

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Russia will have the presidency in June. Two regular debates are scheduled: on the [International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals \(IRMCT\)](#), which was established in 2010 to carry out the remaining essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia after their respective closures, and on [Afghanistan](#). An adoption is expected to renew the IRMCT. Five other adoptions are scheduled: to renew [Libya](#) and [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) sanctions and to renew the mandates of the missions in [Darfur](#), the [Golan Heights](#) and [Mali](#).

There will be briefings and consultations, and a TCC meeting, on the UN missions in [Mali](#) and [Darfur](#), ahead of their mandate renewals.

Meetings on other African issues this month include:

- Central Africa, the regular meetings on activities of [UNOCA](#) and [MINUSCA](#);
- [Sudan](#), the semi-annual briefing by the ICC prosecutor; and
- [South Sudan](#), an update on UNMISS.

Regarding Middle East issues, Council members will continue to monitor developments in [Syria](#) closely, and a joint meeting on the political and humanitarian situation is planned, as well as one on the use of chemical weapons. On the [Golan Heights](#), there will be consultations and a TCC meeting on

UNDOF ahead of the renewal of the mission.

Other Middle East issues being considered this month are:

- [Israel/Palestine](#), the regular monthly briefing and consultations;
- [Iran](#), the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme; and
- [Yemen](#), an update on developments.

Regarding Asian issues, in addition to the debate on the mission in [Afghanistan](#), there will be a briefing in consultations on the activities of the [UNRCCA](#) in Central Asia.

There will be briefings by the current and the previous chair of the [Peacebuilding Commission \(PBC\)](#) on the PBC's annual report.

In addition, [International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) elections will be held in June as the Security Council and General Assembly will need to elect a judge to the ICJ due to the resignation of Judge Hisashi Owada (Japan).

Finally, the General Assembly is scheduled to elect five non-permanent Security Council members on 8 June. Six member states—Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia, the Maldives and South Africa—are running for the five available seats. Indonesia and the Maldives are contesting the single Asia-Pacific Group seat, while the other four candidates will run unopposed.

Security Council Elections 2018

The 72nd session of the UN General Assembly is expected to hold elections on 8 June for five non-permanent members of the Security Council for the term 2019-2020. (For more detailed information please see our 21 May Research Report: Security Council Elections 2018.)

Background

The five seats available for election in 2018 according to the regular distribution among

regions will be as follows:

- one seat for the African Group (currently held by Ethiopia);
- one seat for the Group of Asia and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (the Asia-Pacific Group, currently held by Kazakhstan);
- one seat for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC, currently held by Bolivia); and
- two seats for the Western Europe and Others

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Security Council Elections 2018

Group (WEOG, currently held by the Netherlands and Sweden).

The East European Group is not contesting any seat this year as its seat, held by Poland through 2019, comes up for election every other year.

Six member states—Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia, the Maldives and South Africa—are running for the five available seats. Indonesia and the Maldives are contesting the Asia-Pacific Group seat, while the other four candidates will run unopposed.

Among the current six candidates, four have previous Council experience. Belgium and Germany have served five times, Indonesia three times, and South Africa twice. The Dominican Republic and the Maldives have never served on the Council.

Voting Procedures

A country must obtain the votes of two-thirds of the member states present and voting at the General Assembly session in order to secure a seat on the Council, regardless of whether the election is contested. This means that a minimum of 129 positive votes are required to win a seat if all 193 UN member states are present and voting.

Election to the Council, as with other principal organs of the UN, requires formal balloting even if candidates have been endorsed by their regional group and are running unopposed. In theory, it is possible, although unlikely, that a member state running unopposed might not garner the requisite votes in the General Assembly in the first round. Such a country could then be challenged in subsequent rounds by a new candidate and ultimately not obtain a seat.

Historically, there have been several instances in which extended rounds of voting were required to fill a contested seat. This was more common before the Council's enlargement from 11 to 15 members starting in 1966 and resulted in a number of agreements to split terms. Despite the enlargement, extended voting has still occurred, although such situations have usually been solved by the withdrawal of one of the contenders or the election of a compromise candidate, rather than by agreeing on a split term. The sole exception to this practice since 1966 was the 2016 agreement between Italy and the Netherlands to split the 2017-2018 term.

Potential Council Dynamics in 2018

This will be the third Council election since the timing was brought forward from October to June. As a result, the incoming members enjoy a longer preparatory period, including three months of participation as observers in Council consultations of the whole, Council subsidiary bodies, and some informal Council meetings.

Some of the candidates appear to have a strong national interest in particular regional issues and country-specific situations on the Council's agenda. South Africa can be expected to emphasise African issues, which make up a significant portion of the Council's workload. In its previous two terms on the Council, in 2007-2008 and 2011-2012, South Africa advocated closer cooperation between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council, on the basis that this would enhance the effectiveness of the UN Security Council in addressing challenges to peace and security in Africa.

The Dominican Republic is also likely to take a keen interest in its own region, in particular the situation in Haiti, given its proximity. With the possibility that the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti may draw down or even close in the coming years, it is likely that the Dominican Republic will seek to influence this process so as to promote stability.

Germany has expressed interest in engaging closely on several issues on the Council's agenda. High on its list of priorities are the Syrian conflict, Libya, Yemen, and what it has described as the migration crisis. Given its engagement in the Normandy format (along with France, Russia and Ukraine) which played an instrumental role in negotiating the Minsk agreement in February 2015, Germany could be expected to play a role in the Council's discussions on Ukraine as well.

On thematic issues, this year's candidates seem to have a shared interest in thematic issues concerning the protection of civilians, including children in armed conflict; women, peace and security; and youth, peace and security.

The conflict prevention and sustaining peace agenda is another common priority among this year's candidates, which is also in line with the Secretary-General's renewed emphasis on these issues. Several candidates, most notably Germany and Indonesia, have played an active role in the Peacebuilding

Commission and could be expected to further advance this work if elected to the Council.

The role of the Council in designing and overseeing the mandates of peacekeeping operations is likely to be an important issue for several of the candidates, as most of them contribute personnel to UN peace missions. It is likely that these member states will continue to build upon ongoing efforts by the Council and the Secretariat to conduct strategic assessments of peacekeeping operations with the aim of increasing their effectiveness and efficiency. As troop- and police-contributing countries, Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa, if elected, are likely to be interested in fine-tuning the Council's approach to mandating and will encourage constructive engagement with other troop- and police-contributors regarding the mandates of peace operations.

Over the past several years, a growing number of the Council's elected members have emphasised the interlinkages between development and international peace and security. This trend is likely to continue next year since several candidates have stressed the importance of this issue and have supported the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Similarly, the Council has increasingly acknowledged climate change as a root cause of conflict in several areas on the Council's agenda. Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany and the Maldives have all stressed that the Council must address climate change and security, and will likely advocate for this if elected. Some members, however, are resistant to integrating this issue into the Council's work.

There appears to be a strong desire among most candidates to enhance the transparency and inclusiveness of the Council's work. This has been a prominent trend in candidates' campaigns during recent election cycles. Although there have been some positive developments regarding the working methods of the Council, most elected members have continued to draw attention to aspects of the Council's work that need further improvement. These include inadequate time to negotiate Council outcomes and the limited interactivity of Council meetings. In their campaigns, most members have pledged to listen to stakeholders not on the Council and to take their perspectives into account.

Status Update since our May Forecast

Children and Armed Conflict

On 4 May, the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict adopted its conclusions (S/AC.51/2018/1) on the report on children and armed conflict in Mali (S/2018/136). The Secretary-General's report on Children and Armed Conflict in Mali was presented to the Working Group on 12 March. On 7 May, Council members held an Arria-formula meeting on "Ending and Preventing Grave Violations against Children through Action Plans: Best Practices from African States", organised by Poland in partnership with Côte d'Ivoire, France and Sweden.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 8 May, the Security Council held its semi-annual debate on BiH (S/PV.8248). High Representative for BiH Valentin Inzko presented his office's latest report (S/2018/416). With general elections scheduled for 7 October, and in light of an increase in divisive nationalist rhetoric, the international community must remain united and coordinate its efforts to ensure a stable and prosperous country, Inzko said.

Peacekeeping

On 9 May, the Council was briefed on aspects of UN peacekeeping by three heads of military components of UN peace operations: Lieutenant General Leonard Ngondi, Force Commander of UNAMID in Darfur; Major General Jean-Paul Deconinck, Force Commander of MINUSMA in Mali; and Lieutenant General Frank Mushyo Kamanzi, Force Commander of UNMISS in South Sudan (S/PV.8251). Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed the Council as well. On 14 May, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/10) on peacekeeping operations (S/PV.8253). The statement, which was drafted by the Netherlands, builds on the themes raised in the 28 March open debate on "Collective Action to Improve UN Peacekeeping Operations", held during the Dutch presidency of the Council.

Burundi

On 10 May, Special Envoy Michel Kafando briefed Council members on Burundi via video teleconference under "any other business". On 24 May, Kafando and Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), the chair of the Burundi Configuration of the PBC, briefed the Security

Council on Burundi (S/PV.8268). The briefing was followed by consultations, where an OHCHR representative answered questions.

Council Visiting Mission to Bangladesh and Myanmar

On 14 May, the Council was briefed by Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi (Kuwait), Ambassador Gustavo Meza Cuadra Velásquez (Peru), and Ambassador Karen Pierce (UK), the three co-leads on the Council's visiting mission to Bangladesh and Myanmar from 28 April to 1 May (S/PV.8255). Following the briefing, Council members met in consultations, during which High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi briefed by video teleconference.

Kosovo

On 14 May, Special Representative and head of UNMIK Zahir Tanin briefed the Council (S/PV.8254) on the latest Secretary-General's report (S/2018/407). Tanin noted that there have been some positive developments, including the new border demarcation agreement with Montenegro and recent talks in Brussels. He also said that the negative rhetoric between the parties has continued, however. Tanin called on parties to move forward towards common priorities and shared goals instead of mourning the past. In their statements, four Council members that are also EU members (the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and the UK) noted that they believe that the situation in Kosovo allows for a substantial reduction of the current reporting cycle and that there is a need for a strategic review of the mission.

Somalia

On 15 May, the Council adopted resolution 2415, extending the mandate of AMISOM until 31 July (S/PV.8257). On the same day, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and head of UNSOM Michael Keating briefed the Council on the latest report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2018/411). The head of AMISOM, Francisco Madeira, also briefed (S/PV.8259).

Sudan/South Sudan

On 15 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2416, renewing the mandate of UNISFA until 15 November and reduced the authorised troop ceiling of the mission from 4,791 to 4,500 (S/PV.8258).

Middle East (Israel/Palestine)

On 15 May, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov briefed the Council via video teleconference in a meeting requested by Kuwait, focusing on developments in Gaza, where over 60 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces the day before (S/PV.8256). On 23 May, Mladenov provided the scheduled monthly briefing on Israel/Palestine via video teleconference (S/PV.8265). He described plans for addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Consultations followed the briefing. On 30 May, at the request of the US, Mladenov briefed the Council on rocket and mortar fire by militants from Gaza into Israel on 29 May, to which Israel had responded by firing rockets on militant sites in Gaza (S/PV.8272). At press time, a draft resolution was being negotiated focused on protecting Palestinian civilians.

Guinea-Bissau

On 16 May, the Council held a briefing on Guinea-Bissau (S/PV.8261). Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Tayé-Brook Zerihoun covered recent progress in resolving the political crisis, preparations for the November legislative elections, and steps taken to adjust the work of UNIOGBIS following the new priorities set by the Council to its mandate in February. Executive Director of UNODC Yury Fedotov, briefing via video teleconference from Vienna, described UNODC capacity-building activities in Guinea-Bissau to combat drug, money laundering and maritime crime. Ambassador Mauro Viera (Brazil), chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Guinea-Bissau configuration, briefed as well. He noted, among other points, his plans to visit the country most likely in July.

Rule of Law

On 17 May, the Council held an open debate on "Upholding international law within the context of the maintenance of international peace and security" (S/PV.8262). President of Poland Andrzej Duda chaired the open debate. The briefers were Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General, on behalf of the Secretary-General; Judge Hisashi Owada of the International Court of Justice, on behalf of the president of the court; and Judge Theodor Meron, President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

Status Update since our May Forecast

Security Council meeting with EU Political and Security Committee

On 18 May, Security Council members held the sixth annual informal meeting with members of the EU Political and Security Committee, which is composed of the Brussels-based ambassadors of EU member states dealing with the EU's common foreign, security, and defense policy. The meeting focused on the following issues: peacekeeping in Africa, Syria, Iraq, and cooperation on sanctions.

Counter-Terrorism

On 21 May, the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee met with the Monitoring Team to discuss the East Africa regional meeting on intelligence and security held in February. On 24 May, the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee convened to discuss the UN guiding principles for the collection of evidence on the battlefield and in high-risk situations and to discuss the committee's visits to South Africa in May 2018 and Paraguay in July 2017. On 29 May, the CTC held an open meeting on countering terrorist narratives and preventing terrorist use of the Internet. On 14 May, Council members issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attacks on Christian churches and a police station in Surabaya, Indonesia, on 13 and 14 May, which resulted in at least 18 people killed and many more injured (SC/13336).

Protection of Civilians

On 22 May, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/PV.8264), following the release of the Secretary-General's report on the issue (S/2018/462) on 14 May. The debate was chaired by Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz of Poland. Briefers included Secretary-General António Guterres; Director-General of the ICRC Yves Daccord; and Hanaa Edwar, an Iraqi human rights activist. On 24 May, the Council adopted resolution 2417 on the link between armed conflict and food insecurity (S/PV.8267). The resolution strongly condemns the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, as well as the unlawful denial of humanitarian access, and urges all parties to protect civilian infrastructure critical to the delivery of aid and to ensure the proper functioning of food systems. The resolution further requests

the Secretary-General to report swiftly to the Council when there is a risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in the context of armed conflict, and to brief every 12 months on the resolution's implementation in the context of his annual briefing on the protection of civilians.

G5 Sahel

On 23 May, the Council held a briefing on the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel), or FC-G5S (S/PV.8266). It was briefed by Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita, who reiterated the importance of using assessed contributions to support the force as recommended by the Secretary-General in his 8 May report on the joint force (S/2018/432). Permanent Secretary of the G5-Sahel Maman Sidikou, Permanent Observer of the AU to the UN Fatima Kyari Mohammed, and Ambassador of the EU to the UN João Pedro Vale de Almeida also briefed. Later that day, Council members issued a press statement welcoming progress implementing resolution 2391 and the continued determination of G5 States to address the impact of terrorism and transnational crime in the Sahel region (SC/13353). The press statement encouraged G5 States to achieve the full operational capacity of the force as soon as possible and insisted on the critical need for generating support through the swift disbursement by donors of all pledges.

Lebanon

On 24 May, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča briefed Council members in consultations on the implementation of resolution 1559 and the most recent Secretary-General's report (S/2018/480). The discussions centred on several issues including presence of weapons outside government control and the existence of heavily armed militias and involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian conflict. Council members also discussed the successful holding of 6 May elections in Lebanon.

Ukraine

On 29 May, the Council held a briefing on the situation in Ukraine chaired by Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz (S/PV.8270). Dutch Foreign Minister Stef Blok and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo

Klimkin delivered statements at the meeting. The Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo; Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock; and Ertuğrul Apakan, the Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation Special Monitoring Mission via video teleconference. All three briefers voiced their concerns about the recent surge of violence and dire humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine. These issues were also raised by the Council members. In his statement, Blok drew the Council's attention to recent findings by the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) on the downing of flight MH17. He said that both the Netherlands and Australia hold Russia accountable for the incident, and he called on Russia to accept its responsibility and cooperate in the process to achieve justice for the victims. Russia denied these allegations and said that evidence does not exist to support the findings of the JIT.

Iraq

On 30 May, the Council received a briefing (S/PV.8271) by Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNAMI Ján Kubiš on the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/359) and on recent developments in Iraq. According to Kubiš, the parliamentary elections held on 12 May were conducted in a mostly peaceful and orderly manner. He added that they were also marked by a significantly decreased voter turnout of 44.5 percent in comparison to the last elections. He also briefed on the eighteenth report of the Secretary-General on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives (S/2018/353). According to the report, the lack of tangible results in 13 years requires the adoption of new and innovative ways to take the file forward. Additionally, Under-Secretary-General of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) Vladimir Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) Michèle Coninx briefed on their joint visit to Iraq in March. They elaborated on their support to the Iraqi government on a more comprehensive approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism, including addressing root causes.

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is due to renew the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The Council also expects to receive a briefing from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, followed by consultations.

MINUSMA's mandate ends on 30 June.

Key Recent Developments

June marks the three-year anniversary of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Despite the passage of time, important provisions related to institutional measures, security arrangements and development for the northern regions remain unaddressed. Although the parties have reiterated their commitment to its implementation—most recently by agreeing to a timetable in January and a more detailed roadmap in March—some have questioned whether there is sufficient political will to advance this process. Briefing the Council on 11 April, the Special Representative and head of MINUSMA, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, said, “It is time to move from pledges to action by respecting the deadlines that have been set”. In early May, the Mécanisme Opérationnel de Coordination—which provides for the deployment of mixed patrols with elements of the Malian Defence and Security Forces and the Platform and Coordination coalitions of armed groups—initiated its build-up in Kidal. Signatory armed groups have opposed the full participation of splinter groups in the structures established by the agreement. A coalition of such groups, the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Entente, was invited to participate as observers in an April meeting of the Commission Technique de Sécurité chaired by MINUSMA's Force Commander.

As a way of increasing pressure on the parties to deliver on their commitments in the 2015 peace agreement, the Council established a sanctions regime through resolution 2374 on 5 September 2017. At the 11 April briefing, France, the Netherlands, the UK and the US expressed support for identifying those obstructing, delaying or threatening the implementation of the peace agreement,

with a view to imposing sanctions. However, Russia said that “the direct use of sanctions should be a measure of last resort and that rushing to impose restrictions will hinder the entire settlement process”. At press time, no individuals or entities have been sanctioned under the 2374 Mali sanctions regime.

The first round of the presidential elections will be held on 29 July. In light of its mandate under resolution 2364, MINUSMA has been providing technical support and exercising good offices for the holding of peaceful, inclusive, fair and transparent elections. Although President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta has yet to announce his candidacy, it is expected that he will run for a second term. The head of the opposition in the National Assembly, Soumaïla Cissé, is one of several candidates put forward by opposition parties.

The security situation in the north and centre of Mali continues to be critical. In April, three terrorist attacks against MINUSMA camps in Aguelhok and Timbuktu and against a MINUSMA vehicle in Gao killed four peacekeepers and injured many more, including MINUSMA personnel, Malian civilians and French soldiers. The terrorist group Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin claimed responsibility for Timbuktu attack, which was carried out by three suicide car bombs. On 18 April, at the request of France, Council members met in consultations to be briefed on the latest attacks against the mission. Lacroix described how enhanced safety and security measures against increasingly complex attacks had prevented the loss of even more lives. At press time, at least 104 peacekeepers have been killed as a result of malicious acts since the establishment of MINUSMA five years ago. Inter-communal violence among ethnic groups has persisted.

As part of the Secretariat's initiative to review systematically long-standing missions, a strategic review of MINUSMA was concluded in April. The review—led by Ellen Margrethe Løj, a former Special Representative in Liberia and South Sudan—is expected to provide guidance to the Secretary-General on the future direction of MINUSMA prior to the mandate renewal. The review is also expected to contribute to a mission-wide plan, requested

by the Council in resolution 2364, which will set out a strategic approach for a phased implementation of MINUSMA's mandate and for the eventual transition and exit of the mission.

In addition to the challenges presented by the vast territory in which it is deployed and the presence of asymmetrical threats, the mission continues to lack adequate resources to implement its mandate properly. Critical missing equipment and capacities include utility and armed helicopters and additional escort-dedicated capacities, as well as medical capacities. In an 8 May report on the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the Secretary-General expressed his deep concern at the lack of available funding for the mission to provide adequate support for the force and to deliver on the additional tasks mandated by resolution 2391.

Key Issues and Options

Council members could consider ways to increase pressure on the parties to advance in the implementation of the peace agreement and to support Mali in a critical electoral cycle. They could hold a frank and unscripted discussion to garner support around a common political strategy and consider how this should be reflected in the mission's mandate. The Secretariat, the mission leadership and Algeria, which chairs the main follow-up mechanism to the agreement, could be invited to participate.

Council members could request the report of the strategic review in its entirety, or an abridged or summary version, and could engage directly with Løj and the Secretariat on the recommendations in an informal interactive dialogue, as it was done following the review of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq. As Council members negotiate MINUSMA's mandate, they could consider the implications of the existing gap between the mandate and the mission's insufficient capacities and resources.

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

UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2391](#) (8 December 2017) outlined the ways in which MINUSMA is expected to support the G5 Sahel joint force and described how the UN will be reimbursed for its assistance. [S/RES/2374](#) (5 September 2017) established a targeted sanctions regime for Mali. [S/RES/2364](#) (29 June 2017) renewed MINUSMA's mandate for an additional year. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8229](#) (11 April 2018) was the latest briefing on Mali by Annadif. [Security Council Press Statements SC/13298](#) (15 April 2018) condemned the attack on a MINUSMA camp in Timbuktu, which caused the death of a Burkinabe peacekeeper and injured others, including Malian civilians, MINUSMA personnel, and members of the French forces. [SC/13283](#) (6 April 2018) condemned an attack against a MINUSMA vehicle in Gao, which caused the death of a Nigerian peacekeeper. [SC/13281](#) (5 April 2018) condemned the attack against a MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok, which caused the death of two Chadian peacekeepers and injured ten others.

Mali

Council and Wider Dynamics

During a 28 March open debate on peace-keeping, Secretary-General António Guterres warned about mandate inflation and the impossibility of implementing many mandated tasks, calling on the Council to sharpen and streamline mandates. This is in line with previous reports—including the Brahimi report in 2000 and the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace

Operations—that advocated the prioritisation and sequencing of Council mandates to make peace operations more effective. The Secretary-General's warning, in addition to the strategic review recently concluded, may provide an opportunity for assessing the criticality of mandated tasks.

All Council members have expressed concerns about the slow pace of implementing the peace agreement. Resolution 2374 was

adopted unanimously with the idea of pressuring the parties without necessarily listing individuals or entities. The divergent statements about sanctions at the 11 April briefing show that if listings are proposed, divisions among Council members might result.

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

Syria

Expected Council Action

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

Key Recent Developments

May was marked by the Syrian government's consolidation of territory. After taking over the rebel-held area of Eastern Ghouta near Damascus, the government has persisted in its military offensive and has displaced populations through so-called "reconciliation agreements" that provide for the evacuation of fighters and civilians to rebel-held territory, such as Idlib and the Aleppo countryside. Subsequent evacuations have taken place in the eastern Qalamoun area, southern Damascus and northern Homs.

Some of the areas targeted by the government were part of the de-escalation zones established by the Astana process. Even though delegations of the government and the opposition participated in a 14-15 May meeting in Astana convened by Iran, Russia and Turkey, violence in strategic locations continued, showing the limitations of these efforts. The situation of abductees, detainees and missing persons was discussed in Astana as a confidence-building measure, and a working group was established to address this issue, with little progress so far. Turkey is planning to hold another meeting of the working group in June.

The political process continues to fail to gain traction. Briefing Council members on 16 May, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura updated them on his consultations exploring options for a meaningful re-launch of the UN-facilitated political process. He identified several common positions among the different stakeholders, including on the need to de-escalate; forming a constitutional committee under UN auspices; establishing a safe, calm and neutral environment; and respecting Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. The establishment of a constitutional committee was the main outcome of a January conference hosted in Sochi by Russia, along with Iran and Turkey, but the Syrian government has repeatedly questioned the committee's legitimacy. At the Sochi meeting, it was agreed that the UN would help in forming a constitutional committee, including defining its mandate and terms of reference, powers, rules of procedure, and selection criteria for its composition.

In briefings to the Council, de Mistura has repeatedly raised concerns regarding the Syrian government's lack of engagement in the political process and called on those with influence on the parties to exert it in support of a political settlement.

At a 17 May bilateral meeting in Sochi, Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on the success of the government forces in the fight against terrorist groups. According to

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, both leaders noted the need to create additional conditions for the resumption of a full-format political process in Syria.

Tensions between Iran and Israel, which have long been an important factor in the Syrian conflict, escalated in recent weeks. On 8 May, Israel launched an attack on a military position south of Damascus, claiming it was necessary to thwart an impending attack by Iran. On 9 May, Iran attacked Israeli outposts in the occupied Golan Heights. Israel responded the next day by attacking Iranian military installations in Syria, after which Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman claimed that almost all of Iran's military infrastructure in Syria had been destroyed.

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to be critical. The lack of safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access has been an ongoing factor in the conflict. By imposing bureaucratic hurdles and removing crucial items from those convoys that are allowed to proceed, the government has been able to limit humanitarian access to those areas that are not under its control. With the end of the siege of Eastern Ghouta and other areas, the besieged population has decreased sharply, but a 22 May report of the Secretary-General highlights that this has "too often [come] only after civilians have been exposed to prolonged periods of violence and deprivation, which [has] included the denial of critical humanitarian assistance". The

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2401](#) (24 February 2018) demanded that all parties cease hostilities in Syria. [S/RES/2393](#) (19 December 2017) 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. [Secretary-General's Report S/2018/484](#) (22 May 2018) was the monthly report on the humanitarian situation. [Security Council Letters S/2018/478](#) (17 May 2018) was a report of the Fact-Finding Mission of the OPCW determining that chlorine was likely used as a chemical weapon on 4 February 2018 in Saraqib. [S/2018/459](#) (14 May 2018) was a letter by Iran regarding the military escalation with Israel. [S/2018/447](#) (10 May 2018) was a letter by Syria condemning Israel's "aggression". [S/2018/443](#) (10 May 2018) was a letter by Israel justifying the attack against Iranian military targets in Syria. [S/2018/408](#) (1 May 2018) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8260](#) (16 May 2018) was a briefing by de Mistura on the political situation. [S/PV.8242](#) (25 April 2018) was a briefing by Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Ursula Mueller on Syria.

Syria

Secretary-General underlines how access has been limited in areas recently taken over by the government, as well.

The situation of Idlib, which remains under the control of rebel groups, presents major risks. Idlib has been receiving displaced fighters and civilians throughout the conflict and the UN has repeatedly warned of the impact that a military offensive would have in this region, which is overcrowded with vulnerable people.

The humanitarian appeal for Syria continues to be less than 25 percent funded. The Secretary-General is expected to circulate to the Council in June the independent written review requested by resolution 2393. The review, originally proposed by Russia, is expected to focus on UN humanitarian cross-border operations, including recommendations about how to further strengthen the existing UN mechanism monitoring cross-border deliveries.

The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has been investigating various instances of alleged chemical weapons use in Syria. After conducting a field visit to Douma, it has continued its work to ascertain whether chemicals were used as weapons in the alleged 7 April attack on that town. In a 15 May report, the FFM determined that chlorine, released from cylinders through mechanical impact, was likely used as a chemical weapon on 4 February 2018 in the rebel-held Al Talil neighbourhood of Saraqib. According to the report, at the time of the incident, witnesses reported hearing a helicopter flying above the city and the sound of two “barrels” falling and striking in close proximity to their location. This report is the second to be received by the Council since the demise of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism in November 2017. The first one concluded that sarin “was more than likely used as a chemical weapon” on 30 March 2017 in Lataminah. The absence of an attribution mechanism has hampered the possibility of ensuring accountability for these attacks.

On 7 May, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu,

briefed Council members on the good offices carried out by the Secretary-General and herself to devise an attribution mechanism that would garner the unanimous support of the Council. On 18 May, France convened a ministerial meeting of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, which it established in January. The partnership comprises 34 member states, including Council members Côte d’Ivoire, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland and Sweden in addition to the P3. A special session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention has been convoked for June in The Hague to work on supporting the Convention and its implementing body, the OPCW, and to explore options for attributing responsibility for chemical weapons attacks.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The special rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Idriss Jazairy, visited Syria from 13 to 17 May, where he met with government representatives, civil society organisations, and representatives of the business and diplomatic communities in Damascus. In a 17 May press statement he expressed concern with the way sanctions are being implemented, saying “it is not allowing humanitarian actors to access the humanitarian exemptions that are an option under the unilateral coercive measures being applied to Syria”. The special rapporteur will present a report to the Human Rights Council at its 39th session in September.

Key Issues and Options

The current level of P5 divisions raises the question whether the Council will be able to work constructively on Syria in the foreseeable future. If the paralysis continues, those with even a limited capacity to act—whether elected members, the Secretary-General, or key members of the General Assembly—may seek to take initiatives. The Secretary-General could provide options for the Council to consider, or he could directly mobilise the mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons, which was developed in the 1980s and was activated previously in the Syrian context in March 2013. Given the lack of

unanimity among permanent members and the Council’s failure to exercise its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, members of the General Assembly could consider tabling a “Uniting for Peace” resolution.

While divided on Syria for more than seven years, the Council has been able to unite around certain aspects during that time, such as setting the agenda for a political process and authorising cross-border deliveries. As the political climate deteriorates, there is a risk of undermining these Council decisions, just as the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism was discontinued. Council members could hold informal, unscripted and forward-looking discussions at the ambassadorial level to seek ways to increase pressure on the parties to the conflict and strive for a compromise that is both realistic and acceptable to all.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The alleged 7 April chemical weapons attack in Douma led to one of the Council’s most divisive periods in the post-Cold War era. In an effort to address the Council’s polarisation, Syria was added to the agenda of the Secretary-General’s retreat with Council members that took place in Backåkra, Sweden, on 21-22 April. Although Council members agreed at the retreat on press elements on the political and humanitarian situation and on the use of chemical weapons, it is unclear whether they will be able to engage constructively on this file. P5 members have started to meet regularly on Syria at the ambassadorial level, but substantive divisions persist and the meetings have yet to result in any outcome.

The recent military escalation between Iran and Israel highlights the role of external players in the Syrian conflict. As the government consolidates territory, it is unclear how it will approach the areas that are of strategic importance for external actors, particularly near Syria’s borders. The regional dimension of the conflict is thus likely to feature more prominently both on the ground and in Council discussions.

Kuwait and Sweden are the penholders on humanitarian issues in Syria.

International Criminal Tribunals

Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council expects to hold the semi-annual debate on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), which was established in 2010 to carry out the remaining essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) after their respective closures. The IRMCT's president, Judge Theodor Meron, and the IRMCT's prosecutor, Serge Brammertz, are expected to brief and to meet with the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals prior to the debate. A resolution is expected extending the term of the prosecutor, which expires on 30 June.

Key Recent Developments

Following the 31 December 2017 closure of the ICTY, the President of the Security Council issued a note on 2 February, saying that Council consideration of issues in connection with the ICTY and ICTR will be subsumed under the new agenda item "International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals". (The ICTR closed on 31 December 2015.)

The IRMCT, with branches in Arusha, Tanzania and The Hague, focuses 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 with requests related to prosecuting international crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. It was established in 2010 by resolution 1966, which says "the Mechanism shall continue the jurisdiction, rights and obligations and essential functions of the ICTY and the ICTR" and "should be a small, temporary and efficient structure, whose functions and size will diminish over time, with a small number of staff commensurate with its reduced functions". According to the resolution, the IRMCT was mandated

to operate for an initial period of four years and for subsequent periods of two years, subject to reviews of its progress, unless the Security Council decides otherwise. On 19 March, the Council adopted a presidential statement requesting the IRMCT to submit a progress report by 15 April. It also requested the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals to review this report and a report by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the methods and work of the IRMCT by 15 May, and required the review's outcome to be "reflected by the Security Council in an appropriate form".

The OIOS report found that overall the IRMCT "made progress towards realizing its mandate to be small and efficient" and is "mindful of the mandate to be temporary; nevertheless, some of its continuous functions are long-term in nature". The progress report of the IRMCT, requested in the 19 March presidential statement, said that although the IRMCT continued to make progress in the fulfilment of its mandate, it faced significant challenges following the December 2017 decision of the General Assembly to approve a reduced budget, from the budget initially proposed by the IRMCT for 2018-2019. "These reductions will leave or already have left the [IRMCT] with skeletal staffing levels in many areas, opening the institution up to considerable operational risks that may have a negative impact on its ability to conduct and complete its functions in a timely and effective manner", the progress report said.

On 17 May, Meron briefed the Council in an open debate on "upholding international law within the context of the maintenance of international peace and security". Meron proposed a number of steps that the Council could consider to advance efforts to ensure accountability for international crimes, including revisions in the Council's decision-making approach in addressing alleged violations of international law, such as through the development of objective criteria to be

applied by the Council in assessing allegations of international crimes and related measures.

Key Issues and Options

An immediate issue is for members to adopt a resolution appointing a prosecutor of the IRMCT. The term of the current prosecutor expires on 30 June, as set out in resolution 2269.

A key issue is for members to continue monitoring the work of the IRMCT and the implementation of its mandate, and to evaluate these in light of the recent OIOS report, the IRMCT progress report, and the reduced 2018-2019 budget approved by the General Assembly. A related issue is for the Council to reflect the outcome of the review by the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals "in an appropriate form" as requested in the presidential statement adopted on 19 March. An option is for the Council to adopt a resolution or presidential statement reflecting the outcome of this process and to make any changes that are deemed necessary to the IRMCT's mandate.

Council Dynamics

Council members have so far generally assessed the IRMCT positively—including Russia, which had been consistently critical of the ICTY—with the caveat that it must continue to fulfil its mandate expeditiously and cost-effectively. This position was emphasised by China, the UK and Russia at the 6 December 2017 debate. In its statement, Russia said the Council's review of the IRMCT "is extremely important, and the extension of the Mechanism's work for the next two years will depend on it", adding "it is also time that the Council thought about approaches to ending its activities". Ethiopia, France, Sweden, the UK and the US stressed the need to locate the eight remaining fugitives to be tried by the IRMCT.

Peru is the chair of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals.

UN DOCUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2269 (29 February 2016) appointed the prosecutor of the IRMCT. S/RES/1966 (22 December 2010) established the IRMCT. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/6 (19 March 2018) was on the IRMCT. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8262 (17 May 2018) was an open debate on upholding international law within the context of the maintenance of international peace and security. S/PV.8120 (6 December 2017) was the semi-annual debate. Other S/2018/347 (13 April 2018) was the progress report on the IRMCT. S/2018/206 (8 March 2018) was the OIOS report on the IRMCT. S/2018/90 (2 February 2018) was a note by the Council president announcing the new agenda item "International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals".

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to renew the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya bound to or from the country that they have reasonable grounds to believe are violating the arms embargo. The current authorisation expires on 15 June.

The mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expires on 15 September, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the sanctions committee expires on 12 November.

Key Recent Developments

The inspection authorisation, initially issued through resolution 2292 in 2016, was renewed last year through resolution 2357 with an added request to the Secretary-General to report to the Council within 11 months on its implementation.

Deep divisions remain between the parties in Libya. Despite the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) on 17 December 2015, little progress has been achieved in establishing unified and legitimate institutions that are able to deliver basic services to the Libyan population again.

Special Representative and head of UNSMIL Ghassan Salamé has been focusing on implementing a UN action plan that the Council endorsed in October 2017. This plan involves working in parallel to amend the LPA, organise a national conference, finalise a new constitution, and prepare for parliamentary and presidential elections. Briefing the Council on 21 May, Salamé shared his continued assessment that “the parties are unwilling to make the necessary concessions” in order to agree on the necessary amendments to the LPA.

Despite the emphasis of Libyan stakeholders on the importance of holding elections, Salamé has continued to warn that before credible elections can be conducted, adequate conditions must be in place. These include further voter registration, prior commitment by the parties to accept the results, proper funding, strong security arrangements, and legislation to regulate the holding of elections.

Salamé has mentioned the need to bring Libyans together around a common national narrative. To that end, 42 inclusive public consultations have taken place in 27 locations since April. These consultations are part of a ‘National Conference’ process leading up to a special event to be held later this year, where the results of the consultations with the Libyan people will be presented.

The situation in the south remains precarious as inter-tribal tensions reinforce existing rivalries among supporters of the Libyan National Army (LNA) and those nominally affiliated with the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord. In recent weeks, fighting has increased in the south of Libya, notably in the city of Sabha. In Derna in north-eastern Libya, General Khalifa Haftar’s forces have continued to fight for control of the city. Haftar, head of the LNA, was hospitalised in Paris on 8 April. He returned to Libya on 26 April, looking healthy, according to some accounts, despite rumours of his ill-health or demise.

To address the multiplicity of armed actors in Libya, UNSMIL has started a broad dialogue to explore the means and conditions for their reintegration into civilian life or into state military and security institutions. Salamé said during his latest briefing to the Council that the strategy was in the final stages of consultation with the Libyan authorities.

Migrants and refugees in Libya continue to suffer from human rights violations and abuse, including arbitrary detention and forced labour, reportedly inflicted by state officials, armed groups, smugglers, traffickers and criminal gangs. On 19 March, Italy impounded a migrant rescue boat operated by an NGO and detained its crew on human trafficking charges. The ship was released on 16 April; the criminal charges were subsequently dropped.

Sanctions-Related Developments

In his briefing to the Council on 21 May, the chair of the 1970 Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), reported on the expiration of the listing of two vessels on 18 and 29 April, respectively. In addition, he noted that proposals to designate six individuals under the assets freeze and travel ban measures were being considered in the context of migrant exploitation and abuse. At press time, no decision had been made by the committee.

ICC-Related Developments

In March, for the first time in five years, an investigative team from the ICC Office of the Prosecutor was able to travel to Libya. Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, whose extradition the ICC has sought, has been at large since he was freed by the Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq Brigade, a Zintan-based militia, in June 2017. In late March, a spokesman for Saif al-Islam Gaddafi declared that he was planning to run in the upcoming presidential elections. Former internal security chief Mohamed Khaled al-Tuhamy, allegedly responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in 2011 in Libya, remains at large as well.

Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al-Werfalli, a commander participating in General Khalifa Haftar’s Operation Dignity in Benghazi, appears to be directly responsible for the death of 33 persons in Benghazi or surrounding areas between June 2016 and July 2017, either by personally killing them or by ordering their execution, according to the ICC arrest warrant. Additional extrajudicial executions became public in January. Video footage showing his announcement that, on the instructions of the LNA General Command, he would turn himself in to the military police in eastern Libya was posted on social media on 6 February. To date, Al-Werfalli has not been surrendered to the ICC and his whereabouts are unclear.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 10 April, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNSMIL published a joint report on human rights concerns regarding detention in Libya, covering 17 December 2015 to 1 January. According to the report, armed groups in Libya, including those affiliated with the state, hold thousands of people in prolonged arbitrary and unlawful detention and submit them to torture and other human rights violations and abuses. In October 2017, roughly 6,500 people were thought to be held in official prisons overseen by the Judicial Police of the Ministry of Justice, while thousands more were held in a multitude of other facilities nominally under the Ministries of Interior or Defence or run directly by armed groups, the report said.

Key Issues and Options

The immediate issue for the Council in June is whether to renew the high-seas ship inspections authorisation granted to member states under resolution 2292.

The Council could again hold an informal interactive dialogue with the Commander of the EU Mission EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia and a representative of the European External Action Service, as they did before last year’s authorisation renewal. In

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2380 (5 October 2017) renewed the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. S/RES/2376 (14 September 2017) extended UNSMIL’s mandate until 15 September 2018. S/RES/2362 (29 June 2017) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and the measures regarding attempts to illicitly export oil from Libya. S/RES/1970 (26 February 2011) referred the situation in Libya to the ICC, imposed an arms embargo and targeted sanctions (assets freeze and travel ban) and established a sanctions committee. Secretary-General’s Reports S/2018/451 (11 May 2018) was on the implementation of resolution 2357. S/2018/429 (7 May 2018) was on UNSMIL. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8211 (21 March 2018) was a briefing by Special Representative Ghassan Salamé, in which he presented the Secretary-General’s report on Libya.

Libya

addition to the information provided by the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 2357, this exchange might help address the concerns of delegations about the effectiveness of the authorisation in deterring violations of the arms embargo.

Council and Wider Dynamics

When the resolution was first adopted, China and Russia had put forward concerns related to the flag state's rights. Considering that the authorisation has not resulted in the detection of arms smuggling in the past year, members could argue that a re-authorisation has little added value at this point. Making a

statement after last year's authorisation, Russia emphasised its expectation for more effective inspections. At press time it was not clear whether these concerns would be addressed.

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

UNOCA/LRA

Expected Council Action

In June, François Louncény 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.

Key Recent Developments

The region covered by UNOCA continues to present multiple challenges, including several security and political hotspots that are independently on the Council's agenda. The most acute current crises are 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 lawlessness, lack of state authority, and fighting among the predominantly Muslim ex-Séléka factions, between the ex-Séléka and the Christian anti-Balaka groups, and between the ex-Séléka and other rebel groups, resulting in attacks against civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian actors.

In the DRC, armed groups continue to wreak havoc on civilians in eastern DRC, accompanied by intercommunal violence in other regions as well. This has resulted in many casualties and a humanitarian catastrophe. The political situation is marked by preparations for the long-overdue elections scheduled for 23 December 2018 and the uncertainty regarding the intentions and future of

President Joseph Kabila, who, according to the constitution, was to have ended his second and last term in December 2016.

The political situation in Burundi is also of concern to the Council. There, President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a divisive third term threw the country into a political and security crisis in April 2015. The security situation has since stabilised, yet the political situation remains fragile. Human rights violations and political oppression are rampant. Against this backdrop, constitutional amendments were approved in a controversial referendum on 17 May. The amendments change important provisions and safeguards in the constitution, which implemented the 2000 Arusha Accord that ended the ethnic civil war in Burundi in 2005, and potentially allow Nkurunziza to remain in power beyond his current term.

The year 2017 saw a decrease in LRA activities compared with 2016. The LRA, however, remains a serious threat to civilians in the DRC and the CAR, as recent events demonstrate. In the CAR, the LRA has been active in Haute-Kotto prefecture. On 25 March, OCHA reported that the majority of the 6,000 people in the town of Yalinga had reportedly taken refuge in the bush in fear of the LRA. In the DRC, the LRA was responsible for eight attacks in Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele provinces during March.

On 18 May, the AU Peace and Security Council renewed the mandate of the AU Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA) until 22 August. The main component of the initiative has been the AU Regional Task Force (AU-RTF), comprising forces of

the CAR, DRC, South Sudan and Uganda, with US assistance. The US, however, withdrew its special forces and logistical support from the AU-RTF in May 2017. Uganda, which has been the main troop contributor to the AU-RTF, subsequently withdrew its 2,500 troops from the CAR in August 2017. South Sudan also ended its participation. In practical terms, therefore, the AU-RTF is mostly inoperative.

UNOCA also continues to pay close attention to the situation in Cameroon, a country not on the Council's agenda. Since late 2016, there has been unrest in Cameroon's anglophone regions, rooted in claims of long-standing political and economic discrimination by the francophone authorities against the minority anglophone population. Widespread protests against the government, numerous clashes with security forces, several protestor deaths, general strikes, arbitrary arrests, and blocking of access to the Internet have occurred. National Day celebrations on 20 May were marred by violence in the anglophone regions, with two policemen killed, several soldiers wounded, and the kidnapping of a mayor by suspected armed separatists.

In light of the expiration of UNOCA's mandate on 31 August, the upcoming report is expected to include recommendations on its renewal. Council members are expecting a recommendation that the office be renewed for another three years.

Key Issues and Options

While UNOCA's mandate is renewed through an exchange of letters with the Secretary-General, the Council may take the opportunity of the June briefing to adopt a

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNOCA Secretary-General's Report S/2017/995 (28 November 2017) was the semi-annual report on UNOCA. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8134 (13 December 2017) was a briefing by Special Representative and head of UNOCA François Louncény Fall on the Secretary-General's semi-annual report on UNOCA and the implementation of the UN regional strategy to combat the LRA.

UNOCA/LRA

presidential statement or issue a press statement supporting the work of UNOCA and expressing its support for its renewal.

A central issue is the deteriorating security situations in the CAR and eastern DRC. 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 play with respect to assisting the efforts of other actors on these issues.

Another concern for the Council is how to continue to track LRA activities in the

vacuum left by the withdrawal of the main troop contributors to the AU-RTF. The Council may call on member states to consider support for anti-LRA efforts and to remain focused on the issue until the threat from the LRA is eliminated.

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 this point, it seems there is no appetite to add to the Council's agenda new country-specific situations from the region.

Some members are concerned about the security vacuum that has resulted from Uganda's departure from the AU-RTF and the withdrawal of US troops supporting the effort. In light of other security and political problems 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.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), prior to its expiry on 30 June. Prior to the adoption of the resolution the Council will hold a briefing, followed by consultations. It also expects to receive the semi-annual briefing of the ICC Prosecutor related to the court's work on Darfur.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Darfur remains relatively stable going into the end of the dry season except for sporadic clashes among the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction and government forces and nomads in the Jebel Marra area. OCHA estimated that 11,500 people were displaced in Jebel Marra following fighting in April between various armed groups.

The humanitarian situation remains serious. According to revised government figures, some 1.76 million displaced persons in Darfur are registered as living in approximately 66 camps, with around an additional 500,000 unregistered displaced persons. UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock, who visited Sudan from 12 to 14 May, said in a statement that "millions of people face serious and growing humanitarian needs" in the country and stressed the importance of unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access. Despite the improved security situation, the Darfur peace process and implementation

of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur remain largely stalled.

UNAMID continues phase two of its reconfiguration, which started on 31 January in accordance with resolution 2363 and the presidential statement adopted on 31 January. Phase two includes further reductions of UNAMID's authorised troop and police ceilings from 11,395 to 8,735 military personnel and from 2,888 to 2,500 police personnel; it is scheduled to be completed on 30 June. According to the Secretary-General's most recent report, the mission's reconfiguration is on track, including in relation to the establishment of the State Stabilization Assistance Force, which is responsible for areas outside the jurisdiction of the mission's Jebel Marra task force (established under phase one of the reconfiguration and consisting of a civilian and military component), and construction of a temporary operating base in Golo. The report said that the withdrawal of UNAMID from those areas where 11 team sites were closed under phase one had so far shown no overall adverse impact.

On 9 May, UNAMID's Force Commander, Lieutenant General Leonard Ngondi, briefed the Council as one of three heads of military components of UN peace operations. He recommended that the Council include a transition strategy in UNAMID's upcoming mandate renewal, with lessons learned from missions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. He also urged the Council to persuade the government to encourage armed

groups to commit to the peace process and to adhere to the provisions of the status of forces agreement, allowing UNAMID freedom of movement.

The presidential statement adopted on 31 January requested a written review to consider a new mission concept with adjusted priorities, to be submitted to the Council by 1 June. The report was not yet available at press time but is expected to include an evaluation of progress in implementing phase two of UNAMID's reconfiguration, in particular the impact of this phase in the areas where UNAMID's military component has handed responsibility to UNAMID formed police units; and an update on the situation in the areas from which UNAMID withdrew during phase one, including on protection needs and human rights violations and abuses. In addition to addressing, as requested, whether a new mission concept with adjusted priorities based on the situation on the ground is required, the review is also likely to report on the government of Sudan's cooperation with UNAMID, including on the establishment of the temporary operating base in Golo, and on UNAMID's freedom of movement.

The Council received a briefing on Darfur on 10 May via video teleconference from Joint Special Representative for Darfur and head of UNAMID Jeremiah Mamabolo, who emphasised that "as UNAMID continues its reconfiguration and drawdown, the transition phase will be critical in creating the foundation for durable peace". He added that, together with

UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR Security Council Resolution S/RES/2363 (29 June 2017) renewed UNAMID's mandate for one year. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/4** (31 January 2018) was on the situation in Darfur and UNAMID's reconfiguration. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/389** (25 April 2018) was the 60-day UNAMID report. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8252** (10 May 2018) was the most recent UNAMID briefing.

Sudan (Darfur)

the UN country team, UNAMID has finalised a financing approach for sustaining peace in Darfur, which requires efforts towards the mobilisation of financial resources.

The Council was last briefed on the ICC's work with regard to Darfur by ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda on 12 December 2017. She said that unless the five indicted suspects appeared before the Court, "the entire judicial machinery of the Court can be frustrated and held in abeyance". Bensouda noted Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir's travels in 2017 to South Africa, Jordan, Uganda, Chad and Russia and requested that the Council take action to respond to ongoing instances of non-compliance or non-cooperation relating to outstanding arrest warrants. Jordan, a state party to the Rome Statute, appealed a decision by the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber that found it had failed to comply with its obligation to arrest Al-Bashir when he visited the country in March 2017. The ICC Appeals Chamber issued an order on 29 March inviting the UN, AU, EU, League of Arab States and the Organization of American States to submit observations on Jordan's appeal by 16 July. In March of this year, Al-Bashir travelled to Rwanda, which is not a state party to the Rome Statute.

Human Rights-Related Developments

Following his visit to Sudan from 14 to 23 April, the Human Rights Council's independent expert on Sudan, Aristide Nononsi, expressed concern in a 23 April press statement about reports that security forces were using violence, intimidation and other forms of abuse to silence women across the country. He reiterated his call for the government to take effective measures, including reforming the country's current legal framework, to address the serious institutional gaps in its security and justice system in order to promote respect for the rule of law and protection of human rights.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is what modifications to make to the mandate, force structure and troop levels of UNAMID, to reflect the current realities facing the mission. A related key issue is the completion of phase two of UNAMID's reconfiguration by 30 June, and the effect of further troop reductions on the security and human rights situations. An option is for such assessments to be informed by the findings and recommendations of the review, which members expect to receive by 1 June. Other options would be to invite the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide an update on the human rights situation, or to hold an informal interactive dialogue or an Arria-formula meeting with Nononsi.

The Council may also need to tackle how to address the root causes of the conflict and to promote intercommunal reconciliation. An option would be to request Mamabolo to brief on the issue.

Another key issue is to support efforts to break the ongoing impasse in the negotiations between the government and Darfuri rebel movements over implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, adopted in 2011. One option is to invite Thabo Mbeki, chair of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel, to address the Council on his efforts. Mbeki last briefed the Council in an informal interactive dialogue on 12 January 2017. Another option is for the Council to consider imposing additional targeted sanctions on those parties who continue to refuse to participate in the negotiations.

Council Dynamics

There continue to be differences amongst Council members in assessing the improvement in the overall situation in Darfur and the

government's cooperation during UNAMID's reconfiguration, which has so far progressed without major incidents. Some members seem to view more guarded recognition of progress as appropriate. Other members, including Russia, Ethiopia and Kuwait, are generally more positive in their assessment of improvements in the situation in Darfur and steps the government of Sudan has taken to date and would likely support further drawdowns of the mission and the formulation of an exit strategy.

At the 10 May briefing, Equatorial Guinea in its statement expressed support for inviting Mbeki to brief the Council on the political process and for the adoption of "targeted sanctions against recalcitrant groups or individuals who are reluctant to participate in negotiations". Côte d'Ivoire said that the Security Council "should do everything in its power" to encourage the various parties to adhere to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and expressed hope that the recommendations of the UNAMID review "will enable Council members to better define the mission's priorities in the context of the renewal of its mandate". Bolivia said that the country team's capacities must continue to be strengthened to ensure that the withdrawal of the mission is successful. Kuwait similarly referred to the need for an exit strategy for the mission, calling for "a clear transition plan that facilitates a withdrawal of the operation". Kazakhstan said it is essential to reconsider UNAMID's mandate to reflect the improved situation on the ground, in particular giving priority to UNAMID's peacebuilding responsibilities.

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

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council expects briefings by Ambassadors Ion Jinga (Romania) and Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea), the current and former chair, respectively, of the Peacebuilding

Commission (PBC), presenting the PBC's annual report.

On the same day, Council members are expected to convene an informal interactive dialogue with representatives of the PBC.

Key Recent Developments

On 24 and 25 April, the General Assembly held a high-level event on peacebuilding and sustaining peace as envisioned by the April 2016 resolutions of the General Assembly

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEBUILDING Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2413 (26 April 2018) took note of the General Assembly's decision to invite relevant UN bodies and organs to further consider the recommendations and options in the Secretary-General's implementation report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. S/RES/2282 (27 April 2016) was on the ten-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture. Secretary-General's Report S/2018/43 (18 January 2018) was on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8243 (25 April 2018) was a briefing on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. PBC Annual Report S/2018/83 (31 January 2018) was on the PBC's 11th session.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

and the Security Council on the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture. To coincide with the General Assembly event, the Council organised a high-level briefing on 25 April to consider the implications for the Security Council of the Secretary-General's 18 January implementation report on the 2016 resolutions, which laid out options to increase peacebuilding financing, among other points.

The following day, the Council adopted resolution 2413, taking note of the General Assembly's decision to invite relevant UN bodies and organs, including the PBC, to further advance, explore and consider the recommendations and options in the Secretary-General's January report.

The PBC has made significant strides as part of efforts to follow up on the April 2016 resolutions on the review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture. During 2017, it became engaged with new country and regional situations, notably The Gambia and the Sahel, after years of having a narrow focus on five or six countries. Its involvement in the volatile Sahel region followed a 30 January 2017 presidential statement that emphasised the "importance of the convening role" of the PBC and asked it to assist the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) in implementing the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS). Meanwhile, the PBC sought to maintain international attention and support for The Gambia following the crisis in December 2016-January 2017 that led to President Yahya Jammeh's ceding power to a newly elected government. The PBC further diversified the countries under consideration, which have been Africa-focused, by holding meetings on the Solomon Islands, Colombia and Sri Lanka. It also met for the first time on the Great Lakes region as part of its efforts to promote integrated regional peacebuilding approaches.

Historically, there has been an overlap between the Council and the PBC in terms of their engagement with several African countries. The PBC was active during 2017 in supporting Liberia's transition in advance of the closure of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in March of this year. The PBC's

Liberia country configuration, in particular, committed itself to addressing funding and expertise gaps facing the UN Country Team for carrying forward a peacebuilding plan for Liberia, which the Council had endorsed. Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), the chair of the configuration, participated in a series of events in Liberia from 21 to 25 March for the closure of UNMIL and met with the new government and others to consider future PBC support.

The Burundi configuration has continued to draw attention to socio-economic challenges; Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), chair of the configuration, visited the country from 27 to 30 March. The PBC held a high-level meeting on the Central African Republic, another of its country configurations, on 24 April. Its Sierra Leone configuration actively supported and monitored Sierra Leone's presidential, legislative and local elections held in March, while the Guinea-Bissau configuration has similarly focused on supporting upcoming legislative elections in November amidst that country's political crisis.

During 2017, the PBC also made changes to its working methods. Efforts continued to invigorate the primacy of the PBC's Organizational Committee, on which all 31 members of the PBC are represented, and to move away from a reliance on country configurations, where, historically, most of the PBC's work had been focused. The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) also began to brief the PBC regularly during meetings about projects of the Peacebuilding Fund. Among other developments, the PBC continued working to enhance its partnerships with regional and subregional organisations and international financial institutions, notably the AU and the World Bank.

The PBC has sought to build on this work in 2018. Jinga attended the sixth meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for Sahel Strategies in N'Djamena on 15 March. A high-level meeting on The Gambia on 23 April, which Gambian President Adama Barrow attended, considered the government's peacebuilding and sustainable development priorities and sought

to raise awareness for a 22 May donor conference on The Gambia.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue in the Council-PBC relationship continues to be improving the "specific, strategic and targeted advice" that the PBC provides the Council, as stipulated in the resolutions on the UN's peacebuilding architecture. The PBC's convening role—its ability to bring together diverse actors, including the UN system, regional organisations, international financial institutions and civil society—gives it a widely recognised advantage compared to the Council. More broadly, the need for the PBC to deliver tangible benefits for countries, such as helping fill resource and capacity gaps of countries, remains important in improving its perceived relevance. In this regard, Liberia has been seen as an important test for the PBC.

One option is for the Council to summarise in a note or letter the main ideas raised during the informal interactive dialogue, the focus of which at press time had not yet been proposed. Last year's informal interactive dialogue on the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin was the first time a specific country or regional situation was considered, unlike previous thematic discussions focused on the Council-PBC relationship.

Council Dynamics

Following years of scepticism, including from the P5, about its added value, the past 18 months have seen greater Council openness towards working with the PBC, especially in transitions and the drawdown of peace operations. Some doubts remain about the concrete benefits that the PBC can deliver to the Council or countries that it seeks to support, a view strongly held by Russia. Elected members also continue to take the lead in referencing the PBC in Council resolutions and presidential statements, with Sweden and Peru playing this role among current members. Overall there has been satisfaction among Council and PBC members with many of the changes in the PBC, which are seen as having made its activities more relevant and promising.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In June, the Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, is expected to brief the Security Council on Yemen.

Key Recent Developments

The war in Yemen between Houthi rebels and the Yemeni government, supported by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition, entered its fourth year in March as fighting intensified. Some momentum towards resuming peace talks has been provided by the appointment of the Secretary-General's new Yemen envoy. On 17 April, Griffiths delivered his first briefing to the Council following travels to Riyadh, Sana'a, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). His visit to Sana'a was the first time in over a year that the UN envoy had met with the Houthis, who had banned Griffiths' predecessor, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, from Sana'a.

During the briefing, Griffiths stated his intention to present within the next two months a framework for negotiations, noting that the outlines of a political solution remain an end to fighting, the withdrawal of forces and the handover of heavy weapons in key locations, and an agreement on the establishment of an inclusive government. Despite having what he described as encouraging meetings during his visit to the region, he warned that an escalation in fighting and the renewed prospect of a military offensive against the port city of Hodeidah could derail political efforts.

On 15 May, the Office of the Special Envoy said in a press release that the Special Envoy was making "good progress towards the production of a framework for negotiations", which he planned to put to the Council in the first half of June.

Amidst the escalation in fighting, the Houthis announced on 23 April the death of Saleh Ali al-Sammad, president of the Houthis' Supreme Political Council, who was killed in a coalition drone strike near Hodeidah. Al-Sammad's death has been viewed as a serious setback for peace talks, as he was considered an advocate for negotiations and had been scheduled to meet with Griffiths in late April. The coalition bombed Sana'a heavily on the day before and the day of

al-Sammad's funeral, which was held in the Yemeni capital on 28 April. The Houthis said that they fired eight ballistic missiles at Saudi Arabia in retaliation later that day. Saudi Arabia claimed to intercept four missiles, with fragments killing one civilian.

April and May saw increasingly frequent Houthi missile and rocket attacks on Saudi Arabia. Saudi Aramco facilities in Jizan were repeatedly targeted, including in one case with a drone, on 4, 11 and 23 April. A Houthi missile slightly damaged a Saudi oil tanker on 3 April near Hodeidah in an attack conducted one day after an airstrike reportedly killed 12 civilians in the port city. In a 23 April statement, the Secretary-General strongly condemned airstrikes on a wedding party in Hajjah and on civilian vehicles in Taizz that killed at least 50 civilians. On 9 May, the Secretary-General expressed deep concern in another statement about the escalation in the Yemen conflict, singling out the 7 May air strikes that hit a government building in a densely populated area of Sana'a and the launching of ballistic missiles by the Houthis on 6 and 9 May towards different targets in Saudi Arabia, including Riyadh.

Yemen's humanitarian crisis due to the war remains the world's largest. More than 22 million people require humanitarian assistance, and 8.4 million are severely food insecure. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock, speaking during the 17 April Council meeting, again expressed concern over access restrictions for humanitarian and commercial supplies into and inside Yemen. Lowcock flagged the need for commercial shipping to have access to Hodeidah and Saleef ports, highlighting the importance of commercial imports for Yemen, which imported 90 percent of its food and nearly all its medicine and fuel prior to the war.

The UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM), which provides clearance for commercial shipping to Houthi-controlled territory, reported that in April food imports through the two ports declined by 22 percent and fuel imports by 12 percent from March import levels. No containerised cargo was imported for the fifth consecutive month. Only half as many vessels (19) have been berthing at Hodeidah and Saleef on average

per month, compared to an average of 35 prior to the November 2017 blockade imposed by the coalition. Overall, UNVIM reported that food imports in April were only half of Yemen's monthly requirements, while fuel imports were 27 percent of monthly needs.

OCHA reported in early May that fighting from an offensive by forces supported by the coalition along the Red Sea coast had displaced 100,000 people from areas south of Hodeidah into southern Yemen over recent months. On 29 May, the coalition announced that these forces had advanced to within 20 kilometres of Hodeidah.

Tensions continued between the Yemeni government and the UAE, focusing recently on Socotra, an island where there have been protests over the Emirati presence. The situation worsened starting in late April when the UAE deployed two tanks, armoured vehicles and at least 100 soldiers without informing the government. Local authorities at the port and airport were ordered to leave. In a letter to the Security Council, the government described the deployments as "an unjustified military action". On 14 May, following mediation by Saudi Arabia, Yemeni Prime Minister Ahmed Obeid bin Daghr announced that the dispute had been resolved, with Saudi troops reportedly replacing some of the Emirati forces. A letter from the UAE to the Council on 21 May noted, with regret, that there had been a misunderstanding with the government, and that its presence on Socotra is strictly to assist the people of Socotra, adding that the situation had been fully resolved.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 24 April press briefing, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights called for the coalition to investigate fully the most recent deadly attacks against civilians, and said that those found to be responsible should be held accountable with reparations or remedy provided to the victims.

In an 11 May press briefing, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that April was the deadliest month for civilians in Yemen so far this year, with at least 236 civilians killed and 238 injured, well over double the civilian casualties documented the previous month. The heavy toll continued during the first week of May, with 63 civilian casualties – six killed and 57 injured – documented by the UN Human Rights office in Yemen, the spokesperson said.

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2216](#) (14 April 2015) demanded that the Houthis withdraw from all seized areas, relinquish all seized arms, and establish a targeted arms embargo against the Houthis and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/5](#) (15 March 2018) called for the full and sustained opening of all of Yemen's ports, including Hodeidah and Saleef, and for increased access to Sana'a airport. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8235](#) (17 April 2018) was a briefing by Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock. [Security Council Letter S/2018/490](#) (21 May 2018) was a letter from the UAE about Socotra Island. [S/2018/440](#) (8 May 2018) was from Yemen and contained a government statement about developments on Socotra Island.

Yemen

Key Issues and Options

Learning about Griffiths' strategy to resume peace negotiations and considering how the Council can best support his mediation efforts are key issues. The intensification of fighting and the potential for a coalition offensive against Hodeidah, which the UN warned last year would be "catastrophic", remain further key concerns that risk undermining the UN envoy's work.

Another important issue is monitoring implementation of the Council's 15 March presidential statement, which focused on the humanitarian situation, including progress towards increasing access, the parties' compliance with international humanitarian law, and the protection of civilians from hostilities and also from the humanitarian consequence of the war, such as famine and disease.

A related issue is a new UN plan that is being developed to increase UNVIM inspections while addressing the problem of double inspections of ships by UNVIM and the coalition.

One option is for the Council to adopt a

presidential statement expressing support for Griffiths' framework for resuming peace negotiations. This could reiterate the message of its 15 March presidential statement that called upon all parties to the conflict to abandon pre-conditions and engage in good faith with the UN-led process, with the meaningful participation of women and other underrepresented groups at all levels. Such a statement could reiterate the Council's call for the full and sustained opening of Hodeidah and Saleef ports.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Most Council members have strategic relations with Saudi Arabia, making them cautious about the positions they take on Yemen. For this reason, members have been reluctant to seek a new resolution on Yemen, despite their recognition of the problems with resolution 2216, which was adopted in April 2015 at the onset of the coalition intervention. Still, there was interest in a resolution to support the new envoy, which it seems Saudi Arabia opposed, as it has hitherto objected to any new resolution on Yemen. The idea of a new

resolution appears to have been dropped, and in the meantime, Griffiths has found useful the paragraph from the Council's March presidential statement that called for the parties to abandon pre-conditions and to have meaningful participation of underrepresented groups.

Since the end of last year a group of elected members—currently Bolivia, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland and Sweden, joined sometimes by France—have coordinated their positions when they perceive Council products as lacking balance or failing to address sufficiently the humanitarian situation in Yemen. France recently announced that it will co-host with Saudi Arabia a humanitarian conference on Yemen at the end of June. The US has increasingly sought to call out Iranian support of the Houthis. Not all members are in agreement about Iran's role and the support it provides. Kuwait, as a member of the coalition, champions the positions of the coalition.

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

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to extend for six months the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which expires on 30 June. A representative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is expected to brief Council members in consultations on the most recent UNDOF report. UNDOF was established in 1974 to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria.

Key Recent Developments

Between 9 and 10 May, Israel carried out dozens of strikes against presumed Iranian and Syrian government military targets across southern Syria, claiming it was responding to Iranian forces firing rockets from Syrian territory at Israeli military targets in the Syrian Golan. According to UNDOF, 12 rounds were fired by an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) main battle tank, striking close to an UNDOF observation post on the Bravo (Syrian) side. Three other missiles struck observation

post 71. UNDOF was unable to determine the origin of the missiles. In the same area, about 20 surface-to-surface missiles, 30 air-to-surface missiles, and 100 anti-aircraft gun rounds were fired. One surface-to-air missile fired from an IDF position intercepted a missile from the Bravo side. Two missiles impacted near Jabhata al Khashab, and three heavy explosions occurred near Al Baath. Seven high explosive rounds originated from the general area of Al Qunaytirah. UNDOF was unable to determine the point of impact. During the 10 May events, UNDOF was in contact with both parties urging them to respect the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974. Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura reported to the Council on this escalation of incidents during his monthly briefing on political developments in Syria on 16 May, describing the regional tensions as unprecedented since 1973.

The Secretary-General's 20 March report, covering the period from 25 November 2017

to 23 February, noted that during the reporting period the ceasefire between Israel and Syria was maintained, albeit in a volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in Syria and notwithstanding a number of violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974. One incident of particular concern occurred on 10 February when the IDF informed UNDOF that it had "intercepted an Iranian unmanned aerial vehicle launched from Syria" and had taken defensive action against the unmanned aerial vehicle and Syrian targets. The IDF also reported that one of its F-16 fighter jets had been shot down, crash-landing on Israeli territory and injuring two Israeli pilots. Syria informed UNDOF on 10 February of air strikes by Israeli aircraft in Homs and east of Damascus. On the same day, UNDOF observed that three rockets had been launched from the vicinity of Harrah on the Bravo side, about 10 kilometres from UN observation post 54, had flown over observation posts 53 and 54,

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS Security Council Resolution S/RES/2394 (21 December 2017) renewed the mandate of UNDOF until 30 June 2018. Secretary-General's Report S/2018/244 (20 March 2018) was the latest report on UNDOF, covering the period from 25 November 2017 to 23 February 2018.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

and had subsequently crossed the ceasefire line. UNDOF was not in a position to determine the exact point of impact.

According to the report, Syrian armed forces and non-state armed opposition groups engaged in exchanges of heavy weapons fire in the area of separation and the area of limitation on the Bravo side, while various armed groups, including Jabhat Fath al-Sham, which is listed as a terrorist group by the Security Council, and Jaysh Khalid ibn al-Walid, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, continued to exchange fire in the UNDOF area of operation.

During the reporting period, UNDOF made progress towards the limited return to Bravo-side operations in line with the phased UNDOF plan. Following the completion of phase one of the plan, with the re-establishment of the UNDOF presence at Camp Faouar on 14 November 2016, UNDOF continued to develop the infrastructure at the camp and steadily improved the living conditions there. Phase two will involve the resumption over a period of six to eight months of limited patrolling of the northern part of the area of separation by the Nepalese mechanised infantry company from Camp Faouar. In line with the plan, the mechanised infantry company commenced limited protected patrolling on 8 February from Camp Faouar to Jaba, Khan Arnabah, Mount Hermon and Ya'fur. The limited patrolling was suspended on 10 February because of the security situation and resumed on 14 February. The return of the UNDOF temporary headquarters from Ya'fur, Damascus, and of the Force Reserve

Company from Camp Ziouani to Camp Faouar is foreseen during phase three.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 37th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) voted 25 to 14 (with 7 abstentions) on 23 March to adopt resolution 37/33. The resolution expresses grave concern about Israeli practices in the occupied Syrian Golan, which it details, and requests the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all governments, competent UN organs, and intergovernmental and humanitarian organisations. It also requests the Secretary-General to report on the matter at the HRC's 40th session in March 2019. Security Council and HRC members the UK and the US voted against the resolution.

Key Issues and Options

Considering the recently worsened security situation in the Golan, the full return of UNDOF to the Syrian side seems even less likely in the foreseeable future. This is a significant issue in as much as it constrains the mission's ability to carry out its monitoring tasks. At press time, it was unclear whether the escalation of fighting might result in long-term effects on UNDOF's ability to implement its mandate. The Secretary-General is expected to make his usual recommendation for a six-month extension of the mandate in his upcoming report.

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

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

Council and Wider Dynamics

There is general agreement within the Council that UNDOF contributes to stability in the region, given the absence of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria. The mission's observation role has been limited since its September 2014 relocation to the Alpha side of the ceasefire line. However, the mission's liaison function continues to be regarded as 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. However, the security situation on the Syrian side is still not conducive to full redeployment of UNDOF troops. Council members continue to support the eventual complete return of UNDOF to the Bravo side but are mindful that this would require a favourable security environment, which is crucial for maintaining the confidence of troop-contributing countries.

Since June 2012, Russia and the US have been the co-penholders on resolutions renewing UNDOF. Despite the deep divisions between the co-penholders regarding the Syria file, both countries are expected to continue to consider UNDOF as a separate issue and not to politicise it.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

In June, 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). Special Representative for

Afghanistan and head of UNAMA Tadamichi Yamamoto is expected to brief. A representative from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime might also brief.

The mandate of UNAMA expires on 17 March 2019.

Key Recent Developments

The second meeting of the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation in Afghanistan took place on 28 February. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani offered a wide-ranging proposal to the Taliban that included talks

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2405 (8 March 2018) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2019. S/RES/2255 (21 December 2015) contained language clarifying how the 1988 Afghanistan sanctions regime functions and reflecting changing conflict dynamics in Afghanistan. Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2018/2 (19 January 2018) emphasised the importance of advancing regional, interregional and international cooperation to achieve stability and sustainable development in Afghanistan and the Central Asian region. S/PRST/2017/15 (24 August 2017) was on the review of the implementation of resolution 2255. Secretary-General's Report S/2018/165 (27 February 2018) was the latest report on Afghanistan. Security Council Press Statements SC/13323 (1 May 2018) condemned the 30 April terrorist attacks in Kabul and Kandahar, which resulted in at least 41 people killed and 45 injured. SC/13314 (23 April 2018) condemned the 22 April terrorist attack in Kabul targeting a voter registration centre, which resulted in at least 50 people killed and 100 injured. SC/13258 (21 March 2018) condemned the 21 March terrorist attack in Kabul, which resulted in at least 33 people killed and 65 injured. SC/13251 (15 March 2018) welcomed the convening of the second meeting of the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation in Afghanistan on 28 February. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8199 (8 March 2018) was the latest quarterly debate on Afghanistan.

Afghanistan

about a ceasefire, prisoner exchange, review of the constitution, and the removal of sanctions against insurgents. A trend of increased attacks by the Taliban and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since the beginning of 2018 has continued, however. On 21 March, the Iranian New Year (Nowruz), ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack in Kabul that killed at least 33 people and injured 65. During another attack by ISIL at a voter registration centre in Kabul, at least 50 people were killed and 100 injured. On 30 April two attacks by ISIL in Kabul and Kandahar resulted in at least 41 killed and 45 injured. The Council issued press statements condemning all of these attacks. Additionally, the Taliban launched attacks against several other voter registration centres across the country.

On 10 May, UNAMA released a special report detailing a pattern of election-related attacks and abuses during the initial voter registration period ahead of elections in October. The report identified 23 election-related security incidents since voter registration began on 14 April, resulting in 271 civilians killed or injured.

At press time, a formal response by the Taliban to Ghani's offer was still outstanding; meanwhile, on 25 April, the Taliban announced their annual spring offensive and the beginning of the fighting season.

Following the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his strategic review of UNAMA, the Council adopted resolution 2405 on 8 March to renew UNAMA's mandate for another year. The core of the mandate (good offices, human rights monitoring, protection of civilians, and the promotion of good governance and regional cooperation) remains unchanged. The resolution incorporates new language in several areas, including with regard to finding a political solution to the conflict; women's social, economic and political engagement in Afghanistan; counter-terrorism; and elections.

During his last Council briefing on 8 March, Yamamoto reported accelerated progress on preparations for voter registration for the upcoming parliamentary elections. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) announced that elections would be held on 20 October. Much of the ability of Afghanistan to conduct inclusive

elections will depend on the security situation, which has continued to worsen over the past several months.

In other developments, following a request by ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda on 3 November 2017 to open an investigation into the situation in Afghanistan, the victims representation process at the ICC concluded on 31 January. During this process, victims of the alleged crimes were able to submit their views. In conjunction with the facts presented by Bensouda, the judges will decide whether or not to comply with the prosecutor's request to authorise an investigation into alleged war crimes committed in Afghanistan since May 2003.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 15 May, the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee received a briefing from the Monitoring Team, which presented its ninth report, reiterating that it remains underutilised because of a lack of new listings during the reporting period.

Human Rights-Related Developments

Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour visited Afghanistan from 8 to 11 May, where he met with President Ghani, government officials, women's organisations, and civil society. In an 11 May press release, he expressed concern over continued attacks on civilians, mainly by extremists and stressed that the UN Human Rights team in Afghanistan continues to document high levels of civilian casualties, particularly as a result of suicide attacks in densely populated areas. He also expressed concern over discrimination against Afghan women at all levels of society and urged the authorities to investigate and prosecute military and civilian perpetrators of the sexual abuse of boys.

Key Issues and Options

The Council faces many issues that have continued to grow in complexity. Afghan civilians bear the heaviest burden of the worsening security situation, exacerbated most recently by an increase in attacks following the start of the voter registration in April. The security situation is further complicated by the increased presence of ISIL and other terrorist groups. Insurgency in Afghanistan continues to be closely interlinked with illicit drug production and trafficking, activities that reached record levels during 2017. In that context, the 1988 Committee could hold an informal

briefing open to all UN member states in order to draw attention to the possibility of proposing individuals involved in the narcotics trade with the Taliban.

Awaiting the next steps in the framework of the Kabul process and holding credible and inclusive parliamentary elections in 2018 and presidential elections in 2019 continue to be the main concerns for the Council. The Council could issue a presidential or press statement, reiterating its call upon the Taliban to engage in direct peace talks with the government ahead of the elections along the lines of President Ghani's offer.

Council Dynamics

Council members are generally concerned about the progressively volatile security environment and its implications for the civilian population. In addition to the recent surge of hostilities by the Taliban, the presence of ISIL and its violent tactics have added another layer of complexity to the conflict with the potential to deepen ethnic and sectarian tensions. Among permanent members, Russia has continued to emphasise the threat posed by ISIL in Afghanistan, given that the group has now been defeated in its former strongholds in the Middle East. At the last debate, Russia described Afghanistan as a springboard for further expansion by ISIL into the region. That debate took place on 8 March, International Women's Day, and saw members commenting on the necessity for women's participation, especially in connection with the upcoming elections. Following that debate, Council members were able to unite behind a press statement welcoming the convening of the second meeting of the Kabul Process. Russia regularly emphasises the importance of the regional context and the valuable role played by regional organisations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Russia continues to question the utility of the US and NATO presence in the country, which it maintains does not help the situation and even increases casualties.

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

International Court of Justice

Expected Council Action

On 22 June, the Security Council and General Assembly will elect a judge to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), due to the resignation of Judge Hisashi Owada (Japan), effective 7 June.

Background

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

The process of putting forward candidates to the ICJ is linked to Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) membership. Contracting parties to The Hague Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes of 1899 (or its 1907 revision) may appoint up to four potential arbitrators as members of the PCA. To date, there are 121 contracting parties. For the purposes of ICJ elections, the ICJ Statute provides that a group of arbitrators put forward by a contracting party is considered a “national group”, and these national groups can nominate candidates to the ICJ (the Statute also provides for a parallel procedure for states not represented in the PCA to nominate candidates). The ICJ Statute recommends that when making nominations, members of each national group consult their highest national court, national legal faculties, and national schools of law. No group may nominate more than four persons. The national group then communicates the names of the candidates to the Secretary-General, who prepares a list of all persons thus nominated.

The ICJ Statute provides that vacancies on the court shall be filled using the same method as regular elections. When a vacancy occurs, the Secretary-General issues invitations for national groups to suggest nominees. Thereafter, the Council adopts a resolution

deciding on the date of the election for the Council and the General Assembly. The elected judge is to commence his or her term immediately, serving for the remainder of the original term of the departing judge, in this case until 5 February 2021.

On 6 February, Owada informed the President of the Court of his resignation. The Secretary-General then sent a note to the Council on 19 February, requesting that the Council fix a date for the election of Owada’s replacement. The Council adopted resolution 2403 on 28 February, setting the date of the election for 22 June.

Although there is no formal requirement for geographical distribution, Article 9 of the ICJ Statute requires representation of the “main forms of civilization and of the principal legal systems of the world”. Historically, the Court’s composition reflected that of the Security Council, with each of the P5 always having a judge on the bench. During the last elections, however, the judge nominated by the UK was not elected.

Currently, the distribution is as follows: African states, three; Latin American and Caribbean states, two; Asian states, four; Western European and other states, four; and Eastern European states, two.

Candidates

When a judge resigns before the end of his or her term, it is not uncommon that only that judge’s state of nationality puts forward a candidate to fill the vacancy in response to the invitations sent by Secretary-General. In this election, that candidate is Yuji Iwasawa (Japan), a law professor at the University of Tokyo. Iwasawa is also the current chairperson of the Human Rights Committee, a body established by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to monitor the implementation of the treaty.

Election Process

Article 8 of the ICJ Statute states that the General Assembly and Security Council shall proceed independently of one another to elect the members of the Court in a secret ballot. Candidates who obtain an absolute majority of votes (that is, a majority of all electors, whether or not they vote or are allowed to vote) in both the General Assembly and the Council are elected. A candidate therefore must obtain 97 votes in the former and eight votes in the latter. In the Council vote, there is no distinction between permanent and non-permanent members.

Since there is only one candidate to fill the vacancy, the chance that the two bodies will elect different candidates does not exist, as it does in the case of regular elections.

According to Article 2 of the ICJ Statute, members of the Court are to be elected “regardless of their nationality, from among persons of high moral character, who possess the qualifications required in their respective countries for appointment to the highest judicial offices, or are juris-consults of recognized competence in international law”. Once elected, a judge is a delegate neither of the government of his or her own country nor of any other state.

Results are usually achieved quickly in the Council, but balloting in the General Assembly can take much longer. In the last regular elections held on 9 November 2017, four of five vacancies were filled after five rounds of voting. The fifth vacancy remained open after Christopher Greenwood (UK) acquired the majority in the Council while Dalveer Bhandari (India) acquired the majority in the General Assembly. Five additional voting rounds on 13 November did not resolve the deadlock between the two organs. Meeting again on 20 November, the Council elected Bhandari after being informed that the UK had withdrawn Greenwood’s nomination.

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2403](#) (28 February 2018) fixed the date for election of a judge for the ICJ in the Council and the General Assembly. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8110](#) (20 November 2017) was the meeting at which the Council elected Dalveer Bhandari (India) to the ICJ after being informed that the UK had withdrawn Christopher Greenwood’s nomination. [Other S/2018/133](#) (19 February 2018) was a note from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council concerning a vacancy on the ICJ.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is due to renew the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts assisting the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee. The Council will continue to monitor the security and political situation in the DRC and may meet on this, depending on how events in the country unfold.

The mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) expires on 31 March 2019.

Key Recent Developments

The deplorable security situation in the east persists. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) Islamist rebel group—responsible for the deadly attack on Tanzanian peacekeepers on 7 December 2017 in which 15 peacekeepers were killed, 53 wounded and one remains missing—continues to wreak havoc in North Kivu. On 21 May, the group reportedly killed ten people and wounded two others in an attack on the town of Mbau, in the Beni region.

In Ituri, notably in the Djugu area, more than 260 people have died and more than 200,000 have fled their homes since December 2017 amid conflict between the Hema and Lendu ethnic groups. The situation in the Kasai region remains a concern as well. Inter-communal conflict and clashes between militias and government forces in the region began in August 2016 when the leader of the Kamwina Nsapu militia was killed in fighting with the DRC police. Despite a lull in the fighting, some 3.8 million people, including 2.3 million children, are in need of humanitarian assistance, and 400,000 children are severely malnourished and at risk of death, according to an 11 May statement by UNICEF.

The dire humanitarian situation was the focus of a briefing on 19 March, during which Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock; Secretary-General of the Episcopal National Conference of Congo Donatien Nshole; and Coordinator for the Goma-based NGO Encadrement des Femmes Indigènes et des Ménages Vulnérables Jeanine Bandu Bahati briefed the Council. Council members issued a press statement on 22

March, expressing their concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation.

There continue to be serious concerns on the political front in the DRC. President Joseph Kabila, whose second and final term (under the country's constitution) ended in December 2016, remains in office. According to an agreement reached between Kabila and the opposition on 31 December 2016, elections were to be held by the end of 2017, and Kabila was not to run for a third term nor initiate amendments to the constitution. He has refrained from declaring his intentions over the last year, although in the past month, members of his government have said that he would not run for re-election. Citing logistical difficulties that prevented the elections from being held on 5 November 2017, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) published a new electoral calendar for combined presidential, legislative and provincial elections to take place on 23 December 2018.

On 27 March, the Council adopted resolution 2409, renewing MONUSCO's mandate and keeping its current troop levels. The resolution called on all stakeholders in the DRC, including Kabila, to swiftly implement the 31 December 2016 agreement in order to proceed without further delay to the preparation of the 23 December elections. It also called on the DRC to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially those of peaceful assembly; to release all political prisoners; lift the blanket ban on demonstrations; and exercise maximum restraint in responding to protests.

Special Representative and head of MONUSCO Leila Zerrougui briefed the Council on 21 May under "any other business" via video teleconference, particularly on the latest report of the Secretary-General on political and technical progress towards the holding of elections in the DRC. The report noted that, on the one hand, substantial progress has been made in preparation for elections and several important benchmarks have been met. On the other hand, significant challenges remain on the political front, where little has been done to address the lack of political space, posing a threat to the holding of

credible and inclusive elections. For example, the ban on peaceful demonstrations imposed in September 2016 whose lifting the Council urged in resolution 2409 remains in place. In elements to the press released after the meeting, Council members encouraged the DRC to lift the ban and underscored the need to do everything possible to hold transparent, credible and inclusive elections.

An issue of increasing concern that may amplify the security and political difficulties is the recent outbreak of Ebola, with 54 suspected cases of infection and 25 deaths reported by 27 May. Some of the cases confirmed occurred in Mbandaka, a city of over one million people. At press time, the WHO has refrained from declaring an international public health emergency, saying that the situation can be contained if addressed promptly.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 23 March, Zerrougui and a representative of the Joint Mission Analysis Centre of MONUSCO, which is responsible for monitoring the arms embargo, briefed the sanctions committee on the security situation via video teleconference. A representative of the UN Mine Action Service also briefed the committee.

On 30 April the committee held a formal meeting to discuss the DRC's efforts in the fight against sexual violence and child recruitment. Following the formal meeting, which was attended by the DRC, the committee met in informal consultations with Pramila Patten, Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and a representative of the office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.

The committee met on 18 May to discuss the final report of its Group of Experts. The report noted that armed groups and criminal networks continue to use natural resources and levy illicit taxation. It also reported that violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law have taken place in Beni and Djugu. It signalled that some states have not notified the committee regarding delivery of arms and related materiel to the DRC, as required by resolution 2360.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 19 March, the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC released a report documenting killings and other serious human rights violations due to the use of excessive force by security services and defence forces in response to mass

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2409 (27 March 2018) renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 31 March 2019. **S/RES/2360** (21 June 2017) renewed the DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/174** (1 March 2018) was on MONUSCO. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8207** (19 March 2018) was a briefing on the humanitarian situation in the DRC. **Security Council Press Statement SC/13260** (22 March 2018) expressed Council members' concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the DRC. **Security Council Letter S/2018/412** (1 May 2018) was the report on political and technical progress towards the holding of elections in the DRC. **Sanctions Committee Documents SC/13333** (11 May 2018) was on the 30 April committee meeting with the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, and a representative of the office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. **SC/13280** (5 April 2018) was on the 23 March committee meeting with Zerrougui and representatives of the Joint Mission Analysis Centre of MONUSCO and the UN Mine Action Service.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

protests between 1 January 2017 and 31 January 2018, resulting in the deaths of at least 47 people, including women and children. According to the report, there were indications that Congolese security services attempted to cover up these serious human rights violations by removing the bodies of victims and obstructing the work of national and international observers.

During the 37th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), the HRC held an enhanced interactive dialogue on 20 March on the human rights situation in the DRC with Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour. He said that an increase in human rights violations in the country was largely due to the widespread violations of political rights and fundamental freedoms in relation to the electoral process, combined with intensified inter-ethnic and inter-communal violence, as well as a proliferation of armed groups in several provinces. Gilmour stressed the need for the HRC to “retain a sharp focus on the ever-deteriorating human rights situation in the country, especially in the context of the electoral process”.

Key Issues and Options

The primary political issue for the Council in the upcoming period is the importance

of elections taking place as scheduled and that they are free and fair. The Council may choose to issue a presidential or press statement calling on the DRC to take action to guarantee that elections are held in a safe environment conducive to full participation in the political process.

Additionally, the Council may, in coordination with regional actors, reiterate its call on all stakeholders to remain committed to the electoral calendar as the only way forward and to refrain from violence.

The immediate issue for the Council in June is renewing the sanctions regime. The Council can use the sanctions resolution to reiterate its main messages about the electoral process. It can also threaten to impose sanctions or move to sanction actors who undermine the process.

The Council could choose to visit the DRC to reinforce the importance of free, fair and timely elections and to assess the security situation and MONUSCO’s response to it.

Council and Wider Dynamics

All Council members remain concerned about the ongoing political crisis and the dire security situation. There is consensus about the imperative of holding the elections on 23 December without further delays, in alignment with the position of regional actors. There is also general agreement that the Council should remain focused on the DRC throughout the year, including through a possible Council mission, which may take place this summer. Differences between Council members persist, however, regarding the nature of the political crisis, with some seeing it as a constitutional issue and others as one with wider national and regional implications. Some Council members are concerned that while logistical preparations for the elections are meeting their benchmarks on the whole, little has been done by the DRC to guarantee that elections will be free, fair and inclusive.

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

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In June, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita is expected to brief on the latest developments in the country and the most recent UN Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) report, due on 14 June.

MINUSCA’s mandate expires on 15 November 2018.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) is dire. Self-proclaimed self-defence groups, loosely connected to some members of the anti-Balaka movement, have continued to operate in south-eastern CAR, targeting Muslims. Ex-Séléka, largely Muslim factions, continue to establish illegal parallel

administration and taxation structures in areas under their control, preying on the population.

Bangui has also seen more violence in recent months, increasingly along sectarian and inter-communal lines. On 10 April, 28 people died after MINUSCA and local security forces launched an operation to clear PK5, a Muslim neighbourhood, of armed groups, leading to deadly clashes. Blaming the UN for the events, demonstrators laid 17 bodies of those killed in front of MINUSCA’s headquarters. On 1 May, deadly violence erupted when the authorities attempted to arrest a member of an armed group in the PK5 neighbourhood. In the ensuing violence, a nearby church was stormed in the middle of a service, and 24 worshippers and a priest were killed. In response, a mob burned a mosque and lynched two people believed to be Muslim.

In total, 26 people were killed and more than 170 injured from the violence that day.

The security situation in Bambari, located in the centre of the country, where MINUSCA has a significant presence, has also deteriorated. On 15 May it was reported that members of the Union for Peace (UPC), one of the groups forming the ex-Séléka coalition, attacked the mayor’s office, police and radio stations, and a MINUSCA base. MINUSCA launched an operation in response the following day, and eight people were killed during the fighting.

Armed groups continue to target humanitarian workers and MINUSCA peacekeepers. On 3 April, a Mauritanian peacekeeper was killed and 11 injured in an attack on a MINUSCA base in Tagbara, northeast of Bambari, by suspected anti-Balaka elements. Another Mauritanian peacekeeper was killed

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2399 (30 January 2018) renewed the CAR sanctions regime until 31 January 2019 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 28 February 2019. **S/RES/2387** (15 November 2017) renewed the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 November 2018. **Security Council Press Statements SC/13346** (17 May 2018) condemned a 17 May attack by anti-Balaka elements on a MINUSCA convoy, resulting in one Mauritanian peacekeeper killed and eight injured. **SC/13291** (11 April 2018) condemned a 10 April attack on MINUSCA in Bangui by armed groups, which resulted in one Rwandan peacekeeper killed and eight others injured. **SC/13275** (3 April 2018) condemned the attack on a temporary operating base of MINUSCA in Tagbara by suspected anti-Balaka elements, which resulted in one Mauritanian peacekeeper killed and 11 others injured. **SC/13236** (6 March 2018) condemned an attack on education workers near Markounda on 25 February by unknown assailants, which resulted in the killing of one UNICEF education consultant, two officials of the CAR Ministry of Education, and three members of a UNICEF national partner organisation. **Security Council Letter S/2018/463** (16 May 2018) was on MINUSCA support for the CAR security forces. **Sanctions Committee Documents SC/13320** (26 April 2018) was on an amendment to a listing of an individual on the sanctions list. **SC/13239** (7 March 2018) was on the 23 February committee meeting on the Panel of Experts’ progress report.

Central African Republic

and eight were injured in an attack on a convoy they were escorting in the town of Alindao, southeast of Bambari, on 17 May. The Council issued press statements condemning both attacks.

Council members were briefed on the latest violence in the country on 23 May under “any other business” via video teleconference by the Special Representative and head of MINUSCA, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga.

In accordance with resolution 2387, the Secretary-General submitted to the Council on 16 May recommendations regarding possible support for the redeployment of the CAR security forces. The report recognised that such support should only be given on specific conditions, including that the security forces are inclusive and ethnically representative, have been vetted, and uphold the principles of accountability and the rule of law. It recommended that the Council authorise MINUSCA to provide limited operational and logistical support to the CAR security forces trained by the ongoing EU Military Training Mission for a period of 12 months. It stressed that without this support, the ability of the CAR to restore peace and establish state authority would be undermined.

The country also continues to face an acute humanitarian crisis. According to a report released by OCHA on 10 May, there were 687,398 internally displaced persons and 568,572 refugees in neighbouring countries at the end of March.

On the political front, peace and reconciliation initiatives have failed to gain momentum, and the government, led by President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, has minimal control outside Bangui. The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR has advanced the implementation road map for Peace and Reconciliation endorsed by the AU in July 2017, launching the second round of consultations with 14 armed groups in late February. In a 27 February press statement,

Council members reaffirmed their support for the initiative as the main framework for a political solution in the CAR.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 23 February, the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee met to discuss the Panel of Experts' progress report. The coordinator of the panel said that armed groups continue to strengthen their grip over large parts of the CAR with a view to increasing their leverage in the political process. On 16 March, the panel briefed the committee on its work programme. The committee met to discuss the Panel of Experts' latest progress report on 25 May.

Human-Rights Related Developments

During its 37th session, the Human Rights Council held an interactive dialogue on 21 March with the independent expert on human rights in the CAR, Marie-Thérèse Keita Bocoum, who visited the country from 6 to 16 February to assess the impact of the AU's peace initiative on human rights. In a press release following her trip, Bocoum called for an urgent need to reinstate the criminal justice system, saying that “mob justice is in effect replacing state justice in some areas”, and urged national authorities and civil society to explore options for a road map on transitional justice and to consider national consultations and collective reparations.

In a 9 May statement, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein expressed “deep alarm at the volatile situation in the CAR, particularly given the worrying hate speech and incitement to violence on the basis of religion, as well as the recent killings and attacks in Bangui”, referring to the 1 May attack in Bangui. The statement stressed that the recent violence must not be allowed to undermine the peace process facilitated by the AU.

Issues and Options

The need to respond to the increased fighting between rebels, attacks against civilians along sectarian lines, and the targeting of MINUSCA personnel and other UN and humanitarian personnel is of serious concern to the Council. As part of its efforts, the Council may amend MINUSCA's mandate to provide operational and logistical support

to the CAR security forces, as requested by the Secretary-General.

In an effort to curb violence, the Council could consider acting through the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, listing those with links to recent attacks on civilians, including individuals who have incited ethnic or religious violence. Sanctions may also be effective in incentivising armed groups to commit to reconciliation.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The deteriorating security situation and the government's inability to project law outside of Bangui and Bambari have been a continuing matter of concern for the Council. After a period of relative calm, these issues have resurfaced in Bangui and Bambari, despite the presence of MINUSCA. Moreover, part of the population sees MINUSCA as a culprit, blaming the mission for the violence and for inability to prevent it.

The issue of support for the CAR security forces has been a sticking point for Council members, as security sector reform, including the vetting of personnel, has gone slowly. In light of this, during negotiations over resolution 2387, Council members disagreed over whether MINUSCA should be assisting the authorities with personnel who have been linked to human rights violations, while faced with the reality that MINUSCA is unable to be present in large parts of the CAR without the deployment of these forces. Regularly monitored, and limited support may prove to be an acceptable middle ground. Additionally, some Council members will want to receive more precise information on the resources that will be required to fulfil the request, along with its merits.

France is the penholder on the CAR, and Côte d'Ivoire chairs the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee.

Iran

Expected Council Action

In June, 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. The Council is also expected to receive reports

from the Joint Commission, established by the parties to the JCPOA to oversee its implementation, and from the Council's 2231

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2231 (20 July 2015) endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/1030** (8 December 2017) was on implementation of resolution 2231. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8143** (19 December 2017) was the Council's semi-annual meeting on resolution 2231.

Iran

facilitator, Ambassador Karel van Oosterom (the Netherlands). Briefings are expected from Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, van Oosterom, and a representative of the EU in its capacity as coordinator of the Joint Commission.

Key Recent Developments

In a widely expected move, US President Donald Trump announced on 8 May his decision to withdraw the US from the JCPOA, saying among other reasons that Iran had violated the spirit of the agreement by its involvement in various conflicts in the Middle East. Trump signed a memorandum to start the process of restoring US sanctions on Iran, and on the same day US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin issued a statement declaring that full US sanctions on Iran would come into effect after 90 days in some cases and after 180 days in others. In addition to US entities, the sanctions imposed by the US could also affect entities in the EU and other member states that engage in economic activity with Iran.

Trump's announcement drew immediate reactions from across the world. Secretary-General António Guterres issued a statement expressing concern over the US withdrawal from the agreement and called on parties to the JCPOA and all other members to continue to support it. Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said that the EU would abide by the JCPOA as long as Iran continued to uphold its commitments under the agreement. In a joint statement, France, Germany and the UK stressed their continued support for the JCPOA and called for full implementation of resolution 2231. They also called on Iran to exercise restraint and for the US to "avoid taking action which obstructs its full implementation by all other parties to the deal". Israel and Saudi Arabia, who have been critical of the JCPOA since its inception, were among the countries that welcomed Trump's decision.

In the flurry of diplomatic activity that ensued, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif met with his counterparts in China, Russia and the EU to discuss the future of the JCPOA. During these encounters, Zarif received assurances from the remaining JCPOA signatories that they would continue to adhere to the agreement. At the 15 May

meeting of Zarif, Mogherini and the foreign ministers of France, Germany and the UK, all parties agreed that they would try to salvage the JCPOA. Mogherini also announced that expert-level meetings would take place in the coming weeks to explore options for circumventing the US sanctions.

On 21 May, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo outlined a new US strategy towards Iran that will be implemented outside the JCPOA framework. Pompeo asserted that the US would exert robust financial pressure on Iran by employing unprecedented sanctions unless Iran changes its behaviour. Some of the 12 demands for Iran laid out by Pompeo include abandoning the pursuit of nuclear weapons, allowing weapons inspections, and ending its destabilising activities in the Middle East. Should Iran comply with all US demands, Pompeo said that the US would end sanctions, re-establish diplomatic relations, and support Iran's integration into the international economic system.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 12 March, during its 37th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue to consider the report of its special rapporteur on Iran on the situation of human rights in the country (A/HRC/37/68). The report states that demonstrations during December 2017 led to the deaths of at least 22 people and the arrest of at least 1,000 people. It expresses concern over the conditions under which those arrested were being held and over the fate of detainees, following reports of the death of a number of persons in custody, some of whom had been arrested during the protests. On 21 March, the HRC also considered the Secretary-General's report on the human rights situation in Iran (A/HRC/37/24), which focused on the high use of the death penalty; restrictions on and oppression of journalists and human rights defenders; and the continued discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities, as well as women and girls. On 23 March, the HRC voted 21 to seven (with 19 abstentions) to extend the mandate of the special rapporteur for one year and requested a report at its 40th session in March 2019 (A/HRC/RES/37/30). (Security Council and HRC members Ethiopia abstained and China voted against the resolution.)

Key Issues and Options

The Council is primarily concerned with whether a party to the JCPOA or any other member state has failed to comply with resolution 2231 and, in such a case, what the appropriate response should be.

Looking ahead, the Council will have to assess the consequences of the US decision to withdraw from the JCPOA and its implications in light of resolution 2231, which endorsed the agreement, and could consider the possibility of holding an informal meeting or meeting in consultations with 2231 facilitator van Oosterom to discuss this. Such a meeting could also afford members an opportunity to respond to the US administration's criticisms of the agreement and express concern about any intentions to undermine it.

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

Council Dynamics

The current US administration has been critical of the JCPOA from the onset. Now that the US has formally withdrawn from the agreement, the Council dynamics have not changed drastically, given that most Council members anticipated such a move by the US. Most Council members—among them, China, France, the UK and Russia, which are parties to the agreement—maintain their position that the JCPOA remains valid and that they will continue to adhere to its provisions. Iran has also affirmed its commitment to the implementation of the JCPOA and resolution 2231. The E3 JCPOA parties (France, Germany and the UK) expressed regret and concern over the US withdrawal from the agreement, while Iran was highly critical of the US's unilateral action. During the 17 May open debate on upholding international law, Iran noted that the US withdrawal from the JCPOA disregarded international law and the UN Charter.

Looking ahead, there are several factors that could affect Council dynamics. The US could pursue action on Iran in the Council by initiating the process of reinstating sanctions via a new resolution. This could exacerbate the divide between the US and other permanent members, most notably France and the UK, which contend that Iran has been in compliance with JCPOA. The Council dynamics could be further complicated should Iran decide to withdraw from the agreement or leave the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expecting a briefing, followed by consultations, on the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), together with his monthly report on violations of the Status of Forces Agreement or obstructions to UNMISS, as requested in resolution 2406.

The mandate of UNMISS expires on 15 March 2019.

Key Recent Developments

The situation in South Sudan remains a cause for grave concern. The country is on the brink of famine, and the humanitarian crisis continues to intensify amidst widespread insecurity and violence despite the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) on 21 December 2017. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock, who visited South Sudan from 15 to 16 May, said in a statement that “ordinary people are suffering on an unimaginable scale”, with aid agencies “subject to harassment, extortion, looting, kidnappings, killings, predatory fees and levies and other blockages across the country—perpetrated by all parties to the conflict”. Seven million people—more than half of the country's population—will need humanitarian assistance in 2018.

In May, intense fighting took place in the Unity region between government and opposition forces. Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba, and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Adama Dieng strongly condemned this escalation of violence in a joint statement on 11 May. Preliminary investigations by the UN have uncovered alarming patterns of serious human rights violations and abuses including killings, pillaging, abductions, rape and gang-rape committed by both parties during the fighting, leading to forced displacement of the population, violations which could constitute atrocity crimes, the joint statement said. Up to 150 UNMISS peacekeepers were rapidly redeployed to the Unity region to boost the mission's efforts to protect civilians being deliberately targeted by warring parties, according to a 17 May UNMISS press release.

The third round of the South Sudan High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF), first convened in December 2017 by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, took place from 17 to 23 May. This followed two postponements since the second round of the Forum, which took place from 5 to 16 February, to allow for shuttle diplomacy efforts and consultations by IGAD in an attempt to bring the parties closer together. The third round continued discussions, begun in February on governance and security arrangements, but ended with the parties unable to agree on a power-sharing proposal put forward by IGAD. The parties did sign an addendum to the CoHA, requiring the full operationalisation of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism, the body mandated to monitor violations of the CoHA. At press time, next steps in the process had not yet been announced by IGAD.

On 18 May, the US announced that it would initiate a comprehensive review of its assistance programs to South Sudan, including support for the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) and other mechanisms intended to support the 2015 peace agreement, saying that the US “will not continue in a partnership with leaders who are only interested in perpetuating an endless war”. On 14 May, the chairperson of JMEC, Festus Mogae, called on IGAD “to make good its promise to hold spoilers accountable”. On 22 May, the chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers released a statement saying that it had received reports of “repeated and serious violations of the CoHA, which calls for urgent and appropriate action against the perpetrators” and announcing the decision to convene and extraordinary session of the IGAD Council of Ministers “to consider the punitive measures that should be taken against violators of the CoHA”. At press time, the extraordinary session had not yet taken place.

The Council was last briefed on South Sudan on 8 May by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan Ismail Wais (via video teleconference); and a civil society representative based in Juba, Jackline Nasiwa (also via video

teleconference). Ambassador Joanna Wroniecka of Poland, chair of the South Sudan Sanctions Committee, briefed on the committee's work. Lacroix said that there “are no signs of meaningful implementation” of the CoHA and reiterated that “there must be a tangible cost for the continuation of violence”. Ambassador Wroniecka announced that the committee would hold its first open briefing on 31 May with regional and interested member states to hear views concerning the Panel of Experts' final report and the overall implementation of sanctions measures concerning South Sudan. She also said that she intends to visit South Sudan in mid-June.

At press time, the Council was expected to adopt a resolution renewing the South Sudan sanctions regime and the mandate of the South Sudan Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts for one year, ahead of their expiration on 31 May.

Key Issues and Options

An immediate issue for the Council is what consequences it should impose on violators of the CoHA and others who undermine the peace process led by IGAD. In an effort to reduce the level of violence and exert leverage on the parties, Council members could seek to impose an arms embargo and further targeted sanctions.

Another issue is how the Council can receive detailed and more regular updates on the human rights situation in South Sudan. An option in this context would be to invite the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide an update on the human rights situation.

Council Dynamics

Council members share a concern over the continuation of violence and violations of the CoHA and have been following closely the latest round of the HLRF and IGAD's efforts to revitalise the peace process. However, differences still exist over potential action the Council could take to impose consequences on those who undermine the peace process, in particular an arms embargo or further targeted sanctions, given the longstanding divide in the Council on this issue. The resolution extending UNMISS's mandate for one year, unanimously adopted on 15 March, expressed the Council's intention

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2406 (15 March 2018) extended the UNMISS mandate for one year. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/25** (14 December 2017) was on the situation in South Sudan, focusing on IGAD's efforts to revitalise the peace process. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/163** (28 February 2018) was the 90-day report on South Sudan. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8249** (8 May 2018) was a briefing on South Sudan. **Sanctions Committee Document S/2018/292** (12 April 2018) was the final report of the Panel of Experts.

South Sudan

to “consider all measures, including an arms embargo, as appropriate, to deprive the parties of the means to continue fighting and to prevent violations” of the CoHA. Further Council consideration of these measures will likely be influenced by the outcome of the extraordinary session of the IGAD Council of Ministers; the assessment of the chair of the Committee on South Sudan Sanctions following her visit to the country; the

actions and level of commitment of the parties directly following the most recent round of the HLRFF; and any next steps in the process announced by IGAD. Assessments as to whether the threat of an arms embargo is sufficient in the present context will also be taken into consideration.

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

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

Expected Council Action

In June, the Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), Natalia Gherman, will brief Council members in consultations.

Key Recent Developments

UNRCCA and the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre within the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism launched the third phase of the Joint Plan of Action for Central Asia (JPOA) on 30 April, implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia.

In addition to organising workshops in line with its mandate, Gherman undertook bilateral visits and attended conferences, including one on Afghanistan entitled “Peace Process, Security Cooperation and Regional Connectivity” on 26 to 27 March, initiated by Uzbekistan together with Afghanistan.

Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is what more the Council could do to support UNRCCA’s work. An option for the Council would be to hear Gherman’s briefing in an open meeting, followed by closed consultations. That format would allow Council members to publicly express support for the work of UNRCCA and to raise awareness of its activities.

Council Dynamics

Council members are broadly supportive

of the UNRCCA. Until early 2015, Council members used to issue a press statement following a briefing in consultations by the head of UNRCCA, encouraging increased cooperation and coordination among the Central Asian countries, UNRCCA, and “relevant regional organizations”. In September 2015, Russia, the penholder on the UNRCCA, sought to add specific references to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), as well as the OSCE and the EU. The P3 opposed these additions, seeing the CIS, the CSTO and the SCO as vehicles for enhancing Russian influence. No press statements could be agreed upon for more than two years. Kazakhstan sought to overcome those differences as a member of the Council and in February 2017 Council members agreed on press elements. In January, the Council found consensus on a press statement, referring to “relevant regional organizations” without naming them. It appears that this was acceptable to Russia with the addition of “including those organizations of which the Central Asian States are members”.

During its presidency in January, Kazakhstan held an open debate entitled ‘Building regional partnership in Afghanistan and Central Asia as a model to link security and development’ with Gherman being present in the Chamber. A presidential statement was adopted.

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNRCCA Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/2 (19 January 2018) commended the UNRCCA for its support in implementing the Joint Plan of Action for Central Asia. **Security Council Press Statements SC/13179** (25 January 2018) reaffirmed the importance of preventive diplomacy and acknowledged UNRCCA’s role. **SC/11751** (23 January 2015) welcomed the briefing on 21 January by Miroslav Jenča, the Special Representative and head of the UNRCCA, and reiterated support for UNRCCA as an early-warning and preventive-diplomacy tool. **General Assembly Document A/RES/72/7** (17 November 2017) was a resolution noting the tenth anniversary of UNRCCA’s establishment and emphasised the Centre’s role in preventive diplomacy in the region.

Security Council Report Staff

Karin Landgren
Executive Director

Joanna Weschler
Deputy Executive Director

Shamala Kandiah Thompson
Deputy Executive Director

Paul Romita
Senior Policy Analyst

Victor Casanova Abos
Policy Analyst

Lindiwe Knutson
Policy Analyst

Dahlia Morched
Policy Analyst

Vladimir Sesar
Policy Analyst

Eran Sthoeger
Policy Analyst

Vanessa Tiede
Policy Analyst

Benjamin Villanti
Policy Analyst

Robbin VanNewkirk
Website Manager

Audrey Waysse
Operations Manager

Maritza Lopez
Administrative Assistant

Kaitlyn Lynes
Research Assistant

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Security Council Report
One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
88w5 2nd Ave at 48th St, 21st Floor
New York NY 10017

Telephone +1 212 759 6394
Fax +1 212 759 4038
Web securitycouncilreport.org
whatsinblue.org