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in northern Nigeria, and the measures being taken to address Boko Haram's use of sexual violence to further its strategic and military objectives. This information could be useful in shaping the Council's discussions, expected in September, of the Lake Chad Basin report.

This briefing could also help shape the

Council's thinking on gender issues in the next few months as it focuses on the possibility of elections in the DRC at the end of the year and the review of UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) requested by resolution 2348 on 31 March 2017, which is expected to be provided to the

Council by 30 September. The issues around sexual violence in the DRC have long been a topic in Council discussions on the DRC, and the information from this women, peace and security-focused visit could help members gain an insight into how the Council might be able to better address this issue in the DRC.

Sahel

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council expects to receive a briefing on the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel), comprising Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Resolution 2359 of 21 June asked the Secretary-General to provide an oral briefing within two months of the adoption on the activities of the G5 Sahel, "including on its operationalization, on challenges encountered and possible measures for further consideration".

Key Recent Developments

The Sahel region continues to experience instability. Over the past year, terrorist and violent extremist groups from Mali have increasingly spread into north-east Burkina Faso and western Niger. In particular, Niger has been under pressure from a triple threat: armed groups in Mali to its west, the conflicts in Libya to its north, and attacks by Boko Haram in the south-east.

At a summit in Bamako on 6 February, the heads of state of the G5 Sahel countries announced their decision to establish a regional force of 5,000 troops to combat terrorism and transnational crime.

On 13 April, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) authorised the deployment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force for an initial period of 12 months. The PSC mandated the force to:

- combat terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking;
- contribute to the restoration of state authority and the return of displaced persons and refugees;
- facilitate humanitarian operations and the delivery of aid to affected populations as much as possible; and
- contribute to the implementation of

development strategies in G5 Sahel countries.

The G5 force is to deploy along the Mali-Mauritania border; the Liptako Gourma border region between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger; and the Niger-Chad border. In its 13 April communiqué, the PSC urged the UN Security Council to approve the deployment of the force and to authorise the UN Secretary-General to "identify the modalities of sustainable and predictable financial and logistical support to be provided to the Force", including through the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

On 15 May, the Secretary-General circulated to Council members the PSC communiqué and the draft concept of operations of the joint force with a letter from the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, conveying the AU request to the Council. On 21 June, the Council adopted resolution 2359, which welcomed the deployment of the G5 force throughout the territories of its contributing countries. The resolution's adoption followed a difficult negotiation over whether the Council should authorise the force and envisage the possibility of using UN assessed contributions to support its budget. Neither was included in the final text. The resolution encourages bilateral and multilateral partners to support the force and to expeditiously convene a planning conference to ensure the coordination of donor assistance. For follow-up, the resolution, in addition to asking for the oral briefing, requested the Secretary-General to provide a written report within four months. It also expressed the Council's "intent to review" the force's deployment after four months.

At a G5 Sahel heads of state summit in Bamako on 2 July attended by French President

Emmanuel Macron, the five Sahel countries formally launched the force. In addition to the EU's previously announced commitment of 50 million euros to the force, Macron said that France would contribute around 8 million euros towards logistical support. Each of the G5 Sahel countries pledged to contribute 10 million euros. The currently promised funds, however, still leave a significant gap in funding the projected 423 million euro annual budget.

On 13 July, Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced in Paris the launch of the Alliance for the Sahel, a joint initiative of France, Germany and the EU to improve development cooperation in the region and promote innovative development among the EU, its member states, the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank, and the UN. The joint statement announcing the alliance noted that the initiative would not duplicate the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, developed by the UN in 2013 to address the region's underlying causes of instability.

Key Issues

The planned briefing is expected to update members on progress in establishing and deploying the joint force and on issues related to funding and possible challenges to the force's sustainability. The session will also likely consider security developments in the region. It may further provide information about how MINUSMA and France's counter-terrorism Operation Barkhane are supporting G5 countries in establishing the force.

Options

The Council is unlikely to take substantive decisions in August in light of the Secretary-General's expected report in October and the

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE G5 SAHEL Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2364 (29 June 2017) renewed MINUSMA's mandate and requested the Secretary-General to ensure adequate coordination and exchange of information between MINUSMA, the G5 Joint Force, and French forces. S/RES/2359 (21 June 2017) welcomed the deployment of the G5 Sahel joint force. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7979 (21 June 2017) was the adoption of resolution 2359 with statements by France and Mali.

Sahel

Council's intention to subsequently review the force's deployment. It could, however, consider issuing a statement that welcomes any progress reported on the establishment of the G5 Joint Force and that commends the commitment of the G5 Sahel countries and the support provided by the EU and France.

Council and Wider Dynamics

While members support this initiative to tackle the region's security threats, the Council is divided over the UN's role in funding the G5

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

Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger have deployed about 4,000 soldiers within

MINUSMA. Chad and Niger also contribute troops to the Multinational Joint Task Force, which is a similar regional force set up by Lake Chad Basin countries to combat Boko Haram. Chadian President Idriss Deby, whose government is under significant financial strain because of a recession, has expressed reluctance about participating further in the G5 Joint Force unless more international support is provided.

France acted as penholder on resolution 2359.

Sudan/South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In August, Council members may be briefed on the first of two reports requested in resolution 2352 on the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

Key Recent Developments

The Sudanese and South Sudanese governments, still distracted by domestic crises, have made no recent progress in resolving the status of Abyei, the disputed territory along the Sudan/South Sudan border, which remains in administrative and political limbo. Despite ongoing meetings in Addis Ababa between the parties, there has been no visible advance in the implementation of key aspects of the 20 June 2011 agreement, which established temporary arrangements for the administration and security of Abyei pending resolution of its status.

On 15 May, the Council adopted resolution 2352, renewing the mandate of UNISFA until 15 November, while warning that support would be withdrawn unless Sudan and South Sudan complied fully with their obligations. In particular, the resolution decided that the extension of support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) would "be the final such extension unless both parties demonstrate through their actions clear commitment and steadfast guarantees for implementation of the JBVMM, in line with the steps outlined in paragraph 7, and requests the Secretary-General to report on the status of whether the mechanism has reached full operating capability by 15 October 2017".

Against this backdrop of political paralysis, UNISFA continues to maintain law and order and a measure of stability in Abyei. This stability has, however, been challenged in recent months, with UNISFA reporting an increase in criminal activity, including cattle rustling, carjacking, robbery, and in May a grenade attack in the Amiet market, a commercial hub, that injured several civilians. UNISFA has reportedly facilitated discussions to defuse tensions between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka ethnic groups and has supported the return of stolen cattle as part of these efforts. UNISFA is continuing its disarmament activities and announced the destruction of 25 weapons and over 470 rounds of ammunition in June.

There has been no progress in agreeing on the removal of armed Sudanese police from around the Diffra oil facility, as required by several Security Council resolutions that have called for the demilitarisation of Abyei (with the exception of UNISFA peacekeepers and the yet-to-be-established Abyei Police Service).

Key Issues

The key issue facing the Council is whether Sudan and South Sudan have responded to the deadline for progress in implementing the JBVMM and the full implementation of the 20 June 2011 agreement.

A related issue is whether the Council should move to add any additional pressure on Sudan and South Sudan in the absence of such progress.

Options

One option is for the Council to issue a presidential statement reiterating its intent to alter the UNISFA mandate should the parties fail to demonstrate a clear commitment to resolving the current impasse.

Another option is for the Council to take a more hopeful approach, recognising that meetings between the parties are ongoing and reiterating the Council's willingness to remain engaged.

Council Dynamics

Negotiations on the renewal of UNISFA's mandate in May revealed a divide in the Council between the US and Ethiopia, the primary troop-contributing country for UNISFA, on the current mandate and troop ceiling for the mission. The US appears to have been concerned that UNISFA is persisting longer than intended for an interim force, and that Sudan and South Sudan are taking advantage of the relative stability UNISFA provides to delay attempts to resolve the status of Abyei while they focus on respective domestic issues. During the May negotiations, Ethiopia, supported by a number of other Council members, argued that a reduction of the troop ceiling would undermine the effectiveness of the mission. This difference in perspective is likely to be reflected in any meetings in August on Sudan/South Sudan.

More broadly, Council members have for some time recognised that the situation in Abyei and the wider border-related issues

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2352 (15 May 2017) extended the mission's mandate for six months. S/RES/2024 (14 December 2011) added a border-monitoring support role to UNISFA's mandate. **Secretary General's Reports** S/2017/312 (11 April 2017) was the most recent Secretary-General's report on the situation in Abyei. S/2017/293 (5 April 2017) was the Secretary-General's review of UNISFA's mandate. S/2016/864 (12 October 2016) was the 2016 report on the situation in Abyei.

Sudan/South Sudan

between Sudan and South Sudan cannot be resolved in isolation from the internal conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan.

Notwithstanding the current focus on the JBVMM, with neither party ready to advance the political process the Council continues to

devote only minimal time and focus to Abyei. The US is the penholder on Abyei.

Kosovo

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is expected to hold its quarterly briefing on the situation in Kosovo. Zahir Tanin, the Special Representative and head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), will brief on recent developments and the latest report by the Secretary-General. As on several previous occasions, Serbia is likely to participate at a high level, while Kosovo will probably be represented by its ambassador to the US.

Key Recent Developments

During his briefing to the Council in May, Tanin raised concerns about heightened nationalist rhetoric and the lack of progress in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. He also said that frequent elections in both Serbia and Kosovo have contributed to delays in the EU-facilitated dialogue on the normalisation of relations. Notwithstanding the political tensions between Belgrade and Pristina, Tanin noted that the overall security situation remained relatively stable.

In May, Kosovo President Hashim Thaçi dissolved the legislature after 78 of its 120 representatives approved a no-confidence motion, bringing down the government led by Prime Minister Isa Mustafa.

General elections were held on 11 June with the participation of about 41 percent of the electorate. The coalition of political parties led by Thaçi's Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) won 39 seats in the parliament. The coalition led by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK)—Mustafa's party—won 29 seats. The nationalist Self Determination party achieved the most significant result by obtaining 32 seats, which doubled its presence in the legislature. This party has been a vocal opponent of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and has been fiercely opposed to the government led by Mustafa. On multiple occasions during

the past two years, members of Self Determination sought ways to obstruct the normal functioning of the parliament, including setting off smoke bombs in the chamber and organising street protests.

The leading PDK coalition has nominated the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) commander Ramush Haradinaj for the post of prime minister. Haradinaj is wanted in Serbia for his alleged involvement in war crimes against Serbs during the Kosovo war in the 1990s. Earlier this year, Haradinaj was at the centre of a dispute between Serbia and Kosovo after French authorities arrested him upon entering that country. French police acted on an Interpol notice requested by Serbia. Haradinaj was held under judicial supervision in France for several months and released when the court formally ruled against Serbia's extradition request. In 2005, Haradinaj surrendered to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY); he was eventually acquitted of war crimes charges in 2012.

At press time, it is still unknown which political party or coalition of parties will have enough votes to form the new government. The next constituent session of the parliament has been set for 3 August.

After a break of more than six months, the high-level EU-facilitated dialogue resumed on 3 July in Brussels. Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, hosted a meeting with President Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia and Thaçi, during which they agreed to start a new phase in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, while also stressing the importance of implementing existing agreements.

On 28 June, the special court based in The Hague that will investigate crimes committed by the KLA during the conflict in Kosovo approved rules of procedure and evidence, paving the way towards issuing its first indictments.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 26 May statement, the spokesman for the Secretary-General announced the establishment of a trust fund to implement community-based assistance projects, primarily in North Mitrovica, South Mitrovica and Leposavić but also to benefit the broader Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The announcement follows the July 2016 report of the Human Rights Advisory Panel, which examined alleged human rights violations by UNMIK, including a complaint submitted by 138 individuals from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities that they suffered lead poisoning and other serious health consequences as a result of their relocation to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in northern Kosovo. Via his spokesman, the Secretary-General expressed "profound regret" for the suffering endured by those living in IDP camps and called on the international community to support the initiative by providing resources to the trust fund.

On 29 and 30 June, members of the Working Group on Persons Unaccounted for in Relation to the Events in Kosovo and representatives of UNMIK, the ICRC and the UN Working Group on Missing Persons and Enforced Disappearances met in Geneva to discuss the issue of the 1,658 persons who remain missing in Kosovo. In statements on 29 June at the opening of the roundtable, the High Commissioner for Human Rights said, "It is right and urgent that all parties make the extra effort to ensure the fate and whereabouts of every missing person is at last known." Tanin emphasised that finding the missing persons was not only a humanitarian imperative but also a human rights one.

Key Issues

Maintaining stability in Kosovo remains the primary issue for the Council. Related to this is what role UNMIK can play in promoting the implementation of the existing agreements between Belgrade and Pristina.

A further issue for the Council is whether to lengthen the reporting cycle on UNMIK and the possibility of the mission's drawdown.

Options

Should the tensions between Belgrade and Pristina escalate further or start to pose a risk

UN DOCUMENTS ON KOSOVO [Security Council Resolution S/RES/1244](#) (10 June 1999) authorised NATO to secure and enforce the withdrawal of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces from Kosovo and established UNMIK. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/387](#) (3 May 2017) was on UNMIK. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7940](#) (16 May 2017) was a briefing on Kosovo.

Kosovo

to overall stability, the Council could consider issuing a statement calling on both sides to resolve outstanding issues through dialogue. However, the Council has not pronounced itself on the situation in Kosovo in almost ten years, with the last presidential statement adopted in 2008.

If the situation remains stable, the Council could consider lengthening the reporting cycle.

Given the ongoing discussions about the need to improve the effectiveness of UN peace operations, the Council could request the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the mission.

Council Dynamics

Kosovo remains a low-intensity issue for the Council that is followed closely mainly by

members with particular interest in the region. Other regional organisations such as the EU, NATO and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe have been playing increasingly prominent roles in Kosovo.

The permanent members of the Council continue to be deeply divided on Kosovo. France, the UK and the US recognise Kosovo's independence and tend to be supportive of Kosovo's government while China and Russia, which do not, strongly support Serbia's position on the issue. The P3 and Japan have become increasingly outspoken in advocating a lengthening of UNMIK's reporting cycle and thus reducing the frequency of meetings on Kosovo. Furthermore, the US and Japan, which are also the top two contributors to the UN peacekeeping

budget, have called for a drawdown and eventual withdrawal of UNMIK, given the stability in Kosovo. The US has asserted that the mission remains overstaffed and over-resourced considering its limited responsibilities and that these resources could be put to better use in more pressing situations on the Council's agenda.

Since the current US administration has placed great emphasis on reviewing the UN peacekeeping operations with the aim of reducing costs and increasing efficiency, the issue of modifying UNMIK's mandate is likely to become more prominent. However, any attempt to change the status quo regarding UNMIK would require a new resolution, which Russia would strongly oppose and be likely to block.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

During August the Council expects to receive the Secretary-General's report on progress in implementing the 31 December 2016 agreement on the electoral process and a transitional government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It is also likely to receive the final report of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee on the Committee's Group of Experts. The deadline for the Group of Experts report was extended by two months in resolution 2360 on 21 June in recognition of the circumstances under which the experts were operating, including the murder of two experts in the Kasai region in March.

The Council will continue to watch the situation in the DRC closely, particularly the violence in the Kasai region, and a briefing may be requested based on developments.

The mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) expires on 31 March 2018.

Key Recent Developments

On 11 July, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre

Lacroix, briefed the Council on the lack of progress in implementing the 31 December 2016 agreement and the significant obstacles that now exist to an election being held in 2017 as stipulated by the agreement. Lacroix also briefed the Council on the unstable security situation across the DRC, including the violence in the Kasai region and an increase in attacks by Mayi-Mayi militia in North Kivu.

Lacroix's briefing followed discussions by Council members on the DRC under "any other business" on 6 July. During this closed session, Adama Dieng, the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, briefed the Council on the current conflict in the Kasai region, as did Virginia Gamba, the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. The briefing reportedly included disturbing descriptions of violence in the Kasai region, with atrocities being committed by both government forces and local militia. Dieng, who visited the Kasai region in late June, described increasing ethnically motivated violence and the use of scorched-earth tactics, including the complete destruction of villages and the murder of civilian populations.

The DRC government has been

increasingly open about its unwillingness to hold elections in 2017. President Joseph Kabila has made statements that suggest he does not believe elections must occur this year. On 9 July, the president of the DRC electoral commission, Corneille Nangaa, said that logistical constraints would prevent an election from occurring this year. Opposition leaders have accused the government of obstructing efforts to organise the election and of using, and perpetuating, the violence in Kasai as a reason to avoid an election.

Investigations are continuing into the murder in March of two members of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee's Group of Experts, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp, and their interpreter, Betu Tshintela.

On 26 July, the Council adopted a presidential statement expressing concern over the political, security and human rights situation in the DRC.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In July, the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC (UNJHRO) released its report on the human rights situation in the country between January and June 2017, noting an increase in the number of human rights violations committed since the beginning of 2016. UNJHRO said that most of

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2360](#) (21 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 Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/12](#) (26 July 2017) was on the political, security and human rights situation in the DRC. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2017/565](#) (30 June 2017) was on MONUSCO. [S/2017/435](#) (17 May 2017) was on the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7998](#) (11 July 2017) was a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix on the situation in the DRC. [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.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

the 42 mass graves in Kasai discovered during the period “would have been dug by [Congolese army] elements following clashes with alleged militiamen.”

In a statement on 26 July, the High Commissioner for Human Rights announced the appointment of Bacre Ndiaye (Senegal, chairperson), Luc Côté (Canada), and Fatimata M'Baye (Mauritania) as international experts to investigate human rights abuses in the Kasai region as mandated by Human Rights Council resolution 35/33.

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 enforcing accountability for the murder of the two 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee experts is another important issue for Council members.

Options

One option is for the Council to adopt a resolution or 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 establish clear consequences if elections are not held before the end of 2017. Such consequences 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 are troubled by the increase in the scale and severity of violence in the Kasai region. Members have expressed deep concern at the reported human rights abuses occurring in Kasai and fear that the

violence there could spread into other parts of the DRC and to neighbouring states.

Members remain concerned about the ongoing political crisis but are divided on the importance of holding elections in 2017 as stipulated by the 31 December 2016 agreement. Some members emphasise the need for full implementation of the agreement to move the DRC beyond the current crisis and fear potentially explosive ramifications if elections are not held this year. During the briefing on 11 July, several Council members made strong statements emphasising the need for the government to hold free, fair and inclusive elections by the end of the year. The US proposed that the Council “consider targeted sanctions to reduce the violence in the [DRC] and help pressure all stakeholders to play a more constructive role in moving the country forward.” Some other members see all stakeholders as jointly responsible for carrying out the elections and believe their timing is less important than insuring that they are peaceful and inclusive.

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

Libya

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is expected to receive a briefing from the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Ghasan Salamé. The chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), is also expected to brief the Council.

UNSMIL's mandate expires on 15 September, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee expires on 15 November 2018.

Key Recent Developments

The process aimed at reaching an inclusive and sustainable political settlement in Libya continues to be deadlocked. There

is consensus on the need to amend some provisions of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA)—such as the structure and mandate of the Presidency Council and the authority of the supreme commander of the armed forces—but deep divisions remain as to how to do so. Briefing the Council on 7 June, Martin Kobler, then head of UNSMIL, described the unstable situation in Libya and underscored the difficulties created by the existence of parallel institutions. He reiterated that the House of Representatives has failed to endorse the Government of National Accord or adopt the amendment incorporating the LPA into the constitutional declaration. On 16 July, the head of the Presidency Council, Faiez Serraj,

proposed a roadmap to hold parliamentary and presidential elections by March 2018, but on 18 July the speaker of the eastern-based House of Representatives, Agila Saleh, questioned this announcement, as well as the legitimacy of the Presidency Council. On 25 July, French President Emmanuel Macron convened a meeting of Serraj and the commander of the Libyan National Army (LNA) Khalifa Haftar, with the participation of Salamé. In a joint declaration issued after the meeting, Serraj and Haftar committed to a ceasefire and to the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as possible.

The security situation continues to deteriorate. In Tripoli, militias nominally

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2362](#) (29 June 2017) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and the measures regarding attempts to illicitly export oil from Libya. [S/RES/2357](#) (12 June 2017) renewed for an additional year the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels bound to or from Libya suspected to be violating the arms embargo. [S/RES/2323](#) (13 December 2016) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2017. [Security Council Letter S/2017/543](#) (26 June 2017) was from the Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Libya to the UN, reiterating the request of the Presidency Council to allow for the reinvestment of frozen assets. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7961](#) (7 June 2017) was a briefing by Kobler. [Sanctions Committee Document S/2017/466](#) (1 June 2017) was the final report of the Panel of Experts.

Libya

associated with the Presidency Council have clashed with rival armed groups supporting Khalifa Ghwell, the self-appointed prime minister of a Tripoli-based national salvation government. In the south and center of the country, clashes have continued between Misrata-based militias, the LNA, and tribal armed groups, who are competing for the control of strategic infrastructure amid ongoing tribal tensions. After a three-year military campaign, on 5 July Haftar declared the “liberation of Benghazi from terrorism” but fighting continues in some neighbourhoods. A continuing LNA offensive towards Tripoli constitutes a risk of further military escalation. (The LNA has repeatedly justified its operations, including against rival militias, as fighting terrorist groups.) Although Misrata-based militias took Sirte from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in late 2016, the presence of ISIL-associated groups and dormant cells in other areas of Libya persists.

The situation of migrants and refugees in Libya, which was characterised in December 2016 as a “human rights crisis” by UNSMIL and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, continues to be critical. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, as of mid-July more than 93,000 persons have fled to Italy in 2017 following the central Mediterranean Sea route. In the first half of the year, more than 2,200 refugees and migrants have died or gone missing trying to cross from Libya.

In other developments, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, whose extradition has been sought by the ICC, was set free by the Abu-Bakir al-Siddiq Brigade, a Zintan-based militia, in June. On 14 June, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda called on the Libyan authorities, the Security Council, state parties to the Rome Statute, and all other states to provide her office with any information regarding Gaddafi’s whereabouts. She stated that the arrest warrant issued against him in 2011 for crimes against humanity remains valid “regardless of any purported amnesty law”.

The Department of Political Affairs has recently concluded a strategic review of the UN’s role in Libya. The recommendations of this exercise, which included an independent evaluation, are expected to be shared with the Council. In December 2016, the

Council indicated that it stands ready to review UNSMIL’s mandate if needed. On 28 June, militias opened fire on an UNSMIL convoy near Tripoli. Although there were no casualties, staff members were temporarily held by the militias.

Sanctions-Related Developments

In June, the Council adopted two resolutions related to the implementation of the sanctions regime. On 12 June, the Council adopted resolution 2357 renewing 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 there are reasonable grounds to believe that they are violating the arms embargo. It also renewed the authorisation for member states to seize and dispose of arms and ammunition found during the inspection of these vessels. Resolution 2357 will continue to be mostly implemented through the EU’s EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia.

On 29 June, the Council adopted resolution 2362 reviewing the sanctions regime and renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee until 15 November 2018. The resolution added refined petroleum products to the commodities banned from illicit export from Libya (before it covered only crude oil). The resolution also added as a designation criterion for the travel ban and the assets freeze involvement in attacks against UN personnel, including members of the Panel of Experts. On 21 July, the 1970 Sanctions Committee listed a Tanzania-flagged vessel for transporting gasoil illicitly exported from Libya.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 18 July, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern that people taken prisoner by members of the LNA after recent fighting in Benghazi “may be at imminent risk of torture and even summary execution”. This follows reports suggesting the involvement of the Special Forces, a unit aligned with the LNA, and in particular their field commander Mahmoud al-Werfalli, in torturing detainees and summarily executing at least ten captured men. While the LNA had announced in March that it would conduct investigations into alleged war crimes, the spokesperson noted that the LNA has not shared any information regarding the progress of these inquiries. The spokesperson urged the LNA to ensure that there is a “full, impartial investigation into these allegations” and also called on the group to suspend “al-Werfalli from his duties as a Special Forces field commander pending the conclusion of such an investigation”.

Key Issues

A continuing overarching issue is to ensure

that the parties agree on a solution to end the political deadlock by addressing the issues raised by those refusing to support the LPA. Engaging military actors in this endeavour is a related issue.

Rebuilding trust among Libyans, underscoring the added value and relevance of UN mediation efforts, and pressing external actors to ensure the coherence of their mediation efforts are important issues for the political process.

A further issue in light of the complex situation in Tripoli and beyond is the safety and security of UN personnel if the plans for their return from Tunis to be based again in Libya are carried out.

Options

Following the completion of the strategic review of the UN presence in Libya, the Council could discuss its conclusions and adopt a resolution prioritising a limited set of tasks that UNSMIL can realistically achieve to align the mission’s mandate with the political, security and operational realities on the ground.

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

Council and Wider Dynamics

In response to the current stalemate, there seems to be consensus among Council members about the need to amend the LPA. Members, including the P5, generally support UNSMIL’s mediation. But so far, the Council has failed to set a clear direction to reach and support a political settlement. Given the involvement of regional actors with diverging priorities in Libya, the decision by several key countries (including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt) to break off diplomatic ties with Qatar in early June may affect the calculations of Libyan actors regarding their external support.

Several months of P5 divisions over the appointment of a new head for UNSMIL ended when Salamé was named on 22 June.

The UK is the penholder on Libya, and Sweden chairs the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee.

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In August, 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.

Key Recent Developments

Fighting has continued in South Sudan, despite the limited mobility imposed by the rainy season and notwithstanding the unilateral ceasefire declared by President Salva Kiir on 22 May, which has since been effectively discarded. The South Sudanese government has announced that its forces are besieging Pagak, the nominal headquarters of the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO), in the Upper Nile region. UNMISS has reported that over 5,000 civilians have been displaced from Pagak and that some humanitarian personnel have been forced from the town because of fighting.

Violence has been escalating in and around the UN civilian protection sites, where more than 200,000 people have sought shelter. On 15 July there were reports of fighting between youth groups within the UNMISS civilian protection site at Bentiu. The site contains over 120,000 civilians, and the fighting is a troubling reminder of the difficulties UNMISS faces in maintaining law and order inside the sites.

Deployment of the RPF, which was initially authorised in August 2016, is continuing, albeit at a slower than desired pace. To date, initial elements of the force headquarters—the Bangladesh Construction Engineering Company and the Nepalese High Readiness Company—have deployed to Juba, with the remaining forces to follow. Deployment of the remaining contingents continues to be delayed by difficulties finalising agreement with the South Sudanese government over the use of basing sites and securing the necessary clearances.

On 20 June, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El Ghassim Wane briefed the Council on the situation in South Sudan. Wane spoke about the ongoing fighting in the Upper Nile and Eastern Equatoria regions, and noted with concern

that President Kiir continues to replace opposition-aligned members of the nominal Transitional Government of National Unity with his own supporters or those loyal to Vice-President Taban Deng Gai.

Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) Chairman Festus Mogae also briefed the Council, via video teleconference from Juba. Mogae reported on his interactions with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and regional leaders. Mogae discussed IGAD's steps to revitalise the political process. On 2 July, the IGAD Council of Ministers agreed on guidelines and a timeframe for convening the High-Level Revitalization Forum, called for by the 12 June communiqué of the 31st Extra-Ordinary IGAD Summit. The forum is expected to convene in late September. Mogae also reported that he had visited former First Vice-President and opposition leader Riek Machar in South Africa and that Machar had refused Mogae's request to renounce violence and declare a unilateral ceasefire.

Key Issues

The central issue for the Council remains how to 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 most affected 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 is 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 or an assets freeze and travel ban on key figures responsible for the ongoing violence, or both.

An alternative option is for the Council to attempt to incentivise the South Sudanese government to cooperate by offering conditional support, possibly 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 over its approach to South Sudan. There is still 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 engagement with IGAD's efforts to revitalise the political process. Council members also remain divided over whether to incentivise cooperation by the South Sudanese government or whether the targeting of civilians by Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) forces necessitates a strong response by the Council to pressure the South Sudanese government towards peace.

During the 20 July briefing, Council members welcomed IGAD's efforts to revitalise the political process and emphasised the need for all parties to commit to implementation of a ceasefire and participation in an inclusive political process. The US reiterated its call for an arms embargo and additional targeted sanctions; however, there does not appear to be sufficient support for such action at this time.

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

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. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/505](#) (15 June 2017) was the 90-day report on UNMISS. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7982](#) (21 June 2017) was a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix. [S/PV.7950](#) (24 May 2017) was a briefing by Special Representative for South Sudan David Shearer. [S/PV.7930](#) (25 April 2017) was a briefing by Shearer. [S/PV.7906](#) (23 March 2017) was a high-level briefing on South Sudan. [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).

Guinea-Bissau

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council expects a briefing on Guinea-Bissau from the Special Representative and head of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), Modibo Touré, and the chair of the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Elbio Rosselli (Uruguay). Ambassador Mauro Vieira (Brazil), chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), is also likely to brief.

Also in August, the 2048 Sanctions Committee is expected to consider the Secretary-General's report on the Guinea-Bissau sanctions ahead of a possible Council review of the sanctions in September, as stipulated by resolution 2343.

Key Recent Developments

August will mark two years since Guinea-Bissau entered a political crisis that has pitted President José Mário Vaz against his own African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), led by Domingos Simões Pereira.

Recent months saw a rise in tensions in Guinea-Bissau. On 23 February, protestors in Bissau called for Vaz to step down. Subsequently, a number of demonstrations occurred, with some reports of excessive use of force by security personnel against demonstrators.

From 23 to 24 April, a high-level ministerial mission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) went to Bissau, led by Liberian Foreign Minister Marjon V. Kamara. The mission's final communiqué called for the "immediate implementation of all decisions in line with the letter and spirit of the Conakry Agreement". The agreement, brokered last October by ECOWAS, laid out a series of actions for resolving the crisis before the 2018 legislative elections, including the naming of a consensual prime minister who has the confidence of the president, and carrying out constitutional reforms to clarify, *inter alia*, the roles of the president and prime minister. The mission recommended imposing targeted sanctions if no progress was made towards implementing the Conakry Agreement within 30 days.

At a 4 June summit of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government,

the authority urged all stakeholders to comply with the provisions of the Conakry Agreement, giving Bissau-Guinean leaders an additional three months to implement the agreement. In line with that, West African leaders extended the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) for an additional 90 days. ECOWAS had previously announced in April that this 500-member strong force, which has been deployed in the country since the April 2012 coup, would be fully withdrawn by 30 June. The authority affirmed its determination to institute, if needed, targeted sanctions against all those who obstruct the smooth implementation of the Conakry Agreement.

Efforts have been made recently to try to break the political impasse. Starting in late June, Francisca Vaz (no relation to the president) of the Women's Peace Forum mediated several bilateral meetings between President Vaz and key stakeholders, including one with Simaes Pereira on 10 July.

Council members met on Guinea-Bissau on 11 May when Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed in consultations on the outcome of the high-level ECOWAS mission. A Council press statement following the meeting called on relevant stakeholders to strictly respect and comply with the Conakry Agreement, and expressed members' readiness to take necessary measures to respond to a further worsening of the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

Sanctions Committee-Related Developments

From 13 to 15 June, Ambassador Rosselli visited Guinea-Bissau to obtain information about the implementation of the sanctions measures. Rosselli met with a range of interlocutors, including President Vaz, Simaes Pereria, government officials, other political and military leaders, and representatives of civil society and the international community based in Bissau. Rosselli also met the ten people, current and former members of the military, who remain sanctioned by the Council for their role in the 12 April 2012 coup. (One other person who was sanctioned has since died.)

The general view conveyed in his meetings was that the sanctions, which are limited to a travel ban, have had a positive role, a finding that the Secretary-General has shared over the last two years in his reports to the 2048 Sanctions Committee. However, the individuals who are sanctioned are no longer those responsible for the recent problems, which are caused by current political leaders.

Developments in the PBC

A meeting of the country-configuration for Guinea-Bissau was held on 10 May. Touré briefed the configuration via video teleconference. A press release issued several days later by the configuration reiterated its full support for the Bissau Six-Point Roadmap and Conakry Agreement as the framework for the resolution of the crisis. At press time, Ambassador Vieira planned to visit Guinea-Bissau from 25 to 27 July.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 June, a report on the right to health in Guinea-Bissau jointly published by UNIOGBIS and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was released. Despite improvements in the country, the report concluded that comprehensive reform of the health care system is needed. Political instability and endemic poverty, along with deficits in participation and accountability, and lack of access to food, education, safe drinking water and sanitation, continue to lead to violations of the right to health, particularly with regards to maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, and health care for people living with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. In comments accompanying the release of the report, the High Commissioner warned that the poor general health of a population can "be a strong driving factor for a whole host of human rights deficiencies and violations in a country", while Special Representative Touré emphasised that the "realization of the right to health has a strong link with the peacebuilding process in Guinea-Bissau".

Key Issues

A key issue for August's session continues to be how the Council should support ECOWAS efforts to break the political impasse and begin the implementation of the Conakry Agreement. This includes whether and how sanctions could be used against those who obstruct implementation of the Conakry Agreement, and if ECOWAS decides to impose sanctions.

Related issues include the risk of military interference given Guinea-Bissau's history and the future of ECOMIB, which is credited with playing a deterrent role during the crisis but which ECOWAS says it cannot continue to finance. Concerns of Council members also include the possibility that drug traffickers, other organised crime, or terrorist groups in the region will exploit the situation or its possible deterioration. The impact of the political impasse on humanitarian conditions and on the civilian population more

Guinea-Bissau

generally, as government services have been reduced and donors have withheld distribution of funds during the two-year long crisis, is a further issue.

Within the 2048 Sanctions Committee, members will further be considering whether to delist currently sanctioned individuals. A consideration that may make committee members reluctant to remove individuals from the sanctions list is that it could be perceived in Guinea-Bissau as a lessening of the sanctions regime, which is not a signal members want to send.

Options

The Council could issue a statement further expressing support for ECOWAS's mediation efforts and the decisions at its 4 June summit, while reaffirming members' readiness to take necessary measures in case of a deterioration in the situation.

The 2048 Sanctions Committee is likely to delist the one deceased individual. It may

consider delisting the other ten sanctioned persons as well as recommendations in the Secretary-General's expected report to the Committee on the sanctions regime. In his previous reports to the Committee in 2015 and 2016, the Secretary-General recommended maintaining the sanctions regime. The Committee never acted on most of his other recommendations, such as establishing a Panel of Experts.

Another option for the Council is expanding the sanctions to include an assets freeze that could be imposed, in addition to the existing travel ban, on new individuals who the Committee may decide to designate. Such action or the possible imposition of sanctions, however, are more likely to be considered in September when the Council may conduct a review of the sanctions measures and the 90-day period given by ECOWAS expires.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council's approach has been to support

ECOWAS's efforts in resolving the crisis in Guinea-Bissau. Following ECOWAS decisions, Senegal has frequently called for Council sessions to update members on developments, which in turn has been followed by Council statements expressing support for the regional body's mediation efforts.

Any Council push now regarding sanctions would likely depend on ECOWAS. Without ECOWAS acting, most members would probably not be willing to sanction new individuals. It is generally felt, nevertheless, that ECOWAS is unlikely to move forward with its threat of sanctions since, for example, a number of ECOWAS members would be uncomfortable with imposing sanctions on a current head of state. Since 2015, in its resolutions renewing UNIOGBIS, the Council started expressing its intention to review the sanctions measures. So far, it has maintained the status quo.

Senegal is the penholder on Guinea-Bissau.

Cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council will hold a briefing followed by an informal interactive dialogue on cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations with a focus on the partnership with the League of Arab States. The UN Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, will brief the Council. Secretary-General António Guterres may also brief. No outcome is expected.

Background

The UN Charter establishes the Security Council as the principal organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. In this context, however, Chapter VIII of the Charter envisions a role for regional arrangements and agencies in an effort to achieve the peaceful settlement of local disputes as long as these organisations and their activities are consistent with the principles and purposes of the UN. Furthermore,

Article 54 says that the Council should "at all times be kept fully informed of activities undertaken or in contemplation" by regional organisations "for the maintenance of international peace and security".

Improving partnerships and cooperation with regional organisations has in the last decade or so become an increasingly prominent theme for the Council and other parts of the UN system. The Council has held annual joint consultative meetings with members of the AU Peace and Security Council and, more recently, informal meetings with members of the EU Political and Security Committee. It has also received regular briefings from the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. In addition, the Council has held meetings on cooperation with other regional organisations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation

Organisation, and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In his latest report on cooperation between the UN and regional and other organisations, Secretary-General Guterres emphasised the growing cooperation with the League of Arab States, including plans to establish a UN liaison office in Cairo, the organisation's headquarters. The interaction between the two organisations has become more prominent with the onset of the Arab uprisings and the subsequent proliferation of conflicts in the region, especially in Syria where the League of Arab States was involved in the initial mediation efforts.

The representatives of the League of Arab States have addressed the Council on several occasions regarding the organisation's efforts to mediate conflicts in the Middle East. The first such occasion was in January 2012 when its then Secretary-General Nabil Elaraby spoke to the Council on the efforts of the organisation to find a peaceful solution

UN DOCUMENTS ON COOPERATION WITH THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2012/20](#) (26 September 2012) was on cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States, reiterating the Council's commitment to a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace and welcoming the appointment of the Joint Special Representative for Syria. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.6841](#) (26 September 2012) was a high-level meeting of the Security Council on peace and security in the Middle East focusing on the institutional relationship between the Security Council and the League of Arab States. [General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/11](#) (21 November 2016) was on cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States.

Cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States

to the Syrian crisis and urged the Council to endorse the League's plan for ending hostilities in that country.

The UN and the League of Arab States also cooperated by appointing Joint Special Envoy for Syria Kofi Annan in 2012, and subsequently Joint Special Representative for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi, who relinquished his post in May 2014.

During the German presidency in September 2012, the Council held a high-level meeting on peace and security in the Middle East focusing on the institutional relationship between the Council and the League of Arab States. During the meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement in support of the League's contribution to collective efforts for the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the Middle East.

During the Council's visiting mission to Somalia, Kenya and Egypt in May 2016, the Council held its first consultative meeting with members of the League of Arab States in Cairo. The meeting was focused on the Middle East peace process, Somalia, Libya, and developments in the Syrian conflict. Members of both bodies called for greater cooperation between the two organisations on issues pertaining to international peace and security and to stability in the Arab region. Some members called for institutionalising this relationship and making this type of consultative

meeting a regular occurrence. Elaraby noted during the meeting that the Council needed to fulfil its international peace and security responsibilities, especially in regard to Palestinian issues and the Syrian conflict.

In March, Secretary-General Guterres addressed Arab leaders at the summit in Jordan of the League of Arab States. He reiterated the importance of the partnership between the two organisations and called for unity in the Arab world, noting that divisions have "opened the door to foreign intervention and manipulation, breeding instability, sectarian strife and terrorism". The summit focused on some of the pressing regional issues including the Middle East peace process, Syria, the threat of terrorism, and the refugee crises.

Key Issues

A key issue is whether Council members see cooperation with the League of Arab States as a promising tool for addressing the challenges at hand.

Given that political developments are in flux in the Arab world, a key issue for the Council is how to strengthen the existing cooperation to jointly emphasise conflict prevention and resolution in the region.

Options

One option for the Council is to simply hold the discussion.

Another option is for members to explore Council practice regarding conflict prevention and mediation and members' positions on developing a more robust Council role in the Middle East.

A further option is to establish a regular mechanism for contacts between the two bodies, perhaps along the lines of the practice the Council has forged with the AU's Peace and Security Council of holding regular meetings at each other's headquarters.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are generally supportive of the initiative to hold briefings on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations. However, the League of Arab States has been critical of the Council's approach towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, the League of Arab States has suggested that there is a need to review the use of the veto especially after it prevented several attempts by the Council to reach an outcome and take action on the Syrian conflict. Some member states may be wary of discussing specific country situations and will probably aim to have more general discussions on cooperation between the two organisations.

Egypt is the only Council member which is a member of the League of Arab States.

Peacekeeping and Sustaining Peace

Expected Council Action

In August, Egypt will organise an open debate on peacekeeping operations and sustaining peace. Secretary-General António Guterres may brief. No outcome is planned.

Background

Sustaining peace is a concept that emerged from the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) report for the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture (PBA). This review of the PBA was one of three simultaneous reviews initiated in 2015; the others examined UN peace operations and the

implementation of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

A key conclusion of the AGE report was that a broader understanding of peacebuilding was necessary. It said that peacebuilding should not be viewed as only a post-conflict activity as had become the common understanding. Instead, peacebuilding should be recognised as including activities to prevent conflict in the first place, during peacemaking and peacekeeping, and in post-conflict situations. Occurring throughout the conflict cycle, peacebuilding should be seen as a responsibility of the entire UN system and

not limited to the PBA. The AGE suggested that this broader process and understanding could more appropriately be termed "sustaining peace".

An ensuing intergovernmental process culminated in the adoption of substantively identical resolutions by the Security Council and the General Assembly on 27 April 2016: Council resolution 2282 and General Assembly resolution 70/262. The resolutions included a definition of sustaining peace, described as "a goal and a process to build a common vision of society...which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak,

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEKEEPING AND SUSTAINING PEACE Security Council Resolution S/RES/2282 (27 April 2016) was on the UN peacebuilding architecture review. Security Council Letters S/2015/490 (29 June 2015) was the Advisory Group of Experts' report for the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture. S/2015/446 (17 June 2015) was the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7918 (6 April 2017) was a debate on peacekeeping operations. S/PV.7857 (10 January 2017) was an open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Peacekeeping and Sustaining Peace

escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict”. According to the resolutions, sustaining peace “should flow through all three pillars of the UN’s engagement [peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development] at all stages of conflict”.

The two resolutions, which have since become known as the “sustaining peace resolutions”, emphasised the importance of a comprehensive approach to sustain peace, particularly through the prevention of conflict and addressing root causes of conflict. Other important aspects included the inherently political nature of peacebuilding and the importance of integration, coherence and partnerships among the activities of UN missions, the UN system, and non-UN actors.

Peacekeeping operations are situated within this continuum of sustaining peace across the conflict cycle. The High-Level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), which carried out the 2015 review of UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions, made a number of convergent conclusions with the AGE. These included the “primacy of politics”, which recognised that peace operations are a tool to support a political process that must be conceived and planned in support of the broader objective of obtaining political solutions. The HIPPO addressed lessons from the past experience of peace operations in sustaining peace and recommended that mission budgets should include programmatic resources necessary for mandated tasks to support the sustaining of peace. The AGE had noted that programmatic peacebuilding activities in the mandates of peace operations depend on voluntary funding.

Secretary-General António Guterres has

since taken up sustaining peace as part of his agenda for prevention. His 2016 vision statement as a candidate for Secretary-General called for the development of “a comprehensive, modern and effective operational peace architecture, encompassing prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development—the ‘peace continuum’”.

This open debate is meant, in part, to build on the Council’s 10 January open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace organised by Sweden and the Council’s 6 April debate on peacekeeping operations during the US Council presidency.

For this session, Egypt is seeking to have member states consider how peacekeeping operations can more effectively contribute towards the broader objective of sustaining peace. Areas of focus of the debate are likely to include how Council members could bear the goal of sustaining peace more in mind when designing peacekeeping operations’ mandates and what a sustainable peace would look like in the specific country where a mission is being deployed.

Members are likely to discuss how to manage and ensure smooth transitions from a traditional peacekeeping operation to either special political missions or UN country teams. The sustaining peace resolutions highlighted the role envisaged for the Peacebuilding Commission to provide the Council with “specific, strategic and targeted advice... including to assist with the longer-term perspective required for sustaining peace being reflected in the formation, review and draw-down of peacekeeping operations and special political missions”.

The debate is meant to have a strong focus on specific peacekeeping operations and practical ideas for these missions. Members are likely to reflect on ongoing transitions in Haiti and Liberia or the recently concluded operation in Côte d’Ivoire and the means still required for sustaining long-term peace in these countries. Where there are peacekeeping operations deployed in much less stable situations, such as in the Central African Republic, members may explore ways to ensure that the mission’s activities still contribute towards longer-term sustaining peace objectives, in addition to fulfilling immediate security needs.

The debate will also seek to draw lessons from past peacekeeping operations that were deployed to countries that have remained free from war, such as Sierra Leone, and consider how or why such missions were able to contribute to this long-term peace.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Among some Council members and the broader UN membership, there are countries that remain sceptical of what “sustaining peace” entails. The main concerns are over implications for sovereignty and the focus on conflict prevention. Questions have also been raised about mixing issues of development and peace and security, and possible shifting of development funds to peace and security activities. Egypt has emphasised that the application of the concept of sustaining peace will vary according to the context of each situation. For this reason, Egypt is also keen to ensure that the open debate will have a strong focus on how the ideas of sustaining peace could be applied to specific peacekeeping operations.

Somalia

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution reauthorising the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for an additional year.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Somalia remains precarious, with attacks by militant Islamist group

Al-Shabaab continuing. On 2 July, a roadside bomb struck a minibus north of Mogadishu, killing two people and injuring six others. At least four soldiers were killed and several others wounded on 23 July when a roadside blast targeted a security convoy 250 kilometres south-west of the capital Mogadishu; Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack.

Al-Shabaab militants have also stepped up attacks in neighbouring Kenya. Several attacks took place in July, in areas close to Kenya’s long, porous border with Somalia. These attacks include the 5 July killing of three Kenyan police officers by Al-Shabaab gunmen in the Pandaguo area of Lamu County; the 8 July beheading of nine

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2355 (26 May 2017) extended AMISOM’s authorisation until 31 August 2017 with no changes. S/RES/2317 (10 November 2016) was on Somalia and Eritrea sanctions with ten votes in favour. Secretary-General’s Report S/2017/408 (9 May 2017) was on Somalia. Sanctions Committee Documents S/2016/920 (7 October 2016) and S/2016/919 (7 October 2016) were the Monitoring Group’s reports on Somalia and Eritrea.

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Kenyans in the same area; and the 20 July killing of two people by Al-Shabaab gunmen in Kiunga, Lamu County.

On 12 July, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) adopted a communiqué on the report of the chairperson of the AU Commission on the AU-UN joint review of AMISOM, the AU's renewal of the mandate of AMISOM, and the report on the 10-year lessons learned assessment of AMISOM. (At press time, the UN Security Council had not yet received the report of the joint review.)

In the communiqué, the PSC requested the AU Commission to establish a committee of experts to develop a joint AU/troop and police contributors' exit strategy, stressing the importance of an AMISOM transition plan that is based on a realistic timeframe and the attainment of the key security conditions suggested by the AU-UN joint review. The communiqué endorsed the review's recommendations on a phased reduction and reorganisation of AMISOM's uniformed personnel, with Somali National Security Forces (SNSF) progressively taking the lead in undertaking security tasks. The communiqué underlined the need to avoid any security vacuum. The PSC further emphasised that the continued presence of AMISOM in Somalia and the implementation of a viable transition necessitates the securing of predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM and Somali security institutions.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains dire. According to a 24 July OCHA report on drought response, 6.7 million Somalis are in need of aid. Somalis displaced by drought remain highly vulnerable to the spread of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD), as well as cholera and other communicable diseases, because of limited access to safe water and poor sanitation and hygiene conditions. According to the report, over 70,000 AWD/cholera cases and 1,098 related deaths have been recorded since the beginning of 2017.

Sexual and gender-based violence has increased in the context of drought-related displacement. Between November 2016 and March, UNICEF and partners responded on average to about 300 cases of rape, sexual assault and gender-related violence each month. In June, the number tripled, with 909 reported cases. Over 750,000 people have been displaced since November.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 24 July, the chair of the 751/1907 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), delivered his 120-day briefing to Council members in consultations, covering the period from April to July 2017. The chair reported that the Committee received two notifications pertaining to humanitarian exemptions, one request for advance approval for supply of arms to the government, and three notifications of transfers of arms to the government for the development of the national security forces. His briefing touched on the 21 April midterm update of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG). In this update, the SEMG reported that the terrorist group Al-Shabaab remained the most significant threat to peace and security, while an extremist group affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is increasing in size. The resurgence of piracy off the coast of Somalia and the charcoal ban were also addressed.

On Eritrea, Umarov updated Council members on the allegations by two member states concerning the transfer of weapons from Eritrea to Al-Shabaab made in late 2016, reporting that Djibouti has yet to provide the group with sufficient information to support its allegations and that the SEMG is awaiting further information to corroborate information already received. The SEMG reported that Eritrea continued its support to

Ethiopian and Djiboutian opposition groups, he said. The SEMG's investigation into a consignment of 24,900 blank-firing pistols destined for Sudan via Massawa port in Eritrea continues. The SEMG observed that the pistols fall within the scope of the arms embargo and their import to and export from Eritrea would constitute violations of the embargo.

The chair also addressed the Djibouti-Eritrea conflict, following Qatar's 14 June announcement that it would no longer mediate between the parties and its withdrawal of peacekeeping forces from the border areas. On 16 June, Djibouti accused Eritrea of occupying disputed territory along their mutual border. The SEMG has requested access to the border area but has only gained clearance by the Djiboutian side. Umarov also reported that his planned visit to the region in late July – which was to include a visit to Asmara – had to be postponed at the request of the Eritrean government.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 26 May, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Bahame Tom Mukirya Nyanduga, called on the international community to support the country through the current humanitarian crisis, its ongoing state-building process, and efforts to improve the human rights situation. The statement came after the conclusion of Bahame Nyanduga's visit to Somalia from 15 to 25 May. Bahame Nyanduga also expressed concern about violations of the right to freedom of expression and media rights in Somalia, including detention without trial, police

brutality, and intimidation of journalists. Bahame Nyanduga is set to submit a report to the Human Rights Council at its 36th session in September.

Key Issues

Concerning the reauthorisation of AMISOM, a key issue is ensuring that the mission is equipped to adequately strengthen the SNSF so they can progressively take the lead in providing security. This is particularly urgent in light of AMISOM's plan to begin withdrawing from Somalia in October 2018, since a premature handover of security responsibilities would risk undermining Somalia's security and political gains.

Closely related is the need to secure predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM and Somali security institutions. In this regard, the AU's requests for the UN to provide AMISOM with funding through assessed contributions, also suggested by Secretary-General António Guterres during his March visit to Somalia, may be considered by the Council.

Another issue concerning AMISOM is ensuring that its forces comply with human rights standards, including in joint military operations with the SNSF against Al-Shabaab. Likewise, encouraging Somali security forces to meet such standards, including through participation in human rights training programs provided by the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), is crucial to facilitating a successful transition.

Pressing humanitarian issues include ensuring effective humanitarian responses to the drought, the looming famine, and the outbreak of cholera.

Options

The most likely option in August will be to reauthorise AMISOM for one year using the observations and recommendations of the joint AU-UN review of AMISOM as a basis for any alterations to the mandate.

Council and Wider Dynamics

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

The AU continues to press the Council to

Somalia

do more to ensure predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM. It appears that most Council members are in favour of providing some funding to AMISOM through UN assessed contributions, however, the US is opposed to the proposal.

Regarding sanctions, the Council is divided between those members who believe that, because evidence of Eritrean support for Al-Shabaab is lacking, it should reconsider its measures against Eritrea, and those who remain concerned about Eritrea's other

activities in the region and seem to view cooperation with the SEMG as a precondition for any changes in the sanctions regime.

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

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which expires on 31 August.

Key Recent Developments

According to the Secretary-General's most recent report on the implementation of resolution 1701, the environment in the UNIFIL area of operations remained stable overall during the reporting period (9 March to 21 June), but heightened rhetoric by both parties led to some anxiety among the local population.

In particular, he reported on the events of 20 April, when Hezbollah conducted a tour for Lebanese and international media in the UNIFIL area of operations including along sections of the Blue Line. According to the report, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) notified UNIFIL less than an hour before the tour started, saying that LAF personnel would be present but with no mention of Hezbollah. UNIFIL personnel did not observe unauthorised armed personnel when they encountered the group. However, a UNIFIL investigation, based on reliable media reports and information gathered, found it credible that unauthorised personnel and weapons were present during the event, a violation of resolution 1701. Apart from this incident, UNIFIL did not receive specific information or find evidence of armed personnel, weapons or infrastructure in its area of operations. Israel, however, continues to allege that Hezbollah maintains military infrastructure and equipment in southern Lebanon.

Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace continued on an almost daily basis during the reporting period, and the Israeli occupation of northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line continued—both of which are violations of resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty.

Mutual accusations of violations of resolution 1701 continued. On 25 April, Israel said in a letter to the Council (S/2017/356) that it is “extremely disturbing that armed Hezbollah militants feel free to move openly in the UNIFIL area of operation, without being challenged by UNIFIL or LAF personnel”. In an open debate on protection of civilians on 25 May, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel told the Council that Hezbollah had amassed over 100,000 missiles pointing at Israel in violation of resolutions 1559 and 1701. In his letter dated 19 June (S/2017/523), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon denied the presence of armed fighters and weapons in southern Lebanon and accused Israel of encroaching on the daily lives and security of Lebanese civilians with “surveillance towers and listening devices all along the southern border”.

On 8 March, the Secretary-General sent a letter to the Council containing the results of a strategic review of UNIFIL, conducted in accordance with a request from the Council in resolution 2305 of August 2016. The review noted that Lebanon and Israel continue to approach any adjustment to the capabilities, structure or activities of the mission with strong caution, emphasising that, in the current climate of uncertainty, the focus should be on minimising risks. The

strategic review determined that the force was well configured overall to implement its mandated tasks and that the mission's deterrent effect contributes to security and stability in the area. The review recognised that failure to meet the political objectives of resolution 1701—namely, a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict—increasingly puts the relative calm achieved in southern Lebanon and along the Blue Line at risk.

The review identified the following three strategic priorities in the implementation of the mandate of UNIFIL: that UNIFIL, in close coordination with the Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the UN country team, should further promote an integrated and comprehensive approach to the implementation of resolution 1701; that UNIFIL should undertake all necessary preventive actions to maintain calm in its area of operations, including as a means to build confidence between the parties and contribute to creating conditions conducive to the establishment of a permanent ceasefire; and that UNIFIL should have contingency plans in place and be prepared to implement its mandate in extreme situations and, in particular, to deliver on its mandated responsibility to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. The review noted that the overall strategic political guidance is to maintain the current strength, composition and configuration of UNIFIL.

On 20 July, Special Coordinator Sigrid Kaag and Assistant Secretary-General El Ghassim Wane briefed Council members in consultations on the report. In their

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) increased UNIFIL's size by 15,000 troops and expanded its mandate. **S/RES/1559** (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory, and free and fair presidential elections. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/591** (11 July 2017) was on the implementation of resolution 1701. **Security Council Letter S/2017/523** (19 June 2017) was from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon denouncing the presence of armed fighters and weapons in southern Lebanon. **S/2017/356** (25 April 2017) was from the Permanent Representative of Israel regarding Hezbollah's alleged activities in Lebanon. **S/2017/202** (8 March 2017) was from the Secretary-General and contained the findings of the strategic review of UNIFIL.

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interventions, it seems that members echoed concerns about the lack of progress on the implementation of 1701 and over violations of the resolution, particularly the build-up of weapons by Hezbollah. Issues such as the plight of Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, increasing women's political representation, the need to support the LAF, and implementing the recommendations of the strategic review of UNIFIL were raised by various members. Ambassador Nikki Haley (US) said that Hezbollah was calling the shots in Lebanon, that the LAF had no control, and that things needed to change. She stated that while the US supports the work of UNIFIL, the force needed to "do more" to reduce the illicit build-up of arms, and that this should be considered at the time of the mandate renewal.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 June, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) published its concluding observations on Lebanon's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CRC noted measures taken to implement the convention and commended Lebanon's role in hosting and supporting a large number of Syrian refugees, including children. It also highlighted the need for further progress, making recommendations regarding such issues as corporal punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse, children with disabilities, economic exploitation, and the administration of juvenile justice.

Key Issues

The main issue is that although 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

One option for the Council is to renew the mandate of UNIFIL for an additional year without significant changes. However, since the US has indicated that it would like UNIFIL to "do more", another option is renewing UNIFIL with changes to the mandate in this regard.

Council Dynamics

The Council has long been united in its position that UNIFIL contributes to stability between Israel and Lebanon, and there is broad support for the mission, as well as for the LAF. However, the US, which appears to be increasingly interested in focusing the Council's attention on the threats posed by Hezbollah and Iran, has been critical of UNIFIL and indicated that it may push for an augmented mandate. In contrast, France, the penholder, appears to prefer to renew the mandate with no major changes, which is widely supported by other members.

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