

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Italy will have the presidency in November. It is planning to hold a ministerial-level briefing on the [root causes of the security challenges in the Mediterranean](#) and to consider initiatives to promote regional stability. It has planned several meetings on the issue of [refugees and trafficking of persons](#). These will include a briefing by High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on the global refugee crisis and the displacement aspect of various conflicts on the Security Council agenda. There will also be an open debate on [human trafficking](#) and a briefing on the [destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups in situations of armed conflict](#).

Regarding [Libya](#), there will be the regular briefings on UNSMIL and the work of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee. ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda will present her semi-annual briefing on Libyan cases.

A briefing is expected on [attacks on schools](#), which follows the Arria-formula meeting in October organised by France, Italy, Sweden and Uruguay.

Two adoptions on [Somalia](#) are scheduled. The first is to renew counter-piracy measures in Somalia, and the second is of a resolution on Somalia and Eritrea sanctions that will address the partial lifting of the arms embargo, authorisation for maritime interdiction of illicit arms imports and charcoal exports, and the humanitarian exemption. There will also be the regular briefing by the chair of the 751/1901 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee.

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

- [Burundi](#), an update on developments;
- the [CAR](#), renewal of MINUSCA and an update on developments;
- [Darfur](#), on the activities of UNAMID;
- [South Sudan](#), on the activities of UNMISS; and
- [Sudan/South Sudan](#), the renewal of UNISFA

in Abyei.

With regard to [Syria](#), in addition to the monthly briefings on the political and humanitarian situations, Council members are expected to consider the final report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN on the Khan Shaykhun and Um Housh attacks, as well as the renewal of the JIM, which expires on 17 November. Other issues to be considered include:

- [Iraq](#), on recent developments and the activities of UNAMI;
- [Israel/Palestine](#), the monthly briefing and consultations; and
- [Lebanon](#), on the implementation of resolutions 1559 and 1701.

Regarding European situations, the Council will hold its semi-annual debate on [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and will adopt a resolution renewing the authorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force there. The Council will also have its quarterly briefing on the activities of UNMIK in [Kosovo](#).

Regarding the [Democratic People's Republic of Korea](#), the chair of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee will brief in consultations. The Council will be following closely any developments regarding the DPRK.

The fourth annual briefing with heads of police components of [peacekeeping operations](#) will be held in early November, with a resolution as a possible outcome.

Also on the programme of work is the election of five judges of the [ICJ](#) by the Security Council and General Assembly.

The 15 current Council members and the incoming six (Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Netherlands, Kuwait, Peru and Poland) will participate in the annual "Hitting the Ground Running" workshop outside of New York City, organised by Finland.

In Hindsight: Children and Armed Conflict

The children and armed conflict agenda has had a difficult few years. Increasingly complex crisis have led to a deteriorating situation for children in conflict situations and a rise in violations against them. New challenges have emerged in the form of non-state actors such as ISIL and Boko Haram. In 2015 and 2016, controversial decisions were made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon regarding removal of parties from the annexes in the annual report on children and armed conflict. In our latest research report, *Children and Armed Conflict: Sustaining the Agenda*, we look at recent developments and how the system created to maintain pressure on perpetrators of violations is coping with these challenges.

The children and armed conflict agenda has shown resilience under pressure. In 2016, Secretary-General Ban's decision to remove the Saudi Arabia-led coalition from the annexes soon after it was listed for violations against children in Yemen, pending a review, raised questions about the politicisation of listing decisions and the credibility of the mechanism set up to gather information and monitor violations against children which is fundamental to this agenda. The decision of Secretary-General António Guterres to list the Saudi Arabia-led coalition this year has helped restore some trust in the listing mechanism, but the system needs to be better equipped to protect the mandate. Maintaining the independence of the mechanism and the credibility of information and listing decisions are essential. The revision of the format of the annual report to include a more preventive aspect could be a potentially useful tool in encouraging progress on the necessary steps to be delisted. To be effective, it requires a refinement of the reporting process, including regular outreach and advocacy between the Office of the Special Representative and the parties listed in order to enhance transparency and provide regular feedback over the year. In addition, ensuring adequate resources for the monitoring and reporting mechanism is critical in maintaining its ability to function properly.

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, which began functioning on 23 November 2005, has over the years played a key role by applying pressure on perpetrators through the adoption of conclusions on country-specific reports. In a special section in our report we highlight the role

different chairs have played over the years and illustrate how divisions in the Council affected the dynamics of the Working Group. Although at times the politics at the Council level adversely affected the output of the Working Group, it continued to persevere in carrying out its responsibilities, albeit sometimes at a slower pace.

In 2017, the Working Group members appear to be working well together, and under the chairpersonship of Sweden it has adopted four conclusions and at time of writing is close to finalising its fifth. An area that deserves further attention is the follow-up on the implementation of the Working Group's conclusions. A number of options could be considered. The Working Group could request a short, specific follow-up report to conclusions on a country-specific report. In addition, having a follow-up meeting on recently adopted conclusions with the appropriate representatives of the party concerned would allow the Working Group to gauge the level of implementation of its recommendations. Greater interaction with child protection advisers from the field, to get a better understanding of how the conclusions are being implemented and how they can be made more useful, would also be helpful. The Working Group could also request that the Secretary-General's reports on situations listed in the annexes include a separate section on follow-up to the implementation of its conclusions. In order to address criticism that it has not been flexible in the face of emerging or deteriorating crisis involving children, the Working Group could request regular updates from the Special Representative on emerging situations where child protection issues have arisen.

The Office of the Special Representative is a crucial element in the children and armed conflict architecture. It prepares for submission the Secretary-General's reports on children and armed conflict in country-specific situations and the annual report. Together with the child protection advisers of UNICEF and UN peace operations, it works with parties on action plans, which are the first step towards getting off the annexes. Our report looks at the implementation of action plans during the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign which ran from 2014 – 2016, with the aim of getting governments to sign and implement action plans to stop the

recruitment and use of children. The report also examines situations that have been delisted over the years to assess the reasons why parties might be motivated to comply with action plans. We find that beyond "naming and shaming" and pressure from the Council, both governments and non-state armed groups are more likely to be spurred into action if the issue of violations against children is placed within the context of their national interest, and a government or armed group has the political will to improve its reputation in the eyes of the international community. The report's case study on Colombia illustrates how peace talks can provide the right opening for a deeper conversation about protection of children. Other situations where child protection concerns can be raised at the early stages of a peace process should be considered and appropriate mediation expertise put in place. Focused attention from UN country teams, particularly child protection advisers, and the Office of the Special Representative has been key to successful delistings. In addition, getting parties to trust in the process and the monitoring and reporting mechanism are important elements that have allowed for successful implementation of the action plans.

Children in conflict situations today are facing new challenges beyond those when the issue first came to the Council's attention over twenty years ago. The "naming and shaming" approach has had success with some parties, given the right political circumstances and sustained attention from the UN. It has been significantly less successful with non-state armed groups. A fresh approach that retains the core of the children and armed conflict mandate while adding new dimensions to address the new challenges is needed. It may be time to explore how the monitoring and reporting mechanism and the annexes can be used as tools for early engagement and prevention of conflict. One possibility is to consider how the wealth of information from the monitoring and reporting mechanism could be used to feed into a more integrated information platform within the UN. Further thinking about the future of the monitoring and reporting mechanism could include a discussion about whether the time is right to add denial of humanitarian access as a trigger that could lead to a party being listed, or if new violations such as detention should be

In Hindsight: Children and Armed Conflict

specified for monitoring.

The children and armed conflict mandate appears to be on the brink of entering a new phase. Its architecture needs to be adapted

to realise more fully the potential in light of some of the recent developments, and the proper resources need to be available. The support of those committed to this mandate

will be all the more crucial in the coming years as it navigates new challenges.

Status Update since our October Forecast

UNDOF

On 3 October, Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed Council members in consultations on the 27 September Secretary-General's report (S/2017/810).

Mali and the Sahel

On 5 October, the Council held a briefing and consultations on Mali (S/PV.8062). The Council was briefed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and head of MINUSMA Mahamat Saleh Annadif based on the 28 September Secretary-General's report (S/2017/811). Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop of Mali also spoke at the meeting. The need to prevent the gains achieved in Mali from being reversed featured prominently at the meeting. In a 6 October press statement, Council members expressed their deep concern over the persistent delays in the full implementation of key provisions of the 2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and urged the parties to adopt without delay an agreed-upon chronogram (timeline) for its implementation (SC/13019). On 18-23 October, Council members undertook a visiting mission to the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania). The objective of the mission was to assess the situation of the countries of the G5 Sahel, in particular regarding the level and the nature of the threat posed by terrorism and transnational organised crime, as well as to assess the status of the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel joint force. Furthermore, the visiting mission aimed to deliver a clear message to the parties in Mali regarding the need to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement. On 30 October, the Council was briefed by Secretary-General António Guterres and discussed a 16 October report on the activities of the joint force (S/2017/869), including the challenges encountered in its operationalisation and

possible measures for consideration. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission, and the Foreign Minister of Mali Abdoulaye Diop, as rotating President of the G5 Sahel, addressed the Council as well. The other members of the G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and Niger) also participated in the meeting. The discussion was chaired by Jean-Yves Le Drian, the French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs.

Peacekeeping

On 5 October, the Council held a briefing on UN peacekeeping operations that focused on strategic force generation (S/PV.8064). Briefers included Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; Ambassador Masud Bin Momen of Bangladesh; and Ambassador Marc-André Blanchard of Canada. Lacroix said that "clear, prioritised mandates" can help the Department of Peacekeeping Operations "to better guide and assess the performance of uniformed capabilities". Ambassador Bin Momen encouraged troop contributors to tailor their pledges to the specific needs of peacekeeping missions. Blanchard briefed on the planning for the 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference, scheduled to take place in Vancouver 14-15 November.

Colombia

On 5 October, the Council adopted resolution 2381 expanding the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia (S/PV.8063). The resolution tasks the mission with monitoring the bilateral and temporary ceasefire agreed to by the Government of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. The Council authorised the deployment of no more than 70 additional international observers to help the mission take on this further responsibility. Also on 5 October, the Council adopted a presidential statement recognising the work of the UN Mission in Colombia and

welcoming the remarkable achievements in Colombia following the 2016 agreement (S/PRST/2017/18).

Yemen

On 10 October, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and OCHA Operations Director John Ging briefed the Council. During his briefing, the Special Envoy did not report any progress regarding the package of confidence-building measures that he has been pursuing, and said that "the parties have to commit to...start discussions for a comprehensive agreement". In describing the humanitarian crisis, Ging outlined the ongoing challenges facing humanitarian and commercial access and the impact of non-payment of civil servant salaries. Closed consultations followed the public session. Council members subsequently issued elements to the press in which they deeply regretted the lack of progress in the political process and the worsening of the humanitarian situation. They reaffirmed the need for all parties, especially the Houthis, to engage meaningfully with the UN Special Envoy's comprehensive proposals for peace and to make progress towards a ceasefire and resolution of the conflict.

Haiti

On 12 October, outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti Sandra Honoré delivered the final briefing on the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) ahead of its 15 October closure (S/PV.8068). On 17 October, the Council adopted a presidential statement that recognised the contribution MINUSTAH had made in restoring security and stability throughout its 13-year tenure, expressed appreciation of the efforts of the UN Country Team, and welcomed the work of the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti

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(MINUJUSTH), which succeeded MINUSTAH on 16 October (S/PRST/2017/20).

Famine

On 12 October, Secretary-General António Guterres briefed the Council (S/PV.8069) on “country-specific impediments to an effective response to the risk of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria” in accordance with the Council’s 9 August presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/14). During his briefing, Guterres urged an increase in humanitarian aid to address these crises.

Myanmar

On 13 October, at the initiative of France and the UK, an Arria-formula meeting was held on Myanmar, focusing on the situation in Rakhine state. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan briefed in his capacity as the Chair of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, which was comprised of both Myanmar and international commissioners and published a final report on 23 August that included recommendations for improving the situation in the state with regard to conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, reconciliation, institution-building, and development.

Afghanistan

On 17 October, members of the Security Council issued a press statement, condemning terrorist attacks that took place in Paktia, Ghazni and Kabul on that day, which resulted in more than 70 people killed and over 200 wounded, for which the Taliban has claimed responsibility (SC/13034).

Israel/Palestine

On 18 October, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča briefed the Council in the quarterly open debate on the Middle East (S/PV.8072).

Counter-Terrorism

On 21 October, Council members issued a press statement, condemning a terrorist attack that took place the previous day, in El Wahat desert, Egypt, where a large number of policemen were killed and injured (SC/13039).

On 10 October, the Chair (Kazakhstan) of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da’esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee briefed the Committee on his visit to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Singapore. The Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team delivered its quarterly oral briefing pursuant to paragraph 99 of resolution 2368 (2017). The Committee met on 17 October for an update on its work from the Chair and the Monitoring Team. On 23 October, the Committee met with representatives of the European Union on legal issues pertaining to sanctions.

On 12 October, the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee met to discuss various issues, including the recent engagement by the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate with the Global Counter-Terrorism Research Network on new trends and challenges related to terrorism. On 26 October, the Committee held a meeting on “the role of financial institutions and other entities in preventing terrorist financing.” At press time, another committee meeting was scheduled on 31 October.

Women, Peace and Security

On 27 October, the Council held its annual open debate on Women, Peace and Security with briefings by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed; Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; Secretary-General of the International Organisation of Francophonie Michaëlle Jean; and Charo Mina Rojas, a civil society representative from Colombia (S/PV.8079). The Council also considered the Secretary-General’s

annual report on the issue (S/2017/861).

Children and Armed Conflict

At press time, on 31 October, the Council was scheduled to hold an open debate on children and armed conflict. The Secretary-General was expected to present his annual report, and the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba was due to brief. In addition, Mubin Shaikh, a former child soldier, will speak about his experience. The debate is expected to focus on violations committed by non-state armed groups, including violent extremist groups and those that commit acts of terrorism. Council members have been negotiating a presidential statement which is expected to be adopted at the meeting. On 13 October, France, Italy, Sweden and Uruguay organised an Arria-formula meeting on attacks on schools. The briefers were Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba; Joy Bishara, one of the female students kidnapped by Boko Haram in 2014; and Zama Neff, co-chair of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. The meeting provided members and NGOs with an opportunity to hear a first-hand account of the impact of attacks on schools. Member states shared experience of their efforts in protecting schools from military use, highlighted the importance of education, and called for stronger protection measures. A number of members highlighted the Safe Schools Declaration, a voluntary, political commitment from governments not to use schools for military purposes and to protect them during military operations.

Expected Council Action

In November, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ján Kubiš, will brief the Council on the Secretary-General's report on UNAMI and the most recent developments. The Council also expects to receive from the Secretary-General for its approval the terms of reference for an investigative team on accountability for crimes committed in Iraq by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) mandated by resolution 2379.

The mandate of UNAMI expires on 31 July 2018.

Key Recent Developments

Over the course of the year, Iraqi government forces, with the help of Kurdish troops, Sunni tribal fighters and the air support of the US-led coalition, have made significant progress in the fight against ISIL. During the peak of its power in mid-2014, ISIL controlled around one-third of Iraqi territory, including such significant population centres as Ramadi, Fallujah and Mosul. In 2016, government forces retook both Fallujah and Ramadi. After a nine-month battle, government forces took control of Mosul in July. More recently, government forces re-captured Tal Afar in August as well as Hawija and neighbouring areas in October. At press time, ISIL controls only a small portion of Iraqi territory in the western part of the country along the border with Syria.

While the threat posed by ISIL has been considerably reduced, renewed tensions in Iraq pose another threat to stability and national reconciliation efforts. In June, the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Masoud Barzani, announced that a referendum on the independence of Kurdistan would be held on 25 September. The referendum, in which an overwhelming majority voted in favour of independence, was held in the Kurdish region and the disputed territories under control of Kurdish forces, including the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. The Iraqi government led by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi denounced the referendum, calling it unconstitutional. Similarly strong reactions came from regional powers

with significant Kurdish populations, mainly Iran and Turkey. The US voiced its concern regarding the referendum and its potential impact on the ongoing fight against ISIL and instability in the region. In a press statement issued ahead of the referendum, Council members also expressed its concern regarding the vote's destabilising impact.

After the referendum, the Iraqi central government imposed a ban on all international flights to and from the Kurdistan region. Iran and Turkey, both of which share a border with that region, threatened to impose countermeasures, including economic blockades and closure of their respective borders with the region.

Following the recapture of Hawija from ISIL on 5 October, government forces and Shi'a militias started massing near Kirkuk. The Iraqi government demanded that KRG authorities revoke the referendum or face military action. On 16 October, al-Abadi ordered government troops to re-establish control of Kirkuk and surrounding areas in the disputed territories. Facing only sporadic resistance from Kurdish fighters, the military operation was completed in two days as government forces took control of Kirkuk, the main oil fields in the area and the airport. Kirkuk had been under the control of Kurdish forces since 2014, when Iraqi government forces retreated in the face of an ISIL offensive. Oil fields in Kirkuk have provided a major revenue stream for the KRG authorities. At press time, government forces continued to make gains, advancing in Kurdish areas.

The Council voiced its concern over reports of violence near Kirkuk in a press statement on 18 October. A day later, UNAMI issued a press release expressing the UN's concern about reports of destruction of property and "forced displacement of civilians, predominantly Kurds, from disputed areas." On 26 October, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimated that some 165,780 people had been displaced from the disputed areas since 16 October.

On 25 October, the KRG announced that it was willing to freeze the referendum's outcome and commit to an immediate ceasefire. The Iraqi central government turned down

the offer the following day, with al-Abadi declaring that the government wouldn't "accept anything but [the referendum's] cancellation," i.e. not just a freezing of the results.

Kubiš briefed Council members under "any other business" via video-teleconference from Iraq on 26 October. The briefing, requested by France and Sweden, focused on the tensions between the federal government and the KRG and the fighting between their respective forces. Following the meeting, Ambassador François Delattre of France, Council president in October, issued press elements on behalf of Council members. In the press elements, members expressed concern about the tensions and reports of fighting between federal forces and Peshmerga (i.e. Kurdish forces), while calling on all sides to refrain from the threat and use of force and to engage in constructive dialogue.

A review of the structure and staffing of UNAMI and related resources is currently underway, as mandated by resolution 2367, which also renewed UNAMI's mandate. The Secretary-General was asked to report back to the Council on the findings of the review by 15 October. However, this deadline has been extended by one month through an exchange of letters between the Secretary-General and the President of the Council because the review team required additional time for the task.

On 21 September, the Council adopted resolution 2379, which requested the Secretary-General to establish an investigative team to support Iraq's domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable by collecting, preserving and storing evidence of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by ISIL in Iraq. It also asked the Secretary-General to submit to the Council within 60 days "Terms of Reference acceptable to the Government of Iraq in order to ensure the Team can fulfil its mandate".

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 welcomed the Iraqi prime minister's announcement of investigations into allegations of serious human rights violations committed by

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAQ **Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/2379 (21 September 2017) was a resolution on the accountability measures for crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq. S/RES/2367 (14 July 2017) was a resolution renewing UNAMI for a year. S/RES/2335 (30 December 2016) authorised the Secretary-General to continue to maintain the escrow account authorised by resolution 1958 (2010) and to retain the funds contained therein until 30 June 2017. **Security Council Press Statements** SC/13036 (18 October 2017) was on violence in Kirkuk. SC/13002 (22 September 2017) expressed concern regarding the Kurdistan Regional Government's plans to unilaterally hold a referendum on independence. **Security Council Letters** S/2017/851 (6 October 2017) was from the President of the Council, agreeing on the Secretary-General's recommendation in the letter S/2017/850. S/2017/850 (3 October 2017) was from the Secretary-General, recommending a one-month extension of the deadline for the external review assessment of UNAMI. S/2017/710 (14 August 2017) was from Iraq to the president of the Security Council, asking the international community to provide assistance in the effort to prosecute ISIL.

Iraq

pro-government forces and said he hoped the findings would be made public and swiftly followed by impartial prosecutions.

In a 27 September press statement, the High Commissioner said he was appalled at the execution of 42 prisoners on 24 September and expressed “massive concerns” over the country’s use of the death penalty.

Key Issues and Options

There are several interrelated issues that the Council faces with regard to Iraq. There is a need to promote national reconciliation and a genuinely inclusive government accountable to the Iraqi people. At the moment, a particularly pressing issue is how to defuse tensions and prevent an escalation of fighting between the Iraqi central government and the KRG following the referendum in the Kurdistan region. A further important matter for the Council and UNAMI is how to support Prime Minister Abadi’s reform process and encourage greater cooperation on financial, security and humanitarian issues between Abadi’s dominant Shi’a Dawa party and Kurdish and Sunni parties and thereby build confidence in the central government.

To address the current conflict in Kurdistan, Council members could hold an informal interactive dialogue with representatives

of the Iraqi government and the KRG to get their perspectives on the current crisis. If the parties are unable to resolve the crisis in the near future, the Council could dispatch a visiting mission to the region, in an effort to mediate between the two parties.

With the anti-ISIL campaign entering its final stages, an issue is how to address its impact on the human rights, humanitarian and security situations in Iraq. As a first step, the Council could consider additional briefings from UN entities on the ground regarding the humanitarian and human rights situations in light of reports of violations committed by pro-government forces. It could also adopt a resolution reminding those fighting of their responsibilities under international law and urging member states to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need.

Another important issue is how the Council approaches the terms of reference for an investigative team on accountability for crimes committed in Iraq by ISIL. Before approving the terms of reference, one option is to hold a discussion in consultations with relevant Secretariat officials to review the substance of the document and allow these officials to answer any questions or respond to any concerns members may have.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members support UNAMI, and some subscribe to the view held by the US and Iraq, as well as by Kubiš, that the mission’s mandate is sufficiently broad and flexible to support its good offices role. Other Council members believe that UNAMI would benefit from a resolution that updates and prioritises its tasks, given that the mandate has not changed since resolution 1770 was adopted more than ten years ago. Some members have previously expressed interest in incorporating stronger language in the mandate renewal resolution on such issues as the promotion of national reconciliation; accountability; security sector reform; deeper political and economic reforms; women, and peace and security; children and armed conflict; and the right of internally displaced persons to return to their homes. It seems that the US, the penholder, and Iraq, the host country, are reluctant to make any substantial changes to UNAMI’s mandate.

The US is the penholder on Iraq issues in general, and the UK is the penholder on Iraq-Kuwait issues. Egypt is the Chair of the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee.

Briefing by the High Commissioner for Refugees

Expected Council Action

In November, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi will brief the Council. He is expected to address the global refugee crisis and the displacement aspect of various conflicts on the Security Council agenda. The briefing will take place under the agenda item “Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees”, which allows for a general briefing by the High Commissioner without tying it to a specific situation on the Council agenda. No outcome is expected.

Background

Since the early 1990s, the Council has occasionally received briefings by the High Commissioner for Refugees about

specific situations on the Council’s agenda, such as briefings by then-High Commissioner António Guterres on the Sahel in 2012 under the agenda item “Peace and Security in Africa” or on Syria in December 2015. But only twice has it received briefings under the agenda item “Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees”. The first such briefing was held on 10 November 2000 when High Commissioner Sadako Ogata gave her final address to the Council before leaving her post. While it was Ogata’s 12th Council briefing, all of her previous briefings had been held under country-specific agenda items. On 8 January 2009, Guterres briefed the Council under this general agenda item during the presidency of France.

Despite not having been used since Guterres’ briefing in early 2009, the agenda item remains on the most recent summary statement of matters of which the Security Council is seized. Under the current procedure (most recently articulated in the 30 August Note by the President of the Security Council), at “the beginning of each year, the Security Council will review the summary statement in order to determine if the Council has concluded its consideration of any of the listed items”. Agenda items that had not been considered in a Council formal meeting in the previous three years are automatically deleted unless a member state notifies the president of the Security Council by the end of February that it wishes that the item

UN DOCUMENTS ON BRIEFINGS BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.6062 (8 January 2009) was a briefing by High Commissioner António Guterres. S/PV.4219 (10 November 2000) was a briefing by High Commissioner Sadako Ogata. Other S/2017/507 (30 August 2017) was the Note by the President of the Security Council containing the most recent compendium of the agreed Council working methods. S/2017/10 (3 January 2017) was a summary statement by the Secretary-General of matters of which the Security Council is seized and of the stage reached in their consideration.

Briefing by the High Commissioner for Refugees

be retained. The briefing by the High Commissioner for Refugees agenda item was first slated for deletion in the 2014 “Summary statement by the Secretary-General of matters of which the Security Council is seized and of the stage reached in their consideration”. It has been retained due to a request each year since by a member state (in 2014 and 2016 by Denmark, in 2015 by Sweden and in 2017 by Norway) that it not be deleted from the Council’s agenda.

Key Issues

Italy, the Council President for November, has opted to use this general agenda item to request that Grandi brief on any situations he wishes to address on the Council’s agenda with a view to highlighting ways in which the Council can help alleviate the global refugee crisis and perhaps support the work of UNHCR. In his opening address to the Executive Committee of UNHCR in Geneva on 2 October, Grandi called for renewed

international efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, saying that the international community was letting down millions of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), and he urged a “rapidly changing world” to adopt a new focus on protection and solutions. Grandi stressed that refugee protection and security are complementary goals to be pursued in tandem and that refugee protection is essential for building regional and global stability. He may highlight this message to the Council and evaluate the myriad ways in which refugee situations affect security.

Numerous conflict situations on the Council’s agenda have a displacement component that Grandi may address. In late September, Grandi visited Bangladesh, where at the time it was estimated that more than 600,000 Rohingya Muslims had fled from Myanmar since 25 August. Over five million Syrian refugees have been forced to flee the country due to the conflict there since 2011, and another six million Syrians have been internally

displaced. The crises have put immense pressure on host countries such as Turkey, with over three million Syrians, and Lebanon, to which over one million Syrians have fled and which now hosts the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. In another situation on the Council’s agenda, the war in Yemen has caused over 180,000 Yemenis to flee the country; meanwhile, over 280,000 others, mainly fleeing conflict or poverty in the Horn of Africa and hoping to reach oil-rich Gulf countries, are currently residing in Yemen despite the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe. These and many others, including the Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan and Western Sahara, are among the situations on the Council’s agenda with a strong displacement aspect that Grandi may address. He may also offer recommendations as to how the Council ought to take displacement issues into account in its work on these issues or highlight avenues for enhanced cooperation between the Council and UNHCR.

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council will renew the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which expires on 15 November.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Central African Republic (CAR) and head of MINUSCA, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, will brief the Council on the latest developments and the MINUSCA report.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in the CAR continues to deteriorate outside of the capital, Bangui. Various national and regional peace and reconciliation initiatives have not gained momentum. The government, led by President Faustin Archange Touadéra, has minimal control outside of 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.

Fighting between ex-Séléka factions and Christian-dominated anti-Balaka armed groups is further exacerbated by inflammatory sectarian rhetoric. According to the Secretary-General’s latest MINUSCA report of 18 October, growing intercommunal violence with ethnic and religious undertones heightens the risk of mass atrocities along those lines. The Secretary-General thus notes that the window for reversing hatred and violence is shrinking.

Armed groups have continuously targeted MINUSCA, resulting in the death of 12 peacekeepers in 2017. Humanitarian workers are also under attack, with 12 killed. Meanwhile, the number of internally displaced people has increased by 200,000 in 2017 to a total of 600,000.

In an effort to draw attention to the fragile situation in the country that, in his words, “is often far from the media spotlight”, Secretary-General António Guterres arrived in CAR on 24 October, “United Nations Day”. After a meeting with Touadéra and members of

government in Bangui on 25 October, the Secretary-General stressed the need to strengthen MINUSCA so it can better protect the population. He further warned of religious divisions in the country that are a result of “political manipulation that must be condemned and avoided at all costs”. Later that day he travelled to Bangassou where he honoured Moroccan and Cambodian peacekeepers killed earlier this year and visited the compound of a Catholic church in Bangassou, where 1,200 Muslims are taking refuge. He then returned to Bangui to meet with UN humanitarian and development workers and civil society.

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 MINUSCA’s contingents. In addition, the US insisted that the Secretariat produce concrete plans to address the issue of sexual exploitation and

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. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2017/865** (18 October 2017) was the latest MINUSCA report.

Central African Republic

abuse by peacekeepers in the CAR. The Secretariat later 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. In the meantime, Council members postponed discussion of a troop increase until the mandate renewal.

The MINUSCA report notes that while the mission is trying to adapt to the situation, the escalation and spread of violence across the CAR has left MINUSCA overstretched. In light of the security and political situation, the Secretary-General recommends that MINUSCA focus on its support for the political process, both nationally and locally, on protection of civilians, and on facilitating conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Other tasks should be streamlined and adjusted, taking into account the capacities of other international actors and establishing a clear division of labour. In addition, the Secretary-General recommends an increase in the troop level by 900 military personnel, stressing that—while this will not allow MINUSCA to protect all civilians in the country—it can provide the force with greater ability and flexibility to respond to developing events. In addition, the report says that the increase could help facilitate better conditions for the establishment of state authority in more areas and convince armed groups to participate in the political process.

The report mentions steps that are being taken to implement the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers in the CAR. In addition, the Secretary-General intends to carry out a critical assessment of MINUSCA's contingents in early 2018 to examine possible linkages between their performance and conduct.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The Panel of Experts assisting the CAR Sanctions Committee will submit its final report to the committee in November. The committee will then meet with the panel to discuss the report later in the month or in December.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 27 September, CAR President Touadéra addressed the Human Rights Council (HRC) at its 36th session. Taking note of mass violations of human rights, violations based on gender, and the use of child soldiers by armed groups in the CAR, he highlighted the creation of a National Human Rights Commission based on the Paris Principles; it was expected to begin its work in October. Also on 27 September, the HRC held an interactive dialogue with Marie-Thérèse Keita-Bocoum, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the CAR, and considered her report (A/HRC/36/64). The report describes increased human rights violations, the re-recruitment of thousands of children, the deteriorating humanitarian situation, and the failure of peace and reconciliation initiatives.

On 29 September, the HRC adopted, without a vote, a resolution extending the mandate of the Independent Expert for one year and deciding to hold a high-level interactive dialogue to assess the human rights situation in the CAR, with an emphasis on the impact of peace and reconciliation efforts, during the HRC's 37th session (A/HRC/RES/36/25).

Key Issues and Options

The need 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 is of key concern to the Council. In this context, the renewal of MINUSCA's mandate will afford opportunities to adjust the mandate and clarify its main priorities. The Council may revise MINUSCA's mandate while also authorising additional troops

for MINUSCA as part of its response to the ongoing security and political situation.

During the renewal process, Council members could request the Secretariat to report further on actions taken to improve the performance of MINUSCA's contingents, including in the context of sexual misconduct.

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.

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.

In light of the grave situation, all Council members have expressed support for an increase in MINUSCA troop levels, in principle. Notwithstanding the US position, several Council members, including troop-contributing countries, reject steps that they perceive as singling out contingents and publicly shaming them. Thus, language with respect to general assessments of MINUSCA's performance will be contentious and will require careful negotiation in order to achieve agreement on additional troops.

There also seems to be a general understanding that MINUSCA must prioritise some of its tasks within its very limited resources. That said, when negotiations start, disagreements may arise as to which tasks should be allocated fewer resources.

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

Somalia and Eritrea

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution on Somalia and Eritrea sanctions that will address the partial lifting of the arms embargo, authorisation for maritime interdiction of illicit arms imports

and charcoal exports, and the humanitarian exemption, which all expire on 15 November. The 120-day briefing by the chair of the 751/1901 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee, Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), is expected. The mandate review of the Somalia

and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) is also due in November. Finally, the Council is scheduled to adopt a resolution renewing counter-piracy measures.

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA AND ERITREA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2317 (10 November 2016) was a resolution on Somalia and Eritrea sanctions, adopted with ten votes in favour. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/859** (12 October 2017) was the Secretary-General's report on piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia. **Security Council Press Statement SC/13029** (15 October 2017) was a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the 14 October terrorist attack in Mogadishu.

Somalia and Eritrea

Key Recent Developments

Somalia endured the worst terror attack in its history on 14 October when twin bomb explosions in Mogadishu left over 350 people dead and wounded more than 200 others. According to police, a truck bomb exploded outside a hotel at the busy K5 intersection, which is lined with government offices, restaurants and kiosks, levelling several buildings and setting dozens of vehicles on fire. Two hours later, another truck bomb struck the capital's Medina district. Some investigators believe that the trucks did not reach their intended target—the heavily defended compound where the UN, embassies and AU forces are based. There was no immediate claim of responsibility; however, it is widely believed that Al-Shabaab is the only militant group in Somalia with the resources to execute an attack of this scale.

The following day, the Security Council issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attack in the strongest possible terms and commending the swift response of Somalia's security forces and first responders.

In October the Council received the final reports of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG), which were discussed in a meeting of the Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee on 13 October. The report on Somalia noted a troubling trend toward the increased use of improvised explosive devices and other homemade explosives by Al-Shabaab, and it addresses the group's financing through agricultural activities. The report also notes that the illicit sale of charcoal by Al-Shabaab has continued in the last year at a magnitude similar to the previous year. It is estimated that the group made \$10 million last year through charcoal sales, mostly to Gulf Arab countries, which, according to the report, have offered varying degrees of cooperation with the SEMG. The report also addresses the rise of piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia and the activities of ISIL in Puntland. Concerning weapons and ammunition management, the report highlights concerns that compliance with reporting on arms shipments to regional administrations needs to improve, and that the regulations need to be clarified with regional administrations.

On Eritrea, the report states that for the fourth year in a row, the SEMG has found no evidence of support by Eritrea to Al-Shabaab. It reports, however, that the Eritrean

government, which has not allowed the group to visit the country since 2012, continues to block the group from visiting. Furthermore, the Chair of the Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee had planned a visit to the region in July and the Eritrean government initially agreed to receive him in Asmara; however, once the itinerary was set, the Eritrean government told the Chair that the proposed dates were not workable. The SEMG made one recommendation on Eritrea—that, in light of the lack of evidence of support to Al-Shabaab, the Somalia and Eritrea sanctions regimes be disassociated. This recommendation was also made in last year's final report but was not taken up by the Council.

On 12 October, the Secretary-General transmitted his report on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia. The report found that a slight increase in piracy activities between March and June 2017 pointed to the root causes not being fully addressed. During March and April 2017, six successful pirate attacks occurred involving the hijacking for ransom of cargo ships and dhows. In April, Chinese and Indian naval forces thwarted an attack on a cargo ship; and later the same month, Chinese naval forces and the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) prevented an attack on an oil tanker. Twenty-two unsuccessful attacks or suspicious maritime activities were recorded from March to September; of the 29 attempted or successful attacks during the reporting period, only two were against fishing vessels. The report notes that the hijackings in 2017 began four months after NATO terminated its counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia.

The Secretary-General's assessment is that the recent attacks demonstrate that the underlying conditions fuelling piracy have not changed. Several factors add to the risk of a resurgence in piracy activities, including coastal communities' perceptions of weak protection of coastal and marine resources by federal, international and local authorities, especially with regard to illegal fishing by foreign vessels; the ease of recruitment of potential pirates; the financing of attacks as a result of strong criminal networks operating onshore; the lack of alternative income-generating opportunities for affected coastal communities; and internationally, the weakness of the institutional

capacities and legal frameworks that identify, capture, prosecute and convict suspected pirates and their accomplices.

Additionally, the report highlights external factors contributing to the rise in piracy: commercial ships are not adhering to best management practices, are deviating from the internationally-recommended transit corridor, and are taking increased risks and reducing their usage of private security personnel. Also contributing are weak information-sharing on the part of the international community, regional instability, and the fact that pirates are possibly viewing the current environment as permissive owing to the recent reduction in the international naval presence.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 27 September, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Bahame Nyanduga, and considered his report (A/HRC/36/62). The report noted that, while there are improvements in the human rights situation in terms of governance and the peace-building process, attacks by Al-Shabaab continued to cause civilian casualties. On 29 September, the HRC adopted a resolution without a vote that renewed the mandate of the Independent Expert for one year and requested a report at the HRC's 39th session and the General Assembly's 73rd session (A/HRC/RES/36/27).

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for Council members in November will be whether or not to alter the Somalia sanction regime in order to keep weapons out of the hands of Al-Shabaab and other militants in Somalia more effectively, including by taking into account ways to thwart the group's increasing use of improvised explosive devices and its ability to continue to profit from charcoal sales, despite the charcoal ban set out by the Council.

Another issue is whether or not the Council ought to disassociate the Somalia and Eritrea regimes, as recommended by the SEMG. This could be done by creating two separate sanctions committees with their own monitoring groups, keeping a single monitoring group with two separate sanctions committees, or maintaining a single sanctions committee with two separate monitoring groups.

Council Dynamics

The Council is largely united on issues pertaining to Somalia in general and on Somalia

Somalia and Eritrea

sanctions in particular. On Eritrea, however, members are divided between those who believe the Council should reconsider sanctions measures against Eritrea in light of the absence of any findings by the SEMG of evidence of support to Al-Shabaab and those who stress that Eritrea's other activities in the

region also warrant sanctions. All Council members would like to see Eritrea increase its engagement with the UN. At last year's adoption of a resolution on sanctions, there was no appetite among Council members to consider disassociating the Somalia and Eritrea regimes, and it is unclear whether members

may choose to pursue that option at this time.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia and Somalia and Eritrea sanctions. Kazakhstan Chairs the 751/1907 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to hold a debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and to renew the authorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA). High Representative Valentin Inzko is expected to brief on his office's latest report.

The current authorisation for EUFOR ALTHEA expires on 8 November.

Key Recent Developments

Ethnic and political divisions among Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs continue to create gridlock, hampering socio-economic reforms and compliance with decisions of the judiciary.

There has been no progress among relevant BiH political parties in agreeing to amendments of the election law in the Federation of BiH (FBiH)—the predominantly Bosniak and Croat entity—following the December 2016 ruling of the Constitutional Court that several provisions for electing members to the Federation House of Peoples were unconstitutional. After the six-month deadline passed for the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to amend the law, the Constitutional Court on 6 July itself removed the unconstitutional provisions. (Božo Ljubić, president of the Croat People's Assembly, the main organisation representing Bosnian Croats, had requested the court review last year, believing the electoral mechanism to establish the upper house in the FBiH resulted in Croats from Croat-majority cantons being under-represented in that chamber.)

The Court's decision to strike down the problematic parts of the law has called into question whether elections next year for the House of Peoples can go forward. This could

also prevent the formation of a Federation government. Similarly, as general elections scheduled for October 2018 approach, political leaders in Mostar have still not implemented a past Constitutional Court decision regarding the city's election law, which has prevented local elections from being held since 2008.

When Inzko last briefed the Council on 18 May, he said that Milorad Dodik, the president of the predominantly Bosnian Serb entity Republika Srpska (RS), had lessened his calls for secession since the US imposed sanctions on him in January for obstructing and violating the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP). In June, Dodik told the news outlet *Politico* that he would not call for a referendum on RS secession in 2018, which is part of his ruling party's platform. He indicated, however, that such a referendum could still be held in the future.

On 20 September, the June 2015 decision of the RS National Assembly (RSNA) to hold a referendum on the jurisdiction in RS territory of BiH state courts and the High Representative's authority was officially published in the RS Gazette, with the referendum to be held in late November. The publication followed criticism by RS opposition parties that Dodik had withheld the decision's entry into force for two years. That same day, Dodik said the referendum would be suspended, noting the current opposition of the international community. At press time, however, no formal action has been taken to suspend the vote. After a BiH court acquitted Bosniak Naser Oric of war crimes against Serbs on 9 October, Dodik threatened to revive the idea of the referendum, while calling on Bosnian Serb staff to leave state judicial institutions.

There have been increased tensions between Sarajevo and Banja Luka over

registering defence property, which is one of the objectives set for closing the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and a requirement for potential NATO membership. On 17 October, the RSNA adopted a non-binding resolution opposing BiH's membership in NATO. This represented a reversal from the consensus on joining the alliance to which BiH formally applied in 2009. The resolution insists on BiH's military neutrality and states that all future decisions on the issue should be coordinated with Serbia.

On 16 October, the EU Foreign Affairs Council adopted its conclusions on BiH. Besides confirming its intention to continue EUFOR ALTHEA under a Security Council mandate, the Council "regret[ed] that a divisive rhetoric rooted in the past and an early electoral agenda over the last months slowed down the pace of reform and affected the political climate".

Key Issues and Options

Political gridlock, lack of respect for the rule of law, and ethnic divisions remain key issues. With general elections next year, lack of progress on amending election laws regarding the FBiH House of Peoples and the city of Mostar are likely to be of concern. Slow progress in advancing socio-economic reforms linked to BiH's EU integration and fulfilling the criteria and objectives for closing the OHR are recurring issues.

When re-authorising EUFOR ALTHEA, the Council may call on BiH parties to take steps towards improving the overall political atmosphere, to refrain from unilateral actions and to adhere to the principles of compromise and dialogue.

The resolution could further reiterate that the parties must abide by their commitment

Bosnia and Herzegovina

to cooperate fully with all institutions involved in the implementation of the GFAP, and thus address as a matter of urgency the outstanding decisions of the Constitutional Court, including its 1 December 2016 ruling concerning elections to the Federation House of Peoples and earlier ruling regarding the electoral system in Mostar.

Council Dynamics

Members regularly express concern about BiH's divisive ethnic politics and political gridlock. They also have been critical of the

rhetoric of RS leaders and recent referenda initiatives, which they view as challenging the GFAP, the rule of law, and BiH's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russia, however, tends to support the positions of the RS, which it argues is unfairly blamed for BiH's problems, maintaining that political dysfunction and provocations in the FBiH are overlooked. Russia is usually very critical of the High Representative, believing that his reporting is not objective and that he should focus more on encouraging intra-Bosnian dialogue and trust. While

all members support maintaining EUFOR ALTEHA, these dynamics have played out in recent years during negotiations on the resolution in parts of the text that addresses such issues as the High Representative's powers, political developments and references to Euro-Atlantic integration.

The BiH Coordination and Drafting Group first prepares Council products on BiH. For 2017, it comprises France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine, the UK and the US. Italy will serve as penholder on this year's text.

Syria

Expected Council Action

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

Regarding chemical weapons, Council members are expected to consider the final report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN on the Khan Shaykhun and Um Housh attacks, as well as the renewal of the JIM, which expires on 17 November.

Key Recent Developments

On 24 October, Russia cast its ninth veto on Syria on a US draft resolution renewing the mandate of the OPCW-UN JIM for another year. In August, the US had announced its intention to have an early renewal of the JIM to delink it from the conclusions of the JIM's report on two separate attacks (Um Housh on 16 September 2016 and Khan Shaykhun on 4 April), expected on 26 October. Russia had repeatedly expressed strong reservations about the methodology employed by both the OPCW's fact-finding mission (mandated to determine whether chemical weapons were used) and the JIM, and argued that a vote should not occur before the release of the report. In a non-paper annexed to a 6 October letter to the Secretary-General, Russia

maintained that the crater resulting from the explosion that released chemical weapons at Khan Shaykhun was consistent with an improvised explosive device and not with aerial bombardment.

Before the vote, Russia proposed postponing the meeting until 7 November under rule 33(3) of the provisional rules of procedure. A procedural vote was held, but Russia's proposal was supported by only Bolivia, China and Kazakhstan, hence failing to gain the nine votes required for adoption (Egypt, Ethiopia and Senegal abstained, and eight Council members voted against).

The draft resolution that would renew the JIM mandate for one year garnered 11 affirmative votes, with Bolivia and Russia voting against and China and Kazakhstan abstaining. This was the third time that China abstained on a Syria resolution vetoed by Russia; it has vetoed six other drafts jointly with Russia.

In response to a question during consultations on 4 October, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu confirmed the utility of an early renewal to ensure continuity in the JIM's capacity to deliver on its mandate. The uncertainty regarding the JIM's future during the negotiations of the mandate renewal in 2016 created difficulties in the planning and hiring of staff, which disrupted the JIM's work for several months.

On 26 October, the JIM stated that it was confident that the Syrian government was responsible for the release of sarin in Khan Shaykhun.

Efforts continue to enforce de-escalation areas in Syria. As of press time, four areas had been established (in Idlib, Eastern Ghouta, Homs and in the south-western region) with varying degrees of adherence. Since the newest de-escalation zone was established in Idlib in September, the Turkish army has deployed there with the objective of enforcing the de-escalation and containing the influence of Kurdish militias in northern Syria. Russia has also established two additional de-confliction zones in Afrin and Eastern Qalamoun. Briefing the Council on 27 September,

Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura reiterated the widespread consensus among Syrian stakeholders that de-escalation arrangements must not lead to a partition of the country. He stressed that de-escalation should be a precursor to a truly nationwide ceasefire and to action on the humanitarian and confidence-building fronts. He has also repeatedly expressed frustration at the lack of progress on the issue of detainees, abductees and missing persons. At press time, the seventh round of talks in Astana, to which additional countries had been invited to participate as observers, was expected to take place on 30-31 October.

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/2017/902 (25 October 2017) was on the humanitarian situation. **Security Council Letters** S/2017/848 (7 October 2017) was a letter from Russia addressed to the Secretary-General expressing concerns about the methodology of the fact-finding mission and the JIM with regard to Khan Shaykhun. S/2017/832 (3 October 2017) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.8073 (24 October 2017) was the meeting at which Russia vetoed a resolution renewing the JIM, following a procedural vote. S/PV.8076 (26 October 2017) was a briefing by de Mistura. **Other** S/2017/884 (24 October 2017) was a draft resolution renewing the JIM that was vetoed by Russia.

Syria

Briefing the Council on 26 October, de Mistura announced that he expected to convene a new round of the intra-Syrian talks on 28 November in Geneva. Different opposition groups (the High Negotiations Committee and the Moscow and Cairo platforms) continue to work on developing common negotiating positions and to explore the possibility of forming a single delegation. De Mistura called upon those with influence on the government to press it to negotiate substantive issues in Geneva.

On 17 October, the Syrian Democratic Forces announced the takeover of Raqqa, the military stronghold of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Counter-terrorism operations by different actors continue in various regions of Syria, including Deir ez-Zor, Hama, Dara'a and near Raqqa. According to a 25 October report by the Secretary-General on the humanitarian situation, these operations have led to an increased displacement of civilians.

Briefing the Council on 27 September Mark Lowcock, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, emphasised the longstanding difficulties in ensuring humanitarian access. The difficult security situation, administrative impediments, deliberate restrictions, and the removal of items from convoys continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian aid, particularly to besieged and hard-to-reach locations. At press time, Lowcock was expected to brief the Council on Syria on 30 October.

Key Issues and Options

More than six years since the start of the war,

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

Although the chemical weapons dossier on Syria was mostly a result of US-Russia cooperation, elected members may be better positioned to bridge the current divide and overcome the increasing politicisation of the file.

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. In September, Russia circulated a resolution welcoming the decisions made in Astana, but no further engagement has taken place on the draft. However, Council members could be provided with more information about the implementation of the ceasefire and de-escalation agreements, as well as their limitations, and consider whether the Council has any role to play in supporting the monitoring mechanisms needed to enforce them.

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

Council divisions have been made apparent once again by the ninth veto on Syria. Russian ambassador Vassily Nebenzia indicated, when explaining his vote, that Russia was ready to negotiate the JIM's extension after the publication and discussion of the report. He also mentioned the need to address some of the limitations of the JIM, but it is unclear whether Council members will be able to agree on this issue before the mandate's expiration on 17 November. (Last year, Russia pushed to give the JIM a broader, regional mandate to monitor and investigate the use of chemical weapons, with an increased focus on non-state actors and terrorist groups.)

In December, the Council is expected to consider renewing the authorisation of UN cross-border delivery of humanitarian aid established initially through resolution 2165 on 14 July 2014. "Trans-border supplies will have to be gradually rolled back as humanitarian access expands", Nebenzia said at the 27 September briefing. However, OCHA and most Council members have criticised the recurrent obstacles to humanitarian access and highlighted the vital role that the cross-border authorisation has played in the delivery of humanitarian aid in Syria.

Libya/Security Challenges in the Mediterranean

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to receive briefings from the Special Representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Ghassan Salamé, and from the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden). Also this month, ICC Prosecutor Fatou

Bensouda will deliver her semi-annual briefing on recent developments concerning cases in Libya.

During its presidency, Italy is planning to hold a ministerial-level briefing on security challenges in the Mediterranean.

UNSMIL's mandate expires on 15 September 2018, and the mandate of the Panel

of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee expires on 15 November 2018.

Key Recent Developments

On 10 October, the Council adopted a presidential statement endorsing the UN action plan for the resumption of an inclusive Libyan-owned political process. Secretary-General

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2380 (5 October 2017) 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. S/RES/2376 (14 September 2017) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2018. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/19 (10 October 2017) endorsed the UN action plan for the resumption of an inclusive Libyan-owned political process. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/726 (22 August 2017) was the most recent report on Libya. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8032 (28 August 2017) was a briefing by Salamé. S/PV.7934 (8 May 2017) was the last briefing by Bensouda on Libya.

Libya/Security Challenges in the Mediterranean

António Guterres and Salamé presented the action plan at a 20 September meeting on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly. It 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 before 20 September 2018.

To implement the first phase, Salamé organised several meetings in October of a joint drafting committee, which includes members of both the Tobruk-based House of Representatives and the Tripoli-based High Council of State. The objective of these meetings, which took place in Tunis, was to agree on the amendments to the LPA. While convergence has started to emerge on key issues (including the separation of the executive authority into a three-member Presidency Council and a ministerial cabinet), other questions remain outstanding. Chief among them is agreeing which office will include the responsibility of supreme commander of the armed forces. Khalifa Haftar, the head of the so-called Libyan National Army, has repeatedly expressed in public that the transitional period outlined in the LPA will end in December and threatened to take actions to avoid an institutional vacuum.

ICC-Related Developments

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, whose extradition has been sought by the ICC, was set free by the Abu-Bakir al-Siddiq Brigade, a Zintan-based militia, in June. On 14 June, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda called on the Libyan authorities, the Security Council, state parties to the Rome Statute and all other states to provide her office with any information regarding Gaddafi's whereabouts. She stated that the arrest warrant issued for him in 2011 for crimes against humanity remains valid "regardless of any purported amnesia law". The 1970 Sanctions Committee, under which he is listed, has yet to update

his believed status and location. While the case against former Libyan intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi was found inadmissible before the Court in 2013, Bensouda had expressed in the past her intention to review her office's assessment of the al-Senussi case as new information becomes available.

On 24 April, the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber I unsealed the arrest warrant, first issued in April 2013, for former internal security chief Mohamed Khaled al-Tuhamy, allegedly responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Libya in 2011. Al-Tuhamy remains at large, and the case will remain in the pre-trial stage until he is arrested and transferred to the ICC's seat in The Hague.

On 15 August, Pre-Trial Chamber I issued an arrest warrant for Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al-Werfalli, a commander in the Al-Saiqa Brigade, which is participating in General Khalifa Haftar's Operation Dignity in Benghazi. According to the warrant, Al-Werfalli appears to be directly responsible for the death of 33 persons in Benghazi or surrounding areas between June 2016 and July 2017, either by personally killing them or by ordering their execution. The persons killed appear to have been detained and to have been either civilians or persons hors de combat. The prosecutor has called upon Libyan authorities to arrest and surrender Al-Werfalli and has appealed to the international community, including the Security Council, to cooperate and assist Libya to ensure that this happens without delay. Despite reports that the General Command of the Libyan National Army had arrested Al-Werfalli, the Prosecutor has publicly stated that she has received reports alleging that the suspect is at large and may have been involved in additional killings since the ICC arrest warrant was issued.

Background for the Briefing

Italy has organised a briefing that is expected to address, in a holistic manner, the challenges to peace and security in the Mediterranean. While the Council tackles some of the conflicts with impact on the region separately (Libya, Syria, the Sahel), the objective behind this meeting is to identify the linkages between some of the larger trends that feature in these conflicts. The briefing is expected to focus on the root causes of the security challenges in the Mediterranean and

to consider initiatives to promote regional stability. Among the issues that are expected to be discussed are the global threat of terrorism and violent extremism, and the destabilising role of illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime. The meeting is expected to provide an opportunity to tackle the factors that lead to displacement, such as the limited socio-economic development, the absence of state authority and accountable institutions or the impact of climate change. Council members are expected to stress the importance of upholding human rights and international refugee law while addressing these phenomena.

The Council does not address the regional dimension of these challenges in the Mediterranean regularly. However, the Council adopted resolution 2240 on 9 October 2015 authorising member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that they are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. The resolution constituted the legal basis for the deployment by the EU of the Operation EUNAVFOR MED Sophia in the Mediterranean. Two additional tasks were later assigned to the operation: training the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy, and an authorisation to inspect, on the high seas off the coast of Libya, vessels bound to or from Libya that the operation has reasonable grounds to believe are violating the arms embargo.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 27 September, the Human Rights Council (HRC) received an oral update from Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kate Gilmore, who stated that across Libya armed groups were defining the overall human rights situation, which was characterised by hostage-taking, torture, and men, women and children being killed with impunity. Migrants in Libya continued to be held arbitrarily for indefinite periods and in inhumane conditions, she said.

On 10 October, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein visited Tripoli for one day and held discussions with the head of the Presidency Council, Fayez Sarraj, and other officials, including the head of the department responsible for managing migration detention centres. He also visited one of the country's main prisons and a camp for displaced persons. In a 12 October statement, the High Commissioner said the focus of his visit was on arbitrary detention, torture, and other grave violations. His statement noted that the human rights challenges in Libya

Libya/Security Challenges in the Mediterranean

are massive and called for a concerted effort by the government and all stakeholders, including the UN and the international community, to improve the situation.

Key Issues and Options

Generally, the Council could discuss and devise ways in which Council members could support, collectively and bilaterally, the UN-led mediation efforts in Libya. Regarding the perceived end of the transitional period outlined in the LPA, the Council could, after seeking Salame's advice, issue a statement calling on the parties to act with restraint and continue to engage in the political dialogue beyond December, reiterating the Council's support for the UN action plan and its timeline.

To address issues of substance that might

be better discussed in a closed-door setting, Council members could organise an informal interactive dialogue to focus on options for following up ICC decisions on Libya (as the ICC is not a UN entity, the Prosecutor is not allowed in Council consultations under current practice).

Council and Wider Dynamics

While all Council members supported endorsing the UN action plan, there were different positions regarding the degree of detail that the presidential statement should include on the sequencing of its implementation. In particular, two Council members maintained that including too much detail would affect the flexibility of the good offices work of Salamé. Other controversial issues were the inclusion of language on potential

spoilers of the process and how to refer to counter-terrorism efforts, with one member opposing a reference to leadership of Fayed Sarraj, the head of the Presidency Council, in this field. This illustrates the dynamics on Libya: despite unanimous Council outcomes, its members have so far been divided over the way forward to achieve a solution.

The semi-annual briefings by Bensouda on Libya have had limited impact, given the reluctance of the Council to follow up regarding the difficulties in implementing ICC decisions. Council members have often reverted to general exhortations rather than addressing non-compliance in a more forceful and effective way.

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

International Court of Justice

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council and General Assembly will elect five judges to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The judges will each serve a term of nine years commencing on 6 February 2018.

Background

The ICJ consists of 15 judges elected to nine-year terms by the General Assembly and the Council. Five seats come up for election every three years. There is no bar on consecutive terms.

National groups represented on the Permanent Court of Arbitration nominate candidates. When making nominations, members of each national group are recommended to consult their highest national court, national legal faculties, and national schools of law. No group may nominate more than four persons. The names of candidates are then communicated by the national group to the Secretary-General to prepare a list of all persons thus nominated.

Although there is no formal requirement for geographical distribution, article 9 of the ICJ Statute requires representation of the "main forms of civilization and of the principal legal systems of the world". In practice,

the Court's composition reflects that of the Security Council with each of the P5 always having a judge on the bench. Currently, the distribution is as follows: African States, three; Latin American and the Caribbean States, two; Asian States, three; Western European and Other States, five; and Eastern European States, two. The five judges whose terms are to expire are nationals of Brazil, France, India, Somalia and the UK.

Candidates

In this election, six candidates are contesting five positions. Five of the candidates are current members of the ICJ: Ronny Abraham (France), the incumbent president of the Court; Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf (Somalia), the incumbent vice-president; Antônio Augusto Cançado Trindade (Brazil); Christopher Greenwood (UK); and Dalveer Bhandari (India). The sixth candidate is Nawaf Salam, currently the permanent representative of Lebanon to the UN.

Election Process

Article 8 of the ICJ Statute states that the General Assembly and Security Council shall proceed independently of one another to elect the members of the Court in a secret

ballot. Candidates who obtain an absolute majority of votes (i.e. a majority of all electors, whether or not they vote or are allowed to vote) in both the General Assembly and the Council are elected. A candidate therefore must obtain 97 votes in the former and eight votes in the latter. In the Council vote, there is no distinction between permanent and non-permanent members.

Each elector may vote for five candidates on the first ballot. If the number of candidates obtaining an absolute majority is fewer than five on the first ballot, a second ballot for the remaining positions will be held, and balloting will continue until five candidates have obtained the required majority. If more than the required number of candidates obtain an absolute majority on the same ballot in either organ, a new vote on all the candidates will be held. In the event that the five candidates elected by one organ are not the same as those elected by the other, both will proceed (independently) to new balloting to fill the unresolved seats. This process will continue for three meetings, after which, if any positions are still not filled, the Council and the General Assembly may decide to convene a conference of six members (three from each) to recommend a candidate for acceptance by

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE Security Council Letter S/2014/808 (11 November 2014) was a letter from Argentina communicating the withdrawal of Susana Ruiz Cerutti (Argentina) as a candidate for election as a judge of the ICJ.

International Court of Justice

the General Assembly and Council.

According to article 2 of the ICJ Statute, members of the Court are to be elected “regardless of their nationality, from among persons of high moral character, who possess the qualifications required in their respective countries for appointment to the highest judicial offices, or are juris-consults of recognized competence in international law”. No two nationals from the same state can hold office at the same time, and once elected, a judge is a delegate neither of the government of his or her own country nor of any other state.

Results are usually achieved quickly in the Council, but balloting in the General Assembly can take much longer. In the last regular elections held on 6 November 2014, the fifth vacancy remained open after seven

rounds of voting in the General Assembly and four rounds of voting in the Security Council, as Patrick Lipton Robinson (Jamaica) consistently garnered the absolute majority required in the General Assembly while the Council selected Susana Ruiz Cerutti (Argentina). The following day, seven rounds of simultaneous voting failed to produce agreement to fill the remaining seat. Finally, on 11 November, Argentina announced the withdrawal of Cerutti’s candidacy for the sake of “strengthening regional unity” in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Robinson was elected on 17 November by the Security Council and the General Assembly to fill the last remaining seat.

Council Dynamics

Permanent members of the Council have no legal entitlement to representation on the ICJ. However, judges from the P5 are usually present on the Court. This practice favours the re-election of Abraham (France) and Greenwood (UK). Regional considerations are also likely to play a role, posing a challenge for candidates from the same geographical region. Based on this, it may be that Cançado Trindade (Brazil) and Yusuf (Somalia) are seen as running uncontested for the Latin America and Caribbean and Africa vacancies respectively, while Bhandari (India) and Salam (Lebanon) are running against each other for the Asia vacancy. Nevertheless, these political and geographical considerations are not necessarily determinative.

Burundi

Expected Council Action

In November, 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 unsettled. The Burundian government, for its part, maintains that the security situation is good throughout the country. Serious human rights abuses continue to be committed daily with impunity, and oppression and state control over Burundian society remains high, exerted mainly by the government and the Imbonerakure, the youth group of Nkurunziza’s party. Thus, while the security situation has been stable, many fear the situation is untenable and masks a serious risk of violent escalation between the government and those that oppose it (for more on the situation in Burundi, see our September Forecast).

Meanwhile, there seems to have been little headway in the Inter-Burundian dialogue, led

by the East African Community (EAC) and facilitated by former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa. The opposition has been critical of Mkapa, accusing him of siding with the government, after his public comments made in support of the legitimacy of Nkurunziza’s presidency and the need to focus on the future, mainly free and fair elections in 2020. At present, the dialogue is scheduled to be renewed in November.

Kafando met with the leaders in exile of the Conseil National pour le respect de l’Accord d’Arusha (CNARED), a platform composed of opposition groups in exile and part of the internal opposition to Nkurunziza, in Brussels on 14 October. According to a CNARED press release, the opposition leaders repeated their request for an all-inclusive subregional dialogue. Kafando expressed his commitment to facilitate a solution to the political crisis.

At the 19 October conclusion of the heads of state summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, to which Burundi is a party, the conference released a communiqué noting the improvement in the security situation in Burundi. It further urged countries hosting Burundian refugees to facilitate

the return of willing refugees to Burundi. The communiqué also expressed support for the EAC-led inter-Burundian dialogue.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 19 September, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi and considered its report (A/HRC/36/54). The report documents the persistence of extrajudicial executions; arbitrary arrests and detentions; enforced disappearances; torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and sexual violence in Burundi since April 2015, mostly committed by government forces. It concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed since April 2015. Burundi sent a letter to the Security Council rejecting the Commission’s report (S/2017/779).

On 28 September, the HRC adopted a resolution sponsored by the African Group (minus Botswana and Rwanda) requesting OHCHR to urgently dispatch a team of three experts “to collect and preserve information, to determine the facts and circumstances...in cooperation with the government of Burundi, and to forward to the judicial authorities of Burundi such information” concerning human rights violations (A/HRC/RES/36/2). The vote was 23 in favour and 14 against with nine abstentions. Security Council members also on the HRC voted as follows: China, Bolivia, Egypt, and Ethiopia voted in favour; the

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 Letter S/2017/779 (14 September 2017) was from Burundi, rejecting the Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry report on human rights violations in the country. Human Rights Council Document A/HRC/RES/36/19 (29 September 2017) was a Human Rights Council resolution extending the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi for one year. A/HRC/RES/36/2 (28 September 2017) was a Human Rights Council resolution requesting OHCHR to urgently dispatch a team of three experts to Burundi to collect information concerning human rights violations in cooperation with the government of Burundi and to forward such information to the judicial authorities of Burundi. 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

US and UK voted against; and Japan abstained.

On 29 September, the HRC adopted a resolution sponsored by the EU that extended the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi for one year (A/HRC/RES/36/19). The resolution requests the Commission to present a written report at the HRC's 39th session and at the General Assembly's 73rd session. The vote was 22 in favour and 11 against, with 14 abstentions. Security Council members also on the HRC voted as follows: the US, UK and Japan voted in favour; China, Bolivia and Egypt voted against; and Ethiopia abstained.

Key Issues and Options

The ongoing and pressing issue is ensuring that the situation in Burundi does not descend into chaos and further violence, and that a way is found 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 engagement between the UN and Burundi in order to solve the political crisis, while Burundi remains opposed to the deployment of a peace component in accordance with resolution 2303.

Finally, a major issue is the lack of accountability for potential international crimes over the last two years in Burundi, particularly in light of the gravity of the Commission of Inquiry's report.

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 are blocking the implementation of resolution 2303.

Council Dynamics

Burundi remains entrenched in its opposition to the involvement of the international community in the country's political affairs. 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 issue lacking a pressing security dimension, and those who see it as volatile and closely related to international peace and security because it threatens the viability of the 2000 Arusha Accord, which put an end to civil war and ethnic violence in the country. With the Council split, the current state of affairs in Burundi seems to have become a "tolerable" status quo for the international community as its attention shifts elsewhere.

France is the penholder on Burundi.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold a briefing on the 60-day report of the Secretary-General on the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The mandate of UNAMID expires on 30 June 2018.

Key Recent Developments

The level of armed hostilities in Darfur has continued to be significantly lower than in previous years, and Sudanese government forces have re-taken most of the territory previously controlled by rebel groups and now control Darfur. The unilateral ceasefire, declared by the government of Sudan in mid-2016 and most recently extended until 31 December, reportedly continues to be largely observed. While the overall security situation is improving, the region remains fragile, and an environment of instability persists in the presence of intercommunal violence, the proliferation of arms and human rights violations.

In accordance with resolution 2363, UNAMID continues its two-pronged approach. In the Jebel Marra area, it focuses on military protection, clearing explosive remnants of war

and providing emergency relief. In other areas of Darfur it focuses on stabilising the situation, supporting the police, helping to build rule of law institutions, mediating intercommunal conflict, and following up on security sector reform-related issues. Phase one of the mission's reconfiguration, to be completed before 1 January 2018, includes the closure of 11 team sites and a reduction of military personnel strength from 15,845 to 11,395 and police personnel strength from 3,403 to 2,888. All 11 team sites were closed as of 21 October, while discussions with the government over the establishment of a temporary operating base in Golo, Central Darfur for the Jebel Marra Task Force are ongoing.

Existing groups of internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to require significant protection and humanitarian assistance. There are an estimated 2.3 million vulnerable IDPs who need humanitarian assistance across Sudan, including 2.1 million in Darfur and about 240,000 in Blue Nile, South and West Kordofan states, according to OCHA. While over 13,000 IDPs in West Darfur recently returned to their homes, the reported occupation of villages and land by

armed militia previously associated with government forces, particularly in Jebel Marra, and general lawlessness remain an impediment to the return of IDPs. On 22 September, government forces reportedly clashed with IDPs residing at Kalma camp, South Darfur, leading to the death of at least three IDPs and injuries to some 26 others.

The political process continues to falter. Efforts by the AU High-level Implementation Panel for a cessation-of-hostilities agreement and the resumption of direct negotiations towards an inclusive peace agreement have so far remained inconclusive. The role of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), adopted in 2011, remains contentious, with the government of Sudan insisting on using the DDPD as the basis for talks and rebel groups requesting further discussion of the DDPD's provisions.

The Council was last briefed on UNAMID on 14 September, by Joint Special Representative for UNAMID Jeremiah Mamabolo, who said that cooperation with the government has noticeably improved in relation to humanitarian access and restrictions on UNAMID's movements. There is an

UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR Security Council Resolution S/RES/2363 (29 June 2017) renewed the mandate of UNAMID for one year. **Secretary-General's Reports S/2017/747** (30 August 2017) was the Secretary-General's assessment of the status of implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. **S/2017/746** (30 August 2017) was the Secretary-General's 60-day UNAMID report. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8050** (14 September 2017) was a UNAMID briefing. **Security Council Letter S/2017/876** (17 October 2017) was from the government of Sudan conveying its decision to extend the unilateral ceasefire until 31 December 2017.

Sudan (Darfur)

urgent need for the government, with the support of the international community, to find sustainable solutions that would enable the IDPs to return to their homes voluntarily, he said, adding that the cooperation of the government on the reconfiguration of UNAMID, particularly the establishment of a temporary operating base in Golo, is a matter of priority.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 27 September, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan, Aristide Nononsi, and considered his report (A/HRC/36/63). The report found incidents of harassment, arrest, torture and prolonged detention of civil society actors by National Security Service officers. In the Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile regions, the report found that despite a decline in military operations, the prevalence of armed groups, including government-backed militias and other armed actors, continued to pose a serious threat to the protection of civilians and human rights. On 29 September, the HRC adopted a resolution, without a vote, that renewed the mandate of the Independent Expert for a period of one year and requested the Independent Expert to present a report at the HRC's 39th session (A/HRC/RES/36/26).

In a 9 October press statement, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Idriss Jazairy, praised the decision of the US to lift sanctions on Sudan, which have had a major effect on vulnerable population groups, he said, adding that the move “opens new

perspectives for progress in Sudan and for the reduction of poverty in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda”.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue that Council members will want to follow closely is the effect of the troop reduction on the security situation.

Another key issue is to support efforts to break the ongoing impasse in the negotiations between the government and Darfuri rebel movements, leading to a durable cessation of hostilities and a final settlement. One option is to invite Thabo Mbeki, chair of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel, to address the Council on his efforts to reinvigorate the negotiations between the government and rebel groups.

The Council may also need to tackle the underlying causes of the conflict and how to promote intercommunal reconciliation, given the high levels of intercommunal fighting in Darfur. An option could be to request Mamabolo to brief on the issue.

Council Dynamics

In a departure from previous years, and within a context of longstanding divisions in the Council regarding Darfur, improvements in stability in many parts of the region have created an opportunity for apparent unity amongst Council members on certain issues.

These include recognising improvements in the overall security situation and the government's efforts to improve humanitarian access and agreeing on troop reductions. Traditionally, some Council members, notably China and Russia, have tended to emphasise the importance of upholding the sovereignty of Sudan and improvements in the security situation in Darfur. Other members of the Council, such as France, Italy, Sweden, the UK, Ukraine, Uruguay and the US, have been critical of the government for committing human rights violations, restricting the operations of UNAMID, and fostering a culture of impunity. While concerns remain, a number of these states have expressed the view that the government is making an effort to improve humanitarian access to the region and have welcomed reduced violence in Darfur.

On 12 October, longstanding US economic sanctions against Sudan were lifted “in recognition of the government of Sudan's sustained positive actions to maintain a cessation of hostilities in conflict areas in Sudan, improve humanitarian access throughout Sudan, and maintain cooperation with the US on addressing regional conflicts and the threat of terrorism”, according to the US Department of State.

The UK is the penholder on Darfur; Ukraine chairs the Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Sudan/South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) prior to its 15 November expiration.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Abyei, the disputed territory along the Sudan/South Sudan border, remains relatively stable in the absence of progress on the implementation of the 20 June 2011 agreement, which established temporary arrangements for the administration and security of Abyei pending resolution of

its status. Against this backdrop of political paralysis and persisting intercommunal violence, criminality, and the presence of armed groups, UNISFA continues to maintain law and order and a measure of stability in Abyei.

Sudan and South Sudan continue to disagree on the way forward to settle the Abyei question. In particular, they have conflicting positions on the establishment and composition of the institutions called for in the 2011 agreement (the Abyei Area Administration, the Abyei Area Council and the Abyei Police Service), which have yet to be established. Sudan continues to insist that

establishment of these joint institutions is the only way forward, but South Sudan disagrees on the need for the institutions, citing that the timelines to establish them have passed.

The Joint Border and Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), established by a 2011 agreement to conduct monitoring and verification activities along the border, remains at initial operating capability with only two of the four sector headquarters in operation. No significant recent progress towards its implementation has been made. The Secretary-General wrote to the Chairperson of the AU Commission on 13 September, expressing concern

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2352 (15 May 2017) extended the mission's mandate for six months. [Secretary General's Report S/2017/870](#) (17 October 2017) was the most recent Secretary-General's report on the situation in Abyei. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8078](#) (26 October 2017) was a briefing on Sudan/South Sudan.

Sudan/South Sudan

over the lack of tangible progress in the implementation of the various commitments made by the parties, in particular the full operationalisation of the JBVMM. Despite the lack of progress, both countries and the AU view the JBVMM as essential. Sudan and South Sudan jointly wrote to the Security Council on 23 September, to request the continued support of the UN for the JBVMM. On 23 October, the Chairperson of the AU Commission sent a similar request to the Secretary-General.

The Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) has not met since May. South Sudan postponed meetings, organised by the AU in Addis Ababa, of the AJOC and of the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya traditional leaders that were scheduled to take place in August. It argued that those meetings should occur after the presidents of South Sudan and Sudan had met. At press time, the presidents were reportedly scheduled to meet in Khartoum on 31 October.

On 15 May, the Council unanimously 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”.

Council members were briefed on the issue on 26 October, by Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions Alexander Zuev and Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom. In a break with previous practice, the briefing

took place in the Council chamber instead of in consultations. Both briefers stressed UNISFA’s stabilising role. Haysom added that this should inform any decision regarding Abyei and the JBVMM, while Zuev recommended UNISFA’s mandate be extended for another six months.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is whether to renew the mandate of UNISFA in its current format for an additional six months as recommended by the Secretary-General.

An option for the Council is to renew the mandate of UNISFA for six months following the recommendation of the Secretary-General. Another option is to renew the mandate for a shorter period, as has previously been done, as a means of putting pressure on Sudan and South Sudan to address the current lack of progress towards a political solution. A further option is to modify the mandate to suspend the mission’s support for the JBVMM, based on the delays and stalled efforts by the parties to fully operationalise the JBVMM, as set out in resolution 2352.

A related issue is whether the Council should take steps to advance the stalled political process to avoid the mission’s presence having to be extended indefinitely. In considering these issues, Council members will need to reflect on how the Council can best support the AU and Haysom in resuscitating the dialogue between Sudan and South Sudan on the status of Abyei.

An option is for the Council to continue holding briefings on Abyei in the Council chamber as a means of increasing international attention to the status of Abyei and adding pressure on Sudan and South Sudan

to advance the political process. In addition to Haysom, the Council could also invite Thabo Mbeki, head of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel, to brief.

Council Dynamics

Negotiations on the renewal of UNISFA’s mandate in May revealed a divide in the Council between the US and Ethiopia, UNISFA’s primary troop-contributing country, on the current mandate and troop ceiling for the mission. The initial draft resolution circulated by the US proposed a suspension of the mission’s role in supporting the JBVMM and a reduction in the troop ceiling from 5,329 to 4,170. 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 that 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. Ultimately, the resolution adopted set the troop ceiling at 4,791 and maintained support for the JBVMM. This difference in perspective is likely to be reflected again in the upcoming mandate renewal.

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

The US is the penholder on Abyei.

Kosovo

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to hold its quarterly briefing on the situation in Kosovo. Zahir Tanin, the Special Representative and head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), will brief on recent developments and the latest report by

the Secretary-General. As on several previous occasions, Serbia is likely to participate at a high level while Kosovo will probably be represented by its ambassador to the US.

Key Recent Developments

Following the no-confidence motion

initiated by Kosovo’s legislature in May, President Hashim Thaçi dissolved the government, after which general elections were held in June. No single political party or coalition managed to get a majority of the 120 seats in the legislature to form a new government. Furthermore, the nationalist Self-Determination

UN DOCUMENTS ON KOSOVO Security Council Resolution S/RES/1244 (10 June 1999) authorised NATO to secure and enforce the withdrawal of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces from Kosovo and established UNMIK. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2017/640** (24 July 2017) was on UNMIK. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8025** (16 August 2017) was a briefing on Kosovo.

party, a long-standing political opposition party, achieved its best result yet by doubling its share of seats to 32 and thus becoming a considerable force in the legislature. Over the past two years, members of the Self-Determination party sought ways to obstruct the work of the previous government, including setting off smoke bombs in the legislative chamber and staging street protests.

On 9 September, after months of political impasse, the Kosovo legislature approved a new government led by Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj by a narrow majority of 62 votes. The new government also received support from Srpska List, the major political party representing Kosovar Serbs. Haradinaj is a former commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army who is wanted in Serbia for his alleged involvement in war crimes against Serbs during the Kosovo war in the 1990s. He was arrested earlier this year in France and previously in Slovenia in 2015 when those countries acted on an Interpol notice requested by Serbia. In both cases, Haradinaj was released. In 2005, Haradinaj surrendered to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia; he was eventually acquitted of war crimes charges in 2012.

On 31 August, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini hosted another round of the high-level EU-facilitated dialogue in Brussels with the participation of Thaçi and President Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia. In addition to reaffirming their commitment to continue working on a new phase of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, both sides agreed on the concluding steps for the implementation of the justice agreement, which was aimed at integrating judges and prosecutors from the Serb-dominated north into the Kosovo judiciary by 17 October. Mogherini held another meeting with Vučić and Thaçi

on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September, during which they continued discussions on the normalisation of relations and implementation of the existing agreements between Belgrade and Pristina.

On 24 October, 40 judges and 13 prosecutors from the Serb-dominated north took an oath in Thaçi's office marking their integration into the Kosovo justice system. The judges and prosecutors had failed to appear at an earlier oath ceremony hosted by Thaçi on 17 October.

Local elections were held on 22 October throughout Kosovo, including Serb-dominated municipalities in the north. International observers characterised them as free and fair.

Issues and Options

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

Since the adoption of a presidential statement in 2008, the Council has not pronounced itself on the situation in Kosovo. However, the Council monitors the situation closely, and should the tensions between Belgrade and Pristina increase and endanger stability in the region, an option for the Council would be to consider issuing a resolution or a statement calling on both sides to resolve outstanding issues through dialogue.

Another issue that has gained some traction among certain Council members, especially the P3, is to consider lengthening the reporting cycle and possibly downsize the UN mission, given the relative stability in Kosovo over the past several years. Therefore, an option for the Council would be to consider specific proposals to this end.

In light of the ongoing discussions about the need to improve the effectiveness of UN

peace operations, the Council could request the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the mission.

Council Dynamics

For years, Kosovo has been a low-intensity issue for the Council that is followed closely primarily by members with particular interest in the region. Regional organisations including the EU, NATO and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe have been playing increasingly prominent roles in Kosovo.

Deep divisions among permanent members have continued on the Kosovo issue. France, the UK and the US recognise Kosovo's independence and tend to be supportive of Kosovo's government, while China and Russia do not recognise its independence and strongly support Serbia's position. The P3 and Japan have become increasingly outspoken in advocating a lengthening of UNMIK's reporting cycle and thus reducing the frequency of meetings on Kosovo. Furthermore, the US and Japan, which are also the top two contributors to the UN peacekeeping budget, have called for a drawdown and eventual withdrawal of UNMIK, given the stability in Kosovo. The US has asserted that the mission remains overstuffed and over-resourced considering its limited responsibilities, and that these resources could be put to better use in more pressing situations on the Council's agenda.

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

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to receive a briefing on the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the situation in the country. Consultations will follow the briefing.

The mandate of UNMISS expires on 15 December.

Key Recent Developments

The security and humanitarian situations in South Sudan remain dire. Violent clashes between government and opposition forces persist in several areas of the country, including in the greater Upper Nile region and in the Equatorias region. According to OCHA, the number of internally displaced South Sudanese is 1.88 million while an additional 2.1 million people have taken refuge in neighbouring countries. Approximately 6 million people, half the population of the country, face severe food insecurity. The situation for humanitarian aid workers remains extremely dangerous, with 18 aid workers killed since the start of the year.

In an effort to revitalise the peace process and in preparation for its initiative to convene a high-level revitalisation forum, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) consulted separately with government, opposition and civil society actors in October. An IGAD delegation met with opposition leader and former First Vice-President Riek Machar in South Africa on 4 October. Machar expressed his commitment to the IGAD process, his spokesperson said, marking an apparent shift in position from a letter Machar sent to the UN Secretary-General on 14 September. An IGAD Council of Ministers delegation, led by Ethiopian Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu, met with President Salva Kiir and his cabinet on 13 October. The Sudanese officials reportedly said that the government supported the revitalisation forum but asked for clarification of its objectives, which IGAD is expected to give in writing.

On 20 September, the AU Peace and Security Council released a communiqué after its 720th meeting stating that the IGAD-led revitalisation process represents “a last chance for the Parties, to really achieve sustainable peace and stability in South Sudan.” The communiqué said that if the

parties continue to delay the full implementation of the August 2016 peace agreement, the PSC “will consider the necessary steps, including sanction measures [sic], that could ensure effective and efficient implementation of the [peace agreement]...bearing in mind the assessment reports of the IGAD-led revitalisation process”.

Deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF), which was initially authorised in August 2016 and is expected to comprise 4,000 troops, is continuing slowly. Currently less than 25 percent of the authorised troop strength has been deployed, although an Ethiopian advance company consisting of some 200 personnel arrived in October. The government has long resisted the RPF’s mandated role to protect the Juba airport. During his Council briefing on 26 September, Special Representative for South Sudan David Shearer suggested that the deployment of the RPF would enable UNMISS to project into the Equatorias, an area of significant violence over the past year, to better pursue its mandate to protect civilians.

UNMISS personnel continue to face restrictions of movement, harassment and assault at the hands of government forces. In one incident, government forces assaulted an UNMISS contingent commander who was accompanying an UNMISS convoy headed for the Tomping base in Juba on 21 September. The convoy was forced to reroute to UN House on the other side of the city.

On 17 October, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed the Council on the situation in South Sudan. Lacroix described the difficult security and humanitarian environment in the country. He expressed concern that the credibility of the national dialogue process launched by the government “remains in question owing to significant opposition groups being so far unwilling to join, against the backdrop of the concurrent SPLA [i.e., Sudan People’s Liberation Army or government] military operations”. With regard to IGAD’s efforts to revitalise the peace process, he urged “Council members to use their leverage on all parties and encourage them to engage in this process meaningfully and without any preconditions”.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 18 September, the Human Rights Council held an enhanced interactive dialogue on South Sudan, including briefings by the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan and Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kate Gilmore. The Chairperson of the Commission, Yasmin Sooka, said that the Hybrid Court for South Sudan needed to be established swiftly, along with a commission on truth and healing. The national dialogue would not enjoy countrywide support, as there was a prevailing climate of fear, she said.

The Commission visited South Sudan and Ethiopia from 4 to 15 September and released a statement on 20 September. Noting that it witnessed tens of thousands of South Sudanese women and children arriving in Ethiopia, the Commission said that many of them had been subjected to collective punishment by government forces, based on ethnicity and their perceived support for the opposition. The Commission added that it was especially struck by the numbers of unaccompanied children and that the “humanitarian situation is almost unmanageable”.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is how to support efforts to revitalise the political process in South Sudan. The Council could adopt a presidential statement or resolution that:

- emphasises the Council’s support for regional efforts to pursue a mediated solution to the conflict;
- strongly condemns violence perpetrated by government forces and armed groups and calls for an immediate ceasefire; and
- condemns restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNMISS personnel and obstacles to humanitarian access.

In an effort to reduce the level of violence and exert leverage on the parties, members could decide to revisit the idea of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions.

Another important 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. A démarche from the Council president to the South Sudanese ambassador regarding delays in receiving clearances and visas from the South Sudanese government for RPF personnel could help address these issues and expedite the deployment of the force.

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 Records S/PV.8071](#) (17 October 2017) was a briefing on South Sudan by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix. [S/PV.8056](#) (26 September 2017) was a briefing by UNMISS head David Shearer.

South Sudan

Council Dynamics

There is widespread support among Council members for IGAD's efforts to revitalise the peace process. During the Council's briefing on South Sudan on 17 October, Uruguay said that "support of the international community, in particular that of the Security Council, is absolutely critical to ensuring the effectiveness of the revitalization agenda". Bolivia expressed its appreciation for IGAD's efforts to promote

the peace process. In the closed consultations, other members similarly emphasised their support for the IGAD revitalisation initiative.

While all members are concerned about the political and humanitarian situation in South Sudan, there have been differences of view regarding what approach the Council should take to address the crisis in the country. For example, there has been a longstanding divide on whether to authorise an arms

embargo and further targeted sanctions in an effort to exert leverage on the parties.

Council members are awaiting the findings of a strategic review of UNMISS that is expected to take place in November and will inform decision-making with regard to the mission's mandate renewal in December.

The US is the penholder on South Sudan.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In November, Special Coordinator for Lebanon Sigrid Kaag and a representative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will brief Council members in consultations on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701, which called for a cessation of hostilities between the Shi'a militant group Hezbollah and Israel in 2006. The Council will also receive the semi-annual briefing on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559.

The mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) expires on 31 August 2018.

Key Recent Developments

In August, the Council adopted resolution 2373, which extended UNIFIL's mandate for another year and instructed the mission to take a more proactive approach towards ensuring that UNIFIL's area of operations is not used for hostile activities. The resolution called on the Secretary-General to include in his reporting prompt and detailed information on all violations of resolution 1701, violations of the sovereignty of Lebanon, and restrictions to UNIFIL's freedom of movement, as well as to report on specific areas where UNIFIL does not have access and on the reasons behind these restrictions. Furthermore, 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. The negotiations leading up to the

adoption were somewhat contentious, with the US and Israel publicly criticising UNIFIL and its leadership for overlooking an alleged upsurge in Hezbollah activity in southern Lebanon.

The situation along the Blue Line, the border demarcation between Lebanon and Israel, has continued to be generally calm, while the progress on each party's outstanding obligations under resolution 1701 has remained limited. The violations of resolution 1701 persist on a regular basis, and there has been no progress towards achieving a permanent ceasefire.

On 16 October, Israeli fighter jets conducted an airstrike, targeting anti-aircraft missile systems positioned near Damascus in Syria. The Israeli air force acted in response to an incident earlier that day when Israeli planes on a reconnaissance mission over Lebanon came under fire from Syrian territory. In media remarks following the incident, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesperson Ronen Manlis said that the regime in Syria is responsible for any fire from its territory and that the IDF will retaliate if Syria carries out any anti-aircraft military actions against the IDF. Israel had informed Russia, which is providing military support for the Syrian government, of its intention to conduct an airstrike.

While addressing IDF soldiers earlier in October, Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) have become an integral part of Hezbollah. Furthermore, he said that the next conflict in the north of the country will probably include Hezbollah and the LAF, as

well as the Syrian regime.

Lebanon continues to carry the burden of hosting over one million refugees from Syria. In a 16 October meeting in Beirut with representatives of the permanent members of the Council, the EU and the Arab League, Lebanese President Michel Aoun said that his country cannot cope with the vast numbers of refugees from Syria, and he wanted to explore ways to facilitate the return of refugees to safe areas in Syria.

Issues and Options

Although the situation in UNIFIL's area of operation has remained relatively calm, there has been little progress towards achieving the main objectives of resolution 1701 after more than 11 years since its adoption, including a permanent ceasefire.

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

In August, the Council renewed UNIFIL's mandate and requested the Secretary-General to look at ways to enhance the mission's efforts, including increasing its visible presence, patrols and inspections. Given that

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2373 (30 August 2017) renewed UNIFIL's mandate for another year. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) expanded UNIFIL by 15,000 troops and expanded its mandate. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory, and free and fair presidential elections. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2016/10 (22 July 2016) stressed the importance of Lebanon's electing a president by May 2017 in order to maintain stability. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/591 (11 July 2017) was on the implementation of resolution 1701.

Lebanon

UNIFIL's mandate has been renewed recently, the Council is likely to take no action. However, Council members are likely to raise the issue of the enhanced reporting requirement requested by resolution 2373. Moreover, Council 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. The Council could request a briefing by UNHCR on how member states can enhance services to refugees.

Council Dynamics

As was evident from the latest negotiations on UNIFIL's renewal, the US has expressed some criticism of the mission because of differing views about the threat posed by Hezbollah. The US has been advocating a more proactive role for the mission in confronting the threat of Hezbollah and has been increasingly vocal about what it believes is the rising threat

of Hezbollah and its proliferation of weapons. The Council, however, has remained united in its position that UNIFIL contributes to stability in the region and between Israel and Lebanon. There is also broad support for the LAF. Most 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.

Protection of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council may hold an open debate or a briefing on the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict and from terrorists, in accordance with resolution 2347.

Background

Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, notably in Iraq and Syria, and some in Africa, such as in Mali, have brought considerable attention to the issue of the destruction of cultural heritage. Over recent years the Council has, on several occasions, considered certain aspects of this issue, particularly the interlinkages with counter-terrorism and trafficking of cultural property by terrorist organisations.

In addition, the mandate of the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has, since it was established in 2013, included assisting the transitional authorities in the country with the protection of cultural and historic sites in collaboration with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This is currently the only active UN peacekeeping mission that has this provision in its mandate.

This issue has also been of interest to France and Italy outside of the Council. France, together with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), launched an initiative that resulted in a December 2016 conference in Abu Dhabi on safeguarding endangered cultural

heritage, attended by 40 countries. A declaration adopted at the conference called for the creation of an international fund for the protection of endangered cultural heritage in armed conflict and the creation of safe havens for endangered cultural property including, if necessary, in other countries. The declaration called for the support of the Security Council in achieving the aforementioned objectives.

As a follow-up, France, the UAE and the UNESCO announced on 20 March the establishment of a new fund, the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas.

On 24 March, the Council was briefed on "the destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict" by Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO; Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), via video teleconference; and General Fabrizio Parrulli, head of the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage.

At the meeting, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2347. Drafted by Italy and France, this was the Council's first resolution specifically on the issue. The resolution, among other things, condemns the destruction, looting and trafficking of cultural heritage in armed conflicts. It notes that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and their associates are generating income from engaging in the illegal excavation, looting and smuggling of cultural property to support their operations. The resolution calls on member states to implement necessary measures to advance the protection of cultural heritage within their territory and, if requested, with the assistance of relevant UN agencies. It further notes the ICC's conviction of 27 September 2016 of Faqi Al Mahdi for directing attacks against religious and historic buildings in Mali in June and July 2012. (Al Mahdi was sentenced to nine years imprisonment.)

During negotiations on the resolution, reference to the Abu Dhabi conference was an issue of contention for some members of the Council, most notably Egypt and Russia, as they felt the outcome of the conference only represents the views of some member states. The concept of the creation of a network of safe havens for cultural heritage outside the country of origin was particularly troubling for members who emphasise the importance of respecting sovereignty. As a compromise, resolution 2347 stresses that member states have the primary responsibility in protecting their cultural heritage, and it encourages states to take preventive measures to safeguard their cultural property, including as appropriate through "safe havens" in their own territories, without reference to "safe havens" outside the country of origin. Welcoming the Abu Dhabi

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ARMED CONFLICT Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2347 (24 March 2017) was on protection of cultural heritage in armed conflicts. S/RES/2199 (12 February 2015) was on ISIS and Al-Nusra's illicit funding via oil exports, trafficking of cultural heritage, ransom payments and external donations. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7907 (24 March 2017) was the meeting at which the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2347 on the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflicts. Security Council Press Statement SC/12690 (20 January 2017) condemned the destruction of cultural heritage by ISIL in Syria following reports of the destruction of the tetrapylon and parts of the theatre of Palmyra.

Protection of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict

conference initiative to establish an international fund, as suggested in an earlier draft of the resolution, was also contentious as some Council members felt that it undermines UNESCO's independent efforts in this regard. As a compromise, the resolution takes note of the funds established by UNESCO and the Abu Dhabi conference alike.

Finally, the resolution calls for the Secretary-General to submit to the Council a report on the implementation of the resolution before the end of 2017. At press time, the report had not yet been submitted to Council members.

Key Issues and Options

The main issue for the Council is to monitor the implementation of resolution 2347 and identify gaps in order to assist member states in protecting their cultural heritage. Since only a short time has passed since the adoption of the resolution, the Council may request the Secretary-General to report to the Council on the protection of cultural heritage in the future.

Council Dynamics

Notwithstanding the issues mentioned above, Council members seem to be in broad

agreement on the importance of protecting cultural heritage in armed conflict and from terrorist groups, and on the various measures that member states should take to achieve that end in coordination with UNESCO, UNODC and other agencies. However, as with the negotiations over resolution 2347, certain measures taken to protect cultural heritage can be sensitive and cause divisions between Western states and those members who emphasise the importance of respecting sovereignty.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will continue to follow developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) closely in light of the fragile political, security and humanitarian situation. During the month, the Council expects to receive the 45-day written update of the Secretary General "on political and technical progress and obstacles to the implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement", as per resolution 2348.

Key Recent Developments

The political environment in the DRC remains tense. It appears that the timetable established by the 31 December 2016 agreement will not be met. The agreement between the government and the opposition was designed to address the political impasse resulting from President Laurent Kabila's failure to step down at the end of his second (and, according to the constitution, final) term in late 2016. However, on 10 October, the DRC electoral commission announced that voter registration in the restive Kasai region, which began in September, would require a total of three months to be finalised and that at least 504 days would be required to organise the election following the completion of voter registration. According to this schedule, the election would not be conducted until April 2019 or

later. Opposition figure Claudel Lubaya was quoted by Reuters as saying that the electoral commission's announcement was "an election-killing agenda" and that "[e]verything now rests on the shoulders of the population, which must take matters into its own hands".

The security situation has deteriorated in many parts of the country in recent months. Several clashes have been reported between Mai-Mai groups and the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC)—i.e., government forces—in North and South Kivu provinces. Violence in the Kasai, the area in south-central DRC, has continued as well, marked by intercommunal conflict and fighting between government forces and the Kamwina Nsapu militia. On 9 October, two UN peacekeepers were killed and 18 others were wounded during an attack by the Allied Democratic Forces, an Islamist rebel group, on a base of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) in North Kivu. Council members condemned the attack in a 10 October press statement.

Insecurity has contributed to the dire humanitarian situation in the country. According to the Secretary-General's recent MONUSCO report, some 3.8 million people are internally displaced in the DRC, approximately 621,700 Congolese refugees have fled the country, and approximately 7.7 million people

in the DRC suffer acute hunger (S/2017/824).

The Secretary-General's report on the strategic review of MONUSCO was published on 29 September (S/2017/826). In light of financial constraints that have reduced the mission's size, the review called for MONUSCO to focus on two strategic priorities: 1.) supporting implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement; and 2.) protecting civilians and monitoring and reporting human rights. It maintained that while "changes under way in MONUSCO will yield efficiencies...member states should exercise caution in making further cuts to the Mission's budget that may compromise its ability to deliver on its core priorities."

On 11 October, Maman Sambo Sidikou, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MONUSCO, briefed the Council. Referring to the delays in implementing the 31 December 2016 agreement, he noted that "a climate of political uncertainty and tension" has re-emerged. In describing the difficult security situation in the country, Sidikou underscored the UN's concern "about the fact that journalists, political opponents and civil society activists continue to be subject to intimidation, harassment and violence, mostly in connection with their activities and the expression of their opinions concerning the political process". In light of the recently lowered troop ceiling and

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC Security Council Resolution S/RES/2348 (31 March 2017) renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 31 March 2018. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2017/824 (2 October 2017) was a report on MONUSCO. S/2017/826 (29 September 2017) was a special report on the strategic review of MONUSCO. S/2017/825 (29 September 2017) was a report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework of the DRC and the region. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.8067 (11 October 2017) was a briefing on MONUSCO. **Security Council Press Statement** SC/13022 (10 October 2017) condemned the killing of two UN peacekeepers and the wounding of 18 in North Kivu by the Allied Democratic Forces.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

budget cuts, he said MONUSCO was in the process of “testing a new strategy of protection by projection, specifically aimed at areas affected by the closure of MONUSCO bases and designed to provide the mission with greater flexibility in fulfilling its mandate to protect civilians”. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix participated in the closed consultations following the briefing.

On 30 October, Council members issued a press statement reiterating their concerns at the political, security and humanitarian situation in the DRC.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 26 September, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in the DRC, including briefings by the head of MONUSCO, Maman Sambo Sidikou, and Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kate Gilmore. Sidikou expressed shock over the brutality of violations in the Kasai region and the targeting of children, schools and churches. He also expressed concern about the disproportionate use of force by the army.

On 29 September, the HRC adopted a resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights by a vote of 45 in favour, one against (the US) and one abstention (Republic of Korea) (A/HRC/RES/36/30). The resolution requests OHCHR to provide an oral update at the HRC's 37th and 38th sessions and to prepare a comprehensive report on the situation of human rights in the DRC, including in the context of electoral processes, for the HRC's 39th session. The US, which called for the vote, said that “the congratulatory language” in the resolution “does not reflect the realities on the ground”.

Key Issues and Options

Key issues for the Council include the continuing political impasse (and helping the DRC move toward free and fair elections within a clear time frame), the ongoing violence in different parts of the country, and what implications recent cuts to MONUSCO's budget and troop strength will have on its operations.

The Council may choose to send stakeholders in the DRC key messages by adopting a resolution or a presidential statement that:

- calls on stakeholders to cooperate and develop a realistic electoral calendar (as it appears more and more unlikely that elections will be held this year) so that timely, free and fair elections can be held;
- condemns the violence in the Kivus 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 undermining implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Although all Council members are worried about the political situation, in recent months there have been different views on the urgency of holding the elections. Some members have maintained that the elections must be held as quickly as possible, worried about the potentially dire consequences of a lack of progress towards holding them. Others have asserted that the timing of the 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 timeframe.

Several Council members emphasise the role that key regional actors, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the AU, and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, can play in resolving the political crisis. During its summit on 19-20 August, SADC appointed a Special Envoy to help the DRC prepare for elections, while noting the challenges that have made it unrealistic 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.

During negotiations over resolution 2348, the US and the UK advocated a reduction of troop strength, but many Council members were of the view that plans for downsizing MONUSCO and an eventual exit strategy were premature because of the tenuous political and security situation. During the 11 October briefing, Uruguay, a troop contributor to MONUSCO, stated its concern “about the reduction in MONUSCO troop numbers at a time when...the violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is increasing significantly”. Some members caution that the UN country team needs to be accorded the resources required to conduct tasks that are being transferred to it from MONUSCO in light of the recent cuts in the mission's budget and staffing.

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

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Security Council Report is a non-profit organisation supported by the Governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Turkey and United Arab Emirates, and Carnegie Corporation, Humanity United and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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