

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

France has the presidency in October. A visiting mission to the [Sahel](#) focusing on the operationalisation of the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) is planned. There will be a briefing on the visiting mission. Later in the month, the Council expects to hold a ministerial-level meeting to discuss ways the international community can support the G5 Sahel, presided by the French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, with Secretary-General António Guterres briefing.

The Council is likely to renew the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of [Libya](#) when reasonable grounds exist to suspect they are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking.

Other meetings on African issues during the month are expected to include:

- [Mali](#), on the activities of MINUSMA;
- the [DRC](#), on the activities of MONUSCO;
- [South Sudan](#), on the activities of UNMISS;
- [Burundi](#), on the situation in the country;
- the [CAR](#), on the activities of MINUSCA;
- [Western Sahara](#), on the activities of MINURSO; and
- [Sudan/South Sudan](#), on the implementation of resolution 2046, on the activities of UNISFA, and on the status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

France is planning to hold a debate on [UN peacekeeping operations](#) focusing on strategic force generation. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and a representative from a major troop-contributing country are expected to brief.

The annual open debate on [Women, Peace and Security](#) is scheduled this month, with a resolution

as a possible outcome.

An open debate to discuss the Secretary-General's annual report on [children and armed conflict](#) will also be held, and a presidential statement is a possible outcome.

A Secretariat official is expected to provide in October an oral briefing on the risk of [famine](#) in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria that includes recommendations for addressing impediments to effective response.

With regard to the Middle East, in addition to the monthly briefings on the political and humanitarian situations and chemical weapons in [Syria](#), other issues to be considered include:

- [Yemen](#), a briefing originally expected in September;
- [Golan Heights](#), briefing from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on UNDOF;
- [Israel/Palestine](#), the quarterly open debate; and
- [Lebanon](#), a briefing on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), which called for the disarmament of all militias and the extension of government control over all Lebanese territory.

A debate on [Haiti](#) and the activities of MINUSTAH, which will be replaced by MINUJUSTH in mid-October, is expected.

The annual briefing to the Council of the [ICJ](#) President will be held in a private meeting.

An Arria-formula meeting is expected on [Myanmar](#) with participation from Kofi Annan, who headed the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

In addition, the Council will continue to follow closely developments in the [DPRK](#) and in [Myanmar](#), among other issues. More meetings may be scheduled during the month.

28 September 2017

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In Hindsight – Note 507

Following weeks of negotiations over most of the summer, the Council reached agreement on 30 August on a new version of the compendium of its working methods, commonly referred to as “Note 507”. The document was elaborated under the leadership of Japan, in its capacity as chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (IWG), the venue for most discussions regarding the Council’s working methods.

The 142 paragraphs of Note S/2017/507 address nearly all aspects of Council practice (an exception being working methods that apply to all sanctions committees, which will continue to be governed by notes and statements of the president of the Council indexed in document S/2006/78). While consolidating in one document several previously codified practices, the Note also addresses some new areas. Most notably, it includes guidelines regarding the processes leading up to the adoption of Council outcomes in the context of the currently prevalent penholder system, under which nearly all draft decisions on a situation or issue are initiated by a specific member, in most cases one of the P3—i.e. France, the UK and the US. The Note stresses the desirability for at least one round of discussions with all members of the Council on all drafts and of providing reasonably sufficient time for consideration. It also, for the first time, refers to silence procedure, a common practice, whereby a draft is circulated by email with a deadline for raising objections, in the absence of which the draft becomes final. In the Note, Council members recognise “that any Council member may request extension of and/or break silence if further consideration is required”. One practice never previously codified in a Council document and included in the first draft presented by the IWG chair—the regular holding by the Secretariat of situational awareness briefings—was not retained in the final version due to an objection from Russia.

Security Council working methods, while broadly grounded in the UN Charter and the Provisional Rules of Procedure, have over the years evolved in a way in which practice had almost always preceded written articulation. When the Council’s activity increased dramatically in the early 1990s after the end of the Cold War, new practices began emerging, and the Council would occasionally issue a

Note or, in a handful of cases, a statement by the president, to articulate its working methods on a number of matters. Examples include sanctions, relations with troop contributors, and terminology used for particular types of meetings.

The notes and presidential statements were meant to provide a reference for new Council members and the broader UN membership, but finding specific documents was quite difficult, especially in the period when documents were available only in hard copy and had to be either collected at the time they were issued or requested from UN document centres. It was not until 2002 that the Council produced the first index to its working methods, listing the symbols and subject matters of its previous documents on working methods in a single document published as Note by the President S/2002/1000. Acknowledging the interest of the full UN membership, this document also had a General Assembly symbol (A/57/382).

Overall, however, the working methods of the Security Council continued to be hard for outsiders to penetrate, prompting world leaders gathered at a summit in New York in September 2005 to recommend in the summit’s final document that the Security Council “adapt its working methods so as to increase the involvement of States not members of the Council in its work ... enhance its accountability to the membership and increase the transparency of its work” (A/RES/60/1). Probably prompted by this recommendation, members of the Council took steps that led to making Council working methods easier to access both by outsiders and the elected members. In early 2006, Council members resolved to produce a single volume that would collect previously agreed documents on working methods and additionally capture practices that had not yet been articulated in writing. They also decided to reactivate the IWG and depart from the monthly rotation of its chairmanship by appointing Japan to be the chair for the full process. In July of that year, the Council agreed to issue a comprehensive Note by the President and published it with the document symbol S/2006/507.

When Japan returned to the Council for the 2009–2010 term, it took on the leadership of the IWG for those two years and embarked on revising the Note to reflect certain changes in Council practice and update

it with elements that were absent from the previous compendium, such as interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The updated Note was issued on 26 July 2010 as S/2010/507.

In October 2015, presidential statement S/PRST/2015/19 asked the IWG “to continue reviewing and updating relevant Notes by the President of the Security Council, in particular Note S/2010/507”. Japan was back on the Council in 2016 and again assumed the chairmanship of the IWG. During its first presidency, in July that year, it held an open debate on working methods. The concept paper prepared for that discussion stressed that Japan did not seek to have an outcome from the debate but, in its capacity as chair of the IWG, it intended “to follow up the discussions in the open debate, especially the specific practical suggestions made in the debate, in the deliberations of the Informal Working Group on an updated note 507, to be adopted in due course”. Starting in December 2016, the IWG met periodically to discuss several aspects of Council working methods with a view to elaborating a new version of Note 507.

The first draft of the new Note 507 was circulated in late May, and the IWG chair briefed members in consultations on 30 May. The process of elaborating the new version with agreement of all Council members proved complex, and several more drafts were circulated before a draft was placed under silence on 19 July. Silence was broken, new versions were placed under silence, and the chair held several rounds of bilateral consultations until a final version was agreed on 30 August. Most Council members participated actively at different stages of the process. Towards its end, the most active interlocutors were probably Russia (which sought several modifications, including passages regarding the Council’s relationship with the PBC) and Egypt (which insisted on ensuring that all draft decisions are negotiated by all members and that sufficient time is given for silence procedure).

The publication of the compendia of Council working methods under the same symbol, regardless of what consecutive number would correspond to that document on the date it is issued, is itself a working method aimed at making it easier to find the document. (In 2006, 507 was the consecutive number corresponding to the date, 19

In Hindsight – Note 507

July; in 2010 the number corresponding to the issuance date of 26 July would have been 399 or 400; and in 2017 the number corresponding to 30 August is approximately 745.) Since 2006, the Council has applied a similar approach to its documents containing the list of its agenda items by assigning it the number 10, and since 2008 also to the document listing the chairs of the subsidiary bodies by assigning it the number 2.

In a press statement issued on the day the latest Note 507 was adopted, Council members stated their willingness to “continue to consider ways to improve the working methods ... including through the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions”. Japan, the member state with the most consistent contribution to making the Council’s working methods understandable and accessible

to all interested parties, will end its current Council term at the end of the year. Who will continue to lead the process as the chair of the IWG was unclear at press time. However, if the Council meets its goal—articulated in Note S/2017/507—of appointing the chairs of the subsidiary bodies for the following year no later than 1 October, soon after this issue of the Forecast reaches our readers, the identity of that member state should be known.

Status Update since our September Forecast

DPRK

On 4 September, the Council was briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman on the DPRK’s 2 September nuclear test (S/PV.8039). On 11 September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2375 expanding sanctions to additional sectors of the North Korean economy in response to the nuclear test (S/PV.8042). The resolution prohibits the import of textiles produced in North Korea, bans gas exports, and sets a limit on the exports of petroleum products and crude oil to that country. It also includes new tools to stop high seas smuggling of prohibited goods. Furthermore, it strengthens prohibitions on employing North Korean workers abroad and demands the closing of joint ventures with North Korea, with certain exceptions to be determined by the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee. In addition, the resolution freezes the assets and imposes a travel ban on one individual and three entities. Following the launch by the DPRK on 14 September of a ballistic missile which flew over Japan, the Council held consultations on 15 September. In the press statement, members of the Security Council strongly condemned the recent launches, condemned further the DPRK for its outrageous actions, and demanded that it immediately cease all such actions and comply with all UN resolutions (SC/12994). It expressed grave concern that by conducting such a launch over Japan, as well as its recent actions and public statements, the DPRK was deliberately undermining regional peace and stability and these actions are not just a threat to the region, but to all UN member states.

Visiting Mission to Addis Ababa

On 5 September, Council members left for a three-day visiting mission to Addis Ababa for the 11th joint consultative meeting between members of the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). Ahead of the joint consultative meeting, the Council delegation had an informal briefing in Addis Ababa by Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU Haile Menkerios, Special Representative for South Sudan David Shearer, Special Representative for Somalia Michael Keating and Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom. On 7 September, the members of the Security Council and the PSC held informal consultations, which focused on the partnership between the AU and the UN, funding for AU peace and security activities, and post-conflict peacebuilding. The 11th joint consultative meeting took place on 8 September and covered Somalia, South Sudan and the Lake Chad Basin. The Council delegation also met with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Hailemariam Desalegn, and with senior officials from the UN Office to the AU and the AU Commission. On 12 September, Ambassador Tekeda Alemu briefed the Council on the visiting mission to the AU.

AU-UN Cooperation

On 12 September, the Council was briefed (S/PV.8044) by Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU and head of the UN Office to the AU Haile Menkerios on a 30 August report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the AU and the UN on peace and security (S/2017/744).

Lake Chad Basin

On 13 September, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed the Security Council (S/PV.8047) on the Secretary-General’s 7 September report on the situation in the Lake Chad Basin region (S/2017/764). Fatima Shehu Imam, the Director of the Civil Society Organisations in Borno State, also addressed the Council, speaking via video teleconference. On 21 September, a high-level event was held on the humanitarian situation in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region as part of General Assembly high-level week.

Somalia

On 13 September, the Council received a briefing on Somalia from Special Representative and head of UNSOM, Michael Keating, on the Secretary-General’s 5 September report on Somalia (S/2017/751) and from Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson for Somalia and head of AMISOM, Francisco Caetano José Madeira. Both Keating and Madeira briefed via video teleconference (S/PV.8046).

Guinea-Bissau

On 13 September, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/17) that, inter alia, called on the leadership of Guinea-Bissau to implement the 14 October 2016 Conakry Agreement (S/PV.8045). One day earlier, 12 September, the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee met to consider the Secretary-General’s 23 August report on progress made with regard to stabilisation and restoration in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/715). Committee members received briefings from

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Special Representative and head of UNIOG-BIS Modibo Touré and Kelvin Ong from Security Council Affairs Division.

Myanmar

Council members were briefed on 13 September by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman under “any other business” on the deteriorating situation in Myanmar’s Rakhine state. Following the meeting, press elements were issued in which Council members expressed concern at reports of excessive violence by security forces following the 25 August attacks by Rohingya armed groups on police border posts and called for “immediate steps to end the violence in Rakhine, de-escalate the situation, re-establish law and order, ensure the protection of civilians, restore normal socioeconomic conditions and resolve the refugee problem.” They also called for the government to facilitate humanitarian assistance and to fulfil commitments to provide aid to all displaced people. On 26 September, Council members were briefed again by Feltman under “any other business”. On 28 September, the Council was briefed by the Secretary-General in a public meeting.

Sudan (Darfur)

On 14 September, Jeremiah Mamabolo, the Joint Special Representative for UNAMID, briefed the Council (S/PV.8050) on the Secretary-General’s recent report on UNAMID (S/2017/746). The briefing was followed by consultations.

Colombia

On 14 September, the Council adopted resolution 2377 (S/PV.8049) approving the Secretary-General’s recommendations regarding the size, operational aspects, and mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, contained in his 30 August report (S/2017/745).

Peacekeeping

On 20 September, the Security Council held a high-level open debate entitled “Reform of UN peacekeeping: implementation and follow-up”, chaired by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia (S/PV.8051). Secretary-General António Guterres and Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, briefed the Council, along with José Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Chair of the 2014-2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. The open debate was based on a concept note circulated by Ethiopia (S/2017/766). The Council adopted resolution 2378 during the debate.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

On 21 September, the Council held a ministerial-level briefing on the threat posed by the proliferation of WMDs and their delivery systems (S/PV.8053). High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu briefed. All Council members spoke and most expressed concerns regarding escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula and a spread of WMDs. In addition, Nakamitsu and other speakers at the briefing addressed Iran’s nuclear issue, resolution 1540, and other initiatives aimed at curbing the proliferation of nuclear arms.

Iraq

On 21 September, Council members issued a press statement expressing concern regarding destabilising effects of the referendum on independence organised by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) for the following week (SC/13002). Council members urged both the federal Government and the KRG to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the Iraqi Constitution and through dialogue. On 21 September, the Council adopted resolution 2379 on

accountability for crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq. The resolution established an investigative team tasked with collecting, storing and preserving evidence of ISIL crimes in Iraq which could later be used in criminal proceedings in Iraqi national-level courts.

Afghanistan

On 25 September, the Council held its quarterly debate on Afghanistan (S/PV.8055) which focused on the most recent UNAMA report (S/2017/783). Special Representative Tadamichi Yamamoto briefed the Council on the report and most recent developments. In his briefing Yamamoto noted that there is a renewed interest in Afghanistan in political engagements for peace. However, he also stressed that the security situation as well as the impact of violence on the civilian population remain the major concerns for the mission.

Counter-Terrorism

On 27 September, the Council was briefed on “threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts: aviation security” by Fang Liu, the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, and by Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), who chairs the Counter-Terrorism Committee (S/PV.8057). On 28 September, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the newly-created UN Office of Counter-Terrorism; Aboulatta and David Scharia, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate Deputy Head of the Assessment and Technical Assistance Office briefed the Council. On 11 September, the Council issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attack that took place earlier that day, near Al Arish in Sinai, Egypt, where at least 18 policemen were killed and three were injured (SC/12982).

Peacekeeping Operations: Strategic Force Generation

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold a debate at the initiative of France and the UK on strategic force generation in peacekeeping operations. Expected briefers will include Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and a representative from a major troop-contributing country. No outcome is anticipated.

Background and Key Recent Developments

Strategic force generation for UN peacekeeping operations has been a longstanding challenge. The 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) observed that the UN's "force generation approach has struggled to get sufficient forces on the ground quickly enough and relies on under-resourced uniformed capabilities with little or no interoperability and weak command and control". It further noted the difficulties of mobilising specialised capabilities—for example, engineers, medical personnel, and aerial capacities—prior to the deployment of infantry units. The report offered specific recommendations to the Council on this matter, urging members to support "actively and through all diplomatic channels" the Secretary-General's efforts to generate troops and police. It further encouraged members of the Council who possess the requisite resources, including the permanent members, to offer troops in order to enhance mission capacities.

Institutional reforms in the UN Secretariat were launched in mid-2015 in an effort to address capability gaps, with the establishment of the "UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System" (PCRS) and the "Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell" in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The PCRS was created with the goal of generating more predictable and collaborative engagement between the Secretariat and troop/police contributors through a clear process for pledging and preparing for deployment. The Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell was established to engage actively with member states to address key capability gaps and increase female participation; to ensure that

deployments occur more quickly; to widen the base of troop/police contributors; and to improve the performance of peacekeepers.

Since 2015, pledges of troops and equipment have been made in different peacekeeping conferences to address force-generation gaps. Notable in this regard have been the Leaders' Summit at UN headquarters in New York on 28 September 2015 and the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference in London on 7-8 September 2016. Pledges are also anticipated at the 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference, scheduled to take place in Vancouver 14-15 November.

With regard to Mali in particular, where the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has faced considerable shortfalls in troops and enablers, a force generation conference took place in New York on 22-23 May that resulted in commitments from some troop- and police- contributing countries to address gaps.

On 20 September, the Council held a high-level open debate on reform of UN peacekeeping that included briefings by Secretary-General António Guterres; Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AU Commission; and José Ramos-Horta, who chaired the HIPPO. During the meeting, the Council adopted resolution 2378, which underscored the need to enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of UN peacekeeping by improving mission planning, increasing the number of relevant capabilities, and reinforcing peacekeeping performance through training and the fulfilment of outstanding pledges of personnel. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to provide comprehensive annual briefings to the Council on peacekeeping reform, including updates on efforts to fill gaps in force generation, capabilities and other areas to enable more effective response to peace and security challenges. The resolution further requested the Secretary-General to provide the Council with recommendations within 90 days for filling these gaps, including through more effective and efficient training and capacity-building.

Key Issues and Options

One key issue is whether the Council can

play a more proactive role in strategic force generation. Several current Council members are significant troop contributors, and some have conducted important peacekeeping conferences related to capacity-building. A possible option moving forward is to use the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations or an informal meeting format to discuss how members can work in a complementary and coordinated way to generate more peacekeepers and enablers and to enhance their capacities.

Another important matter is ensuring that missions are given realistic mandates, that they are supported by the necessary resources, and that the gap between expectations and resources is bridged. These have been key elements in the discussions related to peace operations reform since at least 2000. And yet, by and large, they have been given short shrift. As recommended by the HIPPO report, sequenced and prioritised mandates could be given greater consideration, where appropriate, when evaluating existing UN peace operations or establishing new ones and would help to fill the divide that often exists between resources and needs.

Council Dynamics

Although political, financial and bureaucratic impediments at times generate obstacles to strategic force generation, many Council members frequently express concern about ensuring that peacekeeping operations have the requisite capacities to achieve their mandates, an issue that was raised in the 20 September open debate by a number of members. Senegalese President Macky Sall emphasised the importance of well-staffed and equipped missions, especially in "peace enforcement" environments. UK Prime Minister Theresa May referred to the upcoming Council debate on strategic force generation, underscoring that not only is it important to secure more peacekeepers and equipment but also to ensure that the peacekeepers who are deployed have the right skills for the job at hand. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian emphasised that peacekeeping missions must be accorded the necessary resources to respond to crises.

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS Security Council Resolution S/RES/2378 (20 September 2017) underscored the need to enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of UN peacekeeping. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/22 (25 November 2015) took note of the HIPPO report's recommendations and the Secretary-General's implementation report. Secretary-General's Report S/2015/682 (2 September 2015) was on the implementation of the recommendations of the HIPPO report. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8051 (20 September 2017) was a meeting on the reform of peacekeeping operations.

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council plans to undertake a visiting mission to Mali, Mauritania and Burkina Faso to assess the operationalisation of the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel), or FC-G5S. The mission will be co-led by Ethiopia, France and Italy.

Upon returning to New York, the Council expects to hold a ministerial-level meeting to discuss ways the international community can support the FC-G5S. At the meeting, the Council will receive a briefing from Secretary-General António Guterres and discuss his report on the activities of the FC-G5S, including the challenges encountered in its operationalisation and possible measures for further consideration. The discussion will be chaired by Jean-Yves Le Drian, the French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs.

Key Recent Developments

The Sahel region continues to experience instability. Over the past year, terrorist and violent extremist groups have increasingly spread from Mali into north-east Burkina Faso and western Niger. On 13 August, 18 people were killed in a terrorist attack at a restaurant in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), and at least 18 were injured.

The G5 Sahel—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger—continue to work on the deployment of a joint force aimed at addressing the impact of terrorism and transnational organised crime. It was authorised by the AU Peace and Security Council in April, and the first joint operations are expected to start in October.

Resolution 2359, adopted on 21 June, welcomed the establishment of the FC-G5S, which is to deploy along the Mali-Mauritania border; the Liptako Gourma border region between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger; and the Niger-Chad border. 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 merely

welcomes the deployment of the force and encourages bilateral and multilateral partners to support it, including by convening a planning conference to ensure the coordination of donor assistance that is expected to be held in December.

Although the FC-G5S is anticipated to cost 423 million euros per year, so far only a quarter of that has been pledged by the EU, G5 Sahel countries and France. On 15 August, El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, briefed Council members on the force's outstanding needs, not only in terms of funding but also with regard to force generation, training and equipment, tactical support, intelligence and communications technologies, medical evacuation capabilities, and force protection. Other challenges include the potential impact of force generation efforts on the UN Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the definition of certain aspects of the legal framework and compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. Speaking at the meeting, Deputy Permanent Representative Anne Gueguen (France) stressed how UN support for the force would be vital to ensure that the force carries out operations in a sustainable and effective manner.

On 9 September, Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta inaugurated the headquarters of the force, in the town of Sévaré in central Mali. On 18 September, a high-level meeting about the force took place on the margins of the UN General Assembly's general debate. With Secretary-General António Guterres presiding, the meeting included heads of state of the countries involved in the force, French President Emmanuel Macron and high-level representatives of the AU and the EU. Participants insisted on the importance of delivering on the pledges made in order to make the force operational.

Key Issues and Options

The visiting mission is expected to travel to Mali, Mauritania and Burkina Faso in an effort to evaluate what the Council can do

to further support the work of the joint force. Given that the US prevented the Council from authorising the force and that several Council members are opposed to using UN assessed contributions to finance it, the visiting mission is devised to make the case for increased UN support in order to address current challenges.

Resolution 2359 expressed the Council's intent to review the deployment of the joint mission in October. While there has been no significant change in Council dynamics, the visiting mission could improve some Council members' understanding of the mandate and limitations of the force. The Council could consider issuing a statement that welcomes any progress reported on the establishment of the joint force and 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 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, supports the position of the G5 countries and the AU that the UN should consider providing assessed contributions. Among the permanent members, this position is also supported by China.

A 26 May Secretary-General's report endorsed in principle a proposal for a process of joint UN-AU planning and consultative decision-making and oversight processes. While the Council has not embraced this option, resolution 2378 adopted on 20 September during a high-level open debate on peacekeeping, noted the need to further develop this work, in consultation with the AU.

France acted as penholder on resolution 2359.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

Expected Council Action

In October, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will brief Council members in consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). No outcome is expected.

UNDOF was established in 1974 to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria. Its mandate expires on 31 December.

Key Recent Developments

While the ceasefire between Israel and Syria is being maintained, the environment in the Golan Heights remains volatile because of the ongoing Syrian conflict. On 15 September 2014, the majority of UNDOF peacekeepers relocated from the Bravo (Syrian) side to the Alpha (Israeli) side of the area of operations after the Al-Qaida affiliated Al-Nusra Front overran Syrian government forces in August 2014 in Quneitra, a Syrian district close to the Israeli-occupied Golan. On 14 November 2016, the UN reported an initial return of 150 troops to Camp Faouar on the Bravo (Syrian) side. A majority of peacekeepers remain on the Alpha (Israeli) side with limited mobility and insufficient equipment to carry out fully its monitoring tasks.

Violations of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces continue. On 19 September, Israel said it shot down an unmanned aircraft that entered the airspace over the Golan Heights. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it believed the aircraft was an Iranian-made drone operated by the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, which has been fighting alongside Syrian government forces. It was not clear if the drone entered Israeli-controlled airspace deliberately. In April, Israel shot down an unmanned Syrian aircraft after it entered the airspace over the Golan Heights. It also attempted to intercept a drone that entered Israeli airspace last year.

According to the 8 June report of the Secretary-General, which covered the period from 2 March to 16 May, military activity

across the ceasefire line increased during the reporting period. On 13 May, UNDOF observed three armed IDF personnel in a vehicle in the area of separation near the Mount Hermon complex, which constituted a violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. There was one incident of spill-over fire across the ceasefire line during the reporting period: on 21 April, UN personnel observed a high explosive impact approximately two kilometres north of the UN position. Evidence indicated that the impact was likely to have been a 105 mm or 120 mm calibre artillery shell from the Bravo (Syrian) side. According to Syrian officials, the IDF responded to the spill-over fire with air strikes across the ceasefire line in the Khan Arnabeh region. Also during the reporting period, open and government sources reported several additional alleged incidents of Israeli air strikes or air activity in the Syrian Arab Republic.

On 29 June, the Council adopted resolution 2361, which extended the mandate of UNDOF for an additional six months. In the resolution, the Council condemned the use of heavy weapons by both the Syrian armed forces and armed groups in the ongoing Syrian conflict in the area of separation between Israel and Syria, and underlined that there should be no military activity by armed opposition groups in that area. The resolution also urged member states to convey strongly to the Syrian armed opposition groups in UNDOF's area of operations that they should halt all activities that endanger UN peacekeepers and accord them the freedom to carry out their mandate safely and securely.

Key Issues and Options

Considering the security situation in the Golan, the full return of UNDOF to the Syrian side seems unlikely in the foreseeable future. This is a significant issue in as much as it constrains the mission's ability to carry out its monitoring tasks.

An ongoing issue for the Council is the

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

The Council is, however, rather limited in its options for UNDOF. It was established as a Syria-based mission, and how it operates, including the use of enhanced equipment or new technologies, is subject to the disengagement agreement. Any changes require agreement by Israel and Syria, which is unlikely, as is any outcome in October.

Council Dynamics

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

Israel and Syria value UNDOF's presence and want to see the mission return to the Bravo side. At the moment, the security situation on the Syrian side is still not conducive to full redeployment of UNDOF troops. Council members continue to support the eventual complete return of UNDOF to the Bravo side. However, they are mindful that this would require a favourable security environment, which is important for maintaining the confidence of UNDOF's troop-contributing countries.

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

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

Syria

Expected Council Action

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

Key Recent Developments

During their last round of talks in Astana on 14-15 September, Iran, Russia and Turkey agreed to the delineation and monitoring mechanism for a de-escalation zone in the north-eastern region of Idlib. While the details for its operationalisation are yet to be defined, agreement on this area had proved difficult given its geostrategic interest. Among the key challenges in Idlib is the difficulty of separating armed groups protected by the 30 December 2016 ceasefire agreement and other groups affiliated with Council-listed terrorist organisations, such as Jabhat Fath al-Sham. Three other de-escalation areas have been established since July—in the south-western region, Eastern Ghouta and Homs—with varying degrees of adherence by the parties. Another de-escalation area is being negotiated near Afrin. Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura has repeatedly emphasised the need to ensure that the de-escalation areas are a temporary measure and has highlighted the importance of preserving the national unity and territorial integrity of Syria. In September, Russia circulated a draft resolution among the permanent members of the Council to welcome the outcome of the talks in Astana.

Briefing the Council on 30 August, de Mistura expressed the need to extend the cooperation among external and internal players on the de-escalation areas into the political realm. He briefed the Council on how members of the opposition groups (the High Negotiations Committee and the Moscow and Cairo platforms) met in Riyadh in late August to develop common negotiating positions and explore the possibility of forming a single delegation. He warned that the government has sent strong public signals that indicate an exclusively military approach and a dismissal of the prospects for any meaningful political negotiation. He emphasised that only political dialogue can turn military advances into a sustainable post-conflict situation. De Mistura is expected to

convene a new round of the intra-Syrian talks in October in Geneva. France had proposed the creation of a contact group made up of the permanent members of the Council and regional actors to support UN efforts to broker a political settlement, but disagreements over its composition led to a meeting of only the P5 on 21 September.

Regarding efforts to eliminate Syria's declared stockpile of chemical weapons, preparations are under way to confirm the condition of the last two stationary chemical weapons production facilities included in Syria's initial declaration. On 16-18 September, high-level consultations were held between the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Syrian government aimed at clarifying all outstanding issues regarding Syria's initial declaration. While the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism expires on 17 November, the US has expressed its intention to negotiate the renewal of its mandate before the release of the final substantive reports on two recent attacks, expected in late October.

Stephen O'Brien, then-Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, briefed the Council on Syria for the last time on 30 August. In his statement, O'Brien urged Council members "to find a way to stop the Syrian people from paying the price of political failure". According to a 21 September Secretary-General's report, the trend toward ceasefire agreements and the establishment of de-escalation areas has contributed to a notable reduction in civilian casualties in areas where agreements have been put into effect. However, violence against civilians persists, and military operations against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor continue to have a major impact on civilian populations.

The offensive by the government and its allies on ISIL-held areas in eastern Hama has recently intensified. The security situation, administrative impediments imposed by the government, other deliberate restrictions by the parties, and the removal of medical items by the government continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian aid, particularly to besieged and hard-to-reach locations. Russia has requested the UN to intensify the delivery

of humanitarian aid to de-escalation areas. On the margins of the UN General Assembly, the EU convened a meeting to address resilience and stabilisation efforts in Syria and support for the humanitarian needs of civilians. At press time, the newly appointed Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, and de Mistura were expected to brief the Council on 27 September.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In his opening statement at the 36th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 11 September, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein remarked that "the conflict in Syria has redefined the meaning of the word 'horror' [and that] the continuation of this nightmare will forever darken the legacy of this generation of world leaders". He stated that OHCHR has "documented hundreds of airstrikes and ground-based strikes in 2017 which have killed thousands of civilians across the country, at least a quarter of them children. Across the country, thousands of people have been deprived of their liberty and are held in facilities run by the government or armed opposition groups, where they are frequently subjected to torture or cruel treatment, including sexual violence".

During its 36th session, the HRC held an interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria and considered its report (A/HRC/36/55). The report, covering March to July, concluded that civilians throughout the country continue to account for the overwhelming majority of casualties; children and internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain among the most vulnerable to violence, such as in Al-Rashidin, Aleppo, where a car bomb in April targeted IDPs and killed 96 persons, including 68 children. According to the report, government forces continued the pattern of using chemical weapons against civilians on at least four occasions, including a sarin attack in Khan Shaykhun, Idlib, which killed more than 80 civilians, the majority of whom were women and children. The report urged the Security Council to support its recommendations, include regular briefings by the Commission of Inquiry as part of the formal agenda of the Security Council, and to use its influence with all relevant actors and stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and all-inclusive peace process that maintains due respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. It also recommended that the HRC transmit the report to the Secretary-General for the attention of the Security Council.

Key Issues and Options

More than six years since the start of the war, the essential issue is whether the Council can

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/2017/794 (21 September 2017) was on the humanitarian situation. Security Council Letter S/2017/756 (29 August 2017) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8036 (30 August 2017) was a briefing by O'Brien and de Mistura.

Syria

rise above P5 divisions and exert leadership in efforts to reach a political solution. However, those divisions limit the options at the disposal of Council members.

The ceasefire and de-escalation initiatives have raised the expectations of many inside and outside Syria. A key priority of the international community's engagement appears to be to ensure that these expectations are fulfilled, and that they improve the living conditions for the 13.5 million civilians in need without promoting a de facto partition of the country. As Council members decide whether to put its weight behind a resolution endorsing the decisions made in Astana, they could be informed about the operationalisation of the ceasefire and de-escalation agreements and consider whether the Council has any role to play in supporting the monitoring mechanisms needed to enforce the de-escalation agreements.

As international efforts against ISIL continue, an important issue is to ensure the coherence of stabilisation initiatives with UN efforts aimed at brokering a political settlement, so as not to create conditions on the ground that undermine those efforts. Some regional and international actors prioritise expediting the return of refugees to Syria. The Council could hold a session to hear directly from refugees and UNHCR and reaffirm the right of all Syrians to seek asylum and enjoy refugee protection until conditions are conducive for voluntary return in safety and in dignity.

Council and Wider Dynamics

As has been the case in the past with regards to Syria, Council members' engagement has been limited to following the lead taken by key actors outside the Council. In late September, Russia circulated a draft resolution

among the permanent members of the Council to welcome the outcome of the talks in Astana. When Russia previously circulated a draft resolution in May welcoming the memorandum agreed to in Astana, several Council members voiced concerns regarding the limited information available to them in order to make a decision, including on the monitoring mechanisms and the role of the guarantor countries in the enforcement of the ceasefire. While some of these details have been agreed to since then, some Council members are still likely to raise questions regarding the scope and functioning of the de-escalation areas in negotiating the draft circulated by Russia in September. The US has consistently expressed its concern regarding the role of Iran as a guarantor in this process and sees its own initiative in bringing about the south-western de-escalation area as separate from the Astana process.

Libya

Expected Council Action

The Council is expected to renew the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking.

The Council is also likely to express its support to the action plan presented by the Secretary-General in late September and follow closely the UN efforts to jumpstart the political process in Libya.

Key Recent Developments

The central Mediterranean route from Libya to Italy continues to be the most active route into Europe for migrants and refugees. According to a 7 September report of the Secretary-General, the UN has recorded over 2,410 deaths and disappearances in the Mediterranean Sea and 123,994 arrivals in Europe by sea in 2017. Since its establishment, EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia has rescued some 40,000 persons in the Mediterranean. Many search and rescue

operations are conducted by international NGOs despite pressure from the Libyan coast guard and efforts to constrain their work, including through an EU proposal to enact a code of conduct that has been condemned by human rights organisations.

The Libyan coast guard, which receives training from Operation Sophia, has been criticised by OHCHR, UNSMIL, and the Panel of Experts of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee for its responsibility for human rights violations and even the involvement of some of its members in smuggling activities. Aggressive interception attempts by the coast guard have resulted in the capsizing of several boats.

On 25 July, the EU Council extended the mandate of Operation Sophia until 31 December 2018 and decided to set up a monitoring mechanism for trainees that would, among other things, ensure the long-term efficiency of the training of the coast guard, as recommended by a 13 December 2016 report by OHCHR and the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).

At a 20 September meeting on the

margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly, Secretary-General António Guterres outlined a comprehensive strategy and an action plan for the engagement of the UN system in Libya. The plan includes a proposal to agree in the following sequence upon:

- a political package that addresses the amendments required to the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA);
- the organisation of a national conference to consult with the largest spectrum of Libyan perspectives and consensually fill important positions;
- agreement on a constitution once changes have been made to the current draft in light of the discussions at the national conference; and
- holding parliamentary and presidential elections within one year.

This is in line with the issues that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, identified as outstanding in his 28 August briefing to the Council. In particular, he stressed the need to amend the LPA and

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2376](#) (14 September 2017) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2018. [S/RES/2312](#) (6 October 2016) renewed the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2017/761](#) (7 September 2017) was on the implementation of resolution 2312. [S/2017/726](#) (22 August 2017) was the most recent report on Libya. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8048](#) (14 September 2017) was the meeting at which resolution 2376 was adopted. [S/PV.8032](#) (28 August 2017) was a briefing by Salamé.

Libya

reach an agreement on the legal and political significance of the end of the transitional period outlined in the LPA in order to avoid an institutional vacuum. The elements that would need to be addressed have to do with the mandate and structure of the Presidency Council (PC), the establishment of a national unity government separate from the PC, the authority of the supreme commander of the armed forces, and the role and membership of the High State Council.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In his opening statement at the 36th session of the Human Rights Council's (HRC) on 11 September, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said that he is "appalled at the horrific abuses migrants face after being intercepted and returned to Libya. Extrajudicial killings, slavery, torture, rape, human trafficking and starvation are only some of the abuses reportedly inflicted on migrants in both official and informal detention centres in the country". During its 36th session, the HRC received an oral update from the High Commissioner on the human rights situation in the country.

Key Issues and Options

Given the reports from different UN entities regarding the violations of the rights of refugees and migrants transiting through Libya, when renewing the authorisation, the Council could emphasise language regarding the protection of human rights, as well as respect for international refugee law.

The Council, which is expected to throw its weight behind the action plan, could discuss and devise ways in which Council members could support, collectively and bilaterally, the UN-led mediation efforts. The Council could also decide to follow one of the conclusions of the strategic assessment review of the UN presence in Libya and allow Salamé enough political space to engage in good offices to bring about a settlement. Member states' pressure to rush an agreement with imposed deadlines has not brought about progress in the past.

Council and Wider Dynamics

While the Council has expressed its unanimous support for efforts to reach a political settlement within the framework of the

LPA, its members have so far been divided over the way forward to achieve a solution. In the absence of progress in the political process, several member states undertook initiatives to bring some of the key stakeholders together. With the momentum created by those meetings, the appointment of Salamé and the increased engagement of the Secretary-General, in September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2376, which supported the Secretary-General's call to consolidate the various initiatives under the leadership of the UN and underscored the central role of the UN in facilitating a Libyan-led political solution.

Speaking at the 14 September meeting of the Council, Ambassador Elmahdi S. Elmajerbi (Libya) highlighted the need for international support to address the smuggling of migrants and expressed his country's frustration at the fact that the need to tackle the root causes of the crisis was not included in resolution 2376.

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

Mali

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council expects to receive a briefing from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, followed by consultations.

MINUSMA's mandate expires on 30 June 2018.

Key Recent Developments

Although the two-year interim period established by the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali has elapsed, key provisions remain unimplemented. The interim authorities of the five northern regions are not fully operational, and mixed patrols of combatants belonging to the Platform and Coordination coalitions of armed groups—which have only deployed in Gao so far—are not able to carry out their functions regularly. Increased tensions between both coalitions

have led to repeated ceasefire violations in the north. On 20 September, the two coalitions signed a definitive cessation of hostilities accord and committed to agree on a timeline for the full implementation of the 2015 agreement.. Little progress has been accomplished on key areas such as reform of the security sector and the cantonment, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process of former insurgents.

Contributing to the polarisation of the political landscape, a proposal by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita to revise the constitution to strengthen the powers of the presidency was withdrawn in mid-August after weeks of protests. The constitution needs to be revised in order, among other things, to establish an upper legislative chamber and lay out a framework for institutional, security and justice reforms as stipulated in the 2015

agreement. As part of the forthcoming electoral cycle, Mali is expected to hold district, regional, legislative and presidential elections, as well as municipal by-elections.

On 29 June, the Council adopted resolution 2364 renewing the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The resolution did not substantively change the mandate of the mission, its posture or its troop ceiling. However, it incorporated some recommendations from the Secretary-General's June report related to extending the good offices mandate of the Special Representative to support the electoral process and the constitutional referendum, as well as the establishment and operations of the international commission of inquiry, which was envisioned by the Ouagadougou Agreement in 2013 but has yet to be created. The resolution also

UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2374](#) (5 September 2017) established a targeted sanctions regime on Mali. [S/RES/2364](#) (29 June 2017) was a resolution renewing MINUSMA's mandate for an additional year. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8040](#) (5 September 2017) was the meeting at which resolution 2374 was adopted. [Security Council Press Statements SC/13006](#) (25 September 2017) condemned the attack against a MINUSMA convoy in the region of Gao, which caused the death of three Bangladeshi peacekeepers and injured four others. [SC/12980](#) (6 September 2017) condemned an attack against MINUSMA near Aguelhoc, which killed two Chadian peacekeepers and injured two others. [SC/12954](#) (14 August 2017) was on the terrorist attack against the MINUSMA camps in Douentza, Mali.

Mali

specified the details of an already existing task related to MINUSMA's support to the redeployment of the Malian Defence and Security Forces.

A ministerial meeting on Mali took place on 20 September, on the margins of the general debate of the UN General Assembly. Participants at the meeting, which included Secretary-General António Guterres, President Keita and other high-level officials from member states and regional organisations, stressed the importance of sustained support by the international community for the implementation of the 2015 agreement and deplored the delays in its implementation, which negatively impact the regional security situation. (For more information regarding the operationalisation of the joint force of the G5 Sahel, please refer to the Sahel brief in this *Forecast*.)

On 5 September, the Council adopted resolution 2374 establishing a targeted sanctions regime on Mali. The resolution, which was adopted unanimously, imposes a travel ban and assets freeze on individuals and entities engaged in actions or policies that threaten the peace, security or stability of Mali (to be identified by the sanctions committee established under the resolution). This initiative is aimed at pressuring the parties to adhere to the letter and spirit of the 2015 agreement through the increased scrutiny that will result from the establishment of the Sanctions Committee and the Panel of Experts.

Terrorist groups that are now part of the coalition Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin have carried out attacks against MINUSMA and French and Malian forces

in the centre, south and north of Mali. Since the mission was established in 2013, at least 83 peacekeepers have been killed as a result of hostile acts, including six since June.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In his opening statement at the Human Rights Council's 36th session on 11 September, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein spoke about Mali: "Any effective strategy to combat violent extremism must seek to address underlying factors such as poverty, lack of basic services, corruption, marginalisation and discrimination, and human rights violations committed by institutions that are mandated to protect the population". He also emphasised the need for all members of the joint force of the G5 Sahel to abide by human rights due-diligence principles.

Key Issues and Options

The Council has consistently expressed concern at the slow implementation of the agreement and the potential for a relapse into conflict. The Council could hold a frank and unscripted discussion, inviting the Secretariat, the mission leadership and Algeria, to garner support around a common political strategy.

Divisions within the armed groups and between the parties hamper the implementation process. During the visiting mission to the Sahel planned for October, which includes Mali, Council members could prioritise engaging with the CSA and, separately, with the parties, to convey a strong, unified message about the need to deliver in good faith on the commitments made in the agreement, as well as to explain the working methods of the 2374 Sanctions Committee.

The gap between MINUSMA's current mandate and the mission's insufficient

capacities and resources continues. A Council debate on strategic force generation planned for October constitutes an opportunity for the Council to continue its engagement in support of the Secretariat on this front. (For more information on this debate, please refer to the strategic force generation brief in this issue of the *Forecast*.)

In order to tackle the terrorist threat, the Council could add terrorist groups operating in Mali, such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin, to the list of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Article 54 of the peace agreement included language inviting the Security Council to adopt measures against those undermining the implementation of the agreement and the pursuit of its objectives. While the Council had repeatedly threatened to impose sanctions, it had failed to have a unified position until recently. Despite the penholder's readiness to table such a resolution in early 2017, only after the government of Mali sent a letter to the Council on 9 August requesting the establishment of a sanctions regime did some Council members decide to support this endeavour. Eventually, the resolution was adopted unanimously. In explaining its vote, Russia expressed its support for the resolution, although it noted its concern about the usefulness of sanctions and the risk of antagonising the parties to the conflict.

France is the penholder on Mali. The chair of the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee is Sweden.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council will be briefed on several reports on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that are due by the end of September.

Maman Sambo Sidikou, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and

head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), will brief on the latest MONUSCO report. Said Djinnit, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region, may brief on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation

(PSC) Framework Agreement.

The Council will also be briefed on the strategic review of MONUSCO requested in resolution 2348 of 31 March.

At press time, it is unclear if the Council will conduct a review of the sanctions regime in October. (Resolution 2360 of 21

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. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/712](#) (15 August 2017) was on the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016. [Security Council Letter S/2017/713](#) (15 August 2017) was from the Secretary-General containing the executive summary of the Board of Inquiry's report on the murder of two members of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee's Group of Experts. [Security Council Press Statement SC/12999](#) (21 September 2017) condemned the attack in North Kivu that led to the death of a Tanzanian peacekeeper.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

June called for the review since it was adopted before the final report of the previous Group of Experts, which was delayed because two of its members were murdered while conducting investigations for the report.)

MONUSCO's mandate expires on 31 March 2018.

Key Recent Developments

The violence in Kasai, the area in south-central DRC, continues. Intercommunal conflict and clashes between militias and government forces in the region began in August 2016 when the leader of the Kamwina Nsapu militia was killed in fighting with the DRC police. Violence continues in the east as well. On 17 September, a Tanzanian peacekeeper was killed in clashes with armed groups in North Kivu. Council members condemned the incident in a press statement on 21 September.

On the political front, the DRC electoral commission has said that elections will not be possible by the end of the year, the timeframe set in the 31 December agreement, citing logistical difficulties with voter registration, including the challenging conditions in Kasai. President Joseph Kabila, whose second and—under the country's constitution—last term in office ended in December 2016, remains in power, and his opponents accuse him of purposely stalling elections.

Felix Tshisekedi, the head of the opposition "Rassemblement" coalition, has called for widespread civil disobedience from 1 October, asserting that Kabila has lost all credibility in the eyes of the public and that elections must be held by the end of the year. In lieu of elections by then, Tshisekedi called for Kabila to step down, to be followed by a six-month transitional period. Kabila's allies have said that he should be part of any transitional arrangement.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) held a summit on 19-20 August in which it decided to appoint a Special Envoy to help the DRC prepare for elections. A SADC statement commended Kabila and other stakeholders for progress made in implementing the 31 December 2016 agreement and noted the challenges that have made it unrealistic for the DRC to hold elections by December 2017. The AU Peace and Security Council held a meeting on the DRC on 23 August after which it adopted a decision welcoming the SADC statement.

As a follow-up to the conclusions of the Secretary-General's Board of Inquiry regarding the murder in March of two members of the DRC Sanctions Committee's Group of Experts—presented to Council members under "any other business" on 22 August by Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security Peter Drennan—the Secretary-General has reportedly decided to send a team of experts to join DRC efforts to investigate the incident.

On 15 September, Congolese military killed at least 36 Burundian refugees in South Kivu who were protesting the expected repatriation of some of their compatriots. One soldier also died. The DRC government said it will investigate the incident.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 7 September, the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee met with the newly appointed Group of Experts assisting it to discuss their programme of work and priorities before their departure for the DRC.

The committee also discussed the tentative plans of its chair, Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), to undertake a visit to the DRC in October. Additionally, he may travel to Brazzaville to attend a meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the PSC Framework Agreement, and to Dubai to discuss ways to tackle the illegal exploitation and smuggling of gold from the DRC and its sale in markets in the region.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 36th session in September, the Human Rights Council considered the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in the DRC (A/HRC/36/34). The report, covering June 2016 to May 2017, documented an alarming deterioration in the human rights situation, with violence in the Kasai region resulting in the deaths of at least 596 people, including 153 children, and the displacement of more than one million people. In the provinces of Kasai, Tanganyika, North Kivu and South Kivu, the number of militias and armed groups—including self-defence groups—has increased, and inter-ethnic tensions have resulted in a number of attacks on civilians, the report said.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council remains the implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement. Another important issue is addressing the continuing violence in the east and the increasing violence in Kasai.

In the longer term, the Council will need to assess the findings of MONUSCO's

strategic review, particularly in light of the security and electoral challenges.

The Council may choose to send stakeholders in the DRC key messages and 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 so that timely, free and fair elections can be held in accordance with the agreement;
- condemns the mass violence in Kasai and elsewhere and calls for accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law; and
- threatens the imposition of targeted sanctions against those identified as having failed to implement the 31 December 2016 agreement.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain concerned about the ongoing political crisis and agree that the publication of a clear timetable for elections is vital and necessary to avoid further tensions and possible escalation of violence.

There are divisions, however, on the importance of holding elections in 2017 as stipulated by the 31 December 2016 agreement. Some Council members, such as France and Italy, emphasise the potentially dire consequences of further delaying elections and will likely continue to insist that they be held by the end of the year. They maintain that the regional organisations should be asserting more pressure on Kabila to hold timely elections. The US has publicly stated that sanctions may be called for to spur actors to push for elections. Nevertheless, these Council members are aware that elections in 2017 seem highly unlikely. Other Council members, such as Russia and Egypt, assert that the timing of elections is less important than ensuring that they are peaceful and inclusive, and that Kabila and the opposition need to agree on a new realistic timetable.

The expected delays in the electoral process and continuing violence in parts of the country will also affect the content of MONUSCO's strategic review and its implementation. During negotiations over resolution 2348, many Council members were of the view that plans for downsizing MONUSCO and an eventual exit strategy

Democratic Republic of the Congo

are premature prior to the successful implementation of the 31 December agreement. However, the US insisted on a shorter time

schedule to advance discussions of the future of MONUSCO.

France is the penholder on the DRC,

and Egypt chairs the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council will receive a report of the Secretary-General and hold a debate on Haiti. The Council, through resolution 2350, decided unanimously on 13 April to phase out the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), draw down its military component by 15 October, and replace the mission with a new entity, the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). MINUSTAH's mandate expires on 15 October and MINUJUSTH begins operating on 16 October.

Key Recent Developments

On 12 July, the Secretary-General transmitted his report on Haiti, requested by resolution 2350, in which he detailed the process of drawing down MINUSTAH and transitioning to MINUJUSTH. He said that the final withdrawal of the military component would begin on 15 August and that force headquarters would remain operational after the repatriation of the last troops, set for 1 to 5 October, until the last day of the MINUSTAH mandate, 15 October. He reported that MINUSTAH leadership consulted closely with the government and high-level commanding officers of the national police to ensure that adequate security arrangements were being put in place, in particular in areas where MINUSTAH troops and police are withdrawing.

The report also outlined MINUJUSTH's key functions. In accordance with its mandate, MINUJUSTH will support and strengthen the accountability and oversight mechanisms in the justice sector, the Superior Council of the Judiciary, and the Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and will also advocate the completion of key legislative reform processes. In addition, MINUJUSTH will

provide capacity-building and advisory support for the effective functioning of the police, criminal defence and justice and corrections institutions, with particular emphasis placed on improving Haitian ownership.

The human rights component of MINUJUSTH will focus on strengthening the capacity of the national human rights institution, the Ombudsperson's office, to operate as a reliable human rights accountability mechanism vis-a-vis all state institutions. This will include supporting the Ombudsperson to effectively and independently investigate systematic human rights violations and carry out public reporting functions. The mission will provide technical assistance and support for the capacity of civil society with regard to advocacy and reporting to human rights mechanisms.

MINUJUSTH will maintain a focus on the institutional and professional development of the Haitian National Police, within the framework of the police's strategic development plan for the period 2017-2021. The mission will provide expertise to senior and midlevel management of the national police. The seven former police units remaining in MINUJUSTH will provide continued operational support to the national police in the maintenance of law and order throughout the country, including—within the limits of their capabilities—the protection of civilians. According to the report, the ongoing withdrawal of the MINUSTAH military and police components, including the closure of military bases in the northern departments and Cité Soleil and the gradual transfer of security tasks to the Haitian National Police, has not affected the overall security situation.

On 13 July, the General Assembly adopted without a vote a resolution titled “The new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti”, in which the Assembly welcomed the

Secretary-General's intention to invite member states to voluntarily direct their share of the unencumbered balance and other income of MINUSTAH to the UN Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

The trust fund is part of the UN's new two-track approach to cholera in Haiti, which was the subject of a 3 May Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly. Track one involves intensifying the UN's support for efforts to reduce and ultimately end the transmission of cholera by improving access to care and treatment and addressing the longer-term issues of water, sanitation and health systems in Haiti. Track two involves developing a package of material assistance and support to Haitians most directly affected by cholera, drawing on contributions from member states.

In the report, the Secretary-General called on member states to voluntarily allocate assessed contributions amounting to \$40.5 million to a trust fund to support his new approach. The funds will remain unspent after MINUSTAH closes in October and would otherwise be returned to states. At press time, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, India, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Nepal, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovak Republic, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uruguay had pledged to divert the unspent funds. The Secretary-General has estimated that the new approach will cost \$400 million, but the effort remains severely underfunded. During a 14 June informal briefing of the General Assembly, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed said that because of insufficient funding, cholera response and control efforts cannot be sustained through 2017 and 2018. Mohammed used the opportunity to call on member states to contribute resources that would enable implementation of the new approach to cholera.

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2350](#) (13 April 2017) extended MINUSTAH's mandate for a final six-month period until 15 October and authorised the establishment of a smaller successor peacekeeping mission, the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/604](#) (12 July 2017) was on MINUSTAH. [A/71/895](#) (3 May 2017) provided updated information on the implementation of the new approach to cholera in Haiti. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7924](#) (13 April 2017) was the meeting during which resolution 2350 was adopted. [General Assembly Resolution A/71/L.78](#) (13 July 2017) welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to invite member states to voluntarily direct their share of the unencumbered balance and other income of MINUSTAH to the UN Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

Haiti

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 5 July, the Human Rights section of MINUSTAH and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released their final joint annual report. The report highlights a lack of accountability, in particular the failure to systematically investigate the use of force and widespread illegal or arbitrary arrests by police. It also considers the vulnerable situation of women, children, LGBTI individuals, people with disabilities, and people of Haitian origin returned or deported to Haiti. In a statement on the report's release, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called on the government to continue addressing human rights challenges in the country, in particular cruel and inhumane conditions in prisons and the reform of the judiciary.

Key Issues and Options

An ongoing issue for the Council is the need for MINUJUSTH to develop further the capacity of the Haitian National Police and to address the lack of progress in the areas of rule of law and human rights-related reforms, in particular with regard to criminal justice and ensuring accountability for past abuses, within its projected two-year operating period.

The Council may need to closely monitor developments during that period to steer the mission to completion of its mandate.

Another issue is the lack of funding for the new approach to cholera and the implications for the credibility of the UN presence in Haiti. The Council could issue a statement encouraging member states to fund the new approach and call on relevant members to voluntarily donate to the new trust fund their share of assessed contributions that will remain unspent after MINUSTAH's closure.

Council Dynamics

Council members seem content with the progress Haiti has achieved recently. The presidential, legislative and municipal elections were all held in a peaceful manner and without major threats to overall security. Earlier this year, a new president, Jovenel Moïse, was inaugurated, marking the restoration of constitutional order. This was the backdrop for the Council's adoption of resolution 2350, which authorised the gradual drawdown and closure of MINUSTAH by 15 October

followed by the establishment of a much smaller successor mission, MINUJUSTH. While the Council voted unanimously in favour of resolution 2350, some members expressed concern regarding certain aspects of the resolution. Most notably, explaining their votes, Russia and China objected to the inclusion of a human rights mandate for the successor mission and its being established under Chapter VII. Bolivia also expressed reservations regarding invoking Chapter VII in the resolution, noting that this does not reflect the reality in the ground. Furthermore, Russia has also argued that some of the aspects of the MINUJUSTH mandate are not clear and would be difficult to implement in practice.

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

Famine

Expected Council Action

In keeping with the Security Council's August presidential statement on famine, a Secretariat official is expected to provide in October "an oral briefing...on country-specific impediments to an effective response to the risk of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and northeast Nigeria and to make specific recommendations on how to address these impediments". No immediate Council outcome is anticipated.

Key Recent Developments

On 21 February, the Secretary-General sent a letter to UN member states highlighting the global food crisis and the risk of famine in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. He noted that without decisive action over 20 million people in these countries faced the risk of famine within six months. While maintaining that the UN and its partners had "comprehensive

programmes, clear strategic plans...and strong teams on the ground", he underscored the importance of "further voluntary contributions...to meet the unprecedented scale of needs across the globe".

On 10 March, then-Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council on the visit he had recently completed to Yemen, South Sudan and Somalia—countries that he described as "facing, or at risk of, famine"—and on the outcome of the 24 February Oslo donor conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin. O'Brien told the Council that the world was facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the UN's establishment. He commended donors who had pledged a total of \$672 million for humanitarian aid at the Oslo conference and urged others to contribute as well.

Several Council members—Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Senegal, Sweden, the

UK and the US—co-hosted an Arria-formula meeting on 16 June on the risk of famine in conflict-affected areas in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria that was open to the wider UN membership, civil society and the media. It featured briefings by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed; Franck Bousquet, senior director of the Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group of the World Bank; and Andrea Tamburini, CEO of the NGO Action Against Hunger. During the meeting, discussion highlighted the hindrance of relief efforts due to access constraints caused by ongoing violence and restrictions imposed by belligerents, as well as shortages in humanitarian financing.

Following the Arria-formula meeting, Sweden prepared a draft presidential statement to cover key points from the session and further actions, with input from the other co-conveners. After several weeks of negotiations, the presidential statement was

UN DOCUMENTS ON FAMINE Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/14 (9 August 2017) was on the threat of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8020 (9 August 2017) was the meeting at which the presidential statement on the threat of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria was adopted. S/PV.7897 (10 March 2017) was a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien.

Famine

adopted on 9 August. It expressed grave concern about the “unprecedented level of global humanitarian needs and the threat of famine presently facing more than 20 million people in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and northeast Nigeria”. The statement noted that ongoing armed conflict and violence are a major cause of famine in these situations. It reiterated the Council’s calls on all parties to allow safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance and to facilitate access for essential imports of food, fuel and medical supplies into each country and for their distribution.

On 21 September, OCHA and the World Bank co-hosted a high-level event on famine prevention and response on the margins of the General Assembly General Debate. During the meeting, Secretary-General António Guterres noted that since his call for action in February to respond to the threat of famine in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, 60 percent of the \$4.9 billion needed for urgent humanitarian operations had been received. However, he added, people’s needs in each of these countries had increased, more funding was required, and efforts needed to be made to influence the parties to conflict to allow for safe humanitarian access.

Key Issues and Options

A major issue for the Council is that the humanitarian needs in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, largely generated by conflict, remain significant. While the famine declared in Unity State in South Sudan earlier this year was halted, severe food insecurity continues to face some six million South Sudanese. Millions of people also continue to be at risk of famine in north-east Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen.

Since the Secretary-General is expected to provide specific recommendations on how to address impediments to effective responses to the risk of famine in these four situations, the most likely option for the Council is to wait for the briefing and to consider how to respond to his recommendations.

Another important issue is how to create synergies between the work of the Council and other UN entities addressing famine in conflict-affected areas. This issue could be raised in the informal expert group on the protection of civilians, for which OCHA serves as the lead within the UN system, under the broader context of improving humanitarian access. Members could also hold another Arria-formula meeting on the risk of famine in conflict-affected areas, to take stock of how the UN and humanitarian organisations have addressed food insecurity

in the relevant conflict-affected countries since the 16 June meeting, explore best practices and shortcomings in their approaches, and develop strategies for the way forward.

Council Dynamics

The humanitarian impacts of conflicts have long been a major focus of the Council’s work and are especially relevant today given the enormous global needs. However, dynamics on the relationship between conflict and famine are complex. Although the link between conflict and famine is a widespread concern, asserting this causality in the Council is sensitive to some members, as factors other than conflict and not related to maintaining peace and security, such as drought and poverty, also contribute to famine. For example, during the negotiations on the 9 August presidential statement, Russia expressed concern about whether famine was an appropriate issue for the Council and was uncomfortable with the initiative to pursue the presidential statement. This created a temporary impasse in the negotiations. However, Russia agreed to reengage on the draft statement after the UK and the US suggested that instead of a presidential statement—which requires consensus to be adopted—they would seek a resolution and thus compel Russia to either abstain or veto.

Burundi

Expected Council Action

In October, the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy, Michel Kafando, will brief the Council on the situation in Burundi.

Key Recent Developments

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

The overall level of oppression and state control over Burundian society remains high, manifested by persistent arbitrary deprivations of life, enforced disappearances, cases of torture and arbitrary detention. These actions are taking place in an environment where the freedoms of expression, association and assembly are virtually non-existent.

An estimated 400,000 people have fled the country since the beginning of the crisis, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). On 31 August, Burundi, Tanzania and UNHCR reached agreement on the voluntary repatriation of 12,000 refugees by the end of the year from Tanzania,

which hosts 280,000 Burundian refugees. The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) reported that on 15 September, Congolese military killed at least 38 Burundian refugees in South Kivu, when they were protesting the arrest and expected repatriation of other Burundians. One soldier also died. The DRC government said it will investigate the incident.

The Council adopted a presidential statement on Burundi on 2 August. During negotiations, Council members were split over whether the mandate of the UN police component—authorised in resolution 2303 for a

UN DOCUMENTS ON BURUNDI [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2303](#) (29 July 2016) established a UN police component in Burundi of 228 officers for an initial period of one year. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/13](#) (2 August 2017) was a statement on the political situation and ongoing violence in Burundi that strongly urged the government and all parties to immediately cease and reject such violence. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8013](#) (26 July 2017) was a briefing on the situation in Burundi by Special Envoy Michel Kafando and Ambassador Jürg Lauber of Switzerland, the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission’s Burundi configuration. [Other A/HRC/36/54](#) (11 August 2017) was the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, established by HRC resolution 33/24 of 30 September 2016.

Burundi

period of a year to monitor the security situation and support human rights monitoring—required renewal as the police deployment had not taken place.

To sidestep the issue, the presidential statement expressed the Council's support of the Secretary-General in his efforts to engage the government of Burundi on the modalities of the implementation of resolution 2303 without explicitly calling for the deployment of the police component. The statement further expressed concern over the political situation, the lack of implementation of resolution 2303, and the lack of engagement by the government of Burundi in that regard.

The statement also supported the AU's call for the rapid signing of the memorandum of understanding which would allow AU human rights observers and military experts to operate fully in the country in fulfilment of their mandated responsibilities. (This deployment was authorised by the AU Peace and Security Council in a 17 October 2015 communiqué.)

Meanwhile, there seems to have been little headway in the Inter-Burundian dialogue, led by the East African Community and facilitated by former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa. Media reports indicate that talks are scheduled to resume in October. The Ombudsman for Burundi, an official elected by the National Assembly to investigate violations of civil rights by state officials, Edouard Nduwimana, said that only actors recognised by the government will be allowed to attend. The opposition has criticised Nduwimana's election, claiming he had undermined civil society when minister of home affairs. The opposition has also been critical at times, of Mkapa, accusing him of siding with the government.

The Council last met to discuss the situation in Burundi on 26 July. Kafando and Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration, briefed the

Council. Members then met in consultations. (Mkapa was also due to engage with Council members but was unable to do so for personal reasons.)

Human Rights-Related Developments

In his opening statement at the 36th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 11 September, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein noted, "The human rights situation in Burundi has in no way improved, with continuing reports of disappearances and killings, arbitrary arrests, detention and torture of perceived opponents. Most opposition parties, independent NGOs and media have been banned or suspended, leaving virtually no space for civil liberties and open debate".

During the session, the HRC held an interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, established by HRC resolution 33/24 of 30 September 2016, and considered its report. The report documents extrajudicial executions; arbitrary arrests and detentions; enforced disappearances; torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and sexual violence in Burundi since April 2015. The report also recommends that the Security Council take account of the commission's conclusions, as well as the persistence of gross violations of human rights, in any discussion on Burundi; refer international crimes committed in Burundi to the ICC; and impose individual sanctions on the principal alleged perpetrators of gross human rights violations and international crimes in Burundi.

Key Issues and Options

The ongoing and pressing issue is ensuring that the situation in Burundi does not descend into chaos and further violence, including ethnically-motivated violence, and finding a way to move beyond the fragile status quo in the country.

As part of its attempt to make headway in Burundi, a main issue for the Council is finding an avenue for renewed and productive engagement between the UN and Burundi in order to solve the political crisis. In a related issue, the Council must address Burundi's refusal to implement resolution 2303, which stands as a dead letter. The Council may

consider engaging with Burundi on other ways to fulfil the role envisaged for the police component, for example by supporting an expanded role for the AU in human rights monitoring and by taking a more forceful stance on ensuring the full deployment of its personnel.

Finally, a major issue is the lack of accountability for potential international crimes over the last couple of years in Burundi. In light of the gravity of the report of the Commission of Inquiry, the Council may consider whether it has a role to play in ensuring accountability for the crimes enumerated therein.

One possible way to address these issues is to impose targeted sanctions against spoilers of the political dialogue, those responsible for human rights violations, and those who block the implementation of resolution 2303.

Council Dynamics

Burundi remains entrenched in its opposition to the implementation of resolution 2303 and the conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry, which reflects its overall position on the international community's involvement in the crisis. The Council, meanwhile, is at an impasse with respect to its engagement with the country, split between those who view the situation as an internal political issue lacking a pressing security dimension, and those who view the situation as volatile and closely related to international peace and security, threatening the viability of the 2000 Arusha Accord, which put an end to civil war and ethnic violence in the country. For these latter Council members, there is a creeping fear that the current state of affairs in Burundi has become a "tolerable" status quo for the international community as its attention shifts elsewhere. However, they view the situation as fragile and unsustainable and hope that the commission's report may bring focus to the situation even if Council action is unlikely.

France is the penholder on Burundi.

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In October, Security Council members expect to receive a briefing on the Secretary-General's monthly assessment of the deployment and future requirements of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) and impediments to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in carrying out its mandate. The briefing will be followed by consultations.

The mandate of UNMISS expires on 15 December.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in the country remains a cause for serious concern while the humanitarian crisis continues to escalate. Violent clashes persist in almost all areas of the country despite the limited mobility imposed by the rainy season, in particular in the Upper Nile region and around Pagak, the de facto headquarters of the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition, as well as in the Equatorias.

According to OCHA, the number of South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries now exceeds two million, and another 1.87 million people remain internally displaced. About 11,000 internally displaced persons have left UNMISS civilian protection sites since the start of the year, but UNMISS continues to shelter some 213,000 people at seven sites. The situation for humanitarian aid workers remains extremely dangerous, with 18 aid workers killed since the start of the year.

Deployment of the RPF, which was initially authorised in August 2016, is continuing. So far, approximately 650 of the authorised 4,000 RPF troops have arrived in the country. Ethiopian troops who will participate in the RPF are expected to arrive in October. Despite the South Sudanese government's stated consent to the deployment of the RPF, critical issues have yet to be resolved, including continued government resistance to the RPF's mandated role to support the protection of Juba International Airport. In this context, Special Representative and UNMISS head David Shearer met with President Salva Kiir on 6 September and emphasised the need for UNMISS and the government to work together and establish clear lines of communication.

South Sudan was one of three situations on the agenda at the 11th joint consultative

meeting between members of the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in Addis Ababa on 8 September. At the meeting, members of both Councils were in general agreement that the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan needed to be implemented before elections could take place. They were also supportive of the convening of the High Level Revitalization Forum by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), expected in October. According to the 12 June communiqué of the Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State held in Addis Ababa, the purpose of the forum is to discuss concrete measures to restore a permanent ceasefire, advance implementation of the August 2015 peace agreement, and develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period.

On 20 September, OCHA, Norway and the AU convened a high-level humanitarian event on South Sudan. On 21 September, UN Secretary-General António Guterres co-chaired with the AU and IGAD a closed high-level meeting on South Sudan in the margins of the General Assembly to consider the revitalisation of the political process in the country.

On 26 September, Special Representative Shearer and Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission Chairman Festus Mogae (via VTC) briefed the Council (S/PV.8056). Shearer emphasised the need for international actors to engage South Sudan with a unity of purpose to support the peace process. Mogae said that little substantial progress had been made in the implementation of key provisions of the August 2015 agreement, and spoke about preparations for the Revitalization Forum.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In his opening statement at the 36th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 11 September, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein remarked that "[t]he country is being quite simply destroyed". He said that "there is a critical need for accountability for violations" and expressed concern over "appalling levels of violence and sexual violence by all parties to the conflict [and] reports of arbitrary detention of people perceived to be critical of the government". He added that the Hybrid Court for South Sudan must be established and welcomed the

HRC's decision to charge the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan with gathering evidence with a view toward prosecuting perpetrators. During its 36th session, the HRC held an enhanced interactive dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan.

Key Issues and Options

The immediate issue for the Council is 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, which has so far proved difficult.

Another issue is how much impact the deployment of the RPF, which is mandated to provide a secure environment in and around Juba and other areas in extremis, will have on improving the security environment in South Sudan.

The Council could consider adopting a presidential statement that:

- strongly condemns violence perpetrated by government forces and armed groups in South Sudan and calls for an immediate ceasefire;
- reminds the government of its responsibility to protect civilians, especially from atrocity crimes;
- condemns restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNMISS personnel and obstacles to humanitarian access; and
- emphasises the Council's support for regional efforts in pursuit of a mediated solution to the conflict, including its support for the High Level Revitalization Forum.

Council Dynamics

The Council remains divided on its approach to South Sudan. While there is general agreement on the gravity of the situation and the need for a political solution to the crisis, there does not seem to be a unified strategy for how to exert leverage on the parties. Some Council members, such as France, the UK and the US, believe that the situation requires a firm response, including the imposition of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions. In its remarks at the Security Council's consultative meeting with the AU PSC in Addis Ababa on 8 September, the US said that the IGAD revitalisation process was the last

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolutions 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/2017/784** (15 September 2017) was the 90-day report on UNMISS. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8056** (26 September 2017) was a briefing by UNMISS head David Shearer.

South Sudan

chance for salvaging the peace agreement and reiterated that if the situation in the country did not change, further targeted sanctions and an arms embargo may be needed. Russia, however, made clear at the same meeting that it did not think this would be particularly effective.

On 6 September, the US placed sanctions on three individuals: Deputy Chief of Defense Force and Inspector General of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) Malek Rengu, South Sudanese Minister of Information Michael Makuei Lueth, and former

Chief of Staff of the SPLA Paul Malong.

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

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In October, Council members expect to receive the semi-annual briefing on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559. Adopted in 2004, resolution 1559 called for the disarmament of all militias and the extension of government control over all Lebanese territory. This briefing has always been held in consultations.

Key Recent Developments

After somewhat contentious negotiations on the draft, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2373 on 30 August, which extended the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for another year. In the weeks leading up to the resolution's adoption, the US and Israel publicly criticised the work of UNIFIL and its leadership for overlooking the alleged upsurge in Hezbollah activity and an increase in the flow of weapons into southern Lebanon. Although UNIFIL's mandate was not altered, the resolution instructed the UN mission to take a more proactive approach in ensuring that the mission's area of operation is not used for hostile activities. In addition, the resolution requested the Secretary-General to explore ways to enhance UNIFIL's efforts by increasing the mission's visible presence, including patrols and inspections.

Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča briefly addressed the situation in UNIFIL's area of operations during the Middle East briefing on 22 August. He noted that military operations on the border with Syria continued and that a number of militants and refugees from Aarsal in Lebanon had been evacuated to some areas in Syria.

On 19 August, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) launched an offensive on positions held by the Islamic State in Iraq and

the Levant (ISIL) in north-eastern Lebanon, while Hezbollah and the Syrian armed forces launched a simultaneous offensive on ISIL positions on the Syrian side of the border in that region. After several days, the remaining ISIL fighters were surrounded by Hezbollah and the Syrian army on one side of the border and the LAF on the other side.

In an agreement brokered on 27 August, the LAF, Hezbollah and Syrian government forces allowed safe passage for about 300 ISIL fighters and their families from the north-eastern border between Lebanon and Syria to ISIL-controlled areas in eastern Syria in close proximity to the border with Iraq. In exchange for this safe passage, ISIL was supposed to hand over the bodies of nine Lebanese soldiers who were kidnapped in 2014 and later killed by the group and to also release some Hezbollah and Syrian army prisoners. The US-led anti-ISIL coalition, which was not a party to the agreement, sought to disrupt the passage of the convoy carrying ISIL fighters towards eastern Syria. The US coalition did not strike the convoy directly because of the presence of civilians but destroyed the road the convoy was supposed to take while attacking some ISIL fighters and their vehicles as they attempted to assist the passage of the convoy. For several days, the convoy was stranded on Syrian territory between government- and ISIL-controlled areas. The government of Iraq and the US-led coalition have publicly criticised the agreement to provide safe passage for ISIL fighters, saying it would undermine collective efforts to fight the terrorist organisation. On 8 September, the US-led coalition stopped monitoring the convoy following a Russian government request to allow Syrian forces supported by Russia to make advances into ISIL-held territory in the area. Media

reports have indicated that the convoy reached its final destination in Deir al-Zour province in eastern Syria on 13 September.

After a military campaign in the north-eastern part of the country ended on 30 August, Lebanese President Michel Aoun declared victory over ISIL. Several days later, the commander of the LAF, Joseph Aoun (no family relationship between the two men), announced that the LAF would be deployed along the eastern border with Syria in areas that have recently been recaptured from ISIL. Furthermore, Hezbollah apparently confirmed that it would hand over the territory it controls along the border with Syria to the LAF.

On 5 September, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched a massive ten-day military exercise in the northern parts of Israel close to the border with Lebanon and Syria. The military exercises involved some 30,000 IDF personnel from various branches of the military. The aim of the exercise was to simulate the response of the IDF to a potential attack by Hezbollah.

Issues and Options

There are several interrelated issues for the Council, with the main one being the weaponry that Hezbollah and other non-state actors possess and the flow of arms through Syria to Hezbollah, which directly hinders the ability of the government to exercise full authority over its territory.

The ongoing crisis in Syria, with Hezbollah's involvement on the side of the government, has contributed to this flow of arms. These circumstances pose a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability and contravene its obligations under resolutions 1559 and 1701, the latter of which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006. The situation also generates concerns

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2373 (30 August 2017) renewed UNIFIL's mandate for another year. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon and extension of the government's control over all of its territory. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel and increased UNIFIL by 15,000 troops. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8028 (22 August 2017) was the quarterly Middle East open debate.

Lebanon

about tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border, with the continuing threat of a resumption of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel.

Should the hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel flair up, the Council could work towards defusing tensions by issuing some form of outcome that calls for restraint by the parties. Members could also request a briefing by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that focuses on the impact that a more proactive approach by the mission to implementing its mandate as outlined in resolution 2373 would have on the security situation.

Lebanon's burden in hosting more than one million refugees from Syria is also of deep

concern, and in that regard, the Council could request a briefing by OCHA on how member states can enhance services to refugees.

Council Dynamics

The Council continues to demonstrate unity in its support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security, and of its efforts to insulate itself from the damaging effect of the Syrian conflict. The Council has been united in repeatedly calling on all Lebanese parties to recommit to Lebanon's policy of dissociation from the Syrian crisis and to desist from any involvement there. As was evident from the latest negotiations on UNIFIL's renewal, the US

has expressed some criticism of the mission due to differing views on the threat posed by Hezbollah. The US has been advocating for a more proactive role of the mission in confronting the threat of Hezbollah. Furthermore, the US has been increasingly vocal about what it believes is the rising threat of Hezbollah and its proliferation of weapons. Most other Council members, including France which is the penholder and Italy which is a major troop contributor to UNIFIL, seem to be wary of the prospect of a more proactive approach by the mission, tending to believe that this could threaten the fragile calm in southern Lebanon that has been maintained for the past ten years.

Western Sahara

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council will receive a briefing in consultations on Western Sahara. It will be the second of the Secretary-General's semi-annual briefings on the situation in Western Sahara this year. While at press time the briefers had not yet been confirmed, typically the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General conduct the briefing.

Key Recent Developments

The new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler, took up his functions on 8 September in New York, where he held meetings and consultations until 16 September. Mr. Köhler met with Secretary-General António Guterres and senior UN officials, representatives of the parties and neighbours, other member states and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security. In a 17 September statement, the Secretary-General welcomed the intention of his Personal Envoy to travel to the region and stressed the importance of the visit to help re-launch the political process with a new spirit and dynamic, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2351. The Secretary-General had sent a letter to the Council on 30 May expressing his intention to appoint Köhler as his new Personal Envoy. Köhler's appointment,

however, faced delays due to administrative difficulties and his appointment was finally announced on 16 August. On 7 March, it had been announced that the Secretary-General's previous Personal Envoy to Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, had offered his resignation after serving in the position for eight years.

On 28 April, the Council adopted resolution 2351, which renewed the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April 2018. The resolution called on the parties to the conflict to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith to facilitate a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. It also called on the parties to cooperate fully with the operations of MINURSO and to take the necessary steps to ensure the unhindered movement of UN personnel in carrying out their mandate. The resolution reaffirmed the need to fully respect military agreements reached with MINURSO on the ceasefire and called for full adherence to those accords, and it recognised that the crisis in the Guerguerat buffer strip that began in August 2016 raised fundamental questions about the ceasefire and related agreements. The Council called upon the parties to demonstrate the political will to work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue in order to resume negotiations and

to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, and it emphasised the importance of their commitment to continuing the preparations for a fifth round of negotiations.

The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to update the Security Council within six months of the appointment of the new Personal Envoy on ways in which the Personal Envoy, working with the parties, was progressing towards a mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara; how MINURSO's performance measures were being developed and implemented; how structures and staffing could be reorganised to achieve mission goals efficiently; and how new technologies were being considered to reduce risk, improve force protection, and better implement the mandate of MINURSO.

Key Issues and Options

The main issue is that the parties to the conflict remain deadlocked and the political process has stalled because the parties' respective proposals for the basis of a political solution as outlined in 2007 are mutually exclusive. The Council may consider ways in which it can support the new Personal Envoy in his endeavours to convene a fifth round of talks between the parties. Council members may consider how they can encourage the parties, collectively or

UN DOCUMENTS ON WESTERN SAHARA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2351 (28 April 2017) renewed the mandate of MINURSO for one year. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/307** (10 April 2017) was on the situation concerning Western Sahara. **Security Council Letters S/2017/462** (25 May 2017) was from the Secretary-General expressing his intention to appoint Horst Köhler as his new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara. **S/2007/210** (16 April 2007) was from South Africa to the Council transmitting the Polisario plan. **S/2007/206** (11 April 2007) was from Morocco to the Council transmitting the Moroccan plan.

Western Sahara

bilaterally, to approach such talks in good faith.

Another issue is that the parties have significantly divergent interpretations of the mandate of MINURSO. In Morocco's view, the mission's role is limited to monitoring the ceasefire, supporting demining, and assisting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with confidence-building measures in the event that such activities resume after their interruption in July 2014; it does not encompass contact with civil society or other civilian actors. By contrast, the Polisario Front maintains that organising a referendum on self-determination remains the central element of the mission's mandate, with ceasefire monitoring and other activities being subordinate to that aim. The Council could attempt to clarify the objectives and mandate

of the mission, but this is unlikely as Council members themselves diverge on this question.

Council Dynamics

Council members are deeply divided on how they view the conflict. These divisions have rendered the Council largely unable to agree to outcomes on Western Sahara, even during successive recent crises. Following Morocco's expulsion of MINURSO's civilian component in March 2016 and the crisis in Al-Guegarat that August, the Council remained mostly silent because of the insistence of some members, notably permanent member France, which staunchly supports the Moroccan position concerning Western Sahara.

The African members of the Council do not have a common position. Egypt and

Senegal have in the past worked to protect Morocco's interests in the Council. Ethiopia recognises an independent Western Sahara and supports the positions of the AU.

Among other members, Uruguay, which recognises an independent Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), has attempted to enhance the Council's role and oversight of the situation by requesting ad hoc briefings. Bolivia also recognises the SADR. The parliament of another member, Sweden, voted to recognise Western Sahara in 2012, but the Swedish government has not implemented this.

The US is the penholder on Western Sahara, and resolutions on Western Sahara are initially discussed among the Group of Friends (France, the UK, the US and Russia, joined by Spain, the former colonial power).

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In October, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix will brief the Council on the latest UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) report.

The mandate of MINUSCA expires on 15 November 2017.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) has worsened as clashes continue among the Muslim-dominated ex-Séléka factions. Since November 2016, two factions in particular, the Union for Peace in the CAR (UPC) and the Popular Front for the Renaissance in the CAR (FPRC), have been involved in heavy fighting amidst attempts to reunite the ex-Séléka. In addition, there has been continued fighting between ex-Séléka factions and Christian-dominated anti-Balaka armed groups, and anti-Balaka attacks against civilians and MINUSCA.

The deterioration in security has resulted in an increase in civilian casualties and

violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, increasingly along sectarian lines. On 22 August, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed Council members under "any other business" on his recent visit to the CAR, lamenting that he has witnessed "early signs of genocide" in the country.

There are 600,000 people who are internally displaced, and roughly 450,000 have fled to neighbouring countries. The situation in Basse-Kotto is of particular concern; the UPC has been directly targeting civilians there since May, causing several hundred deaths, according to Amnesty International. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported on 13 September that armed groups killed at least 25 people around the country in the span of a week. In Bangassou, 2,000 Muslims have taken refuge in a church because they fear local anti-Balaka rebels.

Humanitarian assistance in the country has been hampered by the violence and in some places has completely halted. On 3 August, six ICRC workers were killed in an attack on a health centre.

The government, led by President Faustin Archange Touadera, has minimal control outside the capital, Bangui, which is relatively calm. Disarmament efforts have made only limited progress, and factions of the ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka groups remain armed and in control of large areas of the country.

Touadera sacked his defence minister, Levy Yakete, in a move reported to be related to the growing violence. Yakete is on the CAR Sanctions Committee list for his role in the violence during the ex-Séléka coup.

MINUSCA's roughly 10,000 military troops have been partially successful in protecting civilians but are stretched thin, and the level of performance between contingents has varied. They have also been directly targeted by rebel groups, resulting in the death of three Moroccan peacekeepers in two attacks in July. During his monthly luncheon with Council members on 17 August, the Secretary-General asked them to authorise an immediate increase in troop levels to help address the security situation. The US conditioned additional troops on the development of clear benchmarks for the performance of

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2339 (27 January 2017) renewed the CAR sanctions regime until 31 January 2018 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 28 February 2018. **S/RES/2301** (26 July 2016) renewed the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 November 2017. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/9** (13 July 2017) expressed concern at ongoing clashes between armed groups in the CAR and the targeting of civilians from specific communities, UN peacekeepers, and humanitarian workers. **Security Council Press Statements SC/12930** (26 July 2017) condemned the attack on MINUSCA peacekeepers in Bangassou on 25 July by suspected anti-Balaka elements, which resulted in two Moroccan peacekeepers killed and one injured. **SC/12926** (24 July 2017) condemned the attack on a MINUSCA convoy in Bangassou on 23 July by anti-Balaka elements that resulted in one peacekeeper killed and three injured. **Sanctions Committee Documents SC/12952** (11 August 2017) was a press release drawing attention to the recommendation contained in the midterm report concerning exemptions from sanctions. **SC/12943** (3 August 2017) was a press release concerning the committee's 21 July meeting with its Panel of Experts when the panel's midterm report was presented to the committee. **S/2017/639** (26 July 2017) was a midterm report of the CAR 2127 Sanctions Committee.

Central African Republic

MINUSCA's contingents. In addition, the US insisted that the Secretariat demonstrate concrete plans to address the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers in the CAR. The Secretariat has informed Council members that in its next report it will provide them with more information regarding the troop increase and the issues raised by the US.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 6 September, the CAR Sanctions Committee held a briefing open to the full UN membership to discuss the midterm report of the Panel of Experts assisting the committee. The report itself was submitted to the committee on 21 July. The report noted that illegal exploitation of natural resources remains a major source of income for armed groups, both for ex-Séléka factions in the east and local anti-Balaka groups in the west. In addition, the report found that implementation of sanctions remained weak. Travel ban violations by people on the sanctions list continued, including travel by former President François Bozizé. National authorities have failed to implement the assets freeze, and several listed individuals still collect government salaries. CAR officials continued to criticise the arms embargo, claiming it prevents the rearmament of national security forces. Noting that CAR may still arm its national forces by applying for exemptions from the committee, the panel maintains that some use this argument to blame the UN for the ongoing insecurity.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In his opening statement at the 36th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 11 September, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein expressed alarm over deteriorating

security conditions in the CAR and the "persistent reports of atrocity crimes, which have pushed the country very close to a complete breakdown along religious and ethnic lines". Intensifying violence has forced tens of thousands of civilians to flee, and increasing attacks against aid workers have forced a number of humanitarian organisations to suspend life-saving activities, he said.

During its 36th session, the HRC held an interactive dialogue with the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the CAR, Marie-Thérèse Keita Bocoum, and considered her report (A/HRC/36/64). The report, covering July 2016 to June 2017, concluded there was an increase in human rights violations, mostly perpetrated by ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka armed groups, including killings, acts of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, sexual violence, abductions, deprivation of liberty and arbitrary arrest, extortion and looting, recruitment and exploitation of children, the occupation of schools and health centres and attacks on them, and denial of humanitarian assistance.

Key Issues and Options

The immediate priority for the Council is to respond to the increased fighting between rebels, attacks against civilians along sectarian lines and the targeting of MINUSCA personnel and other UN and humanitarian personnel.

The Council could authorise additional troops for MINUSCA as an immediate response to the violence prior to or during MINUSCA's mandate renewal in November. During this process, Council members could request the Secretariat to report on actions taken to improve the performance of

MINUSCA's contingents.

The Council could also consider acting through the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, listing additional individuals and entities, particularly those with links to recent attacks, in an effort to curb violence. To improve sanctions implementation, the Council could call on countries in the region to cooperate with each other and implement the sanctions regime in order to eliminate arms trafficking to rebel groups and the funding of their operations through illicit exploitation of natural resources.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The deteriorating security situation and the government's inability to project law and order beyond Bangui continue to concern all Council members.

Every Council member has expressed support for an increase in MINUSCA troop levels. In contrast to the US position, however, several Council members, including those that are troop-contributing countries, reject steps that they perceive as singling out contingents and publicly shaming them. Moving forward towards MINUSCA's mandate renewal, any language with respect to benchmarks for the assessment of MINUSCA's performance will be contentious and will require careful negotiation.

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

Sudan/South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In October, Council members are expected to be briefed on the second of two reports requested in resolution 2352 on the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Members will also be briefed on the Secretary-General's report on the status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), also requested in resolution 2352. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom will brief on Sudan/South Sudan issues as well during the month.

UNISFA's mandate expires on 15 November 2017.

Key Recent Developments

The Sudanese and South Sudanese governments 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. In the absence of large-scale clashes and displacements, the security and humanitarian situation has continued to remain relatively stable in Abyei.

With the failure to implement the 20 June 2011 agreement, which established temporary arrangements for the administration and security of Abyei pending resolution of its status, criminal incidents, intercommunal tensions, and the proliferation of arms create a continued risk to the relative calm in the area. The institutions called for by the agreement, including the Abyei Area Administration, the Abyei Area Council and the Abyei Police Service, have yet to be established.

In August, South Sudan declined to take part in a meeting of the Abyei Joint Oversight

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/2017/649 (31 July 2017) was the most recent report on the situation in Abyei. S/2017/293 (5 April 2017) was the review of UNISFA's mandate.

Sudan/South Sudan

Committee (AJOC) organised by the AU in Addis Ababa. Bimonthly meetings of the AJOC were agreed to in an outcome document signed by both parties in May, the first time the AJOC had met after more than two years of suspension, but to date no such meetings have taken place.

Against this backdrop of political paralysis, UNISFA continues to maintain law and order and a measure of stability in Abyei. Given the absence of the Abyei Police Service, the UNISFA police component has continued its efforts to support the maintenance of law and order through community-based interactive patrols and continued capacity-building of community protection committees.

There has still 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).

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 JBVMM would “be the final such extension

unless both parties demonstrate through their actions clear commitment and steadfast guarantees for implementation of the JBVMM”. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to report by 15 October on the mechanism’s status and whether it had reached full operating capability.

Council members were last briefed in consultations on the issue on 9 August by Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El Ghassim Wane.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue facing the Council is whether Sudan and South Sudan have made any progress towards operationalisation of the JBVMM and the full implementation of the 20 June 2011 agreement required by resolution 2352 in order to continue the support for JBVMM. 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.

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 conciliatory approach, 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. During the May negotiations, Ethiopia, supported by a number of other Council members, argued that a reduction in the troop ceiling would undermine the effectiveness of the mission. This difference in perspective is likely to be reflected in any meetings in October on Sudan/South Sudan.

The Council’s focus on Abyei has been limited in recent years, largely overshadowed by its ongoing and intensive engagement on South Sudan and, to a lesser extent, on Darfur. However, the upcoming renewal of UNISFA’s mandate in November, and the focus on the JBVMM following the adoption of resolution 2352, presents an opportunity for Council members to direct renewed attention to the issue.

The US is the penholder on Abyei.

Women, Peace and Security

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council will hold its annual debate on women, peace and security and the Secretary-General’s annual report, due on 1 October.

France, as president of the Council in October, is expected to circulate a concept note ahead of the debate. At press time, a resolution was a possible outcome.

Key Recent Developments

The Council has continued to work towards implementation, to varying degrees, of the recommendations of the three UN peace and security reviews conducted in 2014-2015 on peace operations, peacebuilding, and

implementation of resolution 1325. All three reviews underlined the need to increase and enhance the participation of women in peace and security decision-making. Resolution 2242, adopted on 13 October 2015, included practical actions to improve the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in several areas.

Thus far in 2017, the 2242 Informal Expert Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security, established after the adoption of resolution 2242, has held meetings on the Lake Chad Basin (27 February), Yemen (23 March), Mali (4 May), and Iraq (14 June), with the next meeting expected to be on the

Central African Republic. The meetings on the Lake Chad Basin and Yemen were the first 2242 Group meetings on those situations, with the others constituting the 2242 Group’s third meeting on the respective situations since its establishment. The UK is the P5 co-chair of the 2242 Group, along with elected members Sweden and Uruguay. A summary of every 2242 Group meeting is sent from the co-chairs to the Secretary-General as a document of the Security Council.

In line with resolution 2242—which expressed the Council’s intention to invite civil society, including women’s organisations, to brief the Council on country-specific

UN DOCUMENTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY Security Council Resolution S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015) addressed women’s roles in countering violent extremism and terrorism and noted the need for improving the Council’s own working methods. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2016/822** (29 September 2016) was the 2016 annual report on women, peace and security. **Security Council Letters S/2017/624, S/2017/625, S/2017/626 and S/2017/627** (18 July 2017) were summaries of the 2242 Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security meetings. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8022** (10 August 2017) was a briefing by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed. **S/PV.7793** (25 October 2016) was the 2016 annual open debate on women and peace and security.

Women, Peace and Security

situations—civil society representatives from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, and the Lake Chad Basin have briefed the Council during country-specific briefings thus far in 2017. This is in stark contrast to only one such briefing in 2016.

Relevant developments this year regarding mandates of peace operations include the renewal of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan through resolution 2344 where most of the language on women's rights and participation was removed. By contrast, in resolutions renewing mandates of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (resolution 2351), the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (resolution 2352) and the AU Mission in Somalia (resolution 2372), new language was added on the importance of women's participation.

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed briefed the Council on 10 August, following her 19-27 July joint visit to the DRC and Nigeria with the AU Commission Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security Binta Diop, Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten. Mohammed described the trip as the first of its kind—a high-level mission focused entirely on women, peace, security and development—with the goal of promoting peace by advancing the equality, empowerment and well-being of women.

The ownership of the “pen” on the women, peace and security agenda within the Council has not been shared with an elected member and remains with the UK, and with the US in relation to conflict-related sexual violence. However, the inclusion of Sweden and Uruguay as co-chairs of the 2242 Group has helped to expand elected members' voices in the shaping of the women, peace and security agenda in the Council.

Key Issue and Options

The key issue for the Council is how it will continue to take forward actionable recommendations from the 2015 peace and security reviews to achieve fuller implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in its own work—in particular, how gender is incorporated into the mandates of peace operations and how gender issues are reported to the Council.

During the open debate, some Council members could focus on different aspects of implementation of previous decisions and how to achieve:

- regularly inviting the head of UN Women to brief, in particular when considering a mandate to support post-conflict structures that should ensure broad participation and decision-making by women;
- inviting women's civil society representatives to brief at country-specific meetings;
- ensuring that the women, peace and security agenda is integrated into the Council's thematic work on counter-terrorism;

- improving the quality of gender analysis by calling for gender expertise in all UN-led commissions of inquiry, transitional justice mechanisms, mediation processes and peace operations; and
- expanding the designation criteria in relevant sanctions regimes where sexual and gender-based crimes and specific attacks against women are persistently perpetrated.

Council Dynamics

Familiar divisions in the Council emerged during the negotiations on resolution 2242 in October 2015, and in subsequent negotiations in 2016 on Council outcomes on human trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse, and on women's role in conflict prevention in Africa. China and Russia have typically resisted many elements that they interpreted as an expansion of the women, peace and security agenda, or perceived as infringing on state sovereignty or the competencies of other parts of the UN system. In this context, some Council members may be wary of whether a new resolution is necessary, given the adoption of resolution 2242, and whether it could potentially lead to another acrimonious round of negotiations.

Most Council members view this October's open debate as an opportunity to reflect on the advances and challenges that have emerged since the adoption of resolution 2242 and to advocate ways to consolidate gains.

Children and Armed Conflict

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council will hold an open debate to discuss the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict. France, the president for October, has indicated an interest in also having a discussion during the meeting on the Paris Principles and Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces and groups. A presidential statement, which would be drafted by Sweden, the penholder and chair of the Working Group on Children

and Armed Conflict, is a possible outcome. At press time, the annual report had not yet been published.

Secretary-General António Guterres, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba and a civil society representative are expected to speak.

Key Recent Developments

There has been heightened interest in the two annexes in the Secretary-General's report, which list parties that have committed either

one or more of the violations against children that can lead to this listing, i.e. recruitment and use, sexual violence, killing and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals, and abduction. Last year, then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon removed from the listing, pending a review, the Saudi-led coalition, which had been listed for the first time for the killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and hospitals in Yemen. This raised questions about the integrity of the listing mechanism. Earlier in the year, there had been indications

UN DOCUMENTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT Secretary-General's Reports S/2017/294 (5 April 2017) was on children and armed conflict in the Philippines. S/2017/191 (6 March 2017) was on children and armed conflict in Sudan. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7753 (2 August 2016) was an open debate focused on the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict and developments over the last 20 years. Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict Documents S/AC.51/2017/4 (11 September 2017) was conclusions on the Philippines. S/AC.51/2017/3 (31 July 2017) was conclusions on Sudan. S/AC.51/2017/2 (13 July 2017) was conclusions on Somalia. S/AC.51/2017/1 (7 March 2017) was conclusions on Colombia.

Children and Armed Conflict

that the report, which was due out in August, might be delayed to give the Saudi-led coalition more time to show progress or that the listings would be frozen so that there would be no change from 2016.

Gamba and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Adama Dieng briefed Council members on 6 July under “other matters” on the impact on children of the conflict in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 26 July, Ntabo Ntaberi Cheka, leader of the Nduma Defence of Congo/Cheka, surrendered to the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Mutongo, North Kivu. Cheka’s militia and two other armed groups were implicated in the rape of at least 387 civilians, including 55 girls and nine boys, during the attacks on 13 villages in Walikale territory between 30 July and 2 August 2010.

On 15 September, the Civilian Joint Task Force in Nigeria signed an action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children, making it the 29th party to sign such an action plan.

On 21 February, a conference was held in Paris to mark the tenth anniversary of the Paris Principles. Myanmar became the 107th country to sign the Paris Principles.

Developments in the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Since January, the Working Group has negotiated and adopted conclusions on the Secretary-General’s reports on Colombia, the Philippines, Somalia and Sudan. There have generally been two rounds of negotiations with adoptions about every two months. The Working Group is currently negotiating its conclusions on the first report on children and armed conflict in Nigeria.

Ahead of negotiating the Sudan conclusions, the Working Group was briefed on 2 May via video teleconference by the co-chairs of the Sudan Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on the situation of children and armed conflict in the Sudan. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, also attended the meeting.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue is how to use the children and armed conflict monitoring and reporting mechanism and the Secretary-General’s annexes as tools for engagement and prevention of conflict. How children in post-conflict situations fit into the sustaining peace agenda

should be further explored.

A related issue is assessing whether the children and armed conflict mechanism is equipped to address today’s complex conflict situations. A lessons-learned study of ten years of the functioning of the mechanism might help illustrate its strengths and weaknesses. A rigid work cycle, based on the reports on the situations in the annexes, makes it difficult for the Working Group to react swiftly to a deteriorating crisis. An option for the Working Group in this context would be to seek regular briefings from the Special Representative’s office and relevant UN agencies, to provide information that could be conveyed to the Council.

Deepening relationships with regional and sub-regional organisations is a continuing issue. Options include an Arria-formula meeting with representatives from regional and sub-regional organisations or inviting them to brief the Council.

Denial of humanitarian aid to children needs further discussion, along with the possibility of adding humanitarian access as a trigger for listing in the Secretary-General annual report.

A continuing issue is the implementation of action plans and of Council resolutions. High-level UN engagement, focused Council attention, and bilateral representations might encourage parties to move on action plans.

An issue for the Working Group is ensuring a steady stream of reports. The next report, which is on children and armed conflict in Myanmar, has been delayed.

Council Dynamics

Sweden has brought new energy to this issue since taking on the chair of the Working Group in January. Negotiations of the four conclusions documents this year have gone relatively smoothly, resulting in a significant increase in the output of the Working Group. Members appear more open to the need for up-to-date information from the field as evidenced by the video teleconference with the Sudan country team. Any negotiations on a Council outcome for the debate will reveal positions on potentially sensitive issues, including the importance of the monitoring mechanism and listings, as well as whether a new approach to the mandate is needed.

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