

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Japan will have the presidency of the Council in December. There will be two non-proliferation meetings. The first is expected to be a ministerial-level meeting on the [DPRK](#), focusing on the threat and challenges posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to international peace and security. The second is on [Iran](#) and the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme.

With regard to [Syria](#), there will be the regular briefings on the political and humanitarian situation and on chemical weapons. In addition, Council members are expected to negotiate and put to a vote a draft resolution renewing the authorisation for cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access, which expires on 10 January 2018.

Other Middle East issues that will be considered are:

- [Golan Heights](#), the renewal of UNDOF;
- [Israel/Palestine](#), the regular monthly briefing; and
- [Yemen](#), on the political process and the humanitarian situation.

Council members will continue to follow developments in [South Sudan](#) and are expected to renew the mandate of the UN mission and the authorisation of the Regional Protection Force. There will be discussions on several other African issues this month, including:

- [Liberia](#), an update on UNMIL by the Special Representative and on the peacebuilding plan by the Chair of the Liberia configuration of

the PBC;

- [Libya](#), the renewal of UNSMIL and an update on the 1970 sanctions regime;
- [Sudan](#), the quarterly briefing by the chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee and the semi-annual briefing on the ICC's work; and
- [UNOCA/LRA](#), an update on the activities of the UN Office in Central Africa and the regional strategy to combat the Lord's Resistance Army.

Other Asian issues this month include a briefing followed by consultations on developments in Rakhine state in [Myanmar](#) since the adoption of a presidential statement in early November and the quarterly debate on [Afghanistan](#).

Other issues on the December programme of work include:

- [Counter-Terrorism](#), renewal of the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate;
- [Peace operations](#), a briefing on the Secretary-General's report on how to fill gaps in force generation;
- [Small arms](#), a briefing on the Secretary-General's biennial report; and
- [Tribunals](#), the semi-annual debate on the ad hoc international criminal tribunals.

There will also be the annual briefing by outgoing [subsidiary body](#) chairs, reviewing their experience and developments during their term as chairs of committees or working groups.

A meeting on the human rights situation in the DPRK is also possible in December.

In Hindsight: The Peacebuilding Commission

For much of its existence, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)—created as an advisory body to the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council—has been looked at cynically by some members of the Security Council as not providing much added value

to the Council's work. The UN general membership and staff in the UN Secretariat have also often viewed the PBC as something of a disappointment. Council members, particularly the P5, have questioned its ability to advise on conflict-affected situations and have found its meetings

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In Hindsight: Peacebuilding Commission

redundant, duplicating discussion and information provided by the Secretariat during Council sessions. The PBC's supporters, in turn, have criticised the Council for not being receptive to working with the PBC, thus limiting its ability over the years to demonstrate its value. Tensions have existed since the PBC's creation in 2005, which occurred as Security Council reform stalled, with the P5 seeing the PBC as a forum created by member states to discuss peace and security issues, encroaching on the prerogatives of the Security Council.

However, there has been renewed commitment in recent years to strengthening the PBC, which had been created to fill what then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan called a “gaping hole” at the UN in its support for post-conflict situations. Much of this newfound interest was triggered by the 2015 review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture (consisting of the PBC, Peacebuilding Support Office [PBSO] and the Peacebuilding Fund [PBF]). The review culminated in the UN's most comprehensive resolutions ever on peacebuilding and established the notion of “sustaining peace”, which expanded the understanding of peacebuilding as activities to be undertaken not only in post-conflict situations but also to prevent conflict in the first place, as well as during peacemaking and peacekeeping.

As the end of 2017 approaches, there have been significant changes within the PBC. Security Council Report's research report *The Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council: From Cynicism to Synergy?* documents these developments since SCR's last report on the PBC in April 2013. The report considers challenges in fulfilling the objectives of the PBC while setting out options, many of which are currently being developed among member states and by the Secretariat, to enhance the PBC's contribution to the Security Council and make a more meaningful impact on the countries it considers.

Notable changes at the PBC have included invigorating the work of the PBC's Organizational Committee (where all 31 members of the PBC are represented), and expanding the country situations that the PBC considers beyond the six countries that have traditionally made up its agenda. In fact, the PBC is seeking to move away from having formal agenda countries and country-specific configurations: the former for some countries

carries a stigma to engaging with the PBC, while the latter has structural limitations because of the configurations' dependency on the commitment of the individual ambassadors that chair them and the resources available to these ambassadors.

While the PBC began in 2015 to hold meetings on countries that are not on its agenda, this past year has seen it sustain engagement on new country and regional situations, notably The Gambia and the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Its involvement with the Sahel strategy represented the first time that the Council sought PBC support on a new issue since 2010. The PBC is also seen as facing a crucial test with the transition in Liberia as the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) withdraws in early 2018. It has committed itself to supporting implementation of a peacebuilding plan that the Council requested for Liberia, which faces significant technical, operational and financial gaps.

The PBC has further sought to improve cooperation with regional and subregional organisations, notably the AU Peace and Security Council. It has developed practices to increase synergies with the PBF to address what has long been considered a disconnect between the two. During PBC meetings, the PBSO now provides regular updates on PBF-supported programmes. Countries declared eligible for the PBF are also being encouraged to brief the PBC on their peacebuilding strategies. The first such meetings happened in November on Colombia and Sri Lanka.

Despite the changes and signs of increasing Council engagement and openness, scepticism remains, including among the P5, about whether the PBC will have a greater impact. There appears, however, to be broad agreement among PBC and Council members on the importance and potential for the PBC to make greater use of its convening role. The PBC's greatest strength and comparative advantage over the Council is its convening power—its ability to bring together and meet with a diverse array of actors, including the country concerned, member states, international financial institutions, UN agencies, regional and subregional organisations, and civil society. In doing so, it might be able to collect and better package these views to present to the Council. To develop its input for the Council, the PBC is trying to align its activities with the Council's programme of work.

It can organise meetings with relevant actors during the months preceding Council sessions so as to gather these diverse perspectives and develop its recommendations. This also involves timing country visits by PBC representatives ahead of relevant Council meetings.

Every country situation will vary, but generally the type of advice and context that the PBC can focus on providing to the Council includes socio-economic and longer-term development issues and regional dimensions, issues the Council tends to overlook. As already indicated, the PBC has the potential to play a particularly important role during transitions, especially from a peace operation to a UN country team.

Beyond organising meetings and providing information to the Council, PBC members might further develop its use of informal activities geared towards supporting countries' stability, such as connecting countries with partners that can fill needs. Doing so would be another way to fulfil its advisory function that complements the Council's work. This includes supporting countries not on the Council's agenda, potentially preventing them from becoming situations before the Council.

While mobilising resources has been the PBC's greatest draw, it has also been one its greatest disappointments. The PBC should continue to advocate for and raise awareness of countries' needs, whether in meetings or informally. It has continued to try to increase its collaboration with the World Bank, including reaching an agreement earlier this year to hold an annual dialogue.

The reason for creating the PBC has always made sense conceptually. But its envisioned role has not been easy to implement, for both practical and political reasons. The PBC over the last few years has begun to make significant improvements that are very much procedural—broadening the country situations it discusses, invigorating the Organizational Committee—and, perhaps aided by the “sustaining peace” concept, its meetings have become more interesting and structured, according to diplomats. These are important steps in order for the PBC to become more effective. The challenge now is translating these internal improvements and focus into a greater perceived value for the Council and more tangible benefits for the countries that it seeks to support.

Status Update since our November Forecast

Refugees

On 2 November, High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi briefed the Council under the agenda item “briefing by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees”, which allows the High Commissioner to deliver a general briefing that is not limited to any particular situation on the Council’s agenda (S/PV.8083).

UN Policing

On 6 November, the Council was briefed on the role of UN policing in peacekeeping operations (S/PV.8086). Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix spoke, as did the police commissioners from MINUSMA in Mali, MINUJUSTH in Haiti, and UNAMID in Darfur. The Council adopted resolution 2382, stressing the important contribution that UN policing can provide in peacekeeping and special political missions throughout the conflict cycle across the entire peace continuum. It further welcomed the role that UN police components can play in facilitating the transitions from peacekeeping to development and peacebuilding, and recognised that the improved performance of UN policing can contribute to the success of peacekeeping mission exit strategies.

Central African Republic

On 6 November, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the CAR and head of MINUSCA, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga; the Special Representative of the AU to the CAR, Bédializoun Moussa Nébié (via video teleconference); and the Head of International Relations at the Community of Sant’Egidio, Mauro Garofalo, briefed the Council (S/PV.8084). The briefing was followed by consultations in which the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, participated. On 15 November, the Council adopted resolution 2387, renewing the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 November 2018 (S/PV.8102). On 27 November, Council members issued a press statement condemning an attack on MINUSCA the day before, which resulted in one Egyptian peacekeeper killed and three others injured (SC/13092).

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 7 November, the Council held its

semi-annual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina and unanimously adopted resolution 2384, renewing the authorisation of EUFOR ALTHEA for an additional year (S/PV.8089). Valentin Inzko, the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, briefed on developments (S/2017/922).

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 7 November, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/23) that “reiterate[d] the need for the Government of the DRC to fully investigate the killing of the two members of the [Sanctions Committee] Group of Experts and bring the perpetrators to justice” (S/PV.8087). In the statement, the Council further noted the Secretary-General’s decision, which was agreed with the authorities of the DRC, “to deploy a United Nations team to assist the Congolese authorities in their investigations”. On 28 November, Council members issued a press statement on the electoral process in the DRC in which they noted that presidential, legislative and provincial elections are now scheduled for 23 December 2018, and emphasised the “critical importance of ensuring the elections are not postponed further” (SC/13095).

Somalia and Eritrea

On 7 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2383, which renewed counter-piracy measures off the coast of Somalia (S/PV.8088). On 14 November, the Council adopted resolution 2385, on Somalia and Eritrea sanctions with 11 affirmative votes and four abstentions (Bolivia, China, Egypt and Russia) (S/PV.8099).

Libya

On 8 November, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda briefed the Council, expressing concerns at the discovery in the town of Al-Abyar, near Benghazi, of the bodies of 36 people who appear to have been tortured and executed (S/PV.8091). On 16 November, the Council received briefings from the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, and from the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden) (S/PV.8104). Salamé updated the Council on the implementation of the UN Action Plan for the resumption of an inclusive Libya-owned political process. Before moving

to consultations, all 15 Council members made public statements. Council members subsequently issued elements to the press and reiterated their full support to the action plan and for Salamé’s leadership in the process. On 17 November, the Council held a briefing to explore the challenges to peace and security in the Mediterranean region (S/PV.8106). The meeting focused on the root causes of the security problems in the Mediterranean and to consider initiatives to promote regional stability, with many references to the impact of the situation in Libya. On 28 November, the Council held a meeting on slavery and trafficking of sub-Saharan African migrants in Libya, requested by France. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and Director of the International Organization for Migration William Lacy Swing briefed the Council (S/PV.8114).

International Court of Justice

On 9 November, the Council met twice independently from but concurrently with the General Assembly, to fill five vacant judges’ seats at the International Court of Justice for nine-year terms, beginning on 6 February 2018 (S/PV.8092 and Resumption 1 and S/PV.8093). After five rounds of voting, the following four candidates were elected: Ronny Abraham (France), the incumbent President of the Court; Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf (Somalia), the incumbent Vice-President; Antônio Augusto Cançado Trindade (Brazil) and Nawaf Salam (Lebanon). Continuing the election process for the fifth vacant seat on 13 November, in five rounds of voting, Christopher Greenwood (UK) acquired the majority in the Council, while Dalveer Bhandari (India) acquired the majority in the General Assembly (S/PV.8094, S/PV.8095, S/PV.8096, S/PV.8097 and S/PV.8098). Meeting again on 20 November, the Council elected Bhandari after being informed that the UK had withdrawn Greenwood’s nomination (S/PV.8110).

Venezuela

On 13 November, Council members took part in an Arria-formula meeting on the situation in Venezuela. The meeting was organised by the US in partnership with Italy. Briefers included Luis Almagro, Secretary-General of the Organization of American

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States; Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Joseph Donnelly of Caritas Internationalis; and Julio Henriquez of the Venezuelan human rights NGO Foro Penal.

Kosovo

On 14 November, Zahir Tanin, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNMIK, briefed the Council on the latest Secretary-General's report (S/2017/911) and most recent developments (S/PV.8100). In his briefing, Tanin spoke about the 19 October municipal elections in Kosovo, the current state of the implementation of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. In his statement, the Russian ambassador emphasised that Kosovo still requires the attention of the Council while noting that the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina has ceased to function. Several Council members cited improved political and security situation in Kosovo. The US, reiterated its position that UNMIK has fulfilled its mandate and that it is now time to close the mission.

Sudan and South Sudan

On 15 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2386, extending until 15 April 2018 the mandate of UNISFA. It also stated that the Council would consider renewing UNISFA's mandate to support the territory's Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) only if both parties adhere to the specific measures agreed to in 2017 no later than 15 March 2018 (S/PV.8101). The Council also decided to maintain UNISFA's authorised troop ceiling at 4,791, after which it would decrease to 4,235 unless the Council decided to extend the mission's support for the JBVMM.

Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict held a formal meeting on 15 November to adopt its conclusions on the first report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria (S/2017/304), covering the period from January 2013 to December 2016. The Working Group made a field visit to Sudan from 26–29 November to discuss protection of children and to follow-up

on the Working Group's conclusions, which were adopted on 31 July (S/AC.51/2017/3).

Burundi

On 20 November, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi Michel Kafando and the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission Burundi Configuration, Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), briefed the Council on the situation in Burundi (S/PV.8109). The briefing was followed by consultations.

Israel/Palestine

On 20 November, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov briefed the Council in the regular monthly meeting under the agenda item "the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" (S/PV.8108). The briefing was followed by consultations.

Human Trafficking

On 21 November, the Council held an open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations and was briefed by Executive Director of UNODC Yuri Fedotov; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro; and the AU's Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui (S/PV.8111). Secretary-General António Guterres presented the first annual report on trafficking in persons (S/2017/939), and the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2388, expressing its intention to give greater consideration to how peacekeeping and political missions could help host states combatting human trafficking. It also requested that the Secretary-General ensure the inclusion of trafficking in assessments of country situations and in the training of mission personnel, which would help in identifying, confirming, responding and reporting on situations of trafficking.

Western Sahara

On 22 November, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MINURSO Kim Bolduc and Personal Envoy of the Secretary General Horst Köhler briefed Council members in consultations on the situation in Western Sahara.

Iraq

On 22 November, Ján Kubiš, Special

Representative and head of UNAMI briefed the Council on the most recent developments regarding the fight against ISIL and ongoing tensions between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and central government in Baghdad (S/PV.8112). In his briefing, Kubiš commended the government of Iraq and coalition forces on their victories against ISIL while also calling on return of the internally displaced population, stabilisation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of the country. Furthermore, he called on the KRG and Iraqi central government to deescalate tensions and resolve all outstanding issues through dialogue and with the respect for the Constitution of Iraq.

Terrorism

On 28 November, Under-Secretary-General and head of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov, the Executive Director of the Counterterrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), Michele Coninsx, and the Chair of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), briefed the Council on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters (S/PV.8116). At press time, Voronkov, UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Yuri Fedotov, and President of the International Criminal Police Organization, INTERPOL, Meng Hongwei, were scheduled to brief the Council on the "destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict" on 30 November. On 24 November, Council members issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attack that took place that day, targeting people attending prayers at a mosque in Sinai, Egypt, during which at least 235 people were killed and over 109 were injured (SC/13086).

Lebanon

On 29 November, Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed members in consultations on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (S/2017/964). Philippe Lazarini, Deputy Special Coordinator for Lebanon and Officer in Charge of UNSCOL also briefed the Council.

DPRK (North Korea)

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council is expected to hold a ministerial-level meeting on the threat and challenges posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to international peace and security.

It is also expected to hold a meeting on the human rights situation in the DPRK. As in previous years, China is expected to object to the meeting, thus prompting a procedural vote. At press time it was unclear whether there would be enough votes to proceed with the meeting. The item, "The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" was placed on the Council agenda through a procedural vote on 22 December 2014 and discussed also in 2015 and 2016, each time following a procedural vote. (Council decisions of a procedural nature need nine affirmative votes for a decision to be adopted, and the veto does not apply.)

Key Recent Developments

The last meeting on denuclearisation of the DPRK was held during the US presidency in April. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who chaired the meeting, said that the time had come "to put new pressure on North Korea to abandon its dangerous path" and urged the Council to act. Secretary-General António Guterres, who briefed during the meeting, said that he was alarmed by the risk of a military escalation in the region, including by a miscalculation or misunderstanding. He said that while the onus was on the DPRK to comply with its international obligations, the international community also needed to step up its efforts to manage and reduce tensions.

There has been an increase this year in the pace of missile tests conducted by the DPRK, with signs of significant technological advances in the development of intermediate-range and submarine-launched missiles. In response, the Council has increased the intensity of its attention on the DPRK, holding briefings shortly after a missile test and agreeing to an outcome in a shorter time-frame than in the past.

On 28 November, the DPRK launched

an inter-continental ballistic missile. This was the first ballistic missile test in about two months. According to the DPRK, the inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) reached an altitude of about 4,475km (2,780 miles) and flew 950km in 53 minutes, before falling in the Sea of Japan. It has claimed that the missile was a Hwasong-15, which if true, would mark the launch of a new type of missile for the DPRK. The other launches in 2017 have been of older ICBMs. On 29 November, Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman briefed at a public meeting on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) following its launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile on 28 November.

Following two ballistic missile launches by the DPRK on 4 and 9 July, on 5 August the Council adopted resolution 2371, which imposed a ban on the export of coal, iron, iron ore, lead, lead ore, and seafood from the DPRK, among other measures. After the DPRK launched a ballistic missile over Japan on 28 August, later that day (29 August in New York) the Council adopted a presidential statement condemning the launch and the multiple ballistic missile tests conducted by DPRK on 25 August.

On 4 September, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed the Council on the DPRK's 2 September nuclear test. On 11 September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2375, expanding sanctions to additional sectors of the North Korean economy. The resolution prohibits the import of textiles produced in North Korea, bans gas exports, and sets a limit on exports of petroleum products and crude oil. It also includes new tools to stop high seas smuggling of prohibited goods. Furthermore, it strengthened prohibitions on employing North Korean workers abroad and demanded that joint ventures with North Korea be closed, with certain exceptions to be determined by the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee. In addition, the resolution froze the assets and imposed a travel ban on one individual and three entities.

Three days after resolution 2375 was adopted, on 14 September, the DPRK

launched a ballistic missile that again flew over Japan. The Council held consultations on 15 September, and issued a press statement later that day. The statement summarised the most recent provocative actions by the DPRK and the Council's response in each case. It condemned the recent launches and the DPRK's "outrageous actions", and demanded that it immediately cease all such actions and comply with all UN resolutions. It expressed grave concern that by conducting such a launch over Japan, as well as by its other recent actions and public statements, the DPRK was deliberately undermining regional peace and stability, and that these actions were not just a threat to the region but to all UN member states.

At the end of October, the US and the Republic of Korea conducted joint naval exercises, which included US naval submarines and aircraft carriers.

On 20 November, US President Donald Trump designated the DPRK a state sponsor of terrorism. The following day the US imposed new sanctions on the DPRK.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 18 September, the Special Rapporteur on human rights in the DPRK, Tomás Ojea Quintana, submitted his report to the General Assembly (A/72/394). The report found that patterns of grave human rights violations continue in the country and highlighted concerns over the situation of persons in detention and abductees, access to food, corruption, and freedom of information. In presenting the report to the Third Committee on 26 October, Ojea Quintana appealed to members to ensure that human rights were not overlooked amidst the tensions regarding the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programme, and urged a comprehensive review of sanctions imposed on the regime to avoid possible collective punishment of ordinary North Koreans.

On 14 November, the Third Committee adopted, without a vote, a resolution on the human rights situation in the DPRK. The resolution condemned the "long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights" in the country. It said that more than half of North Korean citizens face a shortage of food and medical services, and denounced North Korea for applying its resources to the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles instead of the welfare of its people. There was a particular emphasis on abuse of non-citizens by the DPRK.

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2375](#) (11 September 2017) expanded sanctions to additional sectors of the North Korean economy in response to the DPRK's 2 September nuclear test. [S/RES/2371](#) (5 August 2017) condemned the 3 and 28 July ballistic missile launches. [S/RES/2356](#) (2 June 2017) condemned the nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development activities, including missile launches, conducted by the DPRK in flagrant disregard of relevant Council resolutions since 9 September 2016. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/16](#) (29 August 2017) condemned the launch of a missile over the territory of Japan and urged the DPRK to comply with previous Council resolutions and presidential statements. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8039](#) (4 September 2017) was a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman on the DPRK's 2 September nuclear test. [S/PV.7932](#) (28 April 2017) was a meeting on the situation in the DPRK chaired by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. [Security Council Press Statements SC/12994](#) (15 September 2017) condemned the launches, condemned further the DPRK for its outrageous actions, and demanded that it immediately cease all such actions and comply with all UN resolutions. [Other S/2017/337](#) (18 April 2017) was the concept note for the 28 April Council meeting.

DPRK (North Korea)

American student Otto Warmbier's death earlier this year following more than a year in custody in the DPRK for allegedly stealing a propaganda poster may have sparked particular interest in highlighting the treatment of foreigners in the DPRK. Canada, Argentina, all members of the EU, Japan, South Korea, and the US, among others, sponsored the resolution.

Issues and Options

The Council has adopted nine resolutions on the DPRK since 2006, strengthening sanctions over the years. Despite this, the DPRK has continued to develop its nuclear capabilities and ballistic missiles in violation of the resolutions. A key issue is finding the right combination of pressure and incentives to persuade the DPRK to stop its nuclear activity. The Council could use the meeting in December as an opportunity to explore possible options.

Another significant issue is the humanitarian impact of the sanctions. The Council could request a report from the Secretary-General on the humanitarian situation in the DPRK with an in-depth analysis of the impact of sanctions.

In the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, ensuring strict implementation of the sanctions continues to be a key issue although there are signs that China is more willing now than before to ensure implementation of Council resolutions.

Regarding a Council meeting on human

rights in the DPRK, among the key issues is how to properly assess the threat to international peace and security posed by human rights violations in the DPRK, given the lack of access. Ojea Quintana has had to conduct investigations into the matter from outside the country because North Korean authorities have barred him entry.

A continuing issue is how to balance the two-track approach of promoting dialogue while at the same time pressing for accountability.

Council and Wider Dynamics

There are differences among members on some aspects of this issue, but members have been united in condemning the missile tests. Negotiations on the draft resolutions, while still largely between China and the US, have seen Russia playing an increasingly active role. Elected members are also less willing to be sidelined and have pushed for more and earlier information on the recent drafts.

The main differences continue to be between those who want to combine more punitive actions with dialogue, and those who are focused mainly on increasing sanctions. Those who believe strongly in the sanctions track are optimistic that the effects of the tougher measures are beginning to be felt. The US under the Trump administration has also made clear that it does not rule out a military option, something that most other

members do not favour.

China and Russia, as well as a number of other Council members, have stressed the importance of finding a diplomatic solution, and the 11 September resolution included new language urging further work to reduce tensions in order to “advance the prospects for a comprehensive settlement” and underscoring the “imperative of achieving the goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner”.

China has continued to advocate its “freeze-for-freeze” position, by which the DPRK would halt further nuclear and missile development in exchange for a freeze on joint US-Republic of Korea (ROK) military exercises. The recent improvement in bilateral relations between China and ROK, following a strain in the relationship over the deployment of a US Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense System in 2016, may open up the prospect of greater regional cooperation.

Positions on the human rights situation in the DPRK have not changed greatly. China continues to be opposed to the discussion of the human rights situation, holding firmly to its position that the Council is not the place to address this issue. A number of other members, including Bolivia, Egypt and Russia, share this position.

The US is the penholder on the DPRK.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council expects to be briefed on Yemen by Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed on efforts towards a political process and by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock, on the humanitarian situation.

Key Recent Developments

The war in Yemen rages on, with no progress towards the resumption of political negotiations and against the backdrop of the world's greatest humanitarian crisis. The fighting pits the Houthis, a Zaydi Shiite rebel group, and

forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh against the Yemeni government and a coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

On 4 November, the Houthis fired a missile towards Riyadh; it was intercepted near the airport of the Saudi capital. The coalition said in a 6 November statement that the incident “could rise to be considered as an act of war” by Iran, which it claimed had supplied the Houthis with the missile. On the same day it closed all Yemeni ground, air and sea ports, which it said in the same statement was to address weapons smuggling. The coalition

said the closures would be temporary.

On 8 November, Council members met in consultations. Sweden had requested the meeting the previous week to be updated on Lowcock's 24 to 28 October visit to Yemen. Because of developments, Lowcock, who briefed the full UN membership on his trip on 6 November, focused his remarks on the consequences of the intensified coalition blockade and communications with authorities to reverse the measures. Speaking to the press afterwards, Lowcock said that he told Council members that unless “those measures are lifted...there will be a famine....

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2216](#) (14 April 2015) established an arms embargo on the Houthis and forces loyal to Saleh. [Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2017/14](#) (9 August 2017) was on the threat of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria. [S/PRST/2017/7](#) (15 June 2017) stressed the importance of keeping all of Yemen's ports functioning, including Hodeidah.

Yemen

It will be the largest famine that the world has seen in many decades, with millions of victims”.

Lowcock outlined five measures that he said were needed to avoid such a famine:

- resumption of air services to Sana’a and Aden for the UN and other humanitarian partners;
- a clear and immediate assurance that there would be no further disruption to those air services;
- immediate agreement to the pre-positioning of the World Food Programme vessel in the waters off Aden and assurances that there would be no further disruptions of its functions;
- immediate resumption of humanitarian and commercial access to all seaports in Yemen, especially for food, fuel, medicines and other essential supplies; and
- a scaling back of delays to or blockages of all vessels that have passed inspection by the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) so that they can proceed to port in Yemen as rapidly as possible, which he said “is very important because humanitarian access through the ports was inadequate even before the measures that were announced on the 6th of November”.

Council members issued “press elements”, which emphasised the importance of fully implementing the Council’s 15 June presidential statement, particularly keeping all of Yemen’s ports and airports functioning, including Hodeidah port as a critical lifeline for humanitarian support and other essential supplies. Members reiterated full support for the UNVIM and strongly condemned the attempted missile attack on Riyadh.

On 13 November, Saudi Arabian Permanent Representative Abdallah Al-Mouallimi announced that ports and airports under Yemeni government control, including Aden, Mocha and Mukalla ports, would reopen within 24 hours. Regarding the airport in Sana’a and the ports of Hodeidah and others in Houthi-controlled areas, he said that the coalition was requesting the Secretary-General to send a team of experts to the coalition command centre in Riyadh to review and strengthen current UNVIM procedures. Al-Mouallimi further said the coalition was preparing proposals for the operation of Hodeidah port

and Sana’a airport, and would engage with Ould Cheikh Ahmed about new management arrangements for the port and airport based on these proposals.

Two days later, the Secretary-General’s Spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric, said, “once the blockade of the ports of Hudaydah and Saleef as well as Sana’a airport is lifted, the United Nations stands ready to send a technical team to Riyadh to discuss the UNVIM”. Dujarric added, “The UN will also then be able to dispatch a senior United Nations team, including humanitarian officials, to discuss arrangements at Hodeidah port and Sana’a airport.” On 25 November, UN humanitarian flights to Sana’a resumed, and on 26 November, an aid shipment was received at Hodeidah.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed last briefed the Council on 10 October. Still unable to engage with the Houthis, he had no progress to report on the confidence-building measures that he had been pushing to deal with Hodeidah port, to reopen Sana’a airport, and to resume civil servant salary payments. During consultations, he apparently acknowledged that these measures were unlikely to be adopted.

Sanctions-Related Developments

In a 10 November case study submitted to the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee, the panel concluded that the arms embargo in resolution 2216 was being used as justification to obstruct humanitarian assistance. The panel also said that it had seen no evidence to support Saudi Arabia’s claims that short-range ballistic missiles have been transferred to the Houthis, which was first reported by the news organisation *The Intercept*. It recommended that the committee chair urge Saudi Arabia to provide the panel with access to its evidence. The Panel further suggested that the chair remind coalition states of their obligations under resolution 2216 to allow for unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance and personnel to Yemen, as well as their obligations under the resolution to report inspections carried out in enforcing the arms embargo.

The Panel visited Riyadh to investigate the recent missile attack from 18 to 20 November. (The Panel had also sent Saudi Arabia a letter on 9 November seeking more information on the attack and expressing concerns about the coalition’s subsequent closure of ports.) It submitted an update report to the Committee on 24 November that apparently concluded that the missile debris from the 4 November attack was consistent with Iranian-designed and manufactured missiles.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 29 September, the Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted, without a vote, a resolution on Yemen requesting the High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish, by the end of 2017, a “group of eminent international and regional experts” for a period of at least one year (A/HRC/RES/36/31). The mandate includes monitoring and reporting on the situation of human rights; carrying out a comprehensive examination of all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights and other applicable fields of international law committed by all parties to the conflict since September 2014; identifying those responsible, where possible; and making general recommendations on improving human rights, access to justice, and accountability. The resolution requested the group to present a comprehensive written report to the High Commissioner by the HRC’s 39th session.

In a 7 November press briefing, the spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Rupert Colville, expressed concern over a series of attacks during the first week of November that killed dozens of civilians, including several children. The spokesperson added that a UN human rights team recently visited Yemen to meet with the de facto authorities in Sana’a and government officials in Aden to prepare the ground for the Group of Eminent Experts mandated by the HRC, which he said the High Commissioner for Human Rights will soon be appointing. The total number of individually verified civilian casualties since March 2015 stands at 14,168, including 5,295 people killed and 8,873 injured, with actual numbers likely to be far higher, the spokesperson said.

Key Issues and Options

Addressing the blockade and overall humanitarian situation is an immediate issue. A related issue is getting the parties to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law.

Lack of progress on a political process is a recurring issue. Members are likely to be interested in new initiatives proposed by the Special Envoy.

Another issue of concern is the risk of further state collapse, benefitting Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

In light of the blocked political process, one option is a Council resolution or presidential statement on the humanitarian situation that includes:

- calling on the coalition to carry out the five actions Lowcock outlined should be taken to avoid famine and alleviate the humanitarian crisis;

Yemen

- condemning indiscriminate attacks by the parties, including the 4 November missile fired at Riyadh; and
- calling for member states to fully implement the arms embargo on Houthi and Saleh-loyalist forces while recalling that regular denial and delays of shipping access through Red Sea ports and the continued closure of the Sana'a airport meet the criterion of obstruction of humanitarian assistance referred to in resolution 2216 as violating the sanctions regime.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Following Lowcock's 8 November briefing, Egypt circulated a seven-paragraph draft presidential statement condemning the Riyadh missile attack, which did not include any mention of the humanitarian situation. Saudi Arabia is said to have prepared the text,

and it seems that the UK declined to circulate it as the Council's penholder on Yemen. After the period to comment on the text was extended until 13 November, Russia shared its view that it would not be appropriate for the Council to adopt such a statement without referring to the humanitarian situation and political efforts. Egypt circulated an updated text with a sentence on the humanitarian situation and access. Five members (Bolivia, France, Italy, Sweden and Uruguay) jointly broke silence on the new draft, expressing the view that any Council product should be balanced and reflect recent discussions. Following this breaking of silence on 13 November, no further action had been taken on the statement by press time.

Overall, Egypt and sometimes Senegal champion positions of the coalition and Yemeni government. Russia has, at times,

highlighted Houthi perspectives, arguing that Council outcomes should be more even-handed. Despite frequent misgivings about the coalition's handling of the war, Council members have been reluctant to challenge Saudi and Emirati preferences because of geo-political relations. Sweden has been highlighting the humanitarian crisis, while Uruguay has been vocal in Council meetings about civilian casualties caused by coalition airstrikes and the need for accountability.

Reflecting the stalled political process, the Quint (composed of Saudi Arabia, Oman, the UAE, the UK and the US), which started meeting in 2016 to try to break the political impasse, has been discussing holding a new meeting since October, but that continues to be postponed.

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

International Criminal Tribunals

Expected Council Action

In December, the Security Council expects to hold its semi-annual debate on the ad hoc international criminal tribunals. The presidents and prosecutors of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals—established in 2010 to carry out the essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the ICTY after the completion of their respective mandates—are expected to brief and may meet with the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals prior to the debate.

Key Recent Developments

The ICTY was expected to deliver judgements on its two final cases by 30 November, ahead of the Tribunal's closure on 31 December. In its final trial judgement on 22 November, the Tribunal convicted Ratko Mladić of genocide, crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war and sentenced him to life imprisonment. At press time, the Tribunal's final appeal judgement,

Prić et al., against six accused was expected on 29 November. Aside from the remaining appeal case, the ICTY had concluded proceedings against 155 of the 161 persons indicted, with 84 individuals sentenced, 19 acquitted, 13 referred to a national jurisdiction, 37 whose indictments were withdrawn or who are deceased, and two with retrials to be conducted by the Residual Mechanism.

The Council unanimously adopted resolution 2329 on 19 December 2016, granting a final extension of the terms of ICTY judges and its prosecutor until 30 November. The term of ICTY President Judge Carmel Agius was extended until 31 December. According to its annual report, the "Tribunal's final chapter will undoubtedly be one of the busiest and most challenging periods in its history". With its core judicial work completed by 30 November, when the mandate of the judges will end, the ICTY will continue to further ramp up its liquidation efforts, including through the implementation of its final downsizing exercises, the disposal or transfer of its remaining records and assets, and the transfer of its remaining functions to

the Residual Mechanism.

The Residual Mechanism, with its branches in Arusha, Tanzania and The Hague, continues to focus on the completion of trials and appeals from the ICTY and ICTR, locating and arresting the eight remaining fugitives indicted by the ICTR, and assisting national jurisdictions prosecuting international crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. According to its annual report, the Mechanism and the ICTY continue to work closely to ensure a smooth and efficient transition of the remaining functions of the ICTY to the Mechanism by the end of 2017. The report adds that the Mechanism is seeking to maximise its effectiveness and efficiency while maintaining relatively low staffing levels, conscious of the temporary nature of its mandate.

One of the 25 Residual Mechanism judges, Aydin Sefa Akay (Turkey), arrested by Turkish authorities in September 2016, was convicted on 14 June by a Turkish criminal court on a single charge of being a member of a terrorist organisation and sentenced to a prison term of seven years and six months. This

UN DOCUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS Security Council Resolution S/RES/2329 (19 December 2016) extended the ICTY judges' and prosecutor's terms until 30 November and the president's term until 31 December. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7960](#) (7 June 2017) was the semi-annual debate. [Security Council Press Statement SC/12188](#) (31 December 2015) marked the ICTR's closure. [Other S/2017/662](#) (1 August 2017) was the ICTY's final annual report. [S/2017/661](#) (1 August 2017) was the Residual Mechanism's annual report.

International Criminal Tribunals

happened despite the UN's formal assertion of his diplomatic immunity in accordance with the Mechanism's statute and the Mechanism's issuing a judicial order to Turkey to cease all legal proceedings against Judge Akay and release him. Upon conviction, Judge Akay was provisionally released and prohibited from departing the country, pending appeal proceedings.

Key Issues and Options

The immediate issue is overseeing the completion of the ICTY's work ahead of its 31 December closure. An option for the Council is to adopt a press statement marking the

ICTY's closure, as it did for the ICTR.

Council Dynamics

According to the relevant Council resolutions, the ICTY was expected to complete its caseload in 2010 or, failing that, by the end of 2014. In the few years prior to the adoption of resolution 2329, Russia had routinely abstained on resolutions for extension of judges' terms and insisted on granting shorter extensions than those sought, commenting that the situation regarding the Tribunal's exit strategy had not improved and that costly trial delays continued. Russia is also critical of the ICTY's jurisprudence, claiming that it

has not done justice on behalf of Serbian victims of the Yugoslav conflict. However, as the ICTY is expected to complete its caseload by November, no further extension of judges' terms is necessary.

Council members, including Russia, have so far generally assessed the Residual Mechanism positively, with the caveat that it must continue to fulfil its mandate expeditiously and cost-effectively.

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

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council will renew the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the authorisation for the Regional Protection Force (RPF), before their 15 December expiration. The Council is also expected to receive a briefing, followed by consultations, on the Secretary-General's 90-day report on UNMISS, together with his monthly assessment of the deployment and future requirements of the RPF and impediments to UNMISS in carrying out its mandate.

Key Recent Developments

Nearly four years since the 13 December 2013 initial outbreak of violence, the security, humanitarian and human rights situations in South Sudan remain a cause for grave concern. Violent clashes between government and opposition forces in several areas of the country continue, including in the greater Upper Nile and Equatorias regions. Fighting, displacement and violations against civilians risk further escalation in the coming months with the onset of the dry season and improved mobility, which traditionally leads to increased levels of violence. Extrajudicial killings of civilians, arbitrary arrests and detentions, hate speech, and the harassment

of political opponents are rampant.

According to OCHA, the number of internally displaced South Sudanese is 1.86 million, and an additional 2.1 million people have taken refuge in neighbouring countries. Intense fighting in Central Equatoria in late October forced more than 17,300 already displaced people to flee to new locations, with the majority reportedly crossing into Uganda. Approximately 4.8 million people face severe food insecurity, with the situation projected to deteriorate further at the start of 2018 to an estimated 5.1 million people. On 9 November, President Salva Kiir issued a decree ordering "free, unimpeded and unhindered movement" for humanitarian aid convoys, including the removal of roadblocks, and declaring that anyone who obstructs aid or imposes taxes on aid convoys "shall be held accountable". In a 13 November statement, OCHA urged swift implementation of the order on the ground.

On 12 November, a weeklong stand-off between the government and Paul Malong, former chief of staff of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)—which had raised fears of renewed fighting in Juba—was peacefully resolved after dozens of government tanks and troops, deployed along the road leading to Malong's home in Juba, were

withdrawn. They were deployed after Malong initially refused a presidential order to reduce the number of soldiers guarding his home from 35 to three. Malong was subsequently released from house arrest, which he had been under since Kiir dismissed him in May.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) continues its efforts to revitalise the peace process in preparation for its initiative to convene a high-level revitalisation forum in the coming months. A summary of findings of IGAD-led consultations held separately with government, opposition and civil society actors in October was submitted to the IGAD Council of Ministers, which met informally on 28 November, and is expected to discuss its recommendations on the process in a formal meeting on 11 and 12 December. The release of a timeline by IGAD regarding next steps and the convening of the high-level forum is subsequently expected.

Deployment of the RPF, which was initially authorised in August 2016 and is expected eventually to comprise 4,000 troops, is continuing. The main body of the Rwandan infantry battalion is expected to complete its deployment by the end of the year. Deployment of the Ethiopian advance company was completed on 22 October, and transportation

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. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/784](#) (15 September 2017) was the 90-day report on UNMISS. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8115](#) (28 November 2017) was a briefing by Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita. [S/PV.7840](#) (16 December 2016) was the meeting to adopt the resolution renewing UNMISS' mandate. [Sanctions Committee Documents S/2017/979](#) (20 November 2017) was the interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan. [SC/13075](#) (17 November 2017) was a joint meeting of the Sudan (1591), Libya (1970) and South Sudan (2206) Sanctions Committees on Darfuri rebel groups in South Sudan and Libya. [S/2017/789](#) (20 September 2017) was the 120-day report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan.

South Sudan

of the Ethiopian infantry battalion's equipment has commenced through Kenya.

At the initiative of the Secretary-General, a strategic review of UNMISS began in mid-November, as one among several comprehensive reviews of peacekeeping operations. An integrated review team visited South Sudan at the end of November to consider the security and humanitarian situations and to consult with a wide range of actors, including the government, the international and humanitarian communities, and UNMISS, both in Juba and in more remote parts of the country. The team also travelled to Addis Ababa, where it met with other South Sudanese groups, including the opposition, as well as regional actors. The review team will report back to the Secretary-General, who is expected to submit a report early next year to the Security Council.

On 28 November, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita briefed the Council on the situation in South Sudan and expressed concern over the real risk of an escalation in violence with the onset of the dry season, and the government's push to assert military dominance across the country. She also underlined the importance of having unified and unconditional international support to the political process, which will involve "very difficult and arduous discussions".

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 6 October, the Coordinator of the South Sudan Panel of Experts briefed members of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee on the panel's 120-day report. The report concluded that the panel continues to view an arms embargo and targeted sanctions "as important tools for shifting the focus of key leaders away from military options and towards political solutions".

On 10 November, there was a joint meeting of

the Sudan (1591), Libya (1970) and South Sudan (2206) Sanctions Committees on the presence and activities of Darfuri rebel groups in South Sudan and Libya. The Panels of Experts for each committee briefed.

On 15 November, the South Sudan Sanctions Committee held informal consultations on the interim report of the Panel of Experts (S/2017/979). The report states that "absent a change in the current conflict dynamics, the coming dry season will see further fighting and civilian suffering, as the government continues to pursue military victory over political compromise."

Key Issues and Options

An immediate issue is the need to renew the mandate of UNMISS ahead of its 15 December expiration. A likely option is for the Council to adopt a technical rollover of the mandate until early 2018. This would allow members to consider the findings of the strategic review, which may inform decisions regarding any possible changes to the mandate. By that time, there may also be progress on IGAD's efforts, which could further inform Council action.

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

- 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, Council members could decide to revisit the proposals for 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 in 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.

Council Dynamics

There is widespread concern about the political and humanitarian situation in South Sudan and general support among Council members for IGAD's efforts to revitalise the peace process. However, different views on the way forward continue to hinder the Council's engagement. For example, there has been a longstanding divide on whether to impose an arms embargo and further targeted sanctions in an effort to exert leverage on the parties. All 15 Council members made statements during the 28 November briefing, where differences in this regard were again made apparent.

Although last year's resolution renewing UNMISS's mandate was adopted unanimously, following a one-day technical rollover in an effort to obtain broader support, the previous three resolutions were adopted without a consensus. Ahead of the mission's mandate renewal in December, the majority of Council members, including the US as penholder on the issue, appear to support adopting a technical rollover in anticipation of receiving the Secretary-General's report on the strategic review of UNMISS in early 2018.

The US is the penholder on South Sudan.

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council expects to receive the monthly briefings on political and humanitarian developments in Syria and on chemical weapons.

Council members are expected to negotiate the renewal of the authorisation, most recently extended through resolution 2332, for cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access, which expires on 10 January 2018.

Key Recent Developments

Council dynamics in November were marked by the failure to renew the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN before its expiration on 17 November. On 7 November, Edmond Mulet, head of the JIM's leadership panel, and Izumi Nakamitsu, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, briefed the Council. Mulet shared the conclusions of the JIM's final report, which attributed responsibility for the 15-16 September 2016 attack in Um Hawsh to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and for the 4 April attack in Khan Shaykhun to the Syrian government. Most Council members, including the P3, publicly supported the conclusions of the JIM's final report, but Russia and some others questioned its findings or highlighted areas where they felt the conclusions were not definitive. In a 31 October letter, Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia (Russia) raised questions about the JIM's investigations of incidents of alleged chemical use without on-site visits and criticised the non-observance of the chain of custody, the failure to use all available methods and methodologies of investigation, and the questionable credibility of the JIM's sources.

These differences were reflected in the US and Russian draft resolutions circulated on 2 November. The initial US draft characterised the information obtained by the JIM as constituting "sufficient, credible and reliable evidence to reach conclusions on those responsible for the use of chemical weapons"; the Russian text addressed its methodological

concerns. While Russia did not ask for a discussion on its draft, there were several rounds of negotiations on the US draft. (Please refer to our 16 November What's in Blue story for a detailed account of the negotiation process.)

At a 16 November meeting, Russia called for a procedural vote on the sequence of voting on the two draft resolutions, which by then were already in blue. Russia's motion to have its draft voted on after the US draft did not pass since it only received the support of China, Russia and Bolivia (seven Council members voted against and five abstained). Russia then withdrew its draft and vetoed the US draft (Bolivia also voted against; China and Egypt abstained). Following the defeat of the US draft, Bolivia re-tabled the Russian draft as its own and asked for a vote; it only received favourable votes from Russia, Bolivia, China and Kazakhstan (seven Council members voted against and four abstained), so it was not adopted.

After the meeting, Japan circulated a draft that would have extended the JIM's mandate for one month while requesting the UN Secretary-General to, in coordination with the OPCW, submit proposals to the Council for the structure and methodology of the JIM "reflecting views of Security Council members". Twelve members voted for the draft resolution, but Russia, which had already signaled that it did not support this draft in a meeting in consultations on 17 November, cast its 11th veto on Syria later that day (Bolivia also voted against, China abstained).

Although Council members met after the veto in an attempt to find a compromise before the expiration of the JIM's mandate by midnight, no further action was taken. In a last-ditch attempt to revive the JIM, Italy circulated a draft letter to the Secretary-General requesting that the organisational and administrative arrangements pertaining to the JIM be maintained until 31 December pending a final decision on the renewal of its mandate. Sweden and Uruguay also circulated a draft to extend the JIM's mandate for a year, aiming to reach a compromise among the

competing perspectives in the Council. Russia opposed both initiatives.

On the political track, briefing the Council on 26 October, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura called upon those with influence on the government to press it to negotiate substantive issues in the upcoming round of the intra-Syrian talks scheduled for 28 November in Geneva. In consultations that day, several Council members reacted to Russia's announcement that it intended to hold a general people's congress of Syrians at the Hmeimim military airbase. They stressed that any initiative must be consistent with the framework of UN-facilitated talks in Geneva. Nebenzia reassured Council members that this was the case, but in subsequent meetings several Council members have further questioned Russia's intentions in convening this meeting, which is now expected to be held in early December in Sochi, Russia. Several Syrian opposition groups met in Riyadh on 22 November in a conference aimed at developing common negotiating positions and forming a single delegation.

November has seen a resurgence of government attacks in Eastern Ghouta, one of the de-escalation areas. On 10 November, Jan Egeland, a senior humanitarian advisor to de Mistura, warned that civilians besieged in Eastern Ghouta face "complete catastrophe" because of continuing attacks, the need for medical evacuations, and the lack of humanitarian access.

In anticipation of the Council's consideration of the re-authorisation of cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access, OCHA has repeatedly stressed the vital role that authorisation plays in the delivery of aid. Regular programming is only able to reach territories held by the Syrian government, and cross-line operations remain limited as a result of the removal of items, bureaucratic impediments imposed by the government and insecurity that hinders access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas. OCHA states that the establishment of de-escalation areas has not improved access. However, through

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/2332 (21 December 2016) renewed the authorisation for cross-border and cross-line aid delivery. S/RES/2254 (18 December 2015) was on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. S/RES/2118 (27 September 2013) was on chemical weapons. **Security Council Letters** S/2017/931 (3 November 2017) forwarded the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission report concluding that sarin "was more than likely used as a chemical weapon" on 30 March in Latamineh. S/2017/916 (30 October 2017) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. S/2017/904 (26 October 2017) was the final report of the JIM, including its conclusions on the attacks in Um Hawsh and Khan Shaykhun. S/2017/905 (25 October 2017) included clarifications from the OPCW FFM explaining why it did not deploy to Khan Shaykhun. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.8107 (17 November 2017) was the meeting at which Russia vetoed a Japanese draft to renew the JIM. S/PV.8105 (16 November 2017) was the meeting at which Russia cast a veto on a US draft renewing the JIM and a Russian draft failed to secure nine votes. S/PV.8090 (7 November 2017) was a briefing by Mulet and Nakamitsu. **Other Documents** S/2017/970 (17 November 2017) was a Japanese draft extending the JIM that was vetoed by Russia. S/2017/968 (16 November 2017) was a Russian draft extending the JIM that was put to a vote by Bolivia but did not secure nine votes. S/2017/962 (16 November 2017) was the US draft to extend the JIM, which was vetoed by Russia.

Syria

cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan, which only require notifying the Syrian government in advance of each shipment, the UN and its partners have delivered health assistance sufficient for nearly 15 million treatments and, in the last two years, nearly one million people have received food assistance monthly. The 26 October report of the Secretary-General stressed the importance of preserving all possible means of humanitarian access.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 27 October statement, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called the situation of at least 350,000 besieged civilians in Eastern Ghouta "an outrage", saying "the deliberate starvation of civilians as a method of warfare constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law and may amount to a crime against humanity and/or a war crime". The statement also called on all those with involvement or influence in the conflict to facilitate the access of humanitarian aid. In a 10 November joint statement, the Special Rapporteur on the right to health, Dainius Pūras, and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Hilal Elver, called on the Syrian government to allow food and medical supplies to reach civilians trapped in Eastern Ghouta.

Key Issues and Options

More than six and a half years since the start of the war, P5 divisions have limited the options at the disposal of Council members. However, the recent failure to renew the JIM's mandate and anticipated divergences over the re-authorisation for cross-border and cross-line operations may signal a trend toward even deeper polarisation and limitations on the rare initiatives that have been able to elicit the unanimous support of the Council.

In light of recent events in the Council and other initiatives that aim at discussing political matters (such as the congress in Sochi or the Astana process), some Council members may want to reaffirm the agenda for the Geneva process established in resolution 2254 and the centrality of the UN role in facilitating intra-Syrian talks. Council members could ask the sponsors of these initiatives to brief them on their plans and the mechanisms in place to ensure coherence with UN efforts sanctioned by the Council.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council divisions have been made apparent once again by two Russian vetoes on Syria

within 24 hours. China decided to abstain on both votes. It has done so five times on a Syria resolution vetoed by Russia, while it has vetoed six other drafts jointly with Russia.

Regarding the JIM, Council dynamics in the negotiation process were dominated by the two original penholders who created it in 2015: the US and Russia. Even though elected members met regularly on this issue for weeks, divergent views among them prevented them from forming a unified front. While some felt that the E10 were well positioned to break the impasse, others thought that tabling a third draft would undermine the then-ongoing negotiations on the US draft.

In the past few months, Russia has expressed its preference for rolling back the authorisation for UN cross-border delivery of humanitarian aid, highlighting the establishment of de-escalation areas and the need to work with the Syrian government. However, OCHA and most Council members have underlined the vital role that the cross-border authorisation has played in the delivery of humanitarian aid in Syria.

Briefing by the Outgoing Chairs of the Security Council Subsidiary Bodies

Expected Council Action

Every December, the chairs of the subsidiary bodies who will be leaving the Council at the end of the year provide a briefing on their experience.

The Council will receive briefings from the five Permanent Representatives completing their countries' two-year terms on the Council:

- Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt) on the work of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee, the 1566 Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee, and the 1533 Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Sanctions Committee;

- Ambassador Koro Bessho (Japan) on the work of the 1636 Lebanon Sanctions Committee, the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee, and the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions;
- Ambassador Fodé Seck (Senegal) on the work of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee and the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations;
- Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko (Ukraine) on the work of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee and the 2127 Central African Republic (CAR) Sanctions Committee; and
- Ambassador Elbio Roselli (Uruguay) on

the work of the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee and the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals.

Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi (Italy), splitting the 2017-2018 term with The Netherlands, will also brief on the work of the 1718 Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee and the 2231 implementation arrangement regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme.

Background

When the practice of the annual end-of term briefings was initiated in December 2002 during Colombia's presidency, it was an

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUBSIDIARY BODIES Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7845 (19 December 2016) was last year's briefing by the chairs of subsidiary bodies. S/PV.7620 (11 February 2016) was the debate on the working methods of subsidiary bodies. Notes by the President of the Security Council S/2017/507 (30 August 2017) was a compendium of agreed working methods. S/2016/619 (15 July 2016) contained transitional arrangements for newly elected Council members. S/2016/170 (22 February 2016) addressed working methods of subsidiary bodies.

Briefing by the Outgoing Chairs of the Security Council Subsidiary Bodies

important step toward providing a degree of transparency in the work of subsidiary bodies, much of which is done in informal settings and, in some cases, without consistent record keeping. In the past 15 years, there have been considerable improvements in the subsidiary bodies' transparency. The dedicated area of the Security Council website has been revamped to include key factual information, documentation, and updates on activities. Since September 2014, the website has also provided a tentative programme of work of the subsidiary bodies for each month. Most chairs of the different subsidiary bodies have given periodic public briefings to the Council, and some also offered briefings for the UN general membership.

The December briefing, however, has continued to provide a significant opportunity for the departing Permanent Representatives to share their insights into the work of the bodies they have chaired and offer advice to their successors. In the case of some informal bodies, not all of which produce an annual report, the briefing is also a way of creating a public record of the body's activities.

Key Recent Developments

On 30 August, the Council reached agreement on an updated and expanded version of its compendium of working methods, the so-called Note 507. Compared with its 2006 and 2010 versions, the compendium devoted considerably more space to the work of subsidiary bodies and the process of selecting their chairs.

The Note outlines a set of measures aimed at enhancing the transparency of subsidiary organs, improving the selection process and the preparation of chairs, and increasing the interaction and coordination among subsidiary organs and between these bodies and the Council. Furthermore, the document says that “members of the Security Council should make every effort to agree provisionally on the appointment of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies for the following year no later than 1 October”. The Note calls for an informal appointment process of consultations, “undertaken in a balanced, transparent, efficient and inclusive way” and “facilitated jointly by two members of the Security Council working in full cooperation”.

The passages concerning the subsidiary organs of the Security Council built on discussions conducted in 2016 and two documents that were adopted that year. In February 2016, the Council held a debate at the initiative of Venezuela on the working methods of Security Council subsidiary organs, and a Note by the President was issued on 22 February as an outcome. In July that year, Council members agreed on another Note by the President, drafted by Japan as chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, concerning the preparation of newly elected members during the transitional period between the election and the beginning of their term, including the selection and preparation of chairs of subsidiary bodies.

These new working methods were first

tested in 2016. The Council missed the intended deadline of 1 October for selection of chairs by almost a month. Nevertheless, the incoming chairs were able to benefit from a much longer preparatory period than any of their predecessors. In 2017, initial consultations started soon after the 2 June Council elections. The process continued for several weeks, with agreement reached in early October and a list put under silence on 9 October. Under the provisional agreement—it will become formal in January and will be published in document S/2018/2—the vacated chairs will be distributed as follows:

- Côte d'Ivoire—the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee and the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations;
- Equatorial Guinea—the 1636 Lebanon Sanctions Committee and the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee;
- Kuwait—Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions and the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee;
- Peru—the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee, the 1566 Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals;
- Poland—the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee, the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, and the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee; and
- The Netherlands—the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee and the 2231 implementation arrangement regarding the JCPOA on Iran's nuclear programme.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In December, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda is expected to provide the semi-annual briefing on the court's work on Darfur. The mandate of the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (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, with no new large-scale displacements. The government's unilateral ceasefire, most recently extended until 31 December, reportedly continues to be largely observed. Improvements in the overall security situation, however, have not led to the voluntary and sustainable return of internally displaced persons. Nearly one-third of Darfur's population remains displaced, while intercommunal violence and human rights

violations persist. Meanwhile, the political process to negotiate a settlement of the conflict with non-signatories of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, adopted in 2011, remains stalled.

In accordance with resolution 2363, which renewed UNAMID's mandate in June, phase one of the mission's reconfiguration, to be completed before 1 January 2018, includes the closure of 11 team

UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR Security Council Resolution S/RES/2363 (29 June 2017) renewed UNAMID's mandate for one year. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/907** (27 October 2017) was the 60-day UNAMID report. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8103** (15 November 2017) was a UNAMID briefing. **S/PV.7963** (8 June 2017) was the semi-annual briefing by the ICC Prosecutor. **Sanctions Committee Document SC/13075** (17 November 2017) was a joint meeting of the Sudan (1591), Libya (1970) and South Sudan (2206) Sanctions Committees.

Sudan (Darfur)

sites and a reduction of military personnel from 15,845 to 11,395 and police personnel from 3,403 to 2,888. While all 11 team sites were closed in October, the allocation of land by the Sudanese government for a temporary operating base in Golo, Central Darfur, for the Jebel Marra Task Force is still pending. A written assessment from the Secretary-General and the chairperson of the AU Commission, requested in resolution 2363 by 1 January 2018, is expected to address progress in implementing phase one of UNAMID's reconfiguration, the impact of the phase one reductions on areas that UNAMID has withdrawn from, the government's cooperation with the mission, the removal of bureaucratic obstacles to the mission, and whether conditions on the ground are conducive to further reductions. With the findings of the assessment, the Council can then decide whether to adjust the scope and pace of UNAMID's reduction ahead of phase two of the mission's reconfiguration, to begin on 1 January 2018.

On 15 November, the Council received a briefing, followed by consultations, on UNAMID from Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita, who said the level of cooperation between UNAMID and the government of Sudan has been positive overall, although access restrictions and customs clearance at Port Sudan remain challenging. The establishment of the Golo team site is essential to UNAMID's reconfiguration and goes hand-in-hand with the mission's withdrawal from more stable parts of Darfur, she said.

On 8 June, Bensouda provided the semi-annual Council briefing on the ICC's work

with regard to Darfur. She asked the Council to take action to respond to ongoing instances of non-compliance or non-cooperation relating to the situation in Darfur and outstanding arrest warrants, adding that "for many...hope has increasingly been replaced by disappointment, frustration and even anger at the slow progress in the Darfur situation".

On 13 November, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir arrived in Uganda for a two-day official visit. This was Bashir's second time in the country since travelling there in May 2016. Although Uganda was obligated as a state party to the ICC under the Rome Statute to arrest Bashir, who has been indicted by the court on charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, it again failed to do so. Amid calls from international civil society and a statement from the EU urging Uganda to arrest Bashir, on 15 November a High Court in Uganda dismissed an application by a local civil society group for an arrest warrant to be issued. According to the judgement, "Uganda is awaiting sanctions by the Security Council for failing to arrest President Bashir in May last year. Therefore, it is unnecessary to issue an immediate arrest warrant against President Bashir".

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 10 November, there was a joint meeting of the Sudan (1591), Libya (1970), and South Sudan (2206) Sanctions Committees on the presence and activities of Darfuri rebel groups in South Sudan and Libya. The Panels of Experts for each Committee gave briefings.

Key Issues and Options

An important issue is the continuing impasse

in the Council with regard to the ICC's work in Darfur and whether a strategy to overcome this stalemate can be developed. There are several options that the Council could consider in this regard, including formally responding to outstanding communications from the ICC to the Council, threatening appropriate measures against Sudan and relevant state parties for a failure to adhere to their obligations under the Rome Statute, and holding an informal interactive dialogue or an Arria-formula meeting with the Office of the Prosecutor to constructively discuss next steps.

Council Dynamics

There are strong differences of perspective among Council members regarding the work of the ICC in Darfur, which makes it difficult for the Council to take action on this issue. All 15 Council members made statements following Bensouda's briefing in June. Council members that have ratified the Rome Statute—Bolivia, France, Italy, Japan, Senegal, Sweden, the UK and Uruguay—as well as Ukraine and the US, neither of which is a state party to the ICC, were supportive of the ICC's work on Darfur and generally expressed strong concerns about impunity in the region. Conversely, the remaining Council members that have not ratified the Rome Statute—China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Russia—expressed criticism of the court's work and its pursuit of Bashir.

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

Myanmar

Expected Council Action

The Council is expected to have a briefing and hold consultations on the situation in Rakhine. The presidential statement on the situation adopted on 6 November requested the Secretary-General to brief on developments 30 days after the adoption.

Any further Council action will depend on

its assessment of developments over the last month.

Key Recent Developments

On 25 August, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) attacked Myanmar security forces at a number of locations. Government forces responded with violence

to these attacks, and more than 600,000 Rohingya subsequently fled across the border into Bangladesh. A report of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released on 11 October and based on interviews conducted with Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, in September, concluded that the

UN DOCUMENTS ON MYANMAR Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/22 (6 November 2017) was on the situation in the Rakhine. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8060 (28 September 2017) was a briefing on the situation in the Rakhine. General Assembly Resolution A/C.3/72/L.48 (31 October 2017) was adopted by the Third Committee Other A/72/382 (8 September 2017) was the report of the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

Myanmar

attacks against Rohingya were “well-organised, coordinated, and systematic”. It said that “these human rights violations were committed against the Rohingya population in northern Rakhine State by the Myanmar security forces often in concert with armed Rakhine Buddhist individuals.”

The Council has followed the situation closely since the end of August. Secretary-General António Guterres briefed the Council on 28 September at the request of Egypt, France, Kazakhstan, Sweden, Senegal, the UK and the US (S/PV.8060). Guterres had written a letter to the president of the Council on 2 September expressing his deep concern about the security, humanitarian and human rights situation in Rakhine State, and warning that the situation could degenerate into a humanitarian catastrophe with implications for peace and security beyond Myanmar’s borders. During his 28 September briefing, Guterres conveyed three key messages: the need for an end to the violence whether by the military or by radical elements within communities; immediate and safe humanitarian access to affected communities for UN agencies and non-governmental partners; and the safe and voluntary return of those who have fled the country.

Besides the 28 September public briefing, the Council had several other meetings on the situation in Rakhine in September. It held three briefings under “any other business” as well as meetings on the margins of the General Assembly high-level debate. Following a briefing by Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman on 13 September, Council members agreed on elements to the press expressing concern over reports of excessive violence by security forces, calling for “immediate steps to end the violence in Rakhine, de-escalate the situation, re-establish law and order, ensure the protection of civilians, restore normal socioeconomic conditions and resolve the refugee problem” as well as for the government to facilitate humanitarian assistance.

On 13 October, an Arria-formula meeting was held on Myanmar, initiated by France and the UK. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan briefed in his capacity as the Chair of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, which was mandated to make recommendations for improving the situation in the state with regard to conflict prevention,

humanitarian assistance, reconciliation, institution-building and development. The Advisory Commission, which published its final report on 23 August, was established at the request of the State Counsellor of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi, and comprised both Myanmar and international commissioners.

Following a failed attempt to get agreement on a draft resolution in October, on 6 November the Council adopted a presidential statement on the situation in Myanmar. The statement condemned the 25 August attacks and the widespread violence that followed, called on the government to ensure no further excessive use of military force in Rakhine State, and stressed the importance of full humanitarian access and the voluntary return of all internally displaced persons to their homes. It also called on the government to address the root causes of the crisis in Rakhine State and welcomed the government’s commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on the Rakhine State. It requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide his good offices and encouraged him to consider appointing a special adviser on Myanmar. (For details on the negotiations on the draft, please see our 6 November *What’s in Blue* story.)

The 31st ASEAN Summit was held from 13-14 November in Manila. The Chair’s statement issued following the leaders’ meeting made reference to ASEAN’s role in providing humanitarian assistance in Rakhine and urged Myanmar to continue to implement the recommendations of the final report of the Advisory Commission. During the ASEAN-UN Summit, Secretary-General Guterres voiced concern over the “worrying escalation of a protracted tragedy” and said that it had potential to cause instability and radicalisation in the region. He met State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi on the margins of the meeting.

On 23 October, a donor conference co-hosted by the EU and Kuwait in Geneva raised \$344 million to fund critical relief programmes for Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh.

Myanmar and Bangladesh signed an “arrangement” on 23 November for the return of Rohingya who had fled to Bangladesh. UNHCR said that it would welcome a framework that enables refugees to exercise

their right to return in line with international standards. It stressed that returns must be voluntary, and “take place in safe and dignified conditions that pave the way for lasting solutions”. It also said that currently conditions were not in place in Rakhine State for safe and sustainable returns.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 September, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, submitted her report to the General Assembly. Presenting her report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 26 October, Lee condemned the widespread use of hate speech against the Rohingyas and other communities, stressing that it amounted to incitement to hostility and even violence. The statement also expressed concern about how long it would take the government to establish conditions for the “safe and dignified” return of the Rohingyas. She expressed the hope that the Council would pass a strong resolution recognising that the crisis in Rakhine State has been decades in the making and has gone beyond Myanmar’s border.

On 27 October, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar established by Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution 34/22 issued a press release at the conclusion of their first fact-finding mission in Bangladesh. The three experts said they were “deeply disturbed” by accounts of killings, torture, rape, arson and aerial attacks reportedly perpetrated against the Rohingya community in Myanmar. If the Mission concludes that there have been violations, it will seek to ensure full accountability for perpetrators and justice for the victims, the press release said. The Mission has so far not been granted access to Myanmar and is required to submit an interim report to the HRC in March 2018.

The Human Rights Council will hold a Special Session on the situation of human rights of the Rohingya and other minorities in Rakhine State in Myanmar on 5 December 2017 at the request of Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia.

On 16 November, the Third Committee voted on a resolution on the human rights situation in Myanmar, which had been initiated by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and presented by Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Egypt had also spearheaded the negotiations on the draft text. The resolution passed with 135 states voting for, 10 voting against, and 26 abstaining. Among those that voted against were China and Russia, as well as ASEAN members Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam. Among those that abstained were Council members Ethiopia and Japan and ASEAN members Singapore and Thailand. The resolution is expected to be voted on in the General Assembly in early December. A key request in the resolution was for the Secretary-General to appoint a special envoy on Myanmar. (There had been either a Special Envoy or Special Adviser on Myanmar from 2000, but at

Myanmar

the end of 2016 the General Assembly chose not to renew the position.)

Issues and Options

The main issue is for the Council to be able to monitor progress on its requests for an end to the violence, humanitarian access, and the voluntary return of internally displaced persons. Instituting regular briefings by a Special Envoy, as well as other relevant UN officials such as the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Representatives on Sexual Violence and Children and Armed Conflict, would allow the Council to be kept informed on developments. Informal meetings such as Arria-formula meetings could also be used to hear from a wider range of actors.

A related issue is the timing for further action from the Council, and the options for such action. Any further deterioration in the situation in Rakhine, or signs of violence against Rohingya still within Myanmar, could be a signal for the need for a resolution that might include the possibility of targeted sanctions. If there are signs of genuine progress, the Council could respond with encouragement.

The Council might consider a visiting mission to Myanmar, Bangladesh and the region, coordinating with the intentions of

the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy regarding the exercise of his good offices.

Securing agreement to UN involvement in developing a framework for the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced people in accordance with international standards may require Council pressure.

The Council, having welcomed the Government of Myanmar's public commitment to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission, might consider what it can do to promote this and to pursue its call for the root causes of the crisis to be addressed.

Council Dynamics

While the Council actively followed developments in Myanmar between 2006, when the issue was added to the Council's agenda, and 2010, it began to pay less attention to the situation following positive developments in the political process in 2012. In the last few years Myanmar has been discussed only during informal consultations under "any other business". Although the situation in Rakhine has been part of these informal briefings in the last few years, Council members did not appear to feel the need to focus attention on the situation. Until the current crisis, the last formal Council discussion on Myanmar was held on 13 July 2009. The adoption of a presidential statement and agreement on a public

briefing marks a shift in the Council's passive approach to this situation in recent years.

It seems that the deteriorating situation in Myanmar, together with the number of Council members pushing for a strong response, may have persuaded China, which from the time the issue came onto the agenda has generally been reluctant to have the Council focus on it, of the need for the Council to act. China made it clear that a resolution would not be acceptable but eventually agreed to a presidential statement based on a modified version of the draft resolution text. Russia, which has been supportive of China on this issue, did not offer any resistance once China was open to a presidential statement.

While the P3 were active in the past in pushing for the release of prisoners and a transparent political process, they have been supportive of the Myanmar government in recent years and less inclined to be critical. However, the developments after the 25 August incident led France and the UK, the penholder on this issue, to press for an outcome. Other members including Sweden and Council members that are also members of the OIC—Egypt, Kazakhstan and Senegal—also played an active role in getting the Council to focus on the situation in Rakhine.

UNOCA/LRA

Expected Council Action

In December, François Loucény Fall, Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), is expected to brief the Security Council on the Secretary-General's semi-annual report on UNOCA and the implementation of the UN regional strategy to combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The mandate of UNOCA expires on 31 August 2018.

Key Recent Developments

The region covered by UNOCA continues to present multiple challenges and security

and political hotspots, several of which are independently on the Council's agenda. The most acute current crises include the elections-related political crises in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi and the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR). The CAR situation is marked by fighting among ex-Séléka factions and among anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka and other rebel groups, resulting in attacks against civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian actors; lawlessness; and lack of state authority.

The LRA remains a threat to civilians in the DRC and the CAR. The most notable

development is the US withdrawal in May of its special forces and logistical support from the AU Regional Task Force (AU-RTF), which has been fighting the group. Uganda, which has been the main contributing force to the AU-RTF, subsequently withdrew its 2,500 troops from the CAR in August. South Sudan also ended its participation.

In the CAR, between June and 18 October, 12 incidents were attributed to alleged LRA elements, with four persons killed and some 35 abducted. In addition, the withdrawal of Uganda and US special forces operating in the south-east has allowed an ex-Séléka faction, the Union for Peace in the CAR, to

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNOCA Secretary-General's Reports [S/2017/865](#) (18 October 2017) was on MINUSCA. [S/2017/824](#) (2 October 2017) was on MONUSCO. [S/2017/764](#) (7 September 2017) was on the situation in the Lake Chad Basin region. [S/2016/996](#) (28 November 2016) was on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of UNOCA. **Security Council Meeting Record** [S/PV.7967](#) (13 June 2017) was a briefing by the Special Representative and head of UNOCA, François Loucény Fall, on the semi-annual report on UNOCA and the implementation of the UN regional strategy to combat the LRA.

UNOCA/LRA

better establish itself in that area.

In the DRC, the Secretary-General reported on 2 October that in Haut-Uélé Province, the withdrawal of the AU-RTF and US special forces have made it difficult for the DRC military to repel infiltration by the LRA from the CAR.

UNOCA continues to pay close attention to the situation in Cameroon. Since late 2016, there has been unrest between Cameroon's Anglophone regions and the government, which has resulted in widespread protests, numerous clashes with security forces, several protestor deaths, general strikes, arbitrary arrests, and blocking of access to the internet. The unrest is rooted in longstanding political and economic discrimination by the Franco-phone authorities against the minority Anglo-phone population.

With an ongoing government crackdown on Anglophone separatists that started in October and the killing of four members of the security forces in November, Fall issued a statement on 16 November, expressing concern over the upsurge in violence, especially against the civilian population and state

agents. Fall added that perpetrators of violence should be brought to justice in a court of law. He further stressed the commitment of the UN to the territorial integrity and unity of Cameroon.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is to monitor the ramifications of the withdrawal of Ugandan and US troops on the possible regeneration of the LRA, leading to greater insecurity in the region, and to consider how it would address such potential instability. The Council may call on member states to consider support for anti-LRA efforts and to remain focused on the issue until the group is no longer a threat.

Another key issue is the deteriorating security situation in the CAR. The Council recently renewed MINUSCA's mandate on 15 November with support for the peace process and reconciliation and protection of civilians as priority tasks, and will continue to monitor the situation as it unfolds. Similarly, the political crises in the DRC and Burundi, and their potential regional implications, will continue to concern the Council. The

Council could express its support for the political role UNOCA may take with respect to assisting efforts of other UN actors on these issues, as well as other situations in the region that are not on its agenda, such as the situation in Cameroon.

Council Dynamics

Council members are largely in agreement on LRA-related issues. Council members have also been supportive of UNOCA's continued shift to focus its efforts on the region as a whole, rather than on the LRA as its main objective.

At the same time, some members are concerned about the possible security vacuum that may result from Uganda's departure from the AU-RTF and the withdrawal of US troops supporting the effort, and they will continue to follow the implications. In light of other security and political situations in the region, however, the Council is not likely to focus on exclusively LRA-related action at this point.

The UK is the penholder on this issue.

Liberia

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council is expected to receive a briefing from Farid Zarif, the Special Representative and head of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), is also expected to brief.

Key Recent Developments

Liberia is in the midst of two major transitions: the election of a new government and the withdrawal of UNMIL by the end of March 2018 after more than 14 years in the country.

On 10 October, presidential and legislative elections were held. Twenty candidates contested in the presidential race to succeed President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, whose second term expires in January 2018. The winner will be the first to assume the office since

the end of the war in a change of president through a democratic election. No candidate secured a majority, requiring a run-off election between the top two finishers: George Weah of the Coalition for Democratic Change, who received 38.4 percent of the vote, and Liberia's current vice-president, Joseph Boakai, who received 28.8 percent. National, regional and international observers determined that despite some difficulties, the polls had been credible and well conducted.

Weah, a former international football star, was the runner-up to Johnson Sirleaf in the 2005 presidential race. His running mate for vice-president, Jewel Taylor—the former wife of convicted war criminal Charles Taylor—has created some concerns. Johnson Sirleaf's failure to endorse Boakai, her vice-president for 12 years, caused speculation that she favoured other candidates.

Third-place runner-up Charles Brumskine,

who received 9.6 percent of the vote, filed a challenge with the National Elections Commission (NEC), alleging "massive systematic irregularities and fraud". His challenge was supported by Boakai's Unity Party, which accused Johnson Sirleaf of interfering in the process, and was also backed by the All Liberian Party. On 6 November, the day before the runoff election, the Supreme Court ruled that the runoff should be suspended until the NEC completes an investigation into the charges. On 24 November, the NEC ruled that there was not sufficient evidence to support the fraud claims and that irregularities did not affect the results. Boakai's Unity Party and Brumskine's Liberty Party filed an appeal with the Supreme Court on 27 November.

The situation has sparked international concerns about whether the challenges can be resolved and the runoff can be held before

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBERIA [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2333](#) (23 December 2016) renewed UNMIL's mandate for a final period until 30 March 2018. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/11](#) (24 July 2017) was on the Liberia peacebuilding plan and upcoming elections. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13084](#) (22 November 2017) was on the Liberia electoral process. [Security Council Letter S/2017/282](#) (4 April 2017) contained the Liberia peacebuilding plan.

Liberia

Johnson Sirleaf's constitutionally mandated term ends in January. On 10 November, the AU Liaison Office in Liberia, the Office of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission in Liberia, and UNMIL issued a joint statement, calling on all parties to complete the ongoing motions and conclude the electoral process "without undue delay". On 14 November, the EU delegation to Liberia and EU member states with embassies in Liberia (France, Germany, Sweden and the UK) similarly encouraged the conclusion of the complaint process "without unnecessary delay." A 15 November press release by the US embassy in Monrovia noted, "No accredited Liberian, regional, or international group suggested that the cumulative anomalies observed reflect systemic issues sufficient to undermine the fundamental integrity of the electoral process". Council members issued a press statement on 22 November, calling for the resolution of disputes and pending litigation with a view to permit the timely conclusion of the electoral process.

Other developments in recent months included the Council's adoption of a presidential statement on 24 July expressing support for the Liberian peacebuilding plan. The statement further encouraged the engagement of donors and the international community more broadly to address capacity gaps that were identified by a mapping exercise of the UN Country Team (UNCT) in order to execute the plan. Council members last met on Liberia in consultations on 23 August, when Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El Ghassim Wane briefed on preparations for the elections.

Developments in the Peacebuilding Commission

The PBC's Liberia configuration last met on 21 November. Zarif provided an update on the

electoral process, while UNMIL Deputy Special Representative and Resident Coordinator Yacoub El Hillo, along with the Executive Coordinator of the UNDP's Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, Jennifer Topping, briefed on a multi-partner trust fund that is being developed for Liberia. Also participating through video teleconference were Liberia's Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and Deputy Minister of Finance and Development Planning, who noted a review mechanism for Liberia's peacebuilding plan had been put in place.

Human Rights-Related Developments

Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour visited Liberia from 1 to 3 August. According to a statement issued by Gilmour on 4 August, an agreement was signed with the government during his visit for the opening of a UN Human Rights Office in early 2018 to conduct human rights monitoring and reporting and to provide technical assistance to state institutions, the Independent National Commission for Human Rights, civil society, and other partners. The statement also stressed the need for the government to address "the appalling frequency of rape", including of young girls, and discrimination and abuse of lesbian, gay and transgender people and people with disabilities.

Key Issues and Options

Concluding the electoral process ahead of the 22 January 2018 expiration of President Johnson Sirleaf's second term is a key issue.

Ensuring a smooth transition following the drawdown of UNMIL is another key issue. This includes how to address the UNCT's capacity and financial requirements for its role in implementing Liberia's peacebuilding plan and ensuring coordinated efforts by other international partners in Liberia. Tasks that loom ahead related to factors that have been identified as potential risks and root causes of past conflict include: extending government services beyond Monrovia, continuing to professionalise security services,

increasing access to justice, and addressing issues of land rights and reconciliation.

The Council may monitor developments in the electoral process and exert further pressure if necessary. Regarding the broader transition from UNMIL, one option is for the Council to signal support over the coming months for an enhanced Resident Coordinator's Office, which would possess adequate political capacities while encouraging the PBC to focus on mobilising support for continuing peacebuilding needs.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Members appear frustrated over the hold-up in resolving electoral complaints, especially after observers determined the elections were conducted credibly, and thus irregularities would not have affected the overall results.

More broadly, Liberia is being perceived as a test for the UN system in conducting more effective transitions and fulfilling the Secretary-General's "sustaining peace" approach. A number of members view this as an opportunity for the PBC to show it can play a constructive role. Skoog, as the PBC chair for its Liberia configuration, has committed to advocacy efforts to help raise the estimated \$130 million needed over the next two years for peacebuilding activities. As part of its current role on the PBC and as a Council member, Sweden has promoted additional Council attention on Liberia, collaborating, for example, with the US, the penholder on Liberia, in proposing the Council's July presidential statement.

There appears to be a disconnect between discussion in New York, such as the wide support for Liberia's peacebuilding plan, and fatigue among Liberian donors who feel the government has been too dependent on aid.

The US is the penholder on Liberia.

Golan Heights (UNDOF)

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council is expected to extend for six months the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force

(UNDOF), which expires on 31 December. A representative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will brief Council members in consultations on the most

recent UNDOF report.

UNDOF was established in 1974 to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria.

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNDOF Security Council Resolution S/RES/2361 (29 June 2017) renewed UNDOF's mandate for an additional six months. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/810** (27 September 2017) was on UNDOF for the period from 17 May to 9 September 2017. **Security Council Letter S/2017/857** (10 October 2017) was from the Secretary-General, expressing his intention to appoint Major General Francis Vib-Sanziri (Ghana) as the head of mission and force commander of UNDOF.

Golan Heights (UNDOF)

Key Recent Developments

The situation in the Golan Heights remains tense, and the upcoming Secretary-General's report due in December is likely to highlight several violent incidents and continued violations of the disengagement agreement. On 3 November, the Al-Nusra Front reportedly carried out a car bombing that killed nine Druze men, several of whom were Israelis, in the village of Hader in the Syrian-controlled Golan Heights. On 11 November, Israel shot down a Syrian reconnaissance drone over the Golan Heights. Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Israel viewed the incident gravely and would respond to any provocation. On 16 November, the Syrian Army's 42nd Brigade accused the Israeli military of launching an airstrike on their positions near the Beit Jinn pocket, killing four of their soldiers.

On 27 September, the Secretary-General transmitted his most recent report on UNDOF. According to the report, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic was maintained during the reporting period, albeit in a volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in Syria. The Syrian army and non-state armed opposition groups engaged in exchanges of heavy-weapons fire in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo (Syrian) side. The Secretary-General reported that various armed groups that have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have continued to exchange fire in the UNDOF area of operation. Inside the area of separation, the presence of Syrian armed forces or any other armed personnel and military equipment other than that of UNDOF is in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The situation in the area of separation, particularly during the month of June, was characterised by medium- to high-intensity fighting, and the report noted that there were five incidents of spillover fire across the ceasefire line during the reporting period.

The military violations on the Alpha

(Israeli) side included 95 reports of the presence of unauthorised personnel and military equipment within the 10-kilometre zone of the area of limitation, including M-109 self-propelled guns, Iron Dome anti-missile systems, missile carriers, light armoured vehicles and armoured patrol vehicles. There were three incidents of firing into the area of separation and more than 87 instances of restrictions of movement of UNDOF by the Israel Defense Forces recorded during the reporting period.

The report noted that UNDOF continued to make progress towards the limited return of operations on the Bravo side in line with the phased UNDOF plan. Phase 1 of the plan has continued to progress satisfactorily since 14 November 2016, when UNDOF re-established an initial presence at Camp Faouar, and conditions have steadily improved in line with the mission support plan. Also, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 2361, efforts continued to deploy appropriate technology to ensure the safety and security of UNDOF personnel and equipment. This included initiating the procurement of technology, such as surveillance trailers, to enhance force protection and increase situational awareness.

On 13 October, Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Major General Francis Vib-Sanziri of Ghana as the head of mission and force commander of UNDOF. Vib-Sanziri succeeds Major General Jai Shanker Menon of India, who completed his assignment on 30 September.

Key Issues and Options

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

An ongoing issue for the Council is the violation of the ceasefire on numerous

occasions, including the presence of Syrian heavy weapons in the area of separation, Syrian and Israeli airstrikes, and the presence of non-state armed terrorist groups. No military forces other than those of UNDOF are allowed in the area of separation.

The Council is, however, rather limited in its options for UNDOF. It was established as a Syria-based mission, and how it operates is subject to the disengagement agreement that ended the Yom Kippur war in 1974. Any changes in the mandate would require agreement by Israel and Syria, which is unlikely.

Council Dynamics

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

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

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

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

Small Arms

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council will hold a briefing at the initiative of Japan to consider the Secretary-General's biennial report on small arms, which is expected by mid-December. At press time, no outcome was planned.

Background and Recent Developments

As a thematic issue, small arms was first deliberated by the Council in September 1999, and since then the item has been maintained on the agenda, though the Council's attention to this issue has been somewhat inconsistent. The Council adopted six presidential statements on small arms between 1999 and 2007, but there were no discussions on this issue from 2008 to 2013, with the exception of a briefing in a closed meeting on the Secretary-General's 2011 report on small arms. In 2001, the Council adopted a presidential statement that requested the Secretary-General to produce a report on small arms in 2002. Subsequent presidential statements asked for periodic reports until 2006, when the cycle was interrupted due to the Council's difficulty in adopting the relevant decision. A statement adopted in 2007 requested biennial reports starting in 2008. The report due in 2010 was delayed until 2011 thus altering the reporting cycle.

The Council adopted its first thematic resolution on small arms in September 2013 on the initiative of then-Council member Australia. Resolution 2117 was based predominantly on previously agreed language from the presidential statements on the issue. The resolution sought to strengthen the Council's response to small arms-related threats to international peace and security. It reminded member states of their obligation to comply with Council-mandated arms embargoes, expressing the Council's intention to monitor and strengthen their implementation and emphasised the role of UN peacekeeping operations relating to arms embargoes and capacity-building for host governments.

In May 2015, the Council adopted resolution 2220, which was the Council's second

resolution specifically on this issue. The resolution urged member states to enhance their cooperation in curtailing illicit arms transfers and the accumulation and misuse of small weapons, while focusing on the effects of these activities on civilian populations. It again emphasised the role of UN peacekeeping operations relating to arms embargoes and capacity-building for host governments, encouraged information-sharing and cooperation among relevant actors, and called on states to support weapons collection, disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and stockpile management.

Japan has had a longstanding interest in the issue of small arms and was one of the original co-authors of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2013.

The treaty entered into force on 24 December 2014. At press time, 130 states had signed and 89 had ratified the treaty. Japan currently serves as the president of the Fourth Conference of States Parties (CSP4) to the ATT, which will be held in Tokyo next year.

Issues and Options

The core issue for the Council is the implementation of previous outcomes on small arms, most notably resolutions 2117 and 2220. A related issue is whether there needs to be further Council action on small arms, such as enhancing implementation of the provisions agreed in the aforementioned resolutions in regard to arms embargoes, the role of UN peace operations in combating the proliferation of illicit small arms, and other measures aimed at preventing diversion of arms into the illicit market, such as stockpile management and security sector reform.

An additional issue will be discussing any new recommendations that might be put forward in the upcoming Secretary-General's report.

At press time, there was no indication that Japan, which initiated this meeting,

would seek an outcome on this issue. However, an option for the Council would be to adopt a resolution or presidential statement that would welcome the Secretary-General's report and endorse some of its recommendations. Furthermore, the Council could request the Secretary-General to consistently integrate small-arms issues into all planning and review processes for UN operations at the earliest possible stage, address small-arms issues in all relevant reports, and provide recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Council Dynamics

Council dynamics on small arms tend to be complicated. This was particularly evident during the Council's negotiations on its two most prominent outcomes on this issue, resolutions 2117 and 2220. In the first attempt to pass a resolution on small arms, an initiative of Argentina in 2006, the Council failed to adopt a resolution because of strong objections by the US, which at the time argued that this issue was best dealt with in the General Assembly. When resolution 2117 was adopted in 2013, Russia abstained, citing the omission of an amendment it had proposed aimed at preventing the transfer of small arms to non-state actors.

When resolution 2220 was adopted in 2015, Russia and China abstained, along with then-Council members Angola, Chad, Nigeria and Venezuela. Once again, the core issue during negotiations was the transfer of small arms to non-state actors. Russia also objected to certain provisions of the resolution regarding the expansion of the power of specialised committees and UN missions in controlling the transfers of small arms, which Russia believes should be the sole responsibility of the concerned government. Another issue that tends to be contentious is any suggestion of the Council's calling on states to ratify or accede to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Among the current Council members, seven (Bolivia, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Russia and the US) are not parties to the ATT.

UN DOCUMENTS ON SMALL ARMS [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2220](#) (25 May 2015) was on small arms, and contained new provisions aimed at strengthening UN coordination and action on small arms, promoting effective implementation of UN arms embargoes, and supporting the Arms Trade Treaty. [S/RES/2117](#) (26 September 2013) was the first thematic resolution on small arms adopted by the Council, focusing on the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. [Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2007/24](#) (29 June 2007) was on small arms. [S/PRST/2001/21](#) (4 September 2001) requested Secretary-General to submit to the Council a report on small arms. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2015/289](#) (27 April 2015) was on small arms. [S/2013/503](#) (22 August 2013) was on small arms. [Security Council Meeting S/PV.7447](#) (22 May 2015) was the meeting at which the Council adopted resolution 2220 on small arms in a split vote of nine in favour and six abstentions.

Counter-Terrorism

Expected Council Action

The Council is expected to adopt a resolution in December renewing the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), the Secretariat body that assists the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). CTED's mandate expires on 31 December.

In addition, The Council may also adopt a resolution on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters returning home or travelling to other regions.

In accordance with resolution 2368, the Council may consider an update from the Secretariat on its restructuring plans as they relate to the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

Background

On 28 September 2001, the Council adopted resolution 1373, in which, acting under Chapter VII, it decided that all states should prevent and criminalise the financing of terrorist acts and the support of entities or persons involved in terrorist acts. The Council called upon member states to intensify cooperation on movements of terrorists and on administrative and judicial matters to prevent the commission of terrorist acts, and it established the CTC to monitor the implementation of the measures. On 26 March 2004, resolution 1535 established CTED as a special political mission to support the work of the CTC. The directorate has also been involved in assessing the implementation of resolutions 1373 and 1624 (the latter called upon member states to criminalise the incitement to commit terrorist acts).

On 17 December 2013, the Council adopted resolution 2129, renewing CTED's mandate for four years as a special political mission under the policy guidance of the CTC for the period ending 31 December 2017. The resolution underlined CTED's crucial role in supporting the committee in the fulfilment of its mandate. It encouraged CTED to continue to work with states and regional and subregional organisations to facilitate technical assistance.

Resolution 2129 further underscored the essential role of CTED in assessing issues and trends relating to the implementation of resolution 1373. It directed CTED to identify related emerging issues, trends and

developments in consultation with relevant partners, and to advise the CTC on practical ways for states to implement these resolutions.

In addition, the Council has given CTED mandates in six resolutions adopted in recent years to consider specific aspects of terrorism, such as foreign terrorist fighters and countering violent extremism.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/291 on 15 June establishing the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (OCT), headed by a new Under-Secretary-General. It was decided that this official would also serve as chair of the UN Task Force and executive director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre. Among other things, the office is to enhance coordination and coherence across the 38 UN entities comprising the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force; strengthen the delivery of UN counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to member states; and ensure that due priority is given to counter-terrorism across the UN system and that preventing violent extremism is firmly rooted in the UN Global Counter-Terrorism strategy. The office is to maintain a close relationship with the Security Council, strengthening existing links and developing new partnerships.

On 28 September, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the newly created OCT; the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), and David Scharia, deputy head of CTED's Assessment and Technical Assistance Office, briefed the Council. (The new CTED executive director, Michèle Coninx of Belgium, had yet to assume her position.)

Voronkov conveyed his intention to work closely with the Committee and CTED, among others, to promote implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and all relevant Security Council resolutions. Scharia said that CTED looked forward to discussing ways to strengthen its cooperation with the OCT.

Scharia gave an overview of CTED's work in assisting the CTC to monitor the

implementation of the relevant Council resolutions; identify states' technical assistance needs; work with partners to facilitate the delivery of targeted assistance with a view to strengthening states' counter-terrorism capacities; and identify emerging issues, trends and developments related to resolutions 1373 and 1624. As part of that process, he noted that CTED had conducted 133 visits to 96 states.

Scharia added that these tasks were stretching CTED's capacity and resources to the maximum and, therefore, expressed the wish that the Council would provide it with the resources required to fulfil its significantly expanded mandate. He also asked the Council to consider ways to encourage states to implement CTC recommendations, especially in cases where lack of implementation is not the result of lack of capacity.

Key Recent Developments

On 28 November, the Council was briefed by Voronkov, Coninx and the Chair of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan) Sanctions Committee on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters returning home or travelling to other regions.

At press time, the Council was scheduled to meet on 30 November on the "destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict". Briefers were expected to be Voronkov, Coninx, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Yury Fedotov, and President of the International Criminal Police Organization, INTERPOL Meng Hongwei.

Key Issues and Options

With respect to CTED's mandate renewal, the main issue for the Council is to ensure the widespread implementation of resolution 1373, including the criminalisation of terrorism, the freezing of terrorism-related assets, and effective border and arms control. A related issue is ensuring the implementation of resolution 1624 to prevent acts of

UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2129 (17 December 2013) renewed the mandate of CTED for four years. S/RES/1624 (14 September 2005) called on states to take measures to prohibit by law, and to prevent, acts of incitement to commit terrorism. S/RES/1535 (26 March 2004) established CTED to implement resolution 1373. S/RES/1373 (28 September 2001) established the CTC and its mandate. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8059 (28 September 2017) was a meeting in which Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the newly created UN Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt); and David Scharia, CTED's deputy head of the Assessment and Technical Assistance Office, briefed the Council. Security Council Press Statement SC/13039 (21 October 2017) condemned the 20 October terrorist attack in Egypt's El Wahat desert, in which a large number of policemen were killed and injured. General Assembly Document A/RES/71/291 (15 June 2017) established the UN Counter-Terrorism Office headed by a new Under-Secretary-General.

Counter-Terrorism

incitement to commit terrorism. The Council may choose to elaborate on measures and procedures to be followed when CTED reports a failure to implement the resolutions.

Another issue is the relationship between the newly established OCT and CTED. The Council may present its view on the division of labour between the two and how they should best cooperate to ensure effective and coherent counter-terrorism activities, avoiding duplication of efforts.

The scope of CTED's work with respect to identifying emerging issues, trends and developments, particularly while engaging with non-state actors, may be an issue. The Council may retain this mandate as is or narrow its scope to focus more on assessments of state implementation.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are in general agreement about the importance and usefulness of CTED's work and about the need for an extension of its mandate. Regarding substance, CTED's core mandate of assessment of state implementation, gaps in implementation, and needs for assistance is unlikely to change.

The mandate to identify emerging trends in "consultation with relevant partners" has enabled CTED to engage with NGOs and academia, among others. Some Council members see this interaction as a critical element of CTED's ability to properly analyse and identify emerging developments and advise the CTC on ways to address these issues and implement the relevant resolutions. Russia, however, takes the view that this mandate is

too wide and that CTED should be focused on state implementation through its assessment of and interaction with states, rather than engaging with a wider array of actors.

CTED's request for more resources to perform the expanding list of Council-mandated tasks comes at a time when Council members are particularly reluctant to expand special political missions and their expenditures. That said, there seems to be common ground among Council members that CTED is overstretched and that some expansion is warranted.

On foreign terrorist fighters, there is general agreement among Council members that there is a need for the Council to address the increasing threat from their return to their home countries or travel to other conflict zones.

The US is the penholder on this issue.

Iran

Expected Council Action

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

Key Recent Developments

The Council was briefed on the implementation of resolution 2231 on 29 June by Feltman; the head of the EU delegation to the UN, Ambassador João Vale de Almeida; and Cardi. Feltman said that the JCPOA embodied successful multilateral diplomacy and stressed that its comprehensive implementation would guarantee that Iran's nuclear programme remains exclusively peaceful. At the same time, he quoted

the Secretary-General's reference to ballistic missile launches by Iran as "hav[ing] the potential to increase tensions". Vale de Almeida said Iran's nuclear programme "has been rolled back and placed under tight inspections" and non-nuclear issues could be more easily addressed because of the JCPOA. Cardi covered IAEA reporting on Iran's compliance with the JCPOA. Referring to a 29 January ballistic-missile launch by Iran, he said that there was no consensus in the so-called 2231 format on whether it was inconsistent with resolution 2231.

On 28 June, in a letter to the Council president and the Secretary-General, Israel accused Iran of using a target in the shape of a "Star of David", during a test of a medium-range missile in December 2016. Iran denied the accusation in a 17 August letter of response.

On 27 July, Iran launched a rocket capable of carrying a 50-pound satellite. The following day, the P3 (France, the UK and the US) and Germany condemned the test in a joint statement, maintaining it was "inconsistent" with resolution 2231.

On 4 November, Saudi Arabia shot down a missile over Riyadh launched from Yemen

by the Houthis, which it maintained had been obtained from Iran. Saudi Arabia has characterised the supply of missiles by Iran as an act of military aggression. Iran denied "supplying missiles to Yemen for the purpose of attacking Saudi Arabia" in a letter to the Council and the Secretary-General.

The IAEA's most recent quarterly report on Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related obligations under the JCPOA released on 13 September said that Iran is continuing to meet its obligations.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 14 August, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, Asma Jahangir, submitted her report to the General Assembly (A/72/322). The report highlights numerous serious human rights concerns, including restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, opinion and information; discrimination against women and religious and ethnic minorities; the use of torture in prisons; and the alarming level of executions, including juveniles.

In a joint statement on 18 October, Jahangir, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Agnes Callamard, and Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Renate Winter said that Iran was continuing to execute juvenile offenders despite this being

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAN [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2231](#) (20 July 2015) endorsed the JCPOA. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/515](#) (20 June 2017) was on the implementation of resolution 2231. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7990](#) (29 June 2017) was a briefing on the implementation of resolution 2231. [Security Council Letters S/2017/936](#) (7 November 2017) was from Iran, denying that it had supplied missiles to Yemen that were used to attack Saudi Arabia. [S/2017/719](#) (17 August 2017) was from Iran, denying that it had targeted a Star of David in a missile test on 15 November 2016. [S/2017/555](#) (28 June 2017) was from Israel, accusing Iran of targeting a Star of David in a missile test on 15 November 2016.

Iran

strictly prohibited by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to both of which Iran is a state party. According to the statement, Iran has executed at least four juvenile offenders since January, and at least 86 more are known to be on death row, although the actual figure may be higher.

Key Issues and Options

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

One option is to use this meeting as an opportunity to express concern about any intentions to undermine the JCPOA, while responding to the US administration's

criticism of the agreement.

The Council could adopt a statement expressing concern about Iran's missile launches.

A further option is to encourage Iran to participate in the meeting, as it has not to date taken part in the semi-annual briefings on the implementation of resolution 2231.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Most Council members believe that the JCPOA is working. However, the US under the Trump administration has been highly critical of the agreement, and on 13 October, US President Donald Trump announced that he would not certify the JCPOA, as called for every 90 days by the US Congress. He did not decertify the agreement, but requested

Congress to establish specific provisions that Iran must adhere to in order to avoid sanctions. On the same day, the leaders of France, Germany and the UK issued a joint declaration expressing concern at "the possible implications" of Trump's decision and affirming their commitment to the JCPOA.

Council members have been divided over whether or not ballistic missile tests are violations of resolution 2231. China and Russia maintain that the restrictions in resolution 2231 are not legally binding obligations and that a missile must be explicitly designed to deliver nuclear weapons for a test to be a violation. Other members—including the P3, Japan and Sweden—have generally taken the position that these tests are destabilising and against the spirit of the resolution.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

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

The mandate of UNAMA expires on 17 March 2018.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Afghanistan has continued to deteriorate with intensifying clashes between the Taliban and Afghan security forces. In addition, the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the increasing number of attacks perpetrated by the group have added another layer of complexity to the overall security environment. ISIL has intensified attacks on local Shi'a Muslim populations and their places of worship, exposing the potential for deepening sectarian tensions in the country.

On 17 October, more than 70 people were killed in Taliban attacks in Paktia and Ghazni provinces. The Taliban employed similar method in both attacks, with suicide

bombings followed by armed attacks on the targets. In Paktia province, the Taliban attacked the regional police outpost, killing at least 21 and injuring another 48 police officers; around 130 civilians were injured and 20 killed during the attack. In Ghazni province, 25 police officers died, and ten were injured during the attack. The Council issued a press statement condemning the attacks and calling for accountability.

October and November were two of the deadliest months this year. On 19 October, the Taliban attacked an army base in Kandahar province, killing at least 43 and injuring nine, out of 60 soldiers manning the base. A day later, ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack on a Shi'a mosque in Kabul during Friday prayers, killing at least 30 and injuring over 40 worshippers. In a separate attack on a Sunni mosque in Ghor province the same day, there were over 30 dead and scores of injured. On 21 October, the Taliban claimed responsibility for an attack on an army base in Kabul that resulted in the death of 15 army recruits. On 16 November, ISIL claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing in Kabul that left 14 civilians dead and another 18 injured.

On 15 November, the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) published the latest Afghan Opium Survey indicating an 87 percent increase in opium production in Afghanistan in 2017 compared to the same period last year, a 63 percent increase in the area under opium cultivation, and an expansion into regions where cultivation had not occurred previously. In his statement at the launch of the survey, UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov expressed alarm at these developments, noting that the increase in opium production creates manifold challenges for Afghanistan, the region, and the rest of the world.

In other developments, ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda requested authorisation from the Court's judges on 3 November to open an investigation into alleged war crimes committed in Afghanistan since May 2003. If approved, the investigation would include crimes committed by any party in the conflict, including the Taliban and Afghan and US armed forces. Afghanistan is a state party to the Rome Statute, which established the Court, but the US is not.

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2344 (17 March 2017) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2018. S/RES/2255 (21 December 2015) clarified how the 1988 Afghanistan sanctions regime functions in the context of the changing conflict dynamics in Afghanistan. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/15 (24 August 2017) was on the review of the implementation of the measures outlined in resolution 2255. Secretary-General's Reports S/2017/783 (15 September 2017) was on UNAMA. S/2017/696 (10 August 2017) was on the strategic review of UNAMA. Security Council Press Statement SC/13034 (17 October 2017) was on the terrorist attacks in Paktia, Ghazni and Kabul.

Afghanistan

Sanctions-Related Developments

From 28 to 31 October, Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), Chair of the 1988 and 1267/1989/2253 ISIL/Da'esh/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committees, visited Kabul, where he met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, and other government officials. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate the effectiveness of the sanctions measures and assess the situation on the ground.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 7 November, UNAMA released a joint special report with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on attacks on civilians in places of worship, covering 1 January 2017 to 30 September. The report documented a sharp increase in such targeted attacks, recording 850 civilian casualties (273 killed and 577 injured) in 51 attacks. This is nearly double the cumulative total of such attacks documented between 2009 and 2015. The report further highlights a pattern of attacks by anti-government elements directed at Shi'a Muslims and religious scholars and leaders regarded as pro-government.

Key Issues and Options

There are multiple inter-related issues that the Council continues to face concerning Afghanistan. The persistently deteriorating security situation is taking an increasingly heavy toll on the civilian population and undermining the country's stability. Further complicating the security environment is the increasing presence and activity of ISIL. There also continues to be a strong link between the insurgency and illicit activities related to drug production and trafficking and the exploitation of natural resources. So far, efforts to promote reconciliation have borne few results and are further undermined by the increased hostilities between government forces and the Taliban. In addition, the regional context has been difficult, with recurring cross-border tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan, including accusations that Pakistan provides a safe haven for insurgents.

Addressing these issues has been challenging for the Council. An option that has been contemplated by some Council members but has not yet materialised because of security is a visiting mission to Afghanistan. The visiting mission would provide Council members with a better understanding of the situation on the ground and would showcase the Council's support for counter-insurgency, reconciliation, and anti-corruption efforts.

Another option would be for the Council

to adopt a resolution or presidential statement that:

- deplores the high number of civilian casualties and demands that all sides avoid killing and injuring civilians, stressing that targeting civilians is a war crime;
- encourages efforts toward political inclusivity and dialogue within the government;
- underscores the need for the international community, and particularly neighbouring countries, to support and cooperate with Afghanistan;
- emphasises the importance of development assistance in promoting Afghanistan's stability; and
- calls for accountability for crimes committed.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain concerned about the worsening security environment in Afghanistan and its impact on the civilian population. The growing prominence of ISIL and its violent tactics have added another dimension to the conflict, with the potential to deepen ethnic and sectarian tensions. Among permanent members, Russia has been particularly vocal in emphasising the urgency of the threat posed by ISIL while expressing disappointment that some members have in its view tried to downplay its significance. Several Council members, most notably France, Egypt, Russia and Kazakhstan, continue to raise concerns regarding the connection between the insurgency and drug production and trafficking.

Kazakhstan and Russia have continued to emphasise the important role of regional organisations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in addressing the situation in Afghanistan. Russia has questioned the utility of the US and NATO presence in the country, which it maintains does not help to stabilise the military and political situation. Kazakhstan has been advocating a new approach towards Afghanistan that would stress the security and development nexus. This would include strengthening regional cooperation and trade and the economic integration of Afghanistan with its Central Asian neighbours with the aim of bolstering development.

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

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