

# Monthly Forecast

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## Overview

In October, Bolivia assumes the presidency of the Council. Early in the month a [Council visiting mission to the DRC](#) is planned, focused on the upcoming elections. Following the return of the Council delegation, there will be a briefing to the Council by the trip co-leads (Bolivia, Equatorial Guinea and France). Special Representative of the Secretary-General Leila Zerrougui is also scheduled to brief on the activities of the UN mission in the DRC.

Bolivia has chosen to hold a meeting on the role of [natural resources as a root cause of conflict](#). There will also be two open debates: one on [women, peace and security](#), focused on the empowerment of women in political processes; and the regular quarterly open debate on [Israel/Palestine](#).

Other Middle East issues include:

- [Golan Heights](#), on the activities of UNDOF;
- [Lebanon](#), on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), which called for the disarmament of all militias and the extension of government control over all Lebanese territory; and
- [Syria](#), the monthly briefings on political and humanitarian developments and on the use of chemical weapons.

The Council is scheduled to adopt a resolution renewing the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of [Libya](#) when reasonable grounds exist to suspect

they are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking.

Additionally, in accordance with the 60-day reporting cycle, [Yemen](#) may be added to the programme of work.

Other African issues include:

- [Mali](#), on the activities of MINUSMA;
- the [CAR](#), on the activities of MINUSCA;
- [Sudan \(Darfur\)](#), on the activities of UNAMID and the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee;
- [Western Sahara](#) on the activities of MINURSO and the adoption of a resolution renewing the mission's mandate; and
- [Sudan/South Sudan](#), on the activities of UNISFA and an adoption scheduled to renew the joint border verification monitoring mechanism in Abyei.

There will be a briefing from Special Representative Jean Arnault on the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the UN Verification Mission in [Colombia](#).

A briefing is also expected on the report on the Secretary-General's good offices in [Cyprus](#) and the outcome of UN consultant Jane Holl Lute's consultations on the negotiation process.

Other issues this month include the annual briefing to the Council of the [ICJ](#) President and a joint briefing by the chairs of the Council's counter-terrorism related committees.

## In Hindsight: Emergence of the E10

In October, the five incoming members of the Security Council—Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa—will begin attending meetings of the Council, both formal and informal, as well as meetings of the subsidiary bodies. Starting on 1 January 2019, these five members will make up the E10 together with Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Peru and Poland.

For many years, the diverse nature of the E10 members has made coordination and joint action difficult. However, driven by dissatisfaction with being sidelined on key Council decisions and a shared desire to improve the effectiveness of the Council, especially in the face of P5 paralysis caused by sharp differences, elected members have begun acting as a more cohesive group. The E10 now meet monthly at both

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## In Hindsight: Emergence of the E10

permanent representative and political coordinator level. These meetings have allowed the E10 to discuss the working methods of the Council, particularly around the issues of penholders and chairs of subsidiary bodies. The elected members chair all the subsidiary bodies, with the P5 deciding on the distribution of responsibilities. This year the E10 have pushed for a greater role and more equitable distribution in the allocation of chairs of subsidiary bodies. These regular E10 meetings also provide a forum for discussion of issues of substance, and an opportunity to garner support from fellow E10 members for potential new initiatives. The E10 have had several meetings with the Secretary-General, most recently in mid-September together with the incoming five elected members.

The incoming members enter the Council at a moment when the opportunity for elected members to make their mark on the work of the Council appears greater than it has been for many years. In the early 1990s, after the end of the Cold War and lasting for about a decade, elected members frequently took initiatives on important issues and contributed policy options on a full range of matters. However, starting in the mid-2000s, the space shrank for such contributions from elected members, particularly with the emergence of a more rigid “penholder” system. Today, the P3—France, the UK, and the US—are penholders on the majority of situations on the Council’s agenda.

The P3, with their institutional memory and well-resourced missions, are arguably in a strong position to hold the pen on substantive issues in the Council. Being a penholder goes beyond drafting and negotiating texts, however. It also means calling meetings and organising visiting missions, and can work against inclusive Council processes. The penholder practice has often led the permanent members first to discuss and seek agreement among themselves on a draft text before sharing it with the rest of the Council, making it difficult for elected members to provide substantive inputs at an early stage in the negotiations.

In recent years, frustration over being sidelined and concerns at a lack of effectiveness on major Council decisions have spurred elected members to find creative ways of playing a role on key agenda issues.

In 2013-14, Australia and Luxembourg (joined by Jordan in 2014) paved the way by drafting decisions on the humanitarian aspects of the Syria conflict. Ever since, elected members have been the recognised co-penholders on Syrian humanitarian issues and have found ways of navigating the divisions of the permanent members on the Syria issue to achieve outcomes on cross-line and cross-border humanitarian access

The increasingly divisive P5 dynamics, particularly over Syria, have been a particular catalyst for E10 action. In April 2017, following the chemical weapons attack on Khan Shaykhun, the P3 and Russia both produced separate draft resolutions, which were then negotiated among the P5. Frustrated at not being consulted in the negotiation process, the E10 in an unusual move produced a draft text that represented a compromise among the positions of the permanent members. The existence of this alternative E10 draft that might have been acceptable to the majority of members apparently made it more difficult for the P3 and Russia to proceed with a vote on draft resolutions that would almost certainly not have been adopted, either because of likely vetoes or not having the requisite nine votes. However, US air strikes that evening on the Sha’yrat airbase outside Homs derailed the attempt by the E10 to bridge the divide among permanent members. The P3 then circulated a draft resolution, largely based on their previous text, although incorporating one element from the E10 draft. That draft was vetoed by Russia.

In November 2017, elected members played an active role in trying to keep alive the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN, which had been set up to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Renewing the JIM mandate was always going to be difficult, as the P5 held divergent views on how well it had performed its job. Competing draft resolutions from the US and Russia failed to be adopted—the US draft due to a veto, the Russian draft lacking enough votes—on 16 November, one day ahead of the end of the JIM’s mandate. Several elected members then offered options to keep the JIM functioning. Japan circulated a draft text that would have

extended the JIM’s mandate for one month while requesting the UN Secretary-General, in coordination with the OPCW, to submit proposals to the Council for a new structure and methodology for the JIM. Following the Russian veto of the Japanese draft, Italy in its role as Council president circulated a draft letter to the Secretary-General requesting that the JIM’s organisational and administrative arrangements be maintained until 31 December 2017, pending a final decision on the renewal of its mandate. Soon thereafter, Sweden and Uruguay circulated a draft resolution to extend the JIM’s mandate for a year with the aim of reaching a compromise among the competing perspectives in the Council. Russia opposed both initiatives, which led to the demise of the JIM, but the energy and dynamism shown by these Council members in the last stretch of the negotiations on a file traditionally monopolised by permanent members was notable.

Even when there is agreement on a Syria-related issue, implementation of these Council decisions is often difficult. In February, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2401, which demanded a cessation of hostilities in Syria. Sweden and Kuwait, the current co-leads on humanitarian issues, engaged in intense bilateral negotiations with Russia and were able to incorporate enough of its concerns for there to be rare Council unity on a Syria-related outcome. However, the Syrian government did not abide by the resolution, and there was no de-escalation of the violence.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen, for which the UK is the penholder, is another situation where the elected members have pushed for greater Council attention and more balanced outcomes. Coordination by some elected members on this issue emerged late last year as a result of what were perceived as unbalanced Council draft products on Yemen. This year, a group of Council members—Bolivia, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland and Sweden—have coordinated regularly and taken joint positions on the humanitarian dimensions of the conflict. In particular, members of this group were united on what they regarded as a more comprehensive text during the negotiations on a presidential statement on the humanitarian situation in Yemen adopted in

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## In Hindsight: Emergence of the E10

March this year.

There are other examples of elected members with very different foreign policy priorities coming together on issues of shared interest. In May 2016, five elected members (Egypt, Japan, New Zealand, Spain and Uruguay) initiated a resolution on the protection of health care in armed conflict, an issue which is now regularly

discussed in the Council. In December 2016, Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal and Venezuela worked together for the adoption of a resolution on Israeli settlements after the original sponsor, Egypt, had withdrawn the draft under heavy political pressure.

The actions of elected members in the last few years have shown that, although the P5 have the advantages of permanence as

well as the power of the veto, elected members, through strategic alliances and greater cooperation as the E10, are able to influence the work of the Council. The incoming elected members are in a strong position to continue this move from the sidelines to working more closely with the P5 in core areas related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

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## Status Update since our September Forecast

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### Programme of Work

On 4 September, the Council discussed the “unofficial calendar of events” for September in the open chamber after members were unable to reach agreement on the provisional programme of work for the month, given disagreement over whether to include Nicaragua on the programme (S/PV.8339). Following the meeting on Nicaragua on 5 September, the Council adopted the provisional programme of work.

### Nicaragua

On 5 September, the Council held a briefing on the situation in Nicaragua (S/PV.8340). Gonzalo Koncke, the Chief of Staff of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and Felix Maradiaga, a civil society representative, briefed the Council.

### Haiti

On 6 September, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita briefed the Council (S/PV.8342) on the most recent Secretary-General’s report on MINUJUSTH (S/2018/795). Keita described the progress towards 11 benchmarks for the transition to a non-peacekeeping UN presence in the country. Council members also noted that the violent July protests in Haiti demonstrated the volatility of the socio-economic situation.

### Nerve Gas Attack

On 6 September, the Council held an emergency session on the investigation of the Salisbury nerve agent attack (S/PV.8343). UK Ambassador Karen Pierce presented the latest information on the investigation. She also said that the UK had brought charges against

two Russian nationals for the attempted murder of Sergei Skripal and his daughter and for the possession of the nerve agent Novichok. Russia denied the allegations that it was involved in the incident in Salisbury and blamed the UK for refusing any cooperation with Russia in the investigation.

### Corruption and Conflict

On 10 September, the Council held a briefing on corruption and conflict under the agenda item “Maintenance of International Peace and Security” (S/PV.8346). UN Secretary-General António Guterres and John Prendergast, Founding Director of the Enough Project and Co-Founder of The Sentry, briefed.

### Venezuela

On 10 September, Council members held an open Arria-formula meeting proposed by the US and entitled “Venezuela as a Case Study of Corruption, Peace, and Security”. Mercedes de Freitas, the Executive Director of the Venezuela chapter of Transparency International, and Marshall Billingslea, the Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing in the US Department of the Treasury, briefed Council members.

### Afghanistan

On 11 September, Council members issued a press statement condemning the 5 September terrorist attack in Kabul claimed by ISIL and the 11 September attack in Nangarhar (SC/13498). On 17 September, the Council held the quarterly debate on UNAMA (S/PV.8354). Briefings were provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNAMA, Tadamichi Yamamoto, and Ramiz Bakhtiar, the newly-elected

Youth Representative of Afghanistan to the UN for 2018.

### Somalia

On 11 September, the Somali national security advisor briefed the 751/1907 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee on weapons management in Somalia. On 13 September, Special Representative and head of UNSOM Michael Keating briefed (S/PV.8352) the Council on the latest UNSOM report (S/2018/800). Head of AMISOM Francisco Madeira and Executive Director of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka also briefed. On 20 September, Council members issued a press statement welcoming the Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation signed by Eritrea and Ethiopia on 16 September (SC/13516). They also welcomed the meeting between the presidents of Djibouti and Eritrea on 17 September in Jeddah.

### Peacekeeping

On 12 September, the Council held a debate on peacekeeping reform (S/PV.8349). The Council was briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Sarah Blakemore, Chief Executive of the NGO Keeping Children Safe. On 21 September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2436 on peacekeeping performance (S/PV.8360).

### DPRK (North Korea)

On 17 September, the Council held an open briefing on the implementation of sanctions on the DPRK (S/PV.8353). The US requested the meeting to address issues related to

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## Status Update since our September Forecast

the midterm report of the Panel of Experts. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed on recent efforts to denuclearise the Korean peninsula. During the meeting, the US accused Russia of pressuring the panel to modify its report, which described sanctions violations by some Russian actors, and called on the panel to publish its original report. Russia dismissed the allegations and said that the US interfered in the panel's work by preventing the circulation of the latest version of the report to the wider UN membership. On 27 September, the Council held a ministerial-level meeting on efforts to denuclearise the DPRK. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo briefed on the ongoing diplomatic engagement and stressed the importance of maintaining pressure on the DPRK until it takes concrete steps towards denuclearisation.

### South Sudan

On 18 September, the Council was briefed (S/PV.8356) by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre

Lacroix on the Secretary-General's 90-day report (S/2018/831). Lacroix reported that the international community must send a strong message to the parties in conflict that with the new peace agreement signed, there is no longer any justification for continued clashes. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Special Envoy for South Sudan Ismail Wais also briefed. A civil society representative based in South Sudan briefed via video teleconference.

### Protection of Civilians

On 21 September, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the protection of civilians (S/PRST/2018/18) in which it "recognises the contribution of the updated Aide Memoire", which is attached as an annex to the statement (S/PV.8339). The presidential statement further requests that the next report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians be submitted by 15 May 2019, and that this report summarise achievements and challenges to the UN's

protection of civilians work during the past 20 years, as 2019 will mark the 20th anniversary of protection of civilians becoming a Council agenda item.

### Iran

On 24 September, Council members issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attack that took place in southwest Iran on 22 September during a military parade, which resulted in the death of 24 people, including children, and the injury of 60 others (SC/13523).

### Non-Proliferation

On 26 September, the Council held a summit-level meeting on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, chaired by US President Donald Trump (S/PV.8362). Council members discussed a wide range of non-proliferation issues during the meeting. The Iran nuclear agreement and efforts to denuclearise the Korean peninsula dominated the discussions.

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## Democratic Republic of the Congo

### Expected Council Action

In October, the Council is planning a visiting mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Bolivia, France and Equatorial Guinea will co-lead the mission.

Also in October, the Council expects to be briefed, most likely by the Special Representative and head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), Leila Zerrougui, on the Secretary-General's latest report on MONUSCO.

MONUSCO's mandate expires on 31 March 2019.

### Key Recent Developments

The electoral process in the DRC continues to be a major concern for the Council, despite recent positive developments. 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 or initiate amendments to the constitution. Citing logistical difficulties, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) eventually published a new electoral calendar for combined presidential, legislative and provincial elections to take place on 23 December 2018. The political tensions were exacerbated by Kabila's failure to reveal his own intentions for a long time.

On 8 August, the last day to submit presidential candidates, Kabila's party nominated former Vice Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary as

its presidential candidate. Kabila's decision not to run was broadly welcomed internationally, including by Canada, Switzerland, the US, the AU, the EU and MONUSCO, according to the latest Secretary-General's progress report on the electoral process of 28 August. Shadary is said to be a Kabila loyalist and is on the EU sanctions list for being "responsible for the recent arrests of activists and opposition members, as well as the disproportionate use of force since his appointment, such as the violent crackdown on members of the Bundu dia Kongo (BDK) movement in Kongo Central, the repression in Kinshasa over January-February 2017 and the disproportionate use of force and violent repression in Kasai provinces", according to the EU listing information.

Former Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba, whose conviction by the ICC for war crimes

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2424](#) (29 June 2018) renewed the DRC sanctions regime until 1 July 2019 and the mandate of the Group of Experts assisting the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee until 1 August 2019. [S/RES/2409](#) (27 March 2018) renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 31 March 2019. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2018/786](#) (24 August 2018) was a report on the electoral process in the DRC. [S/2018/655](#) (2 July 2018) was a report on MONUSCO. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8346](#) (10 September 2018) was a briefing on corruption and conflict in which the Director of the Enough Project and Co-Founder of The Sentry John Prendergast briefed the Council. [S/PV.8331](#) (27 August 2018) was a briefing on political developments in the DRC via video teleconference by MONUSCO head Leila Zerrougui; President of the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo Monseigneur Marcel Utambi; and spokesperson for Rien Sans Les Femmes Solange Lwashiga Furaha. [Sanctions Committee Document SC/13500](#) (12 September 2018) was a press release on the 31 August meeting of the Sanctions Committee with the Group of Experts. [SC/13458](#) (17 August 2018) was a press release on the open meeting for member states held by the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee on 27 July.

# Democratic Republic of the Congo

and crimes against humanity was overturned on appeal on 8 June, also registered as a presidential candidate. The CENI declared him ineligible, however, on the grounds that the ICC had found him guilty of witness tampering. The Constitutional Court confirmed CENI's decision on 19 September. Opposition parties rejected this decision and the disqualification of five other candidates (out of 25), arguing that it was politically motivated, an accusation the government has denied.

On 13 August, Council members issued a press statement welcoming the registration of the candidates for the presidential and legislative elections and Kabila's "respect for his commitment to abide by the Congolese Constitution and the provisions of the 31 December 2016 political agreement". Council members also reiterated the importance of creating the necessary electoral conditions of transparency, credibility and inclusivity.

The President of the National Episcopal Conference of Congo, Monseigneur Marcel Utembi, briefed the Council on 27 August. The spokesperson for Rien Sans Les Femmes (a local organisation promoting women's participation in the electoral process), Solange Lwashiga Furaha, and Zerrougui were the other two briefers.

In his report on the electoral process, the Secretary-General noted with concern continued incidents of repression and intimidation of political activists and human rights defenders and other restrictions on the political space. The report called upon the authorities to lift the general ban on public demonstrations and uphold the rights of Congolese citizens to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. (The Council had called on the DRC to lift the ban in resolution 2409.) The report further noted that recent public statements by government officials and CENI have indicated that the CENI intends to hold the elections without MONUSCO's support.

The eastern DRC continues to be plagued by the activities of rebel groups, with a disastrous effect on the population. According to UNHCR, there were 782,363 Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries on 31 July, mostly originating from the North and South Kivu regions, where there are many active rebel groups and militias, such as the Islamist Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Human rights groups say that the ADF and other militias have

been responsible for killing more than 800 civilians in Beni territory, North Kivu, since October 2014. On 22 September, 18 people, including 14 civilians and four Congolese soldiers, were killed in an attack attributed to the ADF in Beni, North Kivu. The ADF is also believed to be responsible for the deadly attack on Tanzanian peacekeepers on 7 December 2017, in which 15 peacekeepers were killed, 53 were wounded, and one remains missing.

In a briefing on corruption and conflict on 10 September, Director of the Enough Project and Co-Founder of The Sentry John Prendergast said that the DRC exemplifies the nexus between corruption and mass atrocities. He noted that security forces and rebel groups use extreme violence against civilians and forced labour for the exploitation of natural resources in order to fund their activities.

Conflict in North Kivu has complicated efforts to eradicate Ebola in the DRC. After the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the 2018 Ebola outbreak in the DRC over on 24 July, a new outbreak erupted in North Kivu in August. According to the WHO, by 23 September there had been 119 confirmed and 31 probable cases of Ebola, resulting in 100 deaths.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

The DRC Sanctions Committee held a formal open meeting for member states on 27 July on the final report of the Group of Experts assisting the committee. The coordinator of the group presented the report, followed by comments by the representatives of the DRC, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda.

On 31 August, the Group of Experts presented its programme of work for the next year.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 39th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an enhanced interactive dialogue on 25 September on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation and the activities of the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC, covering June 2017 to May (A/HRC/39/42). The report noted a deterioration of the human rights situation across the country with an overall increase of almost 20 percent in the number of human rights violations and abuses documented by the Joint Human Rights Office, compared to the previous reporting period. More than 63 percent of the violations were committed by state officials, primarily members of the DRC armed forces (FARDC) and officers

of the Congolese national police, according to the report. A proliferation of militias and armed groups also contributed to the increase in abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law, notably in North Kivu. A significant increase was also reported in violations of the civil and political rights of political opponents, journalists and civil society activists, including human rights defenders throughout the country related to elections scheduled for December 2018. At press time, the HRC was expected to vote on 28 September on a resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the DRC.

## Key Issues and Options

The primary political issue for the Council in the upcoming period is that the elections take place as scheduled and that they are free and fair. The visiting mission will be an opportunity to meet with key stakeholders and reiterate the Council's previous messages, calling on the DRC to take action to guarantee that the electoral calendar is observed and that elections are inclusive and held in a safe environment conducive to participation in the political process by all.

Council members may also press the DRC government to take all necessary measures to ensure a peaceful transition of power. The Council may reiterate its call on all stakeholders to refrain from violence and to remain committed to the electoral process as the only way forward. The visit will also give Council members the opportunity to assess the status of logistical preparations and offer MONUSCO's assistance to CENI.

The Council may choose to issue a presidential or press statement to reinforce the positions taken during the visit.

Additionally, the Council can utilise the sanctions regime by amending the listing criteria to include acts that hinder a free and fair electoral process and sanction actors who undermine the electoral process.

## 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 elections on 23 December without further delays.

The Council has visited the DRC 13 times, first in 2000 and most recently in November 2016. Since early 2018, there seems to have been agreement among members to visit the DRC during the electoral process. The

# Democratic Republic of the Congo

visit was to have taken place in August, but disagreement over precise dates led members to agree to postpone it. It seems that in order to focus on political developments, the Council will only visit Kinshasa. During the visit, Council members are keen to maintain a united front by focusing on matters of consensus, such as the importance of timely

elections and confidence-building measures between the government and the opposition.

Council members generally take a positive view of Kabila's decision not to run for a third term. Given their varying perspectives on the nature of the political situation in the DRC, his decision also removes what could have been a bone of contention between

Council members during their visit. Questions remain for some Council members, however, as to the influence Kabila may exert on key stakeholders in the run-up to and following the elections.

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

## Libya

### Expected Council Action

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

The mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expires on 15 September 2019, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee expires on 15 November.

### Key Recent Developments

On 13 September, the Council adopted resolution 2434, renewing the mandate of UNSMIL until 15 September 2019 without altering the core of its mandate.

According to UNHCR, the number of arrivals by sea to Italy via the Central Mediterranean route between January and July 2018 was 18,500, representing a sharp decline in comparison to 95,200 in the same timeframe in 2017. The proportion of deaths increased, however: 1,095 persons died on this journey between January and July, representing approximately one in 18 people trying to reach Italy, in contrast to 2,276 between January and July in 2017, representing roughly one in 42 people. The latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2380 on the

smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons via the Mediterranean Sea notes that the humanitarian and human rights situation of refugees and migrants remains dire, with the prospect of worsening. The number of people held in detention is increasing due to a higher number of interceptions at sea and the growing closure of the Mediterranean Sea.

At a 5 September briefing on the latest developments in Libya, Special Representative and head of UNSMIL Ghassan Salamé said that "abuse and exploitation abound within prisons and detention centres", adding that UNSMIL continues to have great difficulty accessing those locations. Human rights abuses in Libya, countries of destination, and at sea include trafficking, arbitrary detention, torture, forced labour and sexual abuse. In the report, the Secretary-General welcomes support to Libya to combat the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons but stresses that such support and all actors involved, including the Libyan coast guard and navy, need to comply with human rights obligations. The report also calls upon states to refrain from handing over individuals to state or non-state actors if there is a known risk that they will face human rights violations by those actors. Furthermore, it also calls upon states not to return to Libya third-country nationals

intercepted at sea. According to estimates by the EU military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA) about 29,785 persons were rescued by various vessels in the central Mediterranean Sea between October 2017 and 31 July 2018, which constitutes a substantial reduction from the corresponding previous reporting period from 2016 to 2017.

The security situation in Libya remains highly volatile, aggravating the precarious situation of migrants and refugees. During recent heavy clashes between armed groups in Tripoli, UNHCR had to relocate people from detention centres that came under fire. With the support of UNSMIL, a ceasefire agreement was reached on 4 September. A Ceasefire Consolidation Agreement was signed on 9 September. On 10 September, the headquarters of the National Oil Cooperation was attacked, and on 11 September, Matiga airport in Tripoli was attacked. At press time, the ceasefire agreement continued to be violated.

At press time, the UN's 2018 humanitarian response plan for Libya of \$312.7 million was funded at 23.5 percent, with \$239.2 million outstanding.

### Sanctions-Related Developments

On 11 September, the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee designated Ibrahim Jadhraan, who led

**UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/2434 (13 September 2018) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2019. S/RES/2420 (11 June 2018) renewed 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. 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/2362 (29 June 2017) renewed the mandate of the panel and the measures regarding attempts to illicitly export oil from Libya until 15 November 2018. 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. **Security Council Presidential Statement** S/PRST/2018/11 (6 June 2018) welcomed the momentum generated by the international conference on Libya in Paris. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2018/807 (31 August 2018) was on migrants and trafficking of persons on the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya and inspection and seizure of vessels off the coast of Libya. S/2018/780 (24 August 2018) was on UNSMIL. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.8341 (5 September 2018) was a briefing by the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, and Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee. S/PV.8250 (9 May 2018) was the semi-annual briefing by ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda on recent developments concerning cases in Libya. **Security Council Press Statement** SC/13490 (6 September 2018) condemned the violence in Tripoli and welcomed the result of the mediation reached on 4 September by UNSMIL. **Sanctions Committee Documents** SC/13497 (11 September 2018) was a press release regarding the adding of one individual to the sanctions list. S/2018/812 (5 September 2018) was the Panel of Experts' final report.

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# Libya

attacks in the oil crescent in June, for sanctions in the form of a travel ban and asset freeze.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 4 September, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern over the outbreak of violence in Tripoli that began on 26 August, in which at least 21 civilians were killed, including two women and two children, with a further 16 injured. According to the statement, the parties to the conflict have been firing indiscriminately and using weapons with wide-area effects – including rockets, tank shells and artillery – in densely populated residential areas. The spokesperson called on all parties to put an end to indiscriminate attacks and to take all feasible precautions to spare civilians and civilian objects. During its 39th session,

the Human Rights Council received an oral update from the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 26 September and held an interactive dialogue on Libya.

## Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council in October is to adopt a resolution renewing the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that these are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking.

Regarding the violence in Tripoli, the Council could issue a press statement urging the parties to adhere to the ceasefire

agreements. Key actors involved in the fighting could be considered for designation by the sanctions committee for targeted sanctions.

## Council Dynamics

Members are aware that international cooperation to combat the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons needs to be strengthened. The last two years have seen few changes to the authorisation, which made the negotiations less contentious. In case the penholder will opt for that approach again, this may also be the case this year.

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

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# Counter-Terrorism

## Expected Council Action

In October, the Council is scheduled to receive its annual briefing from the chairs of its counter-terrorism-related committees, Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorenty Solíz (Bolivia), chair of the 1540 Committee, which focuses on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), chair of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee; and Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez (Peru), chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). Solíz will also address the joint activities of all three committees.

## Key Recent Developments

The joint briefing was initially scheduled to take place in May, a year after the previous joint briefing of 11 May 2017, but was postponed at the request of Bolivia, as Solíz also briefed the Council separately on 12 April on the work of his committee.

## 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee

The Council has adopted two important resolutions concerning ISIL and Al-Qaida over the last year. The Council unanimously adopted resolution 2368 on 20 July 2017, renewing and updating the 1267/1989/2253 sanctions regime. The updates are intended to reflect the current and evolving threat presented by Al-Qaida and ISIL. The resolution also provides updates concerning the Office of the Ombudsperson to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, including communications among the Ombudsperson, the sanctions committee and petitioners. In accordance with the resolution, the committee adopted revised guidelines on 5 September to facilitate the conduct of its own work and provide useful guidance to member states in their efforts to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2368.

The Council adopted resolution 2396 on foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and returnees on 21 December 2017. The resolution acknowledged that returning and relocating FTFs who participated in attacks in

their countries of origin or third countries, including assaults on public spaces and civilian targets, present an immediate threat to member states. In aiming to address this threat, it called on states to assess and investigate suspected individuals whom they have reasonable grounds to believe are terrorists, including suspected FTFs and their accompanying spouses, children and other family members.

After the position of the Ombudsperson had been vacant since 7 August 2017, Daniel Kipfer Fasciati (Switzerland) was appointed on 24 May.

The 1267/1989/2253 sanctions list, which was last updated on 29 August, currently contains the names of 263 individuals and 82 entities.

## 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee

On 21 December 2017, the Council adopted resolution 2395, renewing the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) as a special political mission until 31 December 2021. The resolution addressed CTED's functions within the wider UN system, including the relationship

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2396 (21 December 2017) addressed the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. S/RES/2395 (21 December 2017) renewed the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) until 31 December 2021. S/RES/2368 (20 July 2017) renewed and updated the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida sanctions regime. Through an annex to the resolution, eight individuals or organisations were added to the sanctions list. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/770** (16 August 2018) was the seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL to international peace and security. **Security Council Letters S/2018/514** (24 May 2018) concerned the appointment of Daniel Kipfer Fasciati as Ombudsperson for the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. S/2018/340 (12 April 2018) was the 17th programme of work of the 1540 Committee. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8330** (23 August 2018) was a briefing by Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the UNOCT; Michèle Coninx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; and Joana Cook, senior research fellow with the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence at King's College London. S/PV.8230 (12 April 2018) was the annual briefing by the chair of the 1540 Committee. **Sanctions Committee Documents SC/13504** (13 September 2018) was a press release on the revised guidelines of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee.

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## Counter-Terrorism

between CTED and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). It provided a comprehensive text regarding CTED's full mandate, which now encompasses cross-cutting issues such as FTFs and countering violent extremism. It stressed that assessing the implementation of resolution 1373 and other relevant counter-terrorism resolutions is the core function of CTED.

On 9 April, Council members held an Arria-formula meeting on Peru's initiative, titled "Enhancing synergies between the United Nations and regional and subregional organisations to address the nexus between terrorism and transnational organised crime". Among the briefers were CTED Executive Director Michèle Coninsx; the executive director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Under-Secretary-General Yury Fedotov; and Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of UNOCT.

On 23 August, Voronkov briefed the Council on the seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL. Also briefing were Coninsx and Joana Cook, senior research fellow with the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence at King's College London.

### 1540 Committee

On 12 April, Soliz briefed the Council on the committee's activities and its priorities for the upcoming period as laid out in the programme of work covering the period from 1 February 2018 to 31 January 2019. The

programme included plans by the committee to hold deliberations on enforcing applicable laws on prohibiting non-state actors from acquiring chemical and biological weapons, in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 1540. Soliz emphasised that achieving universal reporting on the implementation of resolution 1540 remains one of the committee's main priorities. He said that 180 out of 193 member states have submitted their national reports. During the April meeting, several Council members expressed concern over the increasing use of chemical weapons in the recent period.

### Key Issues

A key issue for the committees is to ensure that they are able to address the widening scope of the threats and various facets of the Council's counter-terrorism agenda within their respective mandates.

A particular issue for the 1267/1989/2253 Committee is to continue to strengthen member states' compliance with the sanctions regime.

A key issue for the 1540 Committee is the follow-up on national implementation and reporting to the committee.

### Council Dynamics

In the past, most counter-terrorism-related discussions were held in the Council's subsidiary organs, but over the last two years the Council has discussed and adopted decisions on various aspects of counter-terrorism and

related issues, including updating the Al-Qaida and ISIL sanctions regime and the mandate of CTED and addressing FTFs, returnees and others.

The importance of counter-terrorism efforts enjoys overall unanimity among Council members, notwithstanding divergences over the politicisation of the issue in the Middle East. However, frictions on some issues remain, such as divergences between Russia and other member states that led to delays in the appointment of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Ombudsperson.

That some differences remain among Council members in their approach towards counter-terrorism was also evident during the negotiations over resolutions 2395 and 2396. For example, several states, mainly the western ones, took the view with respect to FTFs and returnees that states need to distinguish between FTFs and their families in their screening process rather than automatically assume that the families are complicit. Furthermore, they wanted the resolution to call on states to develop comprehensive prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies to determine the most appropriate solution for FTFs and their families. However, Russia took the view that FTFs should be held criminally liable and that family members travelling with FTFs are complicit and should, therefore, be held accountable.

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## Syria

### Expected Council Action

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

### Key Recent Developments

September was marked by the looming offensive in the governorate of Idlib by

Syria and its allies and its potentially disastrous humanitarian consequences. The UN has repeatedly warned of the possibility of a humanitarian emergency on a scale not yet seen in the Syrian conflict in case of an escalation of military activity in and around Idlib. The area hosts 1.4 million civilians displaced by the conflict and a total of 2.9 million people, including one million children.

Despite constituting a de-escalation zone agreed to in 2017, Idlib has been targeted by Russian and Syrian airstrikes. The presence in Idlib of around 10,000 fighters of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (a Council-designated terrorist group) continues to be used to justify military operations, as has been the case in other parts of Syria.

On 7 September, OCHA's Director of

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**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/2018/845](#) (14 September 2018) was the monthly report on the humanitarian situation. [Security Council Letters S/2018/828](#) (10 September 2018) conveyed a joint statement by the Astana guarantors after a 7 September high-level meeting in Tehran. [S/2018/804](#) (28 August 2018) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8355](#) (18 September 2018) was a briefing by Lowcock and de Mistura. [S/PV.8347](#) (11 September 2018) was a briefing requested by Russia on the Astana process. [S/PV.8345](#) (7 September 2018) was a briefing on Idlib by de Mistura and Ging. [S/PV.8344](#) (6 September 2018) was a briefing by Nakamitsu.



# Syria

Operations and Advocacy John Ging and Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura briefed the Council on the situation in Idlib. That afternoon, the five EU members of the Council (France, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the UK) co-hosted an Arria-formula meeting on “Syrian Voices on Preventing a Deathtrap in Idlib”. At the meeting, which was webcast, several participants emphasised the role that civil society can play in fighting terrorism and promoting the separation of forces in Idlib.

Ahead of the meeting, several configurations of Council members issued joint statements in an attempt to avert the negative humanitarian impact of a major military operation in Idlib. The E10 (the ten elected members of the Council) met on 4 September to discuss developments in Idlib. Poland, in its capacity as the monthly coordinator of the E10, read a statement at the Security Council media stakeout expressing their deep concern about a humanitarian catastrophe in the event of a full-scale military operation in Idlib province. The statement reiterated the urgent appeal of the Secretary-General to the government of Syria and all parties to exercise restraint and to prioritise the protection of civilians. On 6 September, eight current, past and future Council members that belong to the EU expressed support for the urgent diplomatic efforts undertaken by Turkey and the UN and called on the Astana guarantors—in particular Russia and Iran—to uphold the ceasefire and de-escalation arrangements they had previously agreed, including protecting civilians as a matter of priority.

On 10 September, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock told reporters that “there need to be ways of dealing with this problem that don’t turn the next few months in Idlib into the worst humanitarian catastrophe with the biggest loss of life in the 21st century”. According to OCHA, between 1 and 12 September, a sharp increase in hostilities and fears of further escalation led to the displacement of over 38,300 people in northwest Syria.

Russia requested a Council meeting on 12 September to brief on a 7 September high-level meeting convened by the guarantors of the Astana process—which include Turkey as well as Iran and Russia—in Tehran. Speakers highlighted efforts to cooperate and find

a solution for Idlib. During the meeting, in which Iran and Turkey also briefed the Council for the first time on this issue under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, differences among the Astana guarantors regarding how to deal with Idlib became apparent.

On 17 September, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced the establishment of a demilitarised zone 15 to 20 kilometres wide in Idlib along the contact line between the armed opposition and government troops. Council-designated terrorist groups are to be withdrawn from the area and by 10 October, heavy military equipment is to be removed from the area. Turkish mobile patrol groups and Russian military police units are expected to monitor the zone. The agreement also provides for the restoration of transit along the Aleppo-Latakia and Aleppo-Hama routes before the end of 2018.

On 18 September, Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed the agreement and called on all parties in Syria to cooperate in its implementation and ensure safe and unimpeded humanitarian access in all areas through the most direct routes. At a Council meeting that same day, Lowcock, who also welcomed the agreement, wondered: “Is this merely a stay of execution? Or is it the beginning of a reprieve, the first tiny glint of light at the end of the very darkest tunnel?” Reacting to the agreement, most Council members considered it a positive step, but many had questions regarding the conditions for the separation of forces, the mechanisms to enforce the agreement, and the situation of civilians beyond the zone and in the near future.

The Special Envoy’s efforts to facilitate the establishment of the constitutional committee continue to face challenges. The committee is expected to be formed by 150 people (one-third each from the government, the opposition, and civil society). At the 18 September briefing, de Mistura told the Council that the names of 50 civil society members that he had proposed have been significantly challenged by Astana guarantors. Furthermore, and while issues such as chairing and voting have been canvassed with the Astana guarantors, much remains unresolved regarding rules of procedure for the committee. At the meeting, several Council members encouraged de Mistura to proceed to convene a first session of the committee as soon as possible

and report back to the Council by 31 October.

When discussing Idlib, Lowcock has repeatedly emphasised the vital role that Council-authorized cross-border deliveries of humanitarian aid continue to play in alleviating the suffering of civilians. Humanitarian access continues to be restricted for the UN and its partners despite the fact that swathes of territory are increasingly under the control of the government and that it should be possible to deliver aid through regular Damascus-based humanitarian programmes.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, briefed the Council on 6 September. Although the two remaining chemical weapons production facilities have been destroyed, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) continues to regard the initial declaration submitted by the Syrian government to the OPCW in 2013 as incomplete. In October, the OPCW Director-General is expected to submit a progress report to the organisation’s Executive Council on arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria in line with the decision taken on 27 June by the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Regional tensions between Israel and Syria continue. On 17 September Syria’s air defences downed a Russian surveillance plane killing 15 people on board. According to Syria’s state-owned media, air defences were activated in response to Israeli airstrikes in the Syrian province of Latakia.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 39th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on 17 September with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria and considered the commission’s report, which was based on investigations conducted from 16 January to 10 July (A/HRC/39/65). The reporting period was marked by “continued proliferation of warring parties, increased militarization and unprecedented levels of internal displacement” of more than one million civilians. The report deals with the battles that led to mass displacement and their impact on civilians, and sets out applicable internationally accepted principles that have not been observed in relation to forced displacement and internally displaced persons. The HRC also considered the report of the special rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Idriss Jazairy, on his mission to Syria in May (A/HRC/39/54/Add.2).

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# Syria

The report concludes that the application of accumulating unilateral coercive measures is making it “unnecessarily difficult” for Syrians to enjoy basic human rights and to receive humanitarian aid. At press time, the HRC was expected to vote on 28 September on a resolution on the human rights situation in Syria.

## Key Issues and Options

Given the crucial role of actors such as Russia, Turkey and Iran on both the political and humanitarian fronts, Council members could seek an informal interactive dialogue with them in order to have a more action-oriented discussion and to ascertain whether the Council can support the establishment of the demilitarised zone in Idlib.

Some Council members question whether any efforts on the political process are likely to yield results, given the Syrian government’s emphasis on regaining and consolidating control of territory. However, within the window of opportunity created by the temporary reprieve in Idlib, 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 political settlement that is both realistic and acceptable to all.

Since it was established in August 2011, the Human Rights Council’s Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria has briefed Council members in an Arria-formula meeting seven times, most recently on 21 April 2017. Council members could hold a meeting to be briefed by the commission.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

In September alone, the Council held five meetings on Syria, the most since April and mainly focusing on the situation in Idlib. Over the last six months as the government has consolidated the territory under its control (taking over Dara’a and Quneitra in the southwest and lifting the sieges of Foah and Kafraya), the Council has mostly discussed

Syria through its scheduled monthly briefings. The increased attention in September might not have generated concrete Council outcomes, but it has contributed to raising the visibility of the stakes in Idlib. Although consultations could have provided for more action-oriented discussions on sensitive matters, no Council member formally requested consultations on Syria in September.

A new element has been the participation in Council meetings of Iran and Turkey, Astana guarantors that do not have a seat on the Council. In early 2017, several Council members tried to organise an informal interactive dialogue with the Astana guarantors, but this was resisted given the strong divisions among the guarantors. Previous efforts by Council members to receive their briefings, whether formally or informally, had not been successful since the Astana process started gaining traction.

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

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## UNDOF (Golan Heights)

### Expected Council Action

In October, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) will brief Council members in consultations on the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). No formal outcome is expected.

The mandate of UNDOF expires on 31 December.

### Key Recent Developments

On 29 June, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2426, renewing UNDOF’s mandate without changes for another six months, in line with usual practice. Language was added in the preambular section, recalling a request to the Secretary-General to ensure that data related to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, including peacekeeping performance data, is used to improve analytics and the evaluation of mission operations, based on clear and well-identified benchmarks. Language related to the Women, Peace and Security agenda

was also included, recalling resolution 2242 and its aspiration to increase the number of women in military and police contingents of UN peacekeeping operations.

Lieutenant General Paolo Serra is leading a team conducting an independent review of UNDOF. The results of the review are expected later this year.

On 24 July, UNDOF received information from the Syrian authorities that Israel had shot down a Syrian aircraft flying in Syrian airspace. At the same time, UNDOF received a report from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) that they had intercepted a Syrian fighter jet with a missile, stating that the jet had entered two kilometres into Israeli airspace.

Following an offensive in mid-July by the Syrian Arab Armed Forces (SAAF) and their allies in the south-western part of the country to regain areas held by rebels, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the “area of separation” increased sharply. UNDOF was not able to determine the number of IDPs but estimated that there were 2,590

tents for IDPs on 13 July. Following the recapture of that part of Syria by the SAAF, the IDPs started to leave. At press time, no tents were left. The Quneitra crossing point remains closed, as it has been since 2014, making it impossible for UNDOF to provide for humanitarian crossings.

The Secretary-General’s 11 June report, covering the period from 23 February to 23 May, said that the ceasefire between Israel and Syria was being maintained, notwithstanding the volatile environment due to the conflict in Syria. However, violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974 occurred. Those included the Syrian armed forces and non-state armed opposition groups exchanging heavy weapons fire in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo (Syrian) side. Armed groups—including terrorist groups listed by the Council such as Jabhat Fath al-Sham (formerly the Nusra Front) and the Khalid Ibn al-Walid Army, which pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)—continued to

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UN DOCUMENTS ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS Security Council Resolution S/RES/2426 (29 June 2018) renewed the mandate of UNDOF until 31 December 2018. Secretary-General’s Report S/2018/550 (11 June 2018) was a report on UNDOF.

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## UNDOF (Golan Heights)

exchange fire in the UNDOF area of operations. UNDOF reported incidents in which IDF soldiers fired into the area of separation (where no military forces other than those of UNDOF are allowed) and across the ceasefire line. Every day, UNDOF personnel observed crossings by unidentified individuals from the Bravo to the Alpha (Israeli) side. On that side, 200 incidents of deployment of unauthorised military equipment in the area of separation were reported. UNDOF has protested the violations and called upon both sides to exercise restraint, in line with its mandate to observe violations, report them, and interact with both sides.

UNDOF continues to make progress towards a limited return to operations on Mount Hermon and at Camp Faouar on the Bravo side in accordance with a phased UNDOF plan. Phase one was completed on 14 November 2016 with the re-establishment of the UNDOF presence at Camp Faouar. Phase two involved the resumption of limited patrolling of the northern and central parts of the area of separation in February 2018 over a period foreseen to last six to eight months, although the timeline is subject to conditions on the ground. The Nepalese

mechanised infantry company of UNDOF has conducted more than 30 protected patrols during the reporting period. Other developments include the relocation of the office of the force commander and the Irish force reserve company of UNDOF to Camp Faouar. Phase three will include the reoccupation of a number of observation posts.

DPKO has continued to engage with both the Syrian and Israeli governments seeking the deployment of appropriate technologies for UNDOF, which it considers a priority. Regarding a “sense and warn” system, the IDF has informally indicated it would not object to its deployment. Syrian authorities oppose it, however.

### Key Issues and Options

The Syrian government is increasingly taking control of areas of the country formerly held by different armed actors. A changing environment may have implications for the ability of UNDOF to implement its mandate.

Ongoing issues for the Council are the numerous violations of the ceasefire and UNDOF’s ability to implement its mandate, including the full return of UNDOF to the Bravo side and the deployment of appropriate

technologies. Press elements were issued in March as an outcome of the consultations referring to those aspects; this may again be a possibility. The Council is generally rather restricted in its options—how UNDOF operates is subject solely to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974 that ended the Yom Kippur war.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

There is general agreement within the Council that UNDOF’s mandate, including its liaison functions, 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 because of the extremely unstable operating environment. Israel and Syria value UNDOF’s presence and want to see the mission return to the Bravo side. Council members continue to support the eventual complete return, mindful of the fact that this would require a favourable security environment, which is also crucial for maintaining the confidence of troop-contributing countries.

Russia and the US are the co-penholders on UNDOF.

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## Sudan/South Sudan

### Expected Council Action

In October, the Council expects to receive a briefing in consultations on the Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Resolution 2416 requested that this report be submitted by 15 October. The Council is also expected to decide by 15 October whether to adopt a resolution extending the mission’s support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), established in 2011 to conduct monitoring and verification activities along the Sudan–South Sudan border, as set out in resolution 2412.

The mandate of UNISFA expires on 15 November. The mission’s support for the JBVMM expires on 15 October.

### Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Abyei, the disputed territory along the Sudan/South Sudan border, remains relatively stable but unpredictable, in the absence of significant progress on establishing temporary arrangements for its administration and security, pending resolution of its final status. Humanitarian needs remain substantial and are exacerbated by intercommunal tensions and a lack of basic public services. In this context, UNISFA continues to carry out its mandate, including ongoing facilitation of peaceful migration throughout Abyei, conflict prevention and deterrence, and mediation.

On 23 April, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2412, extending UNISFA’s support for the JBVMM until 15 October. The resolution stated that this would be

the final such extension, unless the Council decided to continue the mission’s support for the JBVMM based on the parties’ demonstrating measurable progress on border demarcation in line with six specific measures set out in the resolution. Among other things, these measures included: maintaining clearance for all UNISFA air and ground patrols; finalising agreement on four JBVMM team sites; convening at least two meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM); withdrawing from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ); making progress in establishing specific border crossing corridors (and opening two new ones) between Sudan and South Sudan; and resuming border demarcation discussions.

On 15 May, the Council adopted resolution 2416, which renewed the mandate of

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2416 (15 May 2018) extended UNISFA’s mandate until 15 November and reduced the authorised troop ceiling of the mission from 4,791 to 4,500. S/RES/2412 (23 April 2018) extended UNISFA’s support for the JBVMM until 15 October. Secretary-General’s Report S/2018/293 (3 April 2018) was on the situation in Abyei. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8357 (20 September 2018) was a briefing on Sudan/South Sudan. Security Council Letter S/2018/778 (20 August 2018) was from the Secretary-General, transmitting recommendations about the reconfiguration of UNISFA’s mandate.

## Sudan/South Sudan

UNISFA until 15 November and requested the Secretary-General to provide detailed recommendations for the reconfiguration of UNISFA. The Secretary-General's recommendations were submitted to the Council in a 20 August letter.

The letter recommended changes to the mission's military component, including transferring troops to the JBVMM to make it fully operational based on the reduced need for a large UNISFA military presence within the Abyei Area and the assessment that the JBVMM remains vital in contributing to preventing conflict between the two countries. The full deployment of the JBVMM is of "paramount importance", according to the Secretary-General's letter.

On 14 September, Council members received a confidential note from the Secretary-General, requested in resolution 2412, on progress by the parties on the six specific measures set out in that resolution. The note reportedly said that standing clearance for UNISFA air and ground patrols in the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, one of the six specified measures, has been continued by Sudan and South Sudan, but that little progress has made with regard to other measures, and that the parties had postponed JPSM meetings in recent months.

The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of UNISFA's mandate, which the Council requested be submitted by 15 October in resolution 2416, is expected to include reporting on:

- the movement of weapons into Abyei and the presence, destruction and confiscation of weapons within Abyei;
- steps that have been taken by the Secretary-General to develop an integrated performance-policy framework and to apply it to UNISFA;
- results of human rights monitoring as requested, including information, analysis, and data on violations and abuses of human rights; and
- steps the parties have taken towards implementing the June 2011 Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of Abyei Area (e.g., the establishment of the Abyei Area Administration and an Abyei police service) and towards achieving a political resolution to the status of Abyei.

Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom briefed the Council on UNISFA on 20 September. The briefing was held in the open chamber, departing from the usual practice of receiving these briefings in consultations. In keeping with the Secretary-General's 20 August letter, Lacroix called for changes to UNISFA's mission concept within the current ceiling of uniformed personnel. He maintained that the JBVMM "remains a vital part of the framework that regulates the relationship between the two countries." Lacroix also reiterated the Secretary-General's recommendation to establish two further sector headquarters and team sites within the Safe Demilitarised Border Zone, with troops to be transferred from Abyei, in order to provide more substantive attention to the border region as a part of the JBVMM. He further noted the recommendation of the Secretary-General that UNISFA concentrate those military personnel remaining within the Abyei Area along the area's borders to help prevent incursions by armed groups (namely, rebel groups from Sudan and South Sudan).

Haysom said that the resolution of the final status of Abyei "above all else...would allow for the timely exit by UNISFA from Abyei." He noted that internal problems in both Sudan and South Sudan had hindered negotiations on this issue in recent years. However, Haysom said that there is hope that both countries will now engage substantively in talks on the status of Abyei, noting that the reduced tensions between Sudan and South Sudan as a result of Khartoum's mediation efforts in the South Sudan conflict had created a more conducive environment for negotiations.

### Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is whether to maintain UNISFA's support for the JBVMM through its monitoring and verification tasks along the border. An option is to continue the mission's support in recognition of recent efforts made by the parties towards making it fully operational, namely the standing clearance for UNISFA ground and air patrols. Continued support could also include some or all of the 20 August recommendations of the Secretary-General related to the JBVMM;

for example, this would entail an expansion of the mission's current activities with regard to the JBVMM to include protection for AU Border Programme staff engaged in demarcating the border. Another option is to retain the mission's support for a shorter period as a means of putting pressure on the parties to intensify efforts to fully implement the JBVMM and also to reach a political solution. A further option is for the Council to take no action to extend the mission's support for the JBVMM, which would result in a decrease in UNISFA's troop levels on 15 October from 4,500 to 3,959 as set out in resolution 2416.

An additional key issue for the Council to consider is the appropriateness of UNISFA's current mandate in relation to its strategic priorities and the situation on the ground ahead of the mandate renewal in November. This assessment could be informed by the 20 August recommendations of the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General's October report.

### Council Dynamics

Over the past several years, the US has repeatedly expressed its concern that UNISFA was persisting longer than had been intended for an interim force, and that Sudan and South Sudan were taking advantage of the relative stability that UNISFA provides to delay attempts to resolve the status of Abyei and related border-security issues. At the 20 September Council meeting, US Deputy Permanent Representative Jonathan Cohen questioned whether all of UNISFA's tasks "remain appropriate and necessary." Regarding the JBVMM, he said that the US would not "support indefinitely a mechanism that remains underutilized and is not making progress in resolving the political issues that are at the root of UNISFA's JBVMM support mandate." In contrast, Ethiopia and several other Council members are of the view that suspending support for the JBVMM would undermine its effectiveness, and that the parties have taken sufficient steps towards establishing the JBVMM to merit retaining support. This difference in perspective is likely to feature in discussions ahead of deciding whether to extend support for the JBVMM in October.

The US is the penholder on Abyei.

# Western Sahara

## Expected Council Action

The Council will receive a briefing in consultations on Western Sahara in October. The Special Representative and head of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), Colin Stewart, is expected to brief. Also during October, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of MINURSO, which expires on 31 October.

## Key Recent Developments

When the Council renewed the mandate of MINURSO in April, it opted for a six-month renewal instead of the regular one-year extension. The US, which is the penholder on Western Sahara, pushed for the shorter extension to pressure Morocco and the Polisario Front to resume negotiations that are meant to obtain a mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The last round of formal negotiations occurred ten years ago. During its explanation of vote at the resolution's adoption, the US warned that the further extension of the peacekeeping operation in October would depend on progress in the political process, saying that it expected to see the resumption of "real and substantive talks". The then US political coordinator Amy Tachco added, "Should that fail, we will then need to take a hard look at our work and our responsibilities when the Mission again comes up for renewal in six months".

From 23 June to 1 July, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler, who is responsible for facilitating negotiations, visited the region to push for the resumption of negotiations. Köhler visited Algiers, Nouakchott, Rabouni and Rabat before spending three days in Western Sahara, where he held meetings in Laayoune, Smara and Dakhla with local authorities, civil society organisations, and the business community.

On 8 August, Köhler briefed Council members in consultations on his visit and on his plans to advance the political process. Köhler said that he intended to invite the parties and neighbouring countries Algeria and Mauritania to direct talks that he would seek to organise in late November or early December. These talks, Köhler apparently explained, would allow the parties to discuss

a general framework as a basis for subsequent negotiations, rather than going into substantive issues.

Since MINURSO's renewal in April, an independent review of the mission was conducted. The findings of the review, which have not been made public but are to be integrated into the Secretary-General's report on MINURSO, apparently determined that MINURSO plays a conflict-prevention role, providing a strong guarantee against a renewal in fighting in this part of the Sahel. If the mission were removed and fighting resumed, responding to the resulting situation could be much costlier than MINURSO's annual \$53 million budget. The review reportedly also noted that the mission has been operating in the same way for the past 27 years and proposed modernising it with new technologies, which would be more efficient for monitoring the cessation of hostilities and would provide financial savings.

In other developments, the AU Assembly agreed at its 31st summit in Nouakchott, Mauritania in July, to support a solution to Western Sahara through the UN process, as opposed to its previous position calling for joint AU-UN efforts. It appealed to the parties "to urgently resume negotiations without pre-conditions and in good faith under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the UN, whose Security Council is seized of the matter". It also decided that a troika comprising the outgoing, current and incoming AU chairpersons, together with the AU Commissioner, should be its main mechanism for supporting UN-led efforts and considering the issue.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue is progress in the political process towards resuming negotiations, without which the US has suggested that it may not support MINURSO's renewal. The process has stalled over the last decade because the parties' respective proposals for the basis of a political solution as outlined in 2007 are mutually exclusive. An important step will be the parties' responses to the invitation to participate in the upcoming talks, which, according to Köhler's envisioned timeline that he outlined when he briefed Council members, should be provided during October before MINURSO's expiration. A 1 June letter to the Council

from the Polisario said that it stood ready to resume direct negotiations immediately, without preconditions and in good faith under the auspices of the Personal Envoy.

Another issue will be members' consideration of the recommendations that the Secretary-General is likely to propose to make MINURSO more efficient, based on the independent review. Other issues may include an update to the Council's request in resolution 2414 to "interview" the parties "to better understand" the tensions that have occurred in recent years ahead of the mandate renewal pertaining to Guerguerat and, also this year, to Bir Lahlou. Also likely to be discussed is Stewart's inability since his appointment in December 2017 as Special Representative to meet with the Polisario leadership, which has requested that the meeting take place in Western Sahara as opposed to the practice of meeting in Tindouf.

The Council may renew the mandate of MINURSO for an additional six months, expressing support for the Personal Envoy's plans to resume political negotiations, and reiterating its calls upon the parties to engage in negotiations without preconditions and in good faith.

## Council Dynamics

Council members want to see progress towards the resumption of negotiations, and during the last consultations most members expressed support for the Personal Envoy's efforts. This included the US, which has driven the recent pressure being exerted by the Council on the parties to return to negotiations. US National Security Advisor John Bolton, who served as an assistant in the 1990s to former Personal Envoy James Baker, is said to have played an important role in the decision to have a six-month renewal in April. Personal Envoy Köhler met with Bolton in Washington, D.C. the day before Council consultations in August.

Permanent member France staunchly supports Moroccan positions. Ethiopia is the only current African member that recognises an independent Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, as proclaimed by the Polisario in 1976. Last April's mandate renewal vote saw China, Ethiopia and Russia abstain on resolution 2414, maintaining that the penholder was not adequately consultative during the

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## Western Sahara

negotiation process. Members are likely to have differences over the efficiency proposals that the Secretary-General's report is

expected to recommend for MINURSO.

The US is the penholder on Western Sahara, and resolutions are initially discussed

among the Group of Friends, comprising France, Russia, the UK, and the US, joined by Spain, the former colonial power.

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## Middle East (Israel/Palestine)

### Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council will hold its quarterly open debate under the agenda item “the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”, which will focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov is expected to brief, most likely via video teleconference from Jerusalem. No outcome is anticipated.

### Key Recent Developments

On 4 September, Israel's High Court of Justice rejected a petition to prevent the demolition of Khan al-Amar, a Bedouin village of 180 people in the West Bank. In a tweet the following day, Mladenov noted that the “UN has called on Israel to cease demolition of Palestinian property and efforts to relocate Bedouin communities in the West Bank”.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) filed a claim with the ICC on 11 September calling for an investigation of Israel's activities with regard to Khan al-Amar. Saeb Erekat, a senior PLO official, said that the petition focused on “war crimes in Khan al-Amar”, including “forcible displacement, ethnic cleansing and the destruction of civilian property”.

Violent encounters have continued along the Gaza border fence with Israel. On 14 September, approximately 13,000 Palestinians demonstrated in multiple spots near the fence. Israeli forces said protesters threw explosives and rocks at them. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, three Palestinians were shot and killed by Israeli forces during the protests. On 18 September, it was reported that two more Palestinians had been shot and killed by the Israeli military during protests near the Erez crossing in Gaza.

Since 30 March, over 180 Palestinians have died in violent encounters with Israeli

forces along the fence separating Gaza from Israel, according to OCHA and the Gaza Ministry of Health. One Israeli has also been killed in these clashes. Israel has accused Hamas, which it considers a terrorist group, of directing the protests along the fence.

On 16 September, an Israeli settler was stabbed and killed by a Palestinian youth near the Kfar Etzion settlement on the West Bank. The youth was shot and wounded by the victim.

On 10 September, US State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert issued a press statement announcing that the US was closing the PLO office in Washington, D.C., given that the PLO had “not taken steps to advance the start of direct and meaningful negotiations with Israel” and had “condemned a US peace plan they have not yet seen and refused to engage with the U.S. government with respect to peace efforts and otherwise.” The press statement further noted that the decision was also “consistent with Administration and Congressional concerns with Palestinian attempts to prompt an investigation of Israel by the International Criminal Court.”

This move takes place in the midst of significant US aid cuts to services for Palestinians. On 31 August, the US announced that it would cut all funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). As its largest donor, the US had directed approximately \$350 million per year to the agency. Also in late August, the US slashed approximately \$200 million in bilateral aid to the Palestinian Authority. On 7 September, the US declared that it was redirecting \$20 million allocated for hospitals in East Jerusalem to other prerogatives. Also in early September, the US Administration halted \$10 million in funds expected to support Palestinian-Israeli cultural exchanges as part of the US Agency for International Development's “Conflict Management and

Mitigation Program”.

On 20 September, Mladenov briefed the Council during the monthly meeting on the Middle East (Israel/Palestine). This constituted the quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334, which demands an end to settlement activity and calls for the prevention of violence against civilians, including acts of terror. Mladenov said that in the preceding quarter no steps had been taken by Israel to cease settlement activity, which he described as a violation of international law and a hindrance to peace. He expressed concern about the continuing deterioration of the political, humanitarian, and security situation in Gaza. He also described the continuing violence along the fence separating Gaza and Israel. While criticising Hamas and other groups for firing rockets into Israel, he expressed concern at the continued use of live fire by Israel.

### Key Issues and Options

The key underlying issue is what role the Council can play in mitigating the heightened tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, reflected by the violence along the Gaza border fence, the exchange of fire between Gaza and Israel, the continued settlement activity, the planned demolition of Khan al-Ahmar, and the unhelpful rhetoric from the parties. The two failed draft resolutions on Israel/Palestine tabled on 1 June—the vetoed Kuwaiti draft and the US draft which received only one affirmative vote (from the US itself)—reflect this long-standing gridlock. Since these documents, as well as several failed press statements on this issue in recent months, were proposed by either Kuwait or the US—which hold strongly contrasting views on Israel/Palestine—one possible option is for other members to take the lead in drafting outcomes, perhaps contributing to a perception that initial

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON ISRAEL/PALESTINE** [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2334](#) (23 December 2016) condemned Israeli settlements and was adopted with 14 votes in favour and a US abstention. [Secretary-General's Report S/2018/614](#) (18 June 2018) was on the implementation of resolution 2334. [Security Council Letter S/2018/454](#) (14 May 2018) was submitted by ten Council members – Bolivia, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru and Sweden – and requested that quarterly reports on the implementation of resolution 2334 be in writing. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8358](#) (20 September 2018) was a briefing by Mladenov on the implementation of resolution 2334. [S/PV.8329](#) (22 August 2018) was on the situation in the Middle East. [S/PV.8289](#) (19 June 2018) was a briefing by Mladenov on the implementation of resolution 2334.

## Middle East (Israel/Palestine)

versions of drafts may serve as a more balanced, objective basis for negotiation.

Another key issue is the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the impact it could have in exacerbating the political and security situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel. Given recent US cuts in aid to a variety of institutions serving the Palestinian population, Council members could use the public briefing as an opportunity to commend those who have enhanced their support for humanitarian and development projects supporting Palestinians and to advocate for enhanced financial support for such programs.

A further key issue is the importance of promoting intra-Palestinian reconciliation. In

this regard, the Council could consider pursuing a presidential statement that provides political support for international efforts to foster this reconciliation.

### Council Dynamics

There is a stark and growing contrast between the views of the US and other members on this issue. Although the US has traditionally demonstrated strong support for Israel, its policies have become increasingly partial toward the interests of the current government in Jerusalem. In this regard, the US has placed the blame for the violence along the Gaza fence in recent months entirely on Hamas, moved its embassy to Jerusalem in May, and, as noted above, has withdrawn its

funding for UNRWA. In contrast, several other members have questioned whether Israel has used disproportionate force in Gaza, view Jerusalem's final status as a matter to be negotiated by the parties, and emphasised that UNRWA's work is critical to efforts to maintaining stability in Gaza and elsewhere.

At the 20 September briefing, several members—Bolivia, Equatorial Guinea, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, and Sweden—reiterated their desire to receive written reports in advance of the quarterly briefing on the implementation of resolution 2334. With the exception of the written report produced in June—which was a focus of a public briefing—these reports have only been conveyed orally.

## Mali

### Expected Council Action

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

The mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) ends on 30 June 2019. The sanctions regime ends on 31 August 2019, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts expires on 30 September 2019.

### Key Recent Developments

Mali held a presidential election on 29 July, with a runoff on 12 August between the incumbent President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and opposition leader Soumaïla Cissé. Keïta was re-elected with 67 percent of the vote. The elections took place amidst considerable security challenges and with Cissé asserting that they were tainted by fraud. However, the EU and AU observation missions accepted the results, which were upheld by the Constitutional Court on 20 August. On 24 August, Council members issued a press statement welcoming the publication of the final results of the presidential elections and calling upon all Malians to unite and work

together to promote sustainable peace and to tackle the security and development challenges facing the country. Keïta was sworn in on 22 September.

Council members are growing increasingly frustrated with the limited implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. More than three years since its signing, 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 by agreeing to a timetable in January and a more detailed roadmap in March, some members have questioned whether there is sufficient political will to advance this process.

The Council renewed MINUSMA's mandate for one year on 28 June. Resolution 2423, which was adopted unanimously, did not significantly modify the mission's mandate, but it did exert pressure on the parties to implement the 2015 agreement. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate steps to swiftly conclude a "Pact for Peace" between the government of Mali and the UN. This pact is to be based on agreed benchmarks related to governance,

the rule of law, and implementation of the key provisions of the agreement. Participants at a high-level meeting on the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly invited the government of Mali and the UN to finalise the pact for peace at the next session of the Comité de Suivi de l'Accord, the main follow-up mechanism to the agreement, in October.

As a way of continuing to put pressure on the parties to deliver on their commitments on the agreement, the Council renewed the sanctions regime on Mali and the mandate of the Panel of Experts through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2432 on 30 August. The final report of the panel included a confidential annex proposing the designation of three individuals belonging to non-state armed groups, but no action has been taken on this recommendation.

The security situation in the north and centre of Mali continues to be critical. On 9 August, the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Sanctions Committee added to its list Adnan Abou Walid al-Sahraoui, leader of Al-Mourabitoun, a Council-designated group active in Mali that pledged allegiance to ISIL. At press time, at least 104

**UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2432](#) (30 August 2018) renewed the targeted sanctions regime on Mali and the mandate of the Panel of Experts. [S/RES/2423](#) (28 June 2018) renewed MINUSMA's mandate for one year. [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. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8288](#) (14 June 2018) was a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix on the situation in Mali. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13464](#) (24 August 2018) welcomed the publication of the final results of the presidential elections in Mali. [Sanctions Committee Document S/2018/581](#) (8 August 2018) was the final report of the Panel of Experts.

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## Mali

peacekeepers have been killed as a result of malicious acts since the establishment of MINUSMA five years ago. Inter-communal violence among ethnic groups persists, and terrorist groups often take advantage of these tensions to increase recruitment and legitimacy in their communities.

The G5 Sahel Joint Force has had limited impact so far in addressing instability in Mali and its border areas. On 29 June, its headquarters in Sévaré suffered a complex terrorist attack in which at least six people died. In early July, the military leadership of the mission was replaced as a result of the attack.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

The independent expert on human rights in Mali, Alioune Tine, undertook his first mission to the country from 24 to 29 June. In a 4 July statement, Tine expressed alarm over the continuing deterioration of the security, human rights and humanitarian situation in the centre of the country, as well as in the region of Ménaka. He called on authorities in Mali to carry out prompt, detailed and independent investigations into an “alarming” increase in human rights violations following accounts of several attacks by community militias, often with the participation of armed groups, resulting in deaths, injuries, the destruction or burning of property, and people being forced to leave their homes. Tine will submit a report to the Human Rights Council at its 40th session in March 2019. In a 17 July statement, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern about a surge in intercommunal violence in the Mopti region of central Mali, leading to widespread displacement of the civilian population that is already vulnerable because of a lack of protection and basic social services.

### Key Issues and Options

Council members have raised the tone of their frustration with the lack of implementation of the agreement, calling on the parties to take “unprecedented steps”. Resolution 2423 expressed the Council’s intention, in the absence of significant progress in implementing the agreement, to request the Secretary-General to provide options for significant changes to MINUSMA after June 2019. Council members, who have not held consultations on Mali since April, could discuss how they can support the political process bilaterally and multilaterally. They could hold a frank and unscripted discussion to garner support around a common political strategy and reach out to the parties to encourage progress. To do so, the Secretariat, the mission leadership and Algeria, which chairs the Comité de Suivi de l’Accord, could be invited to participate in an informal interactive dialogue.

Despite the widespread concerns about the slow pace of implementing the peace agreement, no individuals or entities have been sanctioned under the 2374 Mali sanctions regime. Council members could consider a set of listings that target, in a balanced way, all the parties to the agreement that are hindering its implementation, while preserving the parties’ engagement in the process.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

Regarding sanctions, France, the Netherlands,

the UK and the US have expressed support for identifying those obstructing, delaying or threatening the implementation of the peace agreement, with a view to imposing targeted sanctions. Russia stated in April 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. It is unclear whether there would be consensus to sanction any individual or entity.

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—was not shared directly with the Council, although some of its recommendations were conveyed in a Secretary-General’s report. In the review process, it became apparent that the Secretariat continues to experience pressure from member states regarding the outcome of these reviews. On 21 September, the Council adopted resolution 2436, requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that pertinent findings of future reviews be shared with the Council and with relevant member states, as appropriate, alongside the Secretary-General’s integrated analysis, strategic assessment and frank advice.

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

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## Colombia

### Expected Council Action

In October, the Council will receive a briefing from Special Representative Jean Arnault on the Secretary-General’s 90-day report on the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. Consultations are expected to follow the briefing.

The mandate of the verification mission expires on 25 September 2019.

### Key Recent Developments

On 13 September, the Security Council adopted resolution 2435 renewing the mandate of the verification mission until 25 September 2019. The mission will continue to verify the implementation of sections 3.2 and 3.4 of the November 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, as called for in its section

6.3.3. Sections 3.2 and 3.4 focus on political, economic and social reincorporation of the members of the guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP); personal and collective security guarantees; and comprehensive programmes on security and protection measures for communities and organisations in conflict-affected areas.

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON COLOMBIA** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2435](#) (13 September 2018) renewed the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. [S/RES/2381](#) (5 October 2017) authorised the UN Verification Mission in Colombia to participate in and coordinate the work of the monitoring and verification mechanism for the temporary ceasefire between the government of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. [Security Council Letter S/2018/801](#) (30 August 2018) was a letter by President Iván Duque conveying a joint request for the extension of the mission’s mandate by the government of Colombia and the FARC. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8351](#) (13 September 2018) was the meeting at which resolution 2435 was unanimously adopted. [S/PV.8319](#) (26 July 2018) was a briefing by Arnault on the Secretary-General’s latest report on Colombia. Colombian Vice President Óscar Naranjo also participated in the meeting.



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## Colombia

By a letter dated 30 August, Colombian President Iván Duque conveyed a joint request for mandate extension by the government of Colombia and the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC), the political party successor to the FARC-EP. Duque, who took office on 7 August, has repeatedly expressed his commitment not to terminate the peace agreement but to propose “corrections”. The new administration aims to modify provisions related to the transitional justice mechanisms and how to deal with the cultivation of coca.

One of the divisive issues in the implementation of the agreement is the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), the justice component of the transitional justice system. Centro Democrático, the political party of President Duque, had proposed amendments in the final stages of the legislative consideration of the SJP statute in June, including limiting the role of the SJP in evaluating extradition requests and barring human rights attorneys from serving as SJP magistrates, but the Constitutional Court rejected these changes on 16 August. The Court also reaffirmed that those former guerrilla members found responsible for crimes by the SJP and who have cooperated fully with the tribunal can participate in politics, including holding office.

An erosion of confidence about the future among the rank and file, the mid-level commanders and the leadership of the FARC is having a negative impact on the implementation of the agreement. In a statement on 6 September, the UN mission announced that six leaders of the FARC had abandoned the territories in the country’s southeast where they had relocated with approximately 1,500

former guerrilla members. Although the motivation for this decision remains unclear, the mission stressed that the decisions by the six leaders were a breach of their obligations under the agreement to actively contribute to ensuring the success of the reincorporation process.

Meanwhile, FARC-EP dissident groups pose a growing security challenge and have a destabilising impact on rural communities. Human rights defenders and social leaders continue to be targeted, with 121 killed in 2017, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

During a visit to New York on 23 August, Foreign Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo expressed support for the UN’s increased engagement in addressing the regional impact of the humanitarian situation in Venezuela. An estimated 1.6 million people have fled Venezuela since 2015, and an additional 1.8 million are expected to leave this year, according to UNHCR. Colombia, which has also traditionally been a destination country for Venezuelan immigrants, now hosts almost one million Venezuelan citizens. On 19 September, UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration announced the appointment of Eduardo Stein as a Joint Special Representative for Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region.

### Key Issues and Options

An important issue is ensuring that the peace agreement is implemented in its entirety under the new administration. Council members could organise a visiting mission to Colombia to convey its unanimous support for the agreement.

The government’s ability to develop and

finance a strategy for reintegrating former FARC-EP members into society and to provide safety and security in areas previously occupied by the FARC-EP remain critical issues in the successful implementation of the agreement. Council members could encourage dialogue between representatives of the government and the FARC, including through the reactivation of the commission for follow-up, impulse and verification of the implementation of the agreement (CSIVI) to address the trust deficit and discuss how the commitments made in the agreement are to be carried out in this new phase.

The current political context may mean a significant change in the role the two successive UN missions have played since the government of Colombia requested the Council’s involvement in January 2016. The present mission, with the Council’s close attention and support, could be in a position to use its leverage to sustain key provisions of the agreement at a moment of uncertainty in order to reassure Colombians about the irreversibility of the process.

### Council Dynamics

Council members are unified in their support for the peace process in Colombia. This was reflected in the negotiations on the renewal of the mission’s mandate, when no Council member proposed changes to the language in the resolution. Several members have viewed engagement in Colombia as a rare bright spot for the Council as it struggles to play an effective role in several other conflict situations. However, some members have expressed concerns about the future of the agreement under the new administration.

The UK is the penholder on Colombia.

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## Sudan (Darfur)

### Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council will be briefed on the Secretary-General’s 90-day report on the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), as requested in resolution 2429. Also in October, Ambassador

Joanna Wronecka (Poland), chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, is expected to provide the quarterly briefing to Council members on the committee’s work. The mandate of UNAMID expires on 30 June 2019.

### Key Recent Developments

On 13 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2429, extending UNAMID’s mandate until 30 June 2019. The resolution welcomed the improved security conditions in Darfur but expressed concern over

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2429](#) (13 July 2018) renewed UNAMID’s mandate until 30 June 2019. [S/RES/2425](#) (29 June 2018) was a technical rollover of UNAMID’s mandate until 13 July. [Secretary-General’s Reports S/2018/612](#) (13 June 2018) was an update report covering 16 April to 10 June. [S/2018/530](#) (1 June 2018) was the joint special report of the UN Secretary-General and the AU Commission Chairperson on the strategic review of UNAMID. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8290](#) (20 June 2018) was a semi-annual briefing by ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda. [S/PV.8287](#) (14 June 2018) was the 90-day briefing by the chair of the Sudan Sanctions Committee. [S/PV.8283](#) (11 June 2018) was a briefing on UNAMID.

## Sudan (Darfur)

ongoing clashes and restricted humanitarian access in the Jebel Marra area, noting that inter-communal conflicts remain one of the main sources of violence in Darfur. It also welcomed significant reductions in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) but noted that approximately two million people remain displaced in Darfur, with the majority in need of humanitarian assistance.

Given the improved security situation in Darfur overall, resolution 2429 decided to reduce the troop ceiling from 8,735 to 4,050 military personnel over the course of the mandate renewal period. The authorised police personnel ceiling was maintained at 2,500. The resolution incorporated several aspects of the 1 June joint special report of the UN Secretary-General and the AU Commission Chairperson on the strategic review of UNAMID. It requested UNAMID to focus on both peacekeeping and long-term solutions to conflict drivers in Darfur with a view towards the exit of the mission on 30 June 2020, provided there is no significant change in the security situation in Darfur and that key indicators are fulfilled. (These indicators pertain to security sector reform, the rule of law, durable solutions for displaced host communities, human rights and the immediate delivery of services for IDPs.) In the context of the mission's drawdown, the resolution underscored the need "to keep the situation in all areas of Darfur under review" and "to maintain the flexibility within UNAMID to respond to developments throughout Darfur as the situation requires". It supported the joint special report's call for consolidation of a whole-of-system approach in Darfur, and the establishment of joint UNAMID-UN Country Team offices in the capitals of the states of Darfur "except for where Mission sites would remain". It also requests strengthened integration among UNAMID, the UN Country Team, and other UN entities operating in Darfur.

Resolution 2429 requested the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Commission to conduct a strategic review of UNAMID by 1 May 2019. It extended the Secretary-General's regular cycle of reporting to the Council from 60 to 90 days and requested that the Secretary General's initial 90-day report include a detailed, clearly benchmarked exit strategy for UNAMID as well as how progress on these benchmarks

should be monitored. Council members expect to receive this report in October ahead of the briefing.

As in previous years, UNAMID's mandate continues to prioritise the protection of civilians, the facilitation of humanitarian access, mediation between the government and armed groups, and intercommunal mediation. Nevertheless, resolution 2429 slightly revised the priorities. With regard to the protection of civilians, for example, new language has been added calling for "monitoring and reporting on human rights, sexual and gender-based violence and grave violations against children". The priority related to intercommunal mediation has been expanded to include a focus on mediation with regard to "other local conflict that could undermine the security situation".

The last Council briefing on the issue was by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix on 11 June. On 20 June, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda provided the semi-annual briefing on the ICC's work with regard to Darfur—a situation the Council referred to the ICC more than 13 years ago—again urging the Council to play a more active role in supporting the arrest and transfer of those suspected of "multiple crimes against humanity and war crimes" in Darfur.

### Sanctions-Related Developments

On 13 June, Ambassador Wronecka briefed the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, in her capacity as chair, on her April visit to Sudan. The following day she provided the chair's quarterly briefing to the Council. On 17 August, the committee was briefed on the interim report of the Panel of Experts (the interim report, unlike the final report, is not made public).

### Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 39th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on 26 September with the independent expert on human rights in Sudan, Aristide Nononsi, and considered his report covering September 2017 to June (A/HRC/39/71). The report expressed concern that the Sudanese government had still not implemented a significant number of recommendations contained in previous reports of the independent expert. Those displaced within Darfur face many challenges in IDP camps, including lack of adequate food, safe drinking water and adequate health care, causing them to remain heavily dependent on the services and support of UNAMID and humanitarian agencies, the report

said. In Darfur particularly, land occupation and violence targeting IDPs, including sexual violence against displaced girls and women, continue to hinder their return to their areas of origin. At press time, the HRC was expected to adopt a resolution on 28 September on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in Sudan, renewing the mandate of the independent expert for another year.

### Key Issues and Options

A key issue that Council members will want to follow closely is the effect of further troop reductions on the security situation as well as the effect of the mission's revised priorities, including on human rights reporting and intercommunal mediation efforts. An option would be to rely on the benchmarks set out in the Secretary-General's upcoming report, which is also expected to include how progress on these benchmarks should be monitored.

A longstanding issue is how the Council can seek to address the root causes of the conflict and to promote intercommunal reconciliation. An option would be to request Jeremiah Mamabolo, the Joint Special Representative and head of UNAMID, to present the Council with options in this regard.

Another longstanding issue is how 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, or threatening to impose, additional targeted sanctions on those parties who continue to refuse to participate in the negotiations.

### Council Dynamics

Council members continue to differ in their assessment of the situation in Darfur. Some members seem to view more guarded recognition of progress as appropriate while others are generally more positive in their assessment, as reflected during the July negotiations on resolution 2429 renewing UNAMID's mandate. China, Ethiopia, Russia and others were comfortable with the pace and scope of the reduction recommended in the joint special

## Sudan (Darfur)

report, but some members maintained that it was too severe. As a compromise, the recommended troop reduction was accepted, but the police ceiling was maintained at 2,500 instead of being reduced to 1,870 personnel. A related source of disagreement was how to characterise the timeframe for the mission's withdrawal. While some members emphasised that the mission should withdraw by June 2020, as recommended in the joint special report, France, the US, the UK and

others indicated that such a timeline should not be absolute but should be conditioned on success in addressing the drivers of conflict in Darfur. As a result, language was added on the fulfilment of certain indicators and that the Secretary-General's upcoming report should include related benchmarks.

Another issue of some controversy was that earlier drafts of the resolution welcomed the joint special report's recommendation that OHCHR open an office in Sudan. Following

opposition from some members, the resolution instead took note of this recommendation, rather than welcoming it. It did, however, request the Sudanese government "to engage in discussions with the OHCHR as regards the establishment and activities" of such an office.

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

## Central African Republic

### Expected Council Action

In October, Special Representative and head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, is expected to brief on the latest developments in the country and the most recent MINUSCA report, due on 15 October.

MINUSCA's mandate expires on 15 November 2018.

The Chair of the 2127 Central African Republic (CAR) Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kacou Houadja Léon Adom (Côte d'Ivoire), is scheduled to undertake a visiting mission to the country from 2 to 5 October.

### Key Recent Developments

The security situation in the 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 factions, which are largely Muslim, continue to establish illegal parallel administration and taxation structures in areas under their control, preying on the population. The government, led by President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, has minimal control outside Bangui.

The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR, led by the AU, convened a meeting of the government and

representatives of the 14 armed groups that signed on to this process at the end of August. On 30 August, the armed groups signed a document of demands to form the basis for continued negotiations. Media reports indicate that a previous demand for blanket amnesty for all rebels, rejected by the government, was eventually not included in the document.

In parallel, Russia brokered a meeting in Khartoum between the anti-Balaka militia led by Maxime Mokom and the ex-Séléka led by Noureddine Adam. On 29 August, the two groups issued a declaration of commitment towards peace in the CAR through the establishment of the "Central African Forum" as a framework for communication. The CAR government, which did not participate in this meeting, took note of the declaration. Russia has also been training and arming the CAR security forces and has notified the CAR Sanctions Committee, as required by resolution 2399.

In addition to national reconciliation efforts, MINUSCA is supporting government-led local peace and reconciliation initiatives, inclusive of armed groups and civil society, which have been assisting in reducing violence, building trust between communities, facilitating the return of internally displaced people (IDPs), and local disarmament processes in some areas.

Despite these developments, violence

persists. MINUSCA announced that it is investigating reports that nine people were taken from the country's largest IDP camp, PK3, in Bria on 6 September and killed during violent clashes between anti-Balaka and an ex-Séléka faction, the Popular Front for the Rebirth of the CAR (FPRC). MINUSCA also called for calm after IDPs threw two grenades in the camp while protesting the violence.

After eight people were killed in May in fighting between MINUSCA and another ex-Séléka faction, the Union for Peace (UPC), the security situation in Bambari—located in the centre of the country, where MINUSCA has a significant presence—has been relatively calm. Armed groups remain in control of parts of the city, however, and violent crime remains rampant.

Armed groups continue to target humanitarian workers and MINUSCA peacekeepers. On 23 August, a Burundian peacekeeper was killed in an attack on a MINUSCA convoy in Basse-Kotto prefecture. Council members issued a press statement condemning the attack the following day. Additionally, OCHA reported that between January and August, 274 incidents affecting humanitarian organisations were recorded across the country, endangering staff and hindering humanitarian assistance. More than half of the population—2.5 million people—is in need of humanitarian assistance, and according to

**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 Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/14](#) (13 July 2018) expressed the Council's concern over the continuing violence perpetrated by armed groups in the CAR and reaffirmed its support for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR. [Security Council Letters S/2018/846](#) (13 September 2018) was from Sudan regarding the Khartoum meeting between armed groups from the CAR. [S/2018/463](#) (15 May 2018) was on MINUSCA support for the CAR security forces. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13465](#) (24 August 2018) condemned a 23 August attack by armed elements on a MINUSCA convoy in Basse-Kotto prefecture, killing one Burundian peacekeeper. [Sanctions Committee Documents SC/13456](#) (14 August 2018) was a press release on the 20 July briefing by the Panel of Experts assisting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee on the panel's midterm report. [S/2018/729](#) (23 July 2018) was the midterm report of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee.

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## Central African Republic

UNHCR there were 687,398 IDPs and over 582,000 refugees in neighbouring countries as of 17 May.

In accordance with resolution 2387, the Secretary-General submitted recommendations to the Council on 16 May regarding possible support for the redeployment of the CAR security forces. He recommended that the Council authorise MINUSCA to provide limited operational and logistical support to the CAR security forces trained by the EU Military Training Mission for a period of 12 months, under certain conditions, including that the security forces were vetted and would uphold the principles of accountability and the rule of law. The Secretary-General stressed that without this support, the ability of the CAR to restore peace and establish state authority would be undermined. In a 13 July presidential statement, the Council expressed its intent to review the Secretary-General's recommendations. The statement also expressed its concern over the continuing violence perpetrated by armed groups in the CAR and reaffirmed its support for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR.

### Sanctions-Related Developments

The 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee met on 20 July to discuss the midterm report of the Panel of Experts assisting the committee. The report noted that the ongoing redeployment of the CAR military and the joint operations of MINUSCA and the national security forces – mainly the failed attempt on 7-8 April to dismantle armed elements in PK5, a Muslim enclave in Bangui – have contributed to the hardening of the positions of ex-Séléka elements, in particular the FPRC. Its leaders continued their attempts to reunify the Séléka and consolidate parallel administrations

in areas under their control.

The committee met with the representatives of neighbouring countries on 7 September to discuss the implementation of sanctions.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 39th session, the Human Rights Council held an interactive dialogue on 27 September with the independent expert on human rights in the CAR, Marie-Thérèse Keita Bocoum, and considered her report covering July 2017 to June (A/HRC/39/70). The reporting period, during which Bocoum made two visits to the CAR, was marked by “constant human rights violations and abuses linked to continuing attacks by various armed groups in the south-west of the country in 2017, and in Bangui and the centre of the country in 2018”, the report said. Most of the abuses were attributable to anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka armed factions and criminal gangs which continued to target civilians, humanitarian workers and UN peacekeepers, but also homes, public buildings, hospitals and places of worship, worsening the humanitarian situation and restricting access to economic and social rights, as detailed in the report.

### Issues and Options

The continued 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. In addition, slow reconciliation efforts have yet to change the situation on the ground or assist in expanding state authority beyond Bangui.

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. A credible threat of sanctions

might also be an effective incentive for armed groups to commit to reconciliation.

As signalled in the 13 July presidential statement, as part of its efforts, the Council could mandate MINUSCA to provide limited operational and logistical support to the CAR security forces, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his May report.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

The deteriorating security situation, with its intercommunal undertones, slow reconciliation efforts, and the government's inability to project law outside of Bangui and Bambari, has been a continuing matter of concern for the Council.

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, Council members disagreed during negotiations over resolution 2387 about whether MINUSCA should be assisting the authorities by working 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. In addition, while the US is pushing for austerity and efficiency in peacekeeping, some Council members question MINUSCA's ability to expand its tasks when it is already overstretched and experiencing difficulties in fulfilling its mandate. These differences of approach also surfaced during the negotiations over the 13 July presidential statement.

France is the penholder on the CAR.

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## Lebanon

### Expected Council Action

In October, Council members will receive the semi-annual briefing on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559. Adopted in 2004, resolution 1559 called for the disarmament of all militias and the extension of government control over all Lebanese

territory. This briefing, usually conducted by the Special Coordinator for Lebanon or an official from the Department of Political Affairs, has always been held in consultations.

The mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) expires on 31 August 2019.

### Key Recent Developments

Five months after parliamentary elections, Lebanon has yet to form a government. In late May, Lebanese President Michel Aoun designated Saad Hariri as the prime minister in charge of forming the government. Hariri's task has been complicated by a

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2433 (30 August 2018) renewed the mandate of UNFIL for another year. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) expanded UNIFIL by 15,000 troops and expanded its mandate. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory, and free and fair presidential elections. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/703** (13 July 2018) was the report on the implementation of resolution 1701. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8338** (30 August 2018) was the vote on resolution 2433.

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# Lebanon

lack of agreement among the major political blocks on their share of cabinet posts in the new government.

According to media reports from early September, Lebanon's Speaker of the Parliament, Nabih Berri, warned that the economic situation in Lebanon is serious, while President Aoun said that such concerns are exaggerated. Aoun acknowledged that there are difficulties facing the Lebanese economy but said that the country is working to address them. Lebanon is under pressure from the International Monetary Fund to make fiscal adjustments to address its public debt. Initiating any reforms in this regard would require a functioning government.

In a televised address to his supporters on 20 September, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah announced that the group has acquired precision-guided missiles despite Israel's efforts to prevent this. According to some estimates, Hezbollah currently has more than 100,000 missiles that could target Israel. Nasrallah reiterated that Hezbollah fighters would remain in Syria as long as they are needed by the Syrian government.

On 30 August, the Council adopted resolution 2433, which extended UNIFIL's mandate for a further year. While negotiations on the resolution were not as contentious as last year, diverging views among Council members on the mission's role were evident. In the past, the US has publicly criticised UNIFIL for overlooking the alleged upsurge in Hezbollah's activity and increased flow of weapons into southern Lebanon and demanded that UNIFIL assume a more visible presence in the area. The resolution stressed the need to improve management of UNIFIL civilian resources with the goal of improving the effectiveness of the mission, and requested the Secretary-General to provide his recommendations on the issue by the end of the year. While the mandate of the mission remained unchanged, the resolution called on the government of Lebanon to develop a

plan to increase its naval capabilities with the aim of reducing UNIFIL's Maritime Task force and transitioning its responsibilities to the Lebanese Navy.

Newly appointed head of UNIFIL and force commander Major General Stefano Del Col chaired his first tripartite meeting on 6 September. Del Col met with senior officials from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Israel Defense Forces to discuss the situation along the Blue Line, the border demarcation between Israel and Lebanon. He commended both parties for their efforts to ease tensions and preserve stability.

On 21 September, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon completed closing arguments in the case involving four individuals charged with conspiracy to commit a terrorist act, which resulted in the assassination of former prime minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005. The accused remain at large, and the trial in The Hague is being held in absentia. Saad Hariri was present on the first day of the closing arguments and later told the media that he is confident that those who killed his father would be held to account.

## Key Issues and Options

There are several interrelated issues for the Council, notably the weaponry that Hezbollah and other non-state actors possess and the flow of arms through Syria to Hezbollah, which directly hinder the ability of the Lebanese government to exercise full authority over its territory. The ongoing crisis in Syria, with Hezbollah's involvement on the side of the Syrian government, has contributed to this flow of arms. These circumstances pose a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability and contravene its obligations under resolutions 1559 and 1701, the latter of which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006. The situation also generates concerns about tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border, with the continuing threat of a resumption of hostilities

between Hezbollah and Israel.

On the political front, the Council will continue to follow closely the developments related to the formation of the new government in Lebanon. Council members are aware that a protracted period of political instability in Lebanon could have implications for the security situation in the country and the wider region.

Lebanon's burden in hosting close to one million refugees from Syria is also of deep concern, and in that regard, the Council could request a briefing by UNHCR on how member states can enhance services to refugees.

## Council Dynamics

The Council continues to demonstrate unity in its support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security and its efforts to insulate itself from the damaging effect of the Syrian conflict. The Council has also recognised the decisive role of the LAF in responding to security challenges.

The members are divided, however, in their view of the security dynamics in the region and the role of the mission. This was particularly evident during the mandate renewal negotiations both last year and this year. The US has continued to emphasise the threat posed by Iran, Hezbollah, and the proliferation of weapons in southern Lebanon, and has promoted a more active role for UNIFIL in confronting these threats. On the mission's configuration, the US has strongly advocated for the reduction of UNIFIL's Maritime Task force, leading towards eventual termination. Most other members, however, share the view that the mission's mandate and tasks should remain unchanged. These members are cautious of drastic changes in the mission's mandate and their impact on the fragile calm that has been maintained in southern Lebanon for the past ten years.

# Women, Peace and Security

## Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on women, peace and security and the Secretary-General's annual report on the issue.

Bolivia, as president of the Council in October, is expected to circulate a concept note ahead of the debate. The debate, which may be held at high level, is expected to focus on the empowerment of women in peace processes. The Secretary-General is expected to brief. No formal outcome is expected at this point.

## Key Recent Developments

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 on 31 October 2000, the Council has focused regularly on the issue of women, peace and security. Resolution 1325 recognised that conflict has a differential impact on women and that addressing the needs, views and participation of half of society would provide a positive peace dividend. It emphasised the protection of women, their meaningful participation in peace and security processes, and the need for an increased role of women in preventing and resolving conflict. The seven resolutions adopted since then established a broad spectrum of norms on women, peace and security. The most recent Council resolution on this thematic issue, resolution 2242, adopted on 13 October 2015, included practical actions for the improved implementation of the agenda, including by convening an Informal Expert Group (IEG).

Thus far in 2018, the IEG has held meetings on Mali and the Sahel, Iraq, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lake Chad Basin, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic and Yemen.

The Council held a briefing on 10 July on "Women, Peace and Security in the Sahel Region", chaired by Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström. UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security Bineta Diop briefed. Wallström had joined the Chad and Niger legs of a joint UN-AU trip, led by Mohammed and Diop, that focused on peace, security and development issues, with

women's participation at their centre. During the meeting, Mohammed and Diop shared information and impressions with regard to women's leadership in the prevention of conflicts and their inclusion in processes addressing environmental, humanitarian and development challenges. This was the second briefing of its kind, following-up on a briefing after a joint UN-AU trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria in August 2017.

After a briefing on the Lake Chad Basin region in March, the Department of Political Affairs issued a confidential note to Council members addressing the gender dimension of the threat posed by the terror group Boko Haram. This was the first time a communication of this type focused on the gender dimension of any conflict, and is consistent with the provisions of resolution 2242, which called for the inclusion of the women, peace and security agenda in efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism. The note provides information on how Boko Haram uses gender-based inequalities and gender stereotypes for their operations: for example, by deploying a greater proportion of female suicide bombers than other insurgent groups, as women tend to face weaker security checks.

Relevant developments this year regarding mandates of peace operations include the 21 September adoption of resolution 2436 on peacekeeping performance. The resolution, which reiterated a request from resolution 2242 to the Secretary-General to present a revised strategy to double the number of women in military and police contingents of UN peacekeeping operations by 2020, set a deadline of March 2019 for this strategy to be submitted to the Council.

Recent resolutions renewing peacekeeping mandates also reflect increasing awareness of the importance of mainstreaming women, peace and security issues. Resolution 2433 adopted on 30 August, renewing the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), recalls the request in resolution 2242 for a strategy to double female personnel in peacekeeping. It

requests the Secretary-General and troop-contributing countries to seek to increase the number of women in UNIFIL, and to ensure the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of its operations. It also requests UNIFIL to take gender considerations fully into account as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate as well as to assist the Lebanese authorities in ensuring the full and effective participation, involvement and representation of women at all levels of decision-making and to enhance its reporting to the Council on this issue.

Resolution 2414 of 27 April, renewing the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), similarly asked the Secretary-General to increase the number of women in MINURSO, as did resolution 2430 renewing the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) on 26 July. There were also more references than in previous years to women's participation and empowerment in this year's resolution 2405 of 8 March renewing the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

## Key Issues and Options

An important issue is to continue integrating women, peace and security issues in relevant country-specific and regional issues on the Council's agenda, as recent mandate renewals have done and which members may wish to highlight. Other examples of progress include the mainstreaming of language in Council products and reporting by the Secretary-General, an increasing number of female civil society briefers and female leaders in Council meetings, and sexual and gender-based violence as a designation criterion in sanctions regimes. Members may also stress that there is scope for further progress, of the integration of women, peace and security issues in efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism; in non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control; and women's political participation in all levels of governance. They may wish to present good practices regarding their national action plans on women, peace and security and their bilateral foreign

**UN DOCUMENTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY** [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2242](#) (13 October 2015) addressed women's roles in countering violent extremism and terrorism, improved the Council's working methods in relation to women, peace and security, and took up gender recommendations made by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the Global Study on the implementation of resolution 1325. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2017/861](#) (16 October 2017) was the annual report on women, peace and security. [S/2018/250](#) (23 March 2018) was the annual report on conflict-related sexual violence. [Security Council Letters S/2018/688](#) (11 July 2018) was the summary of the 5 June meeting on Mali and the Sahel held by the IEG. [S/2018/475](#) (17 May 2018) was the summary of the 29 March meeting on Iraq held by the IEG. [S/2018/362](#) (16 April 2018) was the summary of the 28 February meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo held by the IEG. [S/2018/188](#) (23 February 2018) was the summary of the 30 January meeting on the Lake Chad Basin held by the IEG. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8306](#) (10 July 2018) was a briefing on "Women, Peace and Security in the Sahel Region", chaired by Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström. [S/PV.8234](#) (16 April 2018) was an open debate on conflict-related sexual violence. [S/PV.8079](#) (27 October 2017) was the annual open debate on women, peace and security.

# Women, Peace and Security

assistance support to organisations working towards women's participation in peacebuilding in countries affected by conflict.

The upcoming annual report of the Secretary-General is expected to provide an update on gender parity within the organisation; members will be able to assess progress and use the information from the Secretary-General's report and the open debate to feed into their thinking about country-specific situations in the context of mission mandate

renewals and sanctions, as well as other thematic areas.

## Council Dynamics

The co-chairs of the IEG, Peru and Sweden, have been working to integrate women's issues as peace and security issues as an integral part of the Council's country-specific work, rather than primarily as a free-standing thematic issue.

During past negotiations of Council

decisions on women, peace and security, China and Russia have routinely criticised new language as an expansion of the women, peace and security agenda or perceived it as infringing on state sovereignty or encroaching upon competencies of other parts of the UN system.

The UK is the penholder on women, peace and security issues; Peru and Sweden are the co-chairs of the IEG.

## Cyprus

### Expected Council Action

In October, the Council expects to receive a report on the Secretary-General's good offices in Cyprus and the outcome of UN consultant Jane Holl Lute's consultations on the negotiation process.

### Key Recent Developments

In July, the Council adopted resolution 2430, which extended the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for another six months. Notwithstanding the lack of progress in unification talks for over a year, the Council did not initiate any changes in the mission's mandate or size. The resolution welcomed the appointment of Lute as UN consultant and called on all sides to use this opportunity to engage in constructive consultations.

The Secretary-General appointed Lute earlier in July as a UN consultant charged with consulting the parties and seeking their reflections on the negotiation process. So far, Lute has held meetings with the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders separately and with the representatives of the guarantor powers—Greece, Turkey and the UK. At press time there was no substantial information on the outcome of her talks with the parties. Neither Lute nor the Secretary-General addressed the media on the ongoing process of consultations. As requested by resolution 2430, the Secretary-General will submit a report to the Council on the outcome of Lute's consultations by 15 October. This report will form the basis for the Council's deliberation on the Cyprus issue in October.

Speaking to the media on 16 September, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that Turkey would increase rather than decrease the number of troops stationed in northern Cyprus. Addressing the issue of Cyprus's unification, he said that the matter would have been solved if the Greek Cypriots had supported the plan of then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In separate referendums on the Annan plan in April 2004, Turkish Cypriots voted for it while Greek Cypriots rejected it.

During the high-level week of the UN General Assembly, the Secretary-General met separately with Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinçi. Secretary-General used this opportunity to discuss with both leaders the prospects for resumption of unification talks.

### Key Issues and Options

At the moment, the Council's main concern about Cyprus is the lack of progress in the unification talks and what role, if any, the Council should play to stimulate the process. In the absence of a political solution or tangible progress in talks, an issue for the Council is whether to consider significant changes to the mission's mandate and examine downsizing options.

Council members are interested in receiving more information on the prospects for a political settlement of the Cyprus issue. The outcome of Lute's consultations will play an important role in guiding discussion during

the next mandate renewal.

So far, the Council has been wary of initiating discussions about the specifics of mandate changes or prospects for downsizing the mission, fearing a negative impact on the situation on the ground and on the political process. Council members could, however, be more open to these discussions during the next mandate renewal in January 2019, especially if the current stalemate in unification talks persists.

### Council Dynamics

As is the case with other issues of low intensity on the Council's agenda, only a few members with particular interest in the conflict follow the situation in Cyprus closely. Among these are France, Russia, and the UK. The UK is also one of the guarantor powers under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee on the independence, territorial integrity and security of Cyprus. Over the past several years, the US has become more engaged in efforts to find a political solution as the island started to gain importance because of its offshore hydrocarbon resources and its strategic location in relation to the fight against terrorism in the Middle East. The current US administration has been particularly focused on increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations while emphasising that such missions need to support political solutions.

The Council has been unified in its support for the political process, which could lead towards final settlement of the Cyprus question. There are some differences,

**UN DOCUMENTS ON CYPRUS** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2430 (26 July 2018) renewed UNFICYP's mandate until 31 January 2019. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2018/610 (14 June 2018) was on progress towards a settlement in Cyprus. S/2017/1008 (28 November 2017) was on the strategic review of the UN mission in Cyprus. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.8317 (26 July 2018) was the vote on resolution 2430.

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## Cyprus

however, over the acceptable timeline for the reunification talks. Some members seem to be frustrated by the duration of the political process and share the view that it cannot be open-ended, and that the Council could stimulate the negotiations by putting pressure on both sides. However, Russia has strongly opposed any attempt to exert pressure on both sides and seek to affect negotiations, as it maintains that the process must

be Cypriot-led and Cypriot-owned for the outcome to be effective.

During the negotiations of the last mandate renewal resolution, the US seemed to have proposed adding to the draft specific references to timed benchmarks for an exit strategy tied to the political process as well as a request for a comprehensive strategic review of the mission that would have evaluated every aspect of UNFICYP. These suggestions,

however, were not included in the final text of the resolution. In the absence of progress on the political front, it is likely that the US position will gain more support from other members who have so far been cautious on this issue. Russia is likely to continue to oppose any drastic changes to the mission's mandate and troop numbers.

The UK is the penholder on Cyprus.

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## Yemen

### Expected Council Action

In October, the Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, is expected to brief the Council. A representative of OCHA is also likely to brief.

### Key Recent Developments

The Saudi Arabia-led coalition, fighting in support of the Yemeni government against the Houthi rebel group, came under increased scrutiny for its conduct of the war during August, while in September, UN efforts to bring the government and Houthis together for the first time in two years faltered.

On 9 August, a coalition airstrike hit a school bus in Saada, killing at least 40 children. The next day, Council members discussed the attack in consultations. Through press elements, members called for a credible and transparent investigation. Initially, the coalition defended the strike, but on 1 September, the Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT), an investigative body set up by the coalition, said the strike was conducted based on intelligence that Houthi leaders were in the bus but that delays had led to striking the bus with children on board. A coalition statement on 6 September said that the JIAT would also assess a 23 August air strike on a vehicle in which 27 civilians fleeing fighting in Hodeidah governorate, including 22 children, were killed.

On 28 August, the Group of Independent Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, established in September

2017 by the Human Rights Council (HRC), published its findings (A/HRC/39/43). The experts affirm that individuals from both sides, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), might have committed war crimes. The report says that coalition airstrikes—which have repeatedly hit residential areas, markets, funerals, weddings, detention facilities, civilian boats and medical facilities, and have caused the majority of documented civilian casualties—may have been conducted in violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. The report also says that there are reasonable grounds to believe that coalition restrictions on commercial shipping violate the proportionality rule of international humanitarian law, having caused extreme suffering for millions of civilians and being unjustified by any possible military advantage. The experts note that no searches of shipments to Houthi-controlled ports had uncovered any weapons. According to the report, the ban on commercial flights to Sana'a constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law protections for the sick and wounded. Violations by the Houthis and their allies for indiscriminate attacks and access restrictions in Taiz are also covered, though the experts, who could not visit the city, say further investigations into these issues are required.

The report further covers widespread arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, ill-treatment, torture and the use of child soldiers. It describes restrictions on the right to

freedom of expression, including the coalition's ban on international media traveling on UN humanitarian flights to Sana'a, Houthi arrests of journalists and of the Bahai minority, and intimidation by both sides of their perceived critics. The report details sexual violence and rape by Yemeni government and Security Belt forces (a southern paramilitary force supported by the UAE) and Emirati personnel against migrants and internally displaced and vulnerable persons. The experts' findings echo those of a Human Rights Watch report, also issued in August, about the JIAT, raising serious concerns over its independence and the quality of its findings. The Group of Experts submitted a confidential list of individuals who may be responsible for international crimes to the OHCHR.

On the political front, Griffiths organised consultations between the government and Houthis that were planned to start on 6 September in Geneva. The Houthis did not attend, however, after demanding last minute changes to the travel arrangements for their delegation, that following several days of discussion could not be resolved. Griffiths held talks with the Yemeni government delegation that focused on confidence-building measures, including the release of prisoners, the re-opening of Sana'a airport, economic issues and a wide range of humanitarian issues, such as opening up humanitarian access routes. At an 8 September press conference, Griffiths said that he would travel to Muscat and Sana'a to consult with the Houthi leadership

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN** [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2216](#) (14 April 2015) demanded that the Houthis withdraw from all seized areas and relinquish all seized arms and established a targeted arms embargo. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/5](#) (15 March 2018) called for the full and sustained opening of Yemen's ports, including Hodeidah and Saleef, and for increased access to Sana'a airport. [Security Council Letter S/2018/847](#) (14 September 2018) was from the UAE about military operations around Hodeidah. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8361](#) (21 September 2018) was a briefing on Yemen. [S/PV.8348](#) (11 September 2018) was a briefing on Yemen. [S/PV.8323](#) (2 August 2018) was a briefing on Yemen. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13484](#) (5 September 2018) welcomed the upcoming Geneva consultations. [Human Rights Council Document A/HRC/39/43](#) (17 August 2018) was the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights containing the findings of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen.



# Yemen

about what had been discussed with the government delegation.

On 11 September, Griffiths briefed the Council in a public meeting followed by consultations after which members issued press elements expressing regret that the Houthis had not attended the Geneva meeting and urging all sides to get behind the process that the Special Envoy is leading. Griffiths visited Muscat from 12 to 13 September and Sana'a from 16 to 17 September. According to his office, he held “constructive” discussions about resuming consultations and confidence-building measures.

Following the unsuccessful Geneva meeting, the coalition intensified military operations around Hodeidah, the port city through which 70 percent of Yemen's imported food, fuel and medicine requirements enter the country. The coalition publicly signalled its plans to re-launch an offensive—paused since June—against the city. A 14 September letter from the UAE to the Council reiterated that “the liberation of Hodeida[h] is critical to re-engaging the Houthis in peace talks”. Most of the fighting so far has been over the main road linking Hodeidah with Sana'a and other population centres in the central highlands, effectively closing the eastern route out of the city.

The economic situation worsened as the Yemeni rial fell sharply in value, prompting widespread protests in southern Yemen in September.

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock briefed the Council on the escalation around Hodeidah and the worsening economic situation on 21 September. He warned that Yemen may be “approaching a tipping point, beyond which it will be impossible to prevent massive loss of life as a result of widespread famine across the country”, and described already existing “pocket-like conditions of famine”.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 39th session, the HRC held an interactive dialogue on 25 and 26 September on the report on Yemen by the High Commissioner for Human Rights containing the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Group of Independent Eminent International and Regional

Experts on Yemen. At press time, the HRC was expected to adopt a resolution on human rights, technical assistance and capacity-building in Yemen on 28 September. It was unclear whether the group of eminent experts' mandate would be renewed.

## Key Issues and Options

The Special Envoy's efforts to resume a political process and ways that the Council could support this remains a key issue. During the 11 September briefing, most members expressed regret over the Houthi absence at Geneva but avoided speaking critically of the Houthis. They reiterated their strong support for Griffiths and encouraged the sides to engage constructively with the Special Envoy. Griffiths has also been seeking to engage other Yemeni actors, including groups in the south where there is a secessionist movement, while he pursues consultations with the two principal parties.

Aspects of Yemen's humanitarian crisis, in which 8.4 million people are at risk of famine, include access for critical supplies and aid, the parties' compliance with international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians and the deteriorating economy. An immediate concern is the situation around Hodeidah, which could see heavy civilian casualties in a battle for the city and a significant worsening of the humanitarian situation if its port can no longer function as Yemen's main entry point for food and other humanitarian assistance.

In the 11 September press elements, Council members asked that Griffiths keep them updated on his efforts. Council members may continue to affirm their support for the Special Envoy, and encourage the parties and those with influence on them to engage constructively with him.

On Hodeidah, the Council is likely to monitor developments, which include the prospect of an offensive on the city and also concerns about the possible imposition of a siege. It could adopt a presidential statement calling for a de-escalation or cessation of hostilities and for the parties to ensure that all roads and ports, including Hodeidah and nearby Saleef, remain open and functional for

humanitarian and commercial imports and their distribution. The Council may further endorse a UN plan from June to place Hodeidah port under UN supervision, and could recall that sanctions can be applied against individuals or entities, according to resolutions 2140 and 2216, for violating international humanitarian law and human rights law, or obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The Council may also consider holding a briefing with the group of eminent experts on the human rights situation in Yemen.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members support the efforts of the Special Envoy, and share strong concerns about the consequences of an attack on Hodeidah and the larger humanitarian crisis, which are reasons that the Council is often described as united on Yemen. At the same time, Saudi Arabia and the UAE exert a great deal of influence on the Council's consideration of Yemen through the alliances and strategic relations they maintain with Council members. This has led to differences among members over how to respond to different aspects of the war, and caused some members to be cautious in the positions they take. Kuwait is part of the coalition and champions coalition positions. A group of five elected members—Bolivia, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland and Sweden—often takes a joint position highlighting humanitarian dimensions. For example, following the 9 August airstrike on the school bus, Peru requested the Council session on this incident, on behalf of this group, and the group also proposed the 21 September meeting with Lowcock. Russia, and members of this group, have called for ending offensive operations around Hodeidah. The P3 have focused on the need to protect infrastructure and access for humanitarian and commercial goods.

Due to Saudi objections to any new resolution on Yemen since the adoption of resolution 2216 in April 2015, the Council approach has been to take decisions through presidential statements, most recently in March.

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





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