

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Côte d'Ivoire will have the presidency in December. It is planning two high-level meetings. The first is a briefing, chaired by Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara, which will focus on the **importance of economic recovery for successful post-conflict transitions**. The second is a ministerial-level open debate on **cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations** in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

A meeting on drug trafficking in west and central Africa is also planned.

Other African issues include:

- **Central African Republic**, renewal of mandate following one-month technical rollover in November;
- **Guinea-Bissau**, an update on developments;
- **South Sudan**, on the activities of UNMISS;
- **Sudan**, the quarterly briefing by the sanctions chair and semi-annual briefing on the ICC's work; and
- **UNOCA/LRA**, an update on the activities of the UN Office in Central Africa and the regional strategy to combat the Lord's Resistance Army.

With regard to **Syria**, there will be the regular briefings on the political and humanitarian situation and on chemical weapons. In addition, Council members are expected to negotiate and put to a vote a draft resolution renewing the authorisation

for cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access, which expires on 10 January 2019. Other Middle East issues include the renewal of **UNDOF** and the regular monthly briefing and consultations on **Israel/Palestine**.

Regarding other regional issues, there will be the quarterly debate on **Afghanistan** and a briefing on the situation in **Haiti**.

The Secretary-General is expected to report on the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on **Iran's** nuclear programme.

Council members will receive their first briefing by the Special Adviser and head of the **UN Investigative Team for Accountability of Da'esh** in early December.

The Council will hold its semi-annual debate on the **International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals**.

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

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

Members will be following developments in **Ukraine** and **Yemen** closely over the month, and meetings may be scheduled if necessary.

In Hindsight: Better Process for Better Mandates

A core task of the Security Council is to design the mandates of UN peace operations and assess their implementation. Central as mandate-crafting is to its work, the Council's products have been criticised for not responding adequately to realities on the ground, for being circumscribed by political and cost considerations of member states rather than driven by what the situation demands, and for lacking strategic focus.

At a Council open debate on 28 March 2018, Secretary-General António Guterres announced the launch of "Action for Peacekeeping" (A4P), an

initiative aimed at renewing states' political commitment to peacekeeping operations. Guterres urged Council members to put an end to mandates that look like "Christmas trees", trailing streams of templated components. "Christmas is over", he declared, calling for sharpened and streamlined mandates and pointing out that the UN Mission in South Sudan could not possibly implement its 209 mandated tasks. This criticism is not new; it can be found in Lakhdar Brahimi's milestone report in 2000 and in the 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO),

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In Hindsight: Better Process for Better Mandates

which highlighted the long-standing gap between mandates and reality.

After a broad consultation process, the UN Secretariat prepared a Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations. By the end of November, it had been endorsed by 151 member states. The declaration included the commitment “to provide clear, focused, sequenced, prioritized and achievable mandates by the Security Council matched by appropriate resources; to seek measures to enable greater coherence between mandates and resources; and to support the implementation of Security Council resolutions through bilateral and multilateral engagements”. This commitment provides an opening for Council members to undertake deeper reflection on the mandating process, notably around strategic objectives, timing, priorities and results.

Well-established mandate cycles provide a predictable time frame that can be used to forge or review a common strategic approach among Council members ahead of each renewal, but such exercises are uncommon. Despite endorsing it in the abstract, the Council has had difficulty implementing the “primacy of politics”. In recent years, there has been a push, led by penholders, to state more clearly in resolutions the strategic objectives of several peacekeeping operations (including the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic) although this has not happened systematically. The Council could begin the mandating process by addressing—and, as far as possible, agreeing on—the main objective(s) for the mission with the Secretariat and the mission itself. This would be a departure from the current focus on delineating tasks, which emphasises outputs rather than the intended outcomes. A strategic articulation of objectives would centre on the question of how every single mandated task (and mission component) supports the achievement of the desired objectives.

To accomplish this, higher-level engagement early in the process would be needed. Permanent representatives or their deputies could, with the Secretariat, outline strategic objectives before Council experts engage in the actual negotiation of the draft. Council members, on the basis of advice from the Secretariat and the missions on the ground, could develop

a multi-year strategic framework beyond the annual mandate horizon and finetune it regularly—in 2012, for instance, the Council endorsed troop drawdown planning with a three-year horizon for the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), based on a strategic assessment earlier that year. Missions should not need to frontload posts and resources before they are necessary for fear that if not budgeted at the outset, they would be hard to add later.

At present, most discussions on mandate renewal among all Council members take place only after the penholder circulates a first-draft resolution to the full Council, often less than two weeks before the mandate is to expire. Within this narrow window, Council members may struggle to consolidate substantive input for the text from their capitals and embassies in the affected countries. Recently, the 13 days allotted by the penholder to discuss the extension of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) proved insufficient. With some matters unresolved, notably references to the ICC and parallel mediation initiatives, a one-month technical rollover of the existing mandate was adopted on 15 November.

Furthermore, the starting point in mandate renewal is commonly the language of the existing resolution, to which amendments are proposed. Given the short time frame for negotiations, there is a tendency to preserve already “agreed language” on issues susceptible to controversy and to add new paragraphs, as proposed by Council members, without deleting the outdated or irrelevant.

Usually, Council members hold one or two rounds of negotiations, after which salient issues are discussed bilaterally or over email. Troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs) have consistently complained about their limited input to the mandating process, including through triangular consultations which lack interactivity and are largely pro-forma.

HIPPO’s emphasis on the prioritisation and sequencing of mandates has led the Council to embrace in principle the need to set priorities within the mandates it authorises. At present, of the 17 mandates of peace operations (peacekeeping and special political missions) that are renewed regularly, eight articulate some sort of prioritisation. In some cases, the mandates differentiate clearly between sets of priority tasks and other tasks that are “mutually reinforcing”. However, this emphasis is largely ad hoc and

depends on the initiative of the penholder and the clarity of the recommendations put forward by the Secretariat.

The better the Council’s understanding of how the language of its resolutions is implemented in practice, the more likely members will be to avoid mandate inflation. Vehicles for better understanding include, but are not limited to, routine briefings by the head of mission, annual meetings with the heads of military and police components, Council visiting missions and the reports of the Secretary-General, particularly those published just before a mandate renewal. Some Council members find that these reports, which mostly consist of fact-based narratives, could be a stronger source of recommendations at a critical time. They may present several options for the Council to consider, even when only one option is manifestly feasible, and there have been instances of influential member states applying pressure to shape the content of these reports. In this connection, the development of benchmarks can be a useful tool to measure progress against objectives, and benchmarking reports to the Council can offer a sharper, more precise narrative snapshot of conditions on the ground. Council members could also benefit from receiving analysis and input ahead of a mandate renewal by organising meetings of subsidiary organs and informal discussions not on the Council’s agenda, including with external experts.

To be more effective, the Council’s collective leverage needs to be exercised throughout the lifespan of an operation, not only when the mandate comes up for renewal. Mandate effectiveness requires the sustained engagement of Council members, which is not necessarily correlated with the number of times that they meet on an issue, but with their collective capacity to provide political backing to the efforts of the missions on the ground.

Revising the mandating process should be a core element of the current push to improve peacekeeping effectiveness. Most changes require the leadership of a few Council members, permanent or not, willing to invest political capital in addressing this issue. The Council will send a strong signal to TCCs/PCCs, the Secretariat and host states about its seriousness regarding reform, and contribute to rebuilding trust in the mandating process along the way. *(For more analysis and options regarding the mandating process, please refer to Security Council Report’s research report to be published later this month.)*

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Libya

On 2 November, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda delivered the semi-annual briefing on recent developments concerning cases in Libya (S/PV.8388). On 5 November, the Council adopted resolution 2441, extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and renewing measures related to the illicit export of petroleum products from Libya, with 13 votes in favour and China and Russia abstaining (S/PV.8389). On 11 November, the Council was briefed by Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative and head of UNSMIL (S/PV.8394). In his remarks, Salamé focused on a new comprehensive security plan for Tripoli, the conditions in prisons around the country, the parallel existence of two “central banks”, the upcoming elections, and the situation in the south of Libya.

Somalia and Eritrea

On 6 November, the Council adopted resolution 2442, renewing for 12 months authorisations allowing international naval forces to fight piracy in the waters off the coast of Somalia (S/PV.8391). On 10 November, Council members issued a press statement condemning a terrorist attack in Mogadishu the day before resulting in several civilian casualties (SC/13572). On 14 November, the Council adopted resolution 2444, lifting sanctions on Eritrea and extending various elements of the Somalia sanctions regime until 15 November 2019 (S/PV.8398).

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 6 November, the Council held its semi-annual debate on BiH and unanimously adopted resolution 2443, renewing the authorisation of EUFOR ALTHEA for an additional year (S/PV.8392). High Representative for BiH Valentin Inzko briefed the Council on his latest report (S/2018/974).

UN Policing

On 6 November, the Council received a briefing on UN policing (S/PV.8393) from Alexander Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the DPKO, and the heads of police components of three UN peacekeeping operations: Unaisi Lutu Vuniwaqa (UNMISS); Awale Abdounasir (MONUSCO); and Serge Therriault (MINUJUSTH). A civil society briefer, Tuesday Reitano, the Deputy Director of the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, also participated in the meeting.

Peacekeeping

On 7 November, the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations held a meeting on peacekeeping safety, security and performance in asymmetric environments. On 20 November, the Council held an open debate on strengthening peacekeeping operations in Africa (S/PV.8407). Secretary-General António Guterres and Smail Chergui, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, briefed the Council.

Protection of Environment Arria-Formula Meeting

On 7 November, current Council member Kuwait convened an Arria-formula meeting, co-sponsored with incoming member Germany, on the “Protection of the Environment during Armed Conflict.” Panelists included Satya Tripathi, Assistant Secretary-General and head of the New York Office of the UN Environment Program, and Carl Bruch, Director of International Programs at the Environmental Law Institute and co-founder of the Environmental Peacebuilding Association.

Mali

From 11-16 November, the Military Staff Committee conducted a field trip to Mali. On 21 November, the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee held a meeting.

Central African Republic

On 12 November, the Chair of the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Léon Houadja Kacou Adom (Côte d’Ivoire), briefed on his recent visit to the country. On 15 November, the Council adopted resolution 2446, extending the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 December, in a “technical rollover”. On 18 November, Council members issued a press statement condemning an attack by suspected members of an armed group, which resulted in the death of one MINUSCA Tanzanian peacekeeper (SC/13588).

Iraq

On 13 November, the outgoing Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of UNAMI, Ján Kubiš, briefed on the latest Secretary-General’s report on UNAMI (S/2018/975), the Secretary-General’s 20th report on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, and the most recent developments in the country (S/PV.8396). Kubiš focused his remarks on the ongoing Iraqi government formation, the

elections in Kurdistan and the activities of the UN Investigative Team for Accountability of Da’esh. He also reported the return of some Kuwaiti property from Iraq to Kuwait.

Israel/Palestine

At the request of Bolivia and Kuwait, Council members received a briefing on 13 November under “any other business” on the recent violence between the parties. Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča briefed. He recounted the developments of the previous three days, culminating in the 13 November ceasefire. He further emphasised the need for the parties to maintain this ceasefire, spoke about the dire economic and humanitarian situation in Gaza, and reiterated the need to promote political dialogue between the parties based on a two-state solution. On 19 November, the Council held its monthly meeting on the Middle East (Israel/Palestine) (S/PV.8405). Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov provided the briefing (via video teleconference from Jerusalem), which was followed by statements from Council members. Mladenov called for calm in light of the escalation of violence that had occurred between Israel and Palestinians in Gaza from 11 to 13 November. He further observed that continued settlement-building undermined the prospects for peace.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 13 November, Special Representative and head of MONUSCO Leila Zerrougui briefed the Council (S/PV.8397). Josephine Mbela of the Congolese Association for Access to Justice, a non-governmental human rights and rule of law organisation, also briefed. On 15 November, Council members issued a press statement condemning the killing of seven MONUSCO peacekeepers in North Kivu (SC/13583). The meeting was followed by consultations. Council members issued a press statement on 21 November on the electoral process in the DRC (SC/13599).

Kosovo

On 14 November, Special Representative and the head of UNMIK Zahir Tanin briefed the Council on the most recent Secretary-General’s report and latest developments (S/PV.8399). While Tanin described the situation on the ground as hostile, he said that prospects for meaningful progress in the EU-facilitated dialogue have improved amid ongoing talks between Belgrade and Pristina on,

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among other issues, the possibility of territorial exchanges. Addressing the Council, Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić emphasised the importance of the continued presence of UNMIK and regular consideration by the Council of the Kosovo issue. Russia also reiterated the need for regular meetings on Kosovo amid ethnic tensions and lack of progress on the implementation of agreements between Belgrade and Pristina. The US and EU members of the Council called for lengthening the reporting cycle and reducing the frequency of meetings on Kosovo.

Sudan/South Sudan

On 15 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2445, extending until 15 May 2019 the mandate of UNISFA (S/PV.8400). The resolution reduced the authorised troop ceiling of the mission from 4,500 to 4,140 and decided to reduce the troop ceiling by a further 295 troops following the start of the deployment of increased police personnel. As of 15 April 2019, the authorised troop ceiling will decrease by a further 557 troops, unless the Council decides to extend the mission's support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

Group of Five for the Sahel

On 15 November, the Council held a briefing on the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5-Sahel) joint force or FC-G5S that Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger established last year to combat terrorist and criminal groups in the region (S/PV.8402). Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed on the Secretary-General's latest report on the FC-G5S (S/2018/1006). Other briefers included G5 Sahel Permanent Secretary Maman Sidikou and AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel Pierre Buyoya. Pedro Serrano, the EU Deputy Secretary General for Common Security and Defence Policy and Crisis Response, briefed via video teleconference from Brussels. Later that same day, Council members issued a press statement encouraging the G-5 Sahel states to take appropriate measures in order for the FC-G5S to conduct new operations and to be fully operational as soon as possible; calling on donors who have not yet honoured their commitments to the joint force to do so urgently; and encouraging the G-5 Sahel States to take appropriate action in order for MINUSMA to be in a position to deliver its specified operational and logistical support (SC/13584).

The press statement also covered aspects related to human rights and broader political and development issues.

Yemen

On 16 November, the Council held a briefing, followed by consultations, on Yemen (S/PV.8404). UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths informed the Council that he intended to convene the parties shortly for consultations in Sweden. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock provided an update on the five areas that he had asked the Council to support at a 23 October briefing, in order to avert famine. World Food Programme Executive Director David Beasley's briefing focused on his first-hand observations of the food insecurity and economic conditions that he witnessed during a recent three-day visit to Yemen. Civil society representative, Rasha Jarhum, who is the founder and Director of the Peace Track Initiative in Yemen, also briefed via video teleconference, making a number of recommendations for Council action. During the meeting the UK, as penholder on Yemen, announced that it would soon circulate a draft resolution that it had been preparing in support of Lowcock's five asks. At press time, Council members were still negotiating the draft resolution.

Children and Armed Conflict

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict met on 16 November to negotiate its conclusions on South Sudan (S/2018/865).

Counter-Terrorism

On 20 November, the CTC held an open briefing for member states to discuss the "Madrid Guiding Principles". On 24 November, Council members issued a press statement, condemning an attack the previous day against the Consulate-General of China in Karachi, Pakistan, which resulted in the deaths of two Pakistani police officers and two civilians (SC/13600). On 28 November, there were joint informal consultations of the 1267/1989/2253 and 1988 Committees. On 29 November, the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee held a formal meeting to discuss visits by the Committee to Australia, Mali, New Zealand and Saudi Arabia.

Burundi

On 21 November, Michel Kafando, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Burundi, briefed the Council (S/PV.8408) on the latest

report (S/2018/1028). Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration, also briefed.

Lebanon

On 21 November, Council members held a meeting in consultations on implementation of resolution 1701 with briefings from UN Acting Special Coordinator for Lebanon Pernille Dahler Kardel and Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Bintou Keita. Council members were updated on recent developments and the latest Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (S/2018/1029).

DPRK (North Korea)

On 21 November, Chair of the 1718 Committee, Ambassador Karel van Oosterom (the Netherlands) briefed Council members in consultations on the work of the committee during the past three months. The Chair updated Council members on his outreach activities and the pending requests for the humanitarian exemptions from sanctions. Some Council members expressed their concern over the humanitarian situation in the DPRK. Most members emphasised, however, that the sanctions should remain in place until the DPRK takes concrete steps towards complete denuclearisation.

Ukraine

On 26 November, the Council held an emergency meeting, requested by Ukraine, on the situation in Ukraine after Russia captured three Ukrainian vessels in the Kerch Strait. The Council first held a procedural vote on the provisional agenda item put forward by Russia "Maintenance of international peace and security: Violation of the borders of the Russian Federation". The agenda item was rejected by a vote of seven against, four abstentions and four in favor. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed on the events of 25 November. Although she said that the UN could not independently verify the circumstances surrounding the incident, she expressed concern over rising tensions. The US and the EU members of the Council strongly condemned the escalation of tensions and violation of international law by Russia in the Sea of Azov. Russia accused Ukraine of provoking the incident for political reasons.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council will hold a high-level briefing, chaired by Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara, on post-conflict economic recovery. Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief.

Background

The presidential briefing is one of the signature events during Côte d'Ivoire's December presidency of the Council. The session seeks to consider the importance of economic recovery for successful post-conflict transitions, having been central to Côte d'Ivoire's recent experience. On 30 June 2017, the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) concluded its mandate, 13 years after it was established and six years after resurgent post-electoral violence in 2011 led to the deaths of approximately 3,000 people. UNOCI made a significant contribution to the country's stabilisation, and its ability to withdraw within six years of the post-electoral crisis, Côte d'Ivoire often notes, was also tied to the country's successful economic recovery.

Since 2012, Côte d'Ivoire has experienced strong economic performance, marked by a rapid increase in gross domestic product (GDP). In the five-year period from 2012 to 2016, the economy grew by more than 8 percent every year. Last year, GDP growth was a still-strong 7.8 percent, according to data from the International Monetary Fund. The Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on Côte d'Ivoire in January 2017 ahead of UNOCI's closure noted that the government had placed "specific emphasis on improving the business environment." It flagged that in November 2012, the government enacted an investment code that four years later resulted in businesses being given a total exemption from the value-added tax, "a 40 percent reduction in customs duties and tax exemption on profits," and that it "continues to create a window for investment and foreign trade." The report further highlighted that Côte d'Ivoire continues to assist private-sector development by promoting business opportunities in agriculture, industry, mining and services. Despite this progress, the Secretary-General noted that economic growth "still needs to become more inclusive, with continued efforts to combat inequality."

Post-conflict economic recovery is often described as being overlooked by the UN in the context of peace and security. However, it is recognised as an important element among the range of interventions required for building and sustaining peace. The Advisory Group of Experts, which drafted the 2015 report for the ten-year review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture, said that "the failure to develop economically poses a risk of relapse in the first place", and that relapse into conflict can be "significantly mitigated when economies are reactivated". It further affirmed that "overcoming economic and social grievances, offering populations the means to earn livelihoods and creating the foundations for inclusive, broad-based economic growth are integral to any transition from conflict to normalcy". Accordingly, the experts wrote, citing the research of Paul Collier, "economic development may be the true 'exit strategy' for international peacekeeping". The Advisory Group of Experts noted, however, that when it comes to post-conflict economic recovery, there is not yet a clear consensus on how to proceed.

The issue was touched on subsequently in resolution 2282, which the Council adopted in April 2016 for the peacebuilding architecture review. Resolution 2282 and the twin General Assembly version (A/RES/70/262) recognised that sustaining peace includes "moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development", and that "advancing economic development in conflict-affected countries" should be part of an integrated and coherent approach for sustaining peace. The resolution highlighted the importance of UN-World Bank collaboration in conflict-affected countries, requesting, among other things, that the Secretary-General explore options for strengthening this partnership, including by assisting such countries, upon their request, in creating an enabling environment for economic growth, foreign investment and job creation, and in mobilising domestic resources and using them effectively, in line with national priorities and underscored by the principle of national ownership.

Among current situations facing the Council where it has considered the importance of economic recovery has been the Lake Chad basin. During its 2017 visiting

mission, members discussed with interlocutors—including national and local government authorities, UN country teams and civil society—the need to promote economic development and create jobs to address root causes of the Boko Haram crisis. Resolution 2349 on the Lake Chad Basin and some of the Council's subsequent presidential statements have recognised the importance of promoting economic growth and supporting livelihood opportunities to contribute to the region's stabilisation and recovery. While Yemen is not a post-conflict situation, here too the Council has needed to consider measures to address the collapse of the economy, including to offset famine and provide more favourable conditions for implementing any future peace agreement.

Key Issues and Options

Considering the experience of Côte d'Ivoire's economic recovery during its transition and lessons that it may offer for other situations on the Council's agenda, or what could have been done differently, is a key issue. Related to this is identifying economic policies or measures that may be crucial for consolidating peace.

Ways that the Council can support or encourage the economic recovery of countries on its agenda and how the UN, regional and sub-regional organisations and international financial institutions can better cooperate on this objective are other important issues. The experiences of other countries that have concluded transitions and the factors that have facilitated or limited their economic recovery are likely to be considered for drawing lessons.

As the organiser of this debate, Côte d'Ivoire may prepare a summary of the main ideas raised or lessons identified to be circulated in a Council letter, which could provide a basis for further Council discussion of this issue over the coming year.

Council Dynamics

Côte d'Ivoire frequently highlights its strong economic recovery following the crisis of 2011, and the issue has been a priority of President Ouattara, a former IMF official. Economic recovery is widely recognised as important to consolidating peace in post-conflict countries, but it seems that

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEBUILDING AND SUSTAINING PEACE Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2349 (31 March 2017) was on the Lake Chad Basin. S/RES/2282 (27 April 2016) was on the ten-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2018/958 (29 October 2018) was on lessons learned about the role of UNOCI in Côte d'Ivoire. S/2017/89 (31 January 2017) was on UNOCI. **Security Council Letter** S/2015/490 (30 June 2015) transmitted the report of the Advisory Group of Experts.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

the Council has not previously held a dedicated meeting on the subject. Instead, the subject has come up under the umbrella of general discussions about peacebuilding

or in the context of different country situations. Some members could view the topic as encroaching on the responsibilities of other UN organs, though the relevance of the issue

to Côte d'Ivoire's own post-conflict transition is likely to dispel such concerns.

UNOCA/LRA

Expected Council Action

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

The mandate of UNOCA expires on 31 August 2021.

Key Recent Developments

The region covered by UNOCA continues to present multiple challenges, including several security and political hotspots that are situations on the Council's agenda. Following a 10 August exchange of letters with the Secretary-General renewing UNOCA's mandate until 31 August 2021, the Council adopted a presidential statement welcoming the renewal and expressing concern about the persistent violence perpetrated by armed groups in the Central African Republic (CAR), the ongoing violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and an increase in violence in parts of Cameroon. The statement furthermore recognised the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters as factors affecting the stability of the region. The Council asked the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of the scope of UNOCA's mandate and activities and to present recommendations to the Council by 1 August 2019 about new or refocused priorities as well as areas that could be improved. The Council expressed its intention to consider these recommendations, including any proposed changes to the mandate, by 31 August 2019.

The CAR situation is marked by

lawlessness, lack of state authority, and fighting among the predominantly Muslim ex-Séléka factions, between the ex-Séléka and the Christian anti-Balaka groups, and between the ex-Séléka and other rebel groups, resulting in attacks against civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian actors. On 15 November, the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) was extended in a technical rollover until 15 December.

In the DRC, numerous armed groups continue to wreak havoc on civilians in the east, accompanied by intercommunal violence in other regions. The political situation is marked by preparations for the long-overdue elections, scheduled for 23 December 2018. Focusing on the electoral period, the Council visited the DRC on 5-7 October and met with several stakeholders, including President Joseph Kabila, who has announced that he will not run for re-election after a long period of uncertainty.

The Security Council has been following the Ebola outbreak in North Kivu and Ituri. According to the World Health Organisation, as at 24 November there have been 412 confirmed cases and 47 probable cases of Ebola, with 236 confirmed Ebola-related deaths and 47 probable Ebola-related deaths. On 30 October, the Council adopted resolution 2439, emphasising the importance of continued international support, including financial assistance, in bringing the Ebola outbreak under control.

The political situation in Burundi is also of concern to the Council following the adoption of amendments that changed important provisions and safeguards in the constitution, which implemented the 2000 Arusha Accord that ended the civil war in Burundi. Special

Advisor on Burundi Michel Kafando briefed the Council on the latest developments on 21 November.

The LRA has remained active over recent months and poses a serious threat to civilians in parts of the DRC and the CAR. Reports indicate that it continues to abduct children and to loot in these countries. On 15 October, for example, a suspected LRA group raided Mangbungulu in Bas Uele in the DRC, looting drugs and food from the local health centre and reportedly abducting 16 people, including 12 children.

UNOCA also continues to pay close attention to the situation in Cameroon, a country not on the Council's agenda. Since late 2016, there has been unrest in Cameroon's anglophone regions, rooted in claims of long-standing political and economic discrimination by the francophone authorities against the minority anglophone population. The violence has resulted in over 400 deaths. On 5 November, 82 people, mostly children, were kidnapped from a boarding school in Bafut, near Bamenda. All were released by 12 November. The government has blamed anglophone rebels for the kidnapping, but they have denied responsibility. On 13 November, at least 15 people were killed in fighting between Cameroon army troops and separatist rebels.

Key Issues and Options

Central issues are the deteriorating security situations in the CAR and eastern DRC. The political crises in the DRC and Burundi and their potential regional implications will continue to concern the Council.

While Cameroon is not on the Council's agenda, the Council included the country in its 2017 visit to the Lake Chad region.

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNOCA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2446 (15 November 2018) extended the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 December. S/RES/2439 (30 October 2018) was on Ebola in eastern DRC. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/17 (10 August 2018) welcomed the renewal of UNOCA's mandate for another three years, from 1 September to 31 August 2021. Secretary-General's Report S/2018/521 (1 June 2018) was on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of UNOCA. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8284 (13 June 2018) was a briefing by Special Representative for Central Africa and head of UNOCA François Louncény Fall on the latest UNOCA report. Security Council Letters S/2018/789 and S/2018/790 (24 and 28 August 2018) was an exchange of letters between the Secretary-General and the Security Council in which the mandate of UNOCA was renewed until 31 August 2021.

Council members may use the UNOCA briefing to call attention to the deteriorating situation in the country and suggest ways to increase the Council's engagement, including by adding it to the Council's agenda or by discussing it in informal settings.

Council Dynamics

Council members have been supportive of UNOCA's continued shift to focus its efforts on the region, rather than on the LRA alone, as its main objective. Council members are concerned about the political turmoil in several countries and the effect it could have on

security and stability in the region.

Although some Council members have expressed interest in the situation in Cameroon, at this point it seems there is no appetite to add new country-specific situations in the region to the Council's agenda.

The UK is the penholder on this issue.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council will receive the monthly Syria briefings on the humanitarian situation, political developments, and the use of chemical weapons.

Council members are expected to negotiate the renewal of the authorisation for cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access, which was most recently extended through resolution 2393 and expires on 10 January 2019.

Key Recent Developments

Despite occasional violations, the relative calm has continued in the north-western province of Idlib after Turkey and Russia agreed to establish a demilitarised zone 15 to 20 kilometres wide along the contact line between armed groups and government troops. However, questions persist about the sustainability of the arrangement, the degree of compliance by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (a Council-designated terrorist organisation) and other groups, and the continuously precarious situation of civilians. While Syria considers this measure temporary, OCHA has stressed repeatedly the need to prevent an all-out military offensive with disastrous humanitarian consequences. At press time, the guarantors of the Astana process—Iran, Russia and Turkey—were expected to hold a senior-level meeting on 28-29 November.

Despite the military impasse, the political process has remained dormant, including the failure to establish the constitutional committee. The committee is expected to comprise 150 people (one-third each from the government, the opposition, and civil society). Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura has

repeatedly told the Council that the main reason for the delay in convening the first session of a credible and inclusive constitutional committee is the government's refusal to accept the current list of civil society participants, which was prepared by the UN. Briefing the Council on 19 November, de Mistura said that the UN welcomes constructive and moderate suggestions, as long as they maintain the same spirit of credibility, balance and international legitimacy of the UN-proposed civil society list. He warned against this list becoming a vehicle for political representatives of either side. In addition to civil society, according to the January Sochi Final Declaration, the list is to include Syrian experts, independents, tribal leaders and women, with "adequate representation of Syria's ethnic and religious components".

A source of tension among member states has been the timing of the first meeting of the constitutional committee. While the members of the Small Group (Egypt, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the P3) had encouraged de Mistura and the Secretary-General to convene the constitutional committee as quickly as possible (before the end of October at first, and then before the end of November), Russia warned against pursuing "artificial deadlines". A joint statement by the presidents of France, Russia and Turkey and the Chancellor of Germany after a summit held on 27 October in Istanbul called for the "establishing and early convening, considering the circumstances, by the end of the year of the constitutional committee in Geneva". The Secretary-General, who had directed de Mistura actively to verify once and for all the feasibility of

forming a credible and inclusive constitutional committee before the end of his tenure in November, extended his mandate until the end of the year, given the emergence of a new deadline. On 31 October, Geir O. Pedersen was appointed new Special Envoy for Syria, although the date on which he will assume this function has yet to be announced.

At press time, Council members had just started negotiating a resolution to reauthorise the delivery of cross-border aid into Syria. According to OCHA, cross-border deliveries of humanitarian aid continue to provide an indispensable lifeline for hundreds of thousands of people across Syria. In the first nine months of 2018, food aid reached over 750,000 people on average each month through UN cross-border activities. A 19 June report of the Secretary-General, which had been requested by Russia in the negotiations for resolution 2393 in December 2017, explained the processes in place to ensure accountable, effective and transparent cross-border operations, based on assessments of needs and with prior notification to the Syrian government. In October, the Secretary-General recommended the renewal of this authorisation for 12 more months.

On 16 November, Elizabeth Hoff, the representative of the World Health Organization in Syria, briefed Council members in consultations. The meeting was held at the initiative of Russia, which requested that it focus on the sanitary situation and problems with obtaining medical care in Syria.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, briefed the Council on 5 November. On 19 November,

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/2018/1041** (21 November 2018) was the monthly report on the humanitarian situation. **Security Council Letter S/2018/971** (29 October 2018) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8406** (19 November 2018) was a briefing by de Mistura on his efforts to bring about a constitutional committee. **S/PV.8390** (5 November 2018) was a briefing by Nakamitsu.

Syria

the Conference of States Parties (CSP) to the Chemical Weapons Convention approved a 2019 budget allocating two million euros to a team of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in charge of identifying the perpetrators of chemical weapons use in Syria in line with a 27 June CSP decision. Russia, which has opposed this decision, voted against the budget, as did Council members Bolivia, China, Kazakhstan and incoming Council member South Africa.

The situation in north-eastern Syria, particularly between Turkey and the YPG, a Kurdish militia that is part of the US-allied Syrian Democratic Forces, continues to be tense, despite joint patrolling by the US and Turkey near Manbij. However, there has been little attention in the Council to this aspect of the Syrian conflict.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 16 November, the Third Committee of the General Assembly adopted a resolution drafted by Saudi Arabia on the human rights situation in Syria with 106 votes in favour; 16 votes against, including Council members Bolivia, China, and Russia; and 58 abstentions, including Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea and Kazakhstan (A/C.3/73/L.50). Among other things, the resolution “demands that the Syrian authorities immediately put an end to all attacks on their own people”; “[u]rges all Member States, especially the members of the International Syria Support Group, to create conditions for continued negotiations for a political solution”; “[d]emands that the Syrian authorities cooperate fully with the Commission of Inquiry, including by granting it immediate, full and unhindered access

throughout the Syrian Arab Republic”; and “[d]emands that the Syrian authorities and all other parties to the conflict ensure the full, immediate, unimpeded and sustained access of the United Nations and humanitarian actors”. On 28 November, Council members participated in an Arria-formula meeting with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria. This was the first such meeting in more than a year and a half.

Key Issues and Options

Given the crucial role of Russia, Turkey and Iran on both the political and humanitarian fronts, Council members could seek an informal interactive dialogue with their representatives to have a more action-oriented discussion regarding current and future efforts to avert a full-fledged military offensive in Idlib.

Some Council members question whether any effort on the political process is likely to yield results, given the Syrian government’s emphasis on regaining territory and consolidating control. Before the end of de Mistura’s tenure, Council members could hold an informal and frank discussion about the challenges that he encountered in facilitating the political process and how Council members, individually and collectively, could best support the work of his successor.

The issue of detainees, abductees and missing persons has not attracted much attention in the Council and is mostly considered under the rubric of confidence-building measures being discussed by the Astana guarantors. With little progress on this front and the Syrian government’s release of thousands

of death notices for prisoners, the Council could hold a meeting on this matter.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council dynamics on Syria continue to be characterised by polarisation on the three files through which the conflict is discussed: political, humanitarian, and chemical weapons.

In December 2017, the adoption of resolution 2393, drafted by Egypt, Japan and Sweden, renewed the authorisation for cross-border humanitarian access to Syria. It was adopted with abstentions by Bolivia, China and Russia. In explaining their vote, China and Russia highlighted the importance of working through the government and eventually rolling back a provision originally devised as a temporary measure. In 2017, Turkey played a key role in convincing those critical of the authorisation to renew it. As Council members negotiate it again, the role of Turkey, from whose territory most of the cross-border aid is delivered, is expected to be equally critical.

Russia and Syria continue to link the return of refugees to Syria with the need for international donors to contribute to the reconstruction of the country. However, other Council members argue that there can be no international support for funding for development and long-term reconstruction until irreversible progress has been made in the political process.

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

Cooperation between the UN and Regional and Sub-Regional Organisations

Expected Council Action

In December, the Security Council will hold a ministerial-level open debate on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief.

Key Recent Developments

In 2018, the Council has continued to engage regularly with regional and sub-regional organisations on peace and security issues. In particular, there have been several meetings this year focusing on the EU-UN and AU-UN relationships.

On 18 May, UN Security Council members held their sixth annual informal meeting

with members of the EU Political and Security Committee, composed of the Brussels-based ambassadors of EU member states dealing with the EU’s common foreign, security and defence policy. The meeting focused on the following issues: Syria, Iraq, peacekeeping in Africa, and cooperation on sanctions.

The Council held a briefing on 18 July on the Secretary-General’s annual report on

UN DOCUMENTS ON COOPERATION WITH REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS Secretary-General’s Report S/2018/678 (6 July 2018) was on ways to strengthen the partnership between the UN and the AU on peace and security in Africa. Security Council Meetings Records S/PV.8407 (20 November 2018) was an open debate on strengthening peacekeeping in Africa. S/PV.8314 (18 July 2018) was a meeting on the Secretary-General’s annual report on ways to strengthen the partnership between the UN and the AU on issues of peace and security in Africa. Other S/2018/736 (19 July 2018) was the joint communiqué following the 12th annual joint consultative meeting between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council.

Cooperation between the UN and Regional and Sub-Regional Organisations

strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU. The then-Special Representative to the AU and head of the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU) Sahle-Work Zewde and AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui briefed. Zewde noted that the UN Secretary-General and the AU Commission Chairperson continue to emphasise the importance of conflict prevention and that, in this regard, the two organisations need to “conduct more joint analyses and assessments and align...early warning indicators, where appropriate”. Chergui recalled that the AU has consistently advocated for more predictable and sustainable funding for AU peace operations through UN assessed contributions.

On 19 July, members of the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council held their 12th annual joint consultative meeting, at which they discussed a range of matters, including the situations in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The informal consultations preceding the meeting focused on thematic issues concerning the partnership between the two bodies, as well as how their cooperation can be strengthened. A joint communiqué was issued following the meeting, which was held in New York.

The Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations, initiated earlier this year, has been endorsed by 151 member states as at 28 November. In the declaration, member states “commit to enhance collaboration and planning between the UN and relevant international, regional and sub-regional organizations and arrangements,

including the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU), which have deployed several mandated operations in the past years”. They further reaffirm the “need to enhance the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of financing for AU-led peace support operations authorized by the Security Council”.

On 20 November, the Security Council held an open debate on strengthening peacekeeping operations in Africa. A key theme of the meeting was the strategic partnership between the AU and the UN, particularly on peacekeeping. Guterres and Chergui briefed.

Key Issues and Options

The overarching theme of the debate is how cooperation between the UN and states, regional organisations, and sub-regional organisations can be enhanced with regard to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

Issues that may be addressed include:

- how to strengthen coordination and coherence between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations regarding peace and security matters;
- how to develop a joint analysis, planning and decision-making framework to make joint action between the UN and the AU more effective;
- how to work towards securing sustainable and predictable financing for AU peace support operations, including potentially through joint financing of a jointly-developed UN-AU budget; and
- how to strengthen the role of women in peace operations through cooperation among the UN and regional and

sub-regional organisations.

One option for the open debate would be to adopt the resolution that was circulated by the African members of the Council in November and that aims to advance the issue of using UN assessed contributions, on a case-by-case basis, to finance Security Council-authorized AU peace support missions.

Over the longer term, another option would be to consider joint fact-finding missions that include members of the Security Council and regional bodies, such as the AU Peace and Security Council and the EU Political and Security Committee, to situations on the UN Security Council’s agenda where the relevant regional organisations have a peace operations presence.

Council Dynamics

Although there has been increasing appreciation of the importance of working with regional organisations in the area of peace and security, divergent views on specific issues have at times complicated these relationships. Perhaps this tension has been most noticeable in disagreements between some major financial contributors on the Council, especially the US, and African Council members over the issue of financing for AU peace support operations. Of the permanent members, China has been particularly supportive of the need to strengthen the capacity of the AU in peace and security, as evidenced by its decision to host an open debate during its November presidency on strengthening peacekeeping operations in Africa, which explored the AU-UN relationship in this regard.

International Criminal Tribunals

Expected Council Action

In December, the Security Council expects to hold its semi-annual debate on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), which was established in 2010 to carry out the remaining essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International

Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) after their respective closures. The IRMCT’s president, Judge Theodor Meron, is expected to brief the Council during the debate on the IRMCT’s semi-annual progress report and to meet with the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals prior to the debate. The IRMCT’s prosecutor,

Serge Brammertz, may also brief the Council. Council members expect to receive the IRMCT’s most recent semi-annual progress report by 3 December.

Key Recent Developments

The IRMCT, with branches in The Hague and Arusha, Tanzania, focuses on the

UN DOCUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2422 (27 June 2018) extended the term of the IRMCT’s prosecutor until 30 June 2020. S/RES/1966 (22 December 2010) established the IRMCT. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8295 (27 June 2018) was the adoption of resolution 2422, with Russia abstaining. S/PV.8278 (6 June 2018) was the semi-annual debate. Security Council Letters S/2018/569 (1 August 2018) was the sixth annual IRMCT report. S/2018/652 (29 June 2018) was from the Secretary-General, reappointing 23 judges of the IRMCT until 30 June 2020.

International Criminal Tribunals

completion of trials and appeals from the ICTY (which closed in December 2017) and the ICTR (which closed in December 2015); locating and arresting the eight remaining fugitives indicted by the ICTR; and assisting national jurisdictions in handling requests related to prosecuting international crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. It was established in 2010 by resolution 1966, which says “the Mechanism shall continue the jurisdiction, rights and obligations and essential functions of the ICTY and the ICTR” and “should be a small, temporary and efficient structure, whose functions and size will diminish over time, with a small number of staff commensurate with its reduced functions”. According to the resolution, the IRMCT was mandated to operate for an initial period of four years and for subsequent periods of two years thereafter unless the Security Council decides otherwise.

Before the 30 June end of the Mechanism’s most recent two-year operating period, the Council adopted resolution 2422 on 27 June, extending Brammertz’s term until 30 June 2020, with 14 votes in favour and Russia abstaining. The resolution requested the IRMCT to continue to take steps further to enhance efficiency and effective and transparent management, including “more focused projections of completion timelines and disciplined adherence thereto”; “enhancement of the geographic diversity and gender balance of staff, while ensuring continued professional expertise”; and “further reduction of costs, including through, but not limited to, flexible staff engagement”. It requested that the IRMCT update the Council in its

semi-annual reports on progress achieved in implementing the resolution.

On 29 June, the Secretary-General reappointed 23 judges to the roster of the IRMCT for two-year terms commencing on 1 July and expiring on 30 June 2020. He also reappointed Meron as president of the IRMCT from 1 July to 18 January 2019 and appointed Judge Carmel Agius as president from 19 January 2019 to 30 June 2020. Since then, one of the judges has died. As the IRMCT is to have a roster of 25 judges, according to Article 8 of its statute, a further three judges still need to be appointed.

On 17 October, Meron briefed the General Assembly on the sixth annual report of the IRMCT and highlighted progress made in carrying out the core responsibilities inherited from the ICTR and the ICTY, including support for victims and protection of witnesses; enforcement of sentences of those convicted; and managing the Tribunals’ archives.

The last semi-annual debate on the IRMCT was held on 6 June, with briefings by Meron and Brammertz. Meron told the Council that the IRMCT “has begun to stand on its own without the support of its two predecessor tribunals and has taken on the full ambit of the residual functions entrusted to it”. He added that it has done so “while facing unprecedented and unexpected challenges with regard to resource constraints and as a result of the rapid implementation of expenditure reductions, the deployment of staff-downsizing measures and the deterioration in staff morale”.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue is for members to continue

monitoring the work of the IRMCT and the implementation of its mandate, including the areas specified in resolution 2422.

Council Dynamics

Following the closure of the ICTY in December 2017, the debate on 6 June was the first public Council meeting focused solely on the IRMCT. All 15 Council members made statements at the debate. With the exception of Russia, all other Council members generally assessed the IRMCT positively and commended the progress it had made so far. Russia, which had been consistently critical of the ICTY, said in its statement that based on its analysis of specific cases, the IRMCT “has inherited the ICTY’s flawed working methods”. It also emphasised the temporary nature of the IRMCT, seeking that “its residual functions—including legal proceedings, whose delay on the pretext of reduced funding is unacceptable—be completed as quickly as possible” and called for “reliable projections, maximum efficiency and transparency”. In explaining its abstention on resolution 2422 on 27 June, Russia expressed its opposition to the reappointment of the same officials from the ICTY (Brammertz had previously served as the ICTY’s prosecutor) and reiterated its view of the IRMCT’s “problems with its approaches to justice and its internal administration and staffing policies”. Russia also abstained on the adoption of resolution 2269 on 29 February 2016, which previously extended Brammertz’s term until 30 June 2018.

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

Guinea-Bissau

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council is expected to receive a briefing and hold consultations on Guinea-Bissau.

The mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) expires on 28 February 2019.

Key Recent Developments

For the second time this year, Guinea-Bissau failed to hold legislative elections in accordance with its electoral calendar. The elections had been scheduled for 18 November, the date set when they were postponed in April.

On 30 August, Special Representative José

Viegas Filho briefed the Council, focusing on preparations for the elections. Guinea-Bissau’s Prime Minister Aristides Gomes participated, stating that the government was “sparing no effort” to hold legislative elections as scheduled for 18 November. A week later, a Council press statement encouraged national

UN DOCUMENTS ON GUINEA-BISSAU Security Council Resolution S/RES/2404 (28 February 2018) extended the mandate of UNIOGBIS for one year. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2018/791** (28 August 2018) was on progress made regarding the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8337** (30 August 2018) was a briefing on Guinea-Bissau. **Security Council Press Statement SC/13492** (7 September 2018) encouraged national stakeholders to work together for the November 2018 legislative elections. **Sanctions Committee Document SC/13537** (11 October 2018) was a press release on the 31 August meeting of the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee.

Guinea-Bissau

stakeholders to work together for the November 2018 legislative elections, stressing that inclusive and credible elections were essential for reform efforts spelled out in the Conakry Agreement and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) six-point road map, which were brokered by ECOWAS in 2016 to resolve the continuing political crisis.

The updating of the voter census was originally slated to start on 23 August and run until 23 September. The process did not get underway until 20 September, however, because of delays in the delivery of biometric voter registration kits to Guinea-Bissau, a large number of which had still not been received by November. On 22 October, the government announced that the voter census would be extended until 20 November, two days after the scheduled date of the legislative elections. ECOWAS, the AU and the UN subsequently issued a joint communiqué on 25 October calling for renewed efforts to ensure that the 18 November legislative elections would be held on time and under the requisite conditions of transparency, regularity and credibility. President José Mário Vaz has so far said that he would decide on a new date for the elections only once the registration process was complete.

On 20 November, the government announced an additional 15-day extension of the voter census until 5 December. Two days later, the government indicated that the process could extend beyond this date. It said that the 20 November announcement referred to the extension of voter registration officials' contracts, and that the process would continue until it reached "as many voters as possible".

Earlier in the month, on 5 November, an ECOWAS delegation travelled to Guinea-Bissau, led by Nigerian Foreign Minister Geofrey Onyeama in Nigeria's capacity as the chair of ECOWAS. The delegation met leaders of Guinea-Bissau's political parties, election officials, Prime Minister Gomes and President Vaz, as well as representatives in Bissau from ECOWAS, the AU, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), the UN and the EU, collectively referred to as the "P5" in Guinea-Bissau. According to Onyeama, it was agreed that legislative elections must be held this year. On 15 November, Vaz met with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari in Abuja to further discuss preparations for the elections. By 11 November, 57.5 percent of

the estimated 886,292 voters had been registered, according to UNIOGBIS, which also said donors had disbursed over \$8 million to a fund for the elections managed by the UN Development Programme, exceeding the projected election budget. A total of \$1.23 million in pledged funds had still not been disbursed. On 21 November, Gomes announced that 74 percent of estimated voters had been registered. These figures do not include diaspora voters.

Sanctions-related Developments

The 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee met on 31 August to consider the Secretary-General's annual report on progress made with regard to the stabilisation and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. Kelvin Ong, Chief of the Security Council Subsidiary Bodies Branch in the Security Council Affairs Division, gave an overview of the findings and recommendations. David McLachlan-Karr, Deputy Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau, joined the meeting via video teleconference from Bissau to provide an update on the situation in the country. A press release with a factual summary of the meeting was issued on 11 October.

Key Issues and Options

The organisation of the legislative elections is a key focus of the upcoming Council briefing and consultations. If they are not held by the end of the year, this could violate the country's constitutional provisions regarding the tenure of the current legislature and might deepen its political crisis. In addition to the logistical delays in updating the voter census, there are concerns about the government's commitment to timely elections, especially on the part of Vaz, who according to the Secretary-General's August report on Guinea-Bissau is believed to want to conduct the legislative elections simultaneously with the presidential election in May 2019. Other processes that should occur before the presidential elections, according to the Conakry Agreement, include concluding a stability pact and undertaking a review of the constitution.

How the Council can support ECOWAS mediation efforts to implement the Conakry Agreement remains a key issue. In this regard, one option is adopting a presidential statement reiterating the Council's support for ECOWAS and the need for legislative elections to be organised without further delay. Such a statement could note that the Council looks forward to the decisions on Guinea-Bissau during the 22 December summit of

ECOWAS heads of state and government, or, if adopted following the summit, support any decisions that are taken.

Other issues include initial discussions on an assessment from the Secretary-General on UNIOGBIS, with options for a possible reconfiguration of the UN presence in Guinea-Bissau and reprioritisation of tasks. This report is due to the Council by 28 November and is likely to set off early thinking around the forthcoming mandate renewal of UNIOGBIS in February.

Drug trafficking remains an ongoing issue of concern. Over the course of the political crisis, Council members' concerns have included the possibility that a deterioration in the situation could lead to an increase in transnational crime, such as drug trafficking and piracy, or be exploited by terrorist groups in the region. Despite the military's having refrained from interfering in the political situation over the past three years, members remain attentive to this risk given Guinea-Bissau's history, including a military coup after the 2012 presidential elections.

Council and Wider Dynamics

On Guinea-Bissau, the Council tends to follow the lead of ECOWAS, seeking to support its decisions or agreements. ECOWAS maintains the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, a 600-person military contingent that has been credited with deterring interference by the armed forces in the political crisis. Earlier this year the regional body sanctioned 19 individuals close to Vaz, including his son, which seemed to trigger several positive breakthroughs in the political crisis, and then lifted the sanctions in July. In Bissau, representatives from ECOWAS, the AU, the CPLP, the UN and the EU often act together to defuse tensions.

The Secretary-General's assessment is expected to provide options for continuing UNIOGBIS, and other possibilities for a UN presence. The US has questioned the usefulness of the mission.

Côte d'Ivoire is the penholder on Guinea-Bissau. It has collaborated with the Netherlands on Council products. Equatorial Guinea, chair of the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee, has said that after the presidential elections it plans to revisit the question of whether to maintain the sanctions regime imposed in 2012 following the coup.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council is expected to hold a briefing on the situation in Haiti and consider the most recent report on the implementation of resolution 2410, adopted on 10 April, which extended under Chapter VII of the UN Charter the mandate of the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH).

The mandate of MINUJUSTH expires on 15 April 2019.

Key Recent Developments

The Council held its most recent meeting on Haiti in September, when Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita briefed the Council on progress towards the imminent transition to a non-peacekeeping UN presence. Keita presented the latest Secretary-General's report, which outlined the 46 separate indicators for the benchmarked exit strategy. In addition, Keita presented infographics that contained more detailed information on the indicators. Although the mission remained active in assisting the local authorities, Keita noted that there has been a lack of progress on crucial aspects of the rule of law, including legislation on the penal code and the draft code of criminal procedure.

Resolution 2410 mandated the withdrawal of two formed police units (of the initial seven) in the period from 15 October to 15 April 2019. Keita informed Council members that the mission has developed an integrated security transition plan that will guide this transition. In concluding remarks, Keita emphasised the importance of the timely implementation of the 11 benchmarks for the exit strategy and said that all actors involved would have to increase their efforts to this end.

The security situation in Haiti has remained fragile. In June, a series of violent protests erupted after the government announced an increase in fuel prices. The demonstrations ended with the government suspending its decision and the resignation of Prime Minister Jack Guy Lafontant. Thousands of Haitians took to the streets again in October in country-wide anti-corruption

demonstrations. The protesters demanded a transparent investigation into the government's alleged mismanagement of over \$3 billion in oil loans from Venezuela. At least six people were killed and dozens injured in clashes between protesters and police. Several inquiries by the Haitian legislature have concluded that a number of government officials were engaged in the misuse of funds. While the demonstrators also called for the resignation of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse, he assured them that those responsible would be brought to account.

Violence erupted again on 18 November, a national holiday marking the anniversary of a victory over French forces in 1803. In addition to demanding accountability in the oil corruption scandal, the protesters reiterated calls for Moïse to step down. Moïse responded by calling for unity and an end to the fighting. According to media reports, at least five people were killed and dozens injured in clashes with the police.

In other developments, over 15 people were killed and over 300 injured in an earthquake on 9 October that affected the northern part of Haiti. The earthquake resulted in significant material damage, leaving tens of thousands in need of humanitarian assistance.

The new Special Representative and head of MINUJUSTH, Helen Meagher La Lime, formally took office on 3 September. She succeeded Susan D. Page, who spent a little over six months in the position before being appointed on 4 May as the Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Rule of Law.

Key Issues and Options

The Council faces several interrelated issues in Haiti. Chief among them is achieving the mission's benchmarked exit strategy within the projected timeframe, that is, by October 2019. Given the lack of progress, the Council will have to consider the possibility that Haiti will not advance sufficiently against the benchmarks in time. In that case, the Council will have to decide whether to revise the current exit strategy or consider extending the mission. Remaining issues for the Council

include the need for the mission to develop further the capacity of the national police and to continue to encourage progress across all rule-of-law sectors, in particular regarding reforms related to human rights and criminal justice, before the projected closure of MINUJUSTH.

The recent tensions in Haiti have exposed some of the underlying socio-economic issues that could potentially threaten the overall security situation. Should these persist, the Council could issue a statement calling for calm and dialogue and supporting the work of the mission. It could also, in due time, reassess the plans for the drawdown of the mission.

Council Dynamics

Council members have recognised Haiti's notable progress over the past several years. The Council has welcomed as a major milestone the restoration of constitutional order and the successful holding of general and presidential elections in 2017. This led to the Council's decision to initiate the gradual drawdown and devise the current exit strategy.

Negotiations on the last two mandate renewal resolutions have exposed some diverging views about the scope and the mandate of the UN mission in Haiti. In April 2017, the Council voted unanimously for resolution 2350—renewing the mandate of MINUSTAH until 15 October 2017, to be followed by the start of MINUJUSTH the next day—but China, Russia, and to some extent Bolivia raised concerns regarding the inclusion of human rights in the MINUJUSTH mandate and its establishment under Chapter VII, which authorises enforcement action to restore international peace and security. During the last mandate renewal, in April, Russia and China abstained on resolution 2410, citing similar concerns. During the meeting in September, Council members raised concerns over the delicate security situation and questioned the readiness of Haitian authorities to take over security responsibilities from the mission in this environment.

The US is the penholder on Haiti.

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2410](#) (10 April 2018) extended MINUJUSTH's mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter until 15 April 2019. [S/RES/2350](#) (13 April 2017) extended MINUSTAH's mandate for a final six-month period until 15 October and authorised the establishment of a smaller successor peacekeeping mission, MINUJUSTH. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2018/795](#) (30 August 2018) was on MINUJUSTH. [S/2018/241](#) (20 March 2018) contained the Secretary-General's strategic assessment of MINUJUSTH and benchmarks for the mission's exit strategy. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8342](#) (6 September 2018) was a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the situation in Haiti. [S/PV.8226](#) (10 April 2018) was the vote on resolution 2410, on which China and Russia abstained. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13419](#) (12 July 2018) condemned the acts of violence against civilians during the anti-government protests.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In December, the Security Council expects to receive the semi-annual briefing of the ICC Prosecutor related to the court's work on Darfur. Also in December, 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 the UN/AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) expires on 30 June 2019.

Key Recent Developments

According to the Secretary-General's most recent report, the security situation in Darfur has "remained relatively stable" except for intermittent clashes in the Jebel Marra area between government forces and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid and the persistence of intercommunal conflict and disputes over land and resources. While there was a decrease in human rights incidents, attacks against civilians—particularly internally displaced persons—have continued with impunity, and sexual and gender-based violence remains a serious concern, the report said.

The Secretary-General's report contains proposed "benchmarks and indicators of achievement" for the eventual exit of UNAMID with a view towards this exit taking place in 2020, "provided that there is no significant change in the security situation in Darfur and key indicators are fulfilled", as stated in resolution 2429, which reduced UNAMID's troop ceiling from 8,735 to 4,050 military personnel. (The mission is set to decrease by 3,265 personnel by December and by another 1,420 personnel by 30 June 2019.) The benchmarks contained in the Secretary-General's report are categorised into three main areas:

- the protection of civilians; monitoring and reporting on human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, and grave violations against children; the facilitation of humanitarian assistance; and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel;
- support for the mediation of intercommunal or other local conflict that could undermine the security situation, including through measures to address its root causes; and
- mediation between the government and

non-signatory armed groups on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur.

A total of 53 individual indicators are grouped under these three benchmarks. Among others, individual indicators include the following: no increase in conflict-related displacement; the government's providing "a suitable environment for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees"; the cessation of conflict-related sexual violence; the government's engaging with OHCHR on the establishment of a country office; and the government's demonstrating its commitment to participate in direct negotiations on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and to conclude a comprehensive ceasefire. Several of the indicators are associated with set periods of time, and the Secretary-General's report recommends that a May 2019 strategic review of UNAMID include an assessment of their implementation. In addition, UNAMID should report on progress in implementation every 90 days, as part of its periodic reporting to the Security Council. According to the report, the indicators are intended to focus on action taken by the government of Sudan and to be measurable and realistic in terms of time frame.

ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda last briefed the Council on 20 June, providing 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. She again urged the Council to play a more active role in supporting the arrest and transfer of the five suspects at large accused of "multiple crimes against humanity and war crimes" in Darfur, including Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. On 22 October, Joint Special Representative and head of UNAMID Jeremiah Mamabolo briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's report, saying UNAMID had begun its reconfiguration and drawdown while monitoring the impact on security and the protection of civilians. He also emphasised the importance of meeting the benchmarks for the mission's exit set out in the Secretary-General's report.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 3 October, Wronecka provided Council members with the quarterly briefing on the committee's work. She highlighted aspects of the interim report

of the Panel of Experts presented to the committee on 17 August (which, unlike the final report, is not made public). She said the report noted that the Sudanese government continued to transfer weapons to Darfur without the required approval of the committee; that the panel is investigating instances of potential violations of the arms embargo by rebel groups; and that there is a growing presence of Darfuri armed groups in Libya.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 31 October, the Human Rights Committee, the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by state parties, published its concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Sudan (CCPR/C/SDN/CO/5). Recommendations made by the Committee include that Sudan should take all necessary measures to end impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations; amend the Criminal Act to revoke stoning and crucifixion as officially sanctioned punishment; adopt comprehensive anti-torture legislation and establish a national mechanism for the prevention of torture; resolve all cases of enforced disappearance and conduct investigations without delay; launch effective and thorough investigations, and prosecute those responsible for attacks against civilians, including the attacks committed in Kalma (South Darfur) and Jebel Marra, as well as cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

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 implementation of the mission's revised priorities as set out in resolution 2429, including on human rights reporting and intercommunal mediation efforts. An option would be to invite the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide an update on the human rights situation.

Another key issue is to consider reviewing the sanctions measures on Darfur in light of the interim report of the Panel of Experts. One option is for such considerations to be further informed by the final report of the Panel of Experts due by 12 January 2019.

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 22 October

Sudan (Darfur)

briefing in statements made by Ethiopia and Kuwait in particular. Ethiopia also called for changes to the sanctions regime, including lifting the arms embargo. Bolivia, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Kazakhstan, Kuwait and Peru emphasised the need for additional funding to support the peacebuilding process.

At the 20 June briefing by Bensouda,

Council members—including France, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden and the UK—reiterated their support for the work of the ICC in relation to Darfur and emphasised the need for the Council to do more to enable the Court to carry out its mandate in Darfur. Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea, supporting the AU's position on the issue, called for the

suspension of proceedings against Bashir and urged the Council to withdraw the referral of the situation in Darfur to the ICC.

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

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council will receive a briefing on the Secretary-General's 90-day report on South Sudan, as requested in resolution 2406, and a briefing on South Sudan sanctions. Council members expect to receive the Secretary-General's report by 10 December and will also receive his monthly report on violations of the Status of Forces Agreement or obstructions to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

The mandate of UNMISS expires on 15 March 2019.

Key Recent Developments

Some reduction in fighting has been reported since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) on 12 September in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. However, clashes have continued in parts of the country despite the cessation of hostilities declared in December 2017 and the permanent ceasefire agreed in June. The human rights, humanitarian, food security and economic conditions in the country remain dire, with an enormous impact on civilians.

On 31 October, thousands of South Sudanese gathered in Juba for a ceremony to celebrate the signing the previous month of the R-ARCSS, which coincided with the return of opposition leader Riek Machar to the country. The ceremony was attended by Machar, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir, leaders from various opposition groups, and high-level representatives, including the presidents of Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda. Prior to and following the ceremony, several political detainees and prisoners of war were

released, including James Gatdet, former spokesman for Machar, and William John Endley, a former military adviser to Machar.

According to the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission's third and most recent progress report available at press time on the implementation of the R-ARCSS, some progress was made, but several of the benchmarks set out in the agreement's implementation matrix were missed. The 5 November report said that tasks implemented included inaugural meetings of the National Pre-Transitional Committee and the National Constitution Amendment Committee, and ratification of the R-ARCSS by the Transitional National Legislative Assembly. Outstanding tasks included compliance with the permanent ceasefire, establishment of the Independent Boundaries Commission and the Technical Boundaries Commission, release of all prisoners of war and political detainees, establishment of the Joint Transitional Security Committee and disengagement and separation of forces in close proximity.

On 16 November, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Council of Ministers held an extraordinary session on South Sudan, at which it adopted a communiqué directing "the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan to reach out to the South Sudanese stakeholders and any warring groups who are not signatories to the R-ARCSS to join in its implementation; otherwise, they shall be labelled spoilers of the peace process". It also called for "the submission of a report by the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers to the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council on concrete proposals to revise the mandate and

structure of [UNMISS' Regional Protection Force] the (RPF) to allow the participation of all IGAD Member States".

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict conducted a mission to South Sudan from 4 to 7 November, led by the chair, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden). The mission followed the September publication of the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict in South Sudan, covering October 2014 to June. The report documents "alarming levels of all six grave violations against children committed by all parties to conflict," including recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence and abductions, numerous incidents of attacks against schools and hospitals, and high levels of denial of humanitarian access to children.

The Council was last briefed on South Sudan on 16 November. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui (via video teleconference) and Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka reported on their joint visit to South Sudan from 7 to 9 October. (For more details, see our What's In Blue story of 15 November.)

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 7 November, the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee was briefed by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on its interim report, which said that while it was too early to assess the full impact of the arms embargo, imposed by resolution 2428 on 13 July, "a number of violations have been noted". The report also noted that Sudan had deployed troops to protect oil fields in Unity State, while Uganda had sent forces to Central and Eastern Equatoria. The report refers

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2428](#) (13 July 2018) imposed an arms embargo and additional targeted sanctions and renewed the sanctions regime and mandate of the Panel of Experts. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2018/865](#) (25 September 2018) was on children and armed conflict in South Sudan. [S/2018/831](#) (11 September 2018) was the 90-day report on South Sudan. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8403](#) (16 November 2018) was a briefing on South Sudan.

South Sudan

to “alarming levels of sexual and gender-based violence, food insecurity and grave human rights abuses, including against children.”

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 17 September, during its 39th session, the Human Rights Council received an oral update from, and held an interactive dialogue with, the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan. Commission Chairperson Yasmin Sooka presented the oral update, saying that the commission had “heard testimonies of wanton killings and numerous accounts of brutal sexual violence”. The need to establish the Hybrid Court for South Sudan was also highlighted, among other issues.

On 18 October, UNMISS and OHCHR jointly published a report on violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law reportedly committed against civilians in Western Equatoria, between April and August. The report documented attacks by the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-In-Opposition (SPLA-IO) on at least 28 villages, a settlement of internally displaced persons and a refugee camp, including killings, abduction, rape, sexual slavery, forced recruitment, and destruction of property. During these attacks, at least 887 civilians were abducted, and 24,000 were forced to flee their homes. According to the report, UNMISS’ Human Rights Division has identified three SPLA-IO commanders who allegedly had effective command and control of the forces committing these abuses, which may amount to war crimes. At the same time, Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) forces carried out military operations, which were characterised by serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law,

in the report. Among the report’s recommendations were calls for accountability and access to basic services, particularly for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue is how the Council can support the parties in South Sudan as well as IGAD and other regional actors in the implementation of the R-ARCSS. An option would be to adopt a presidential statement or press statement calling for full implementation of the agreement and expressing the Council’s support in this regard, as well as calling for unhindered humanitarian access and adherence to the permanent ceasefire agreed in June. Council members could also consider imposing, or threatening to impose, further targeted sanctions against those who undermine the process.

Another key issue for the Council is the implementation of the arms embargo and targeted sanctions imposed by resolution 2428. An option would be to use the various ways in which the Council can receive relevant information as set out in the resolution 2428 to inform the Council’s response in this regard.

The Council could also revisit the idea of holding an Arria-formula meeting with the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan.

Council Dynamics

Council members share deep concern about the crisis in South Sudan—which is about to enter its sixth year—and its devastating impact on civilians and, in this context, are supportive of the R-ARCSS and the roles played by IGAD and the region towards a political resolution of the conflict. While some Council members may be optimistic about progress made by the parties, other members are more critical about the need for this to translate into an improved situation on the ground.

At the 16 November briefing, the Netherlands, Sweden and the US said perpetrators or spoilers of South Sudan’s peace process should be targeted with sanctions. Regarding proposals for IGAD member states to participate in the RPF, the US emphasised that any efforts to restructure UNMISS is the Council’s prerogative, but Russia welcomed the initiative, saying that it “stood ready to consider all reasonable proposals”. Several members expressed concern about reports of civilians being targeted, human rights abuses, sexual and gender-based violence, child recruitment, food insecurity and impediments to humanitarian assistance. Bolivia and Peru called for the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan.

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

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

Expected Council Action

In December, the Council is expected to extend for six months the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which expires on 31 December. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is expected to brief Council members in consultations on the latest 90-day report of the Secretary-General on UNDOF and the most recent developments. A meeting of Council members and UNDOF troop-contributing countries ahead of the mandate renewal is also expected to take place, in line with usual practice.

Key Recent Developments

UNDOF was established following the

conclusion of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria, which ended the Yom Kippur war, and is mandated to maintain the ceasefire between the parties and supervise the disengagement of Israeli and Syrian forces as well as the so-called areas of separation and limitation.

The Secretary-General’s 26 September report, covering the period from 24 May to 14 September, said that the ceasefire between Israel and Syria was being maintained, notwithstanding the volatile environment due to the conflict in Syria. Violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974 occurred, however. These included fighting in the areas of separation and limitation on the

Bravo (Syrian) side between the Syrian armed forces and non-state armed opposition groups and others, including Council-listed terrorist groups Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (formerly Jabhat Fath al-Sham and the Nusrah Front) and the Khalid Ibn al-Walid Army, both of which have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Additionally, Russian military police were noted by UNDOF as being occasionally present in the area of separation. No military forces other than those of UNDOF are allowed in that area. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continued to fire across the ceasefire line and into the area of separation. UNDOF personnel also continued to observe crossings by unidentified individuals

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/2018/867** (26 September 2018) was the latest report on UNDOF.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

between Lebanon and the Bravo side and from the Bravo side to the Alpha (Israeli) side on a daily basis. UNDOF has protested the violations of the 1974 Agreement and called upon both sides to exercise restraint, in line with its mandate to observe violations, report them and liaise with both sides. The Syrian government regained full control over the area of separation at the beginning of August, bringing an end to all fighting in that area, which was previously controlled by armed groups.

UNDOF made further progress towards a limited return to operations 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 preparations for the reoccupation of observation posts. UNDOF's mechanised infantry company has conducted more than 50 protected patrols since such patrols resumed on the Bravo side in February 2018. Patrols to more observation posts are expected soon. The Force Reserve Company completed its re-deployment to the Bravo side on 4 September. UNDOF's positions on Mount Hermon and at Camp Faouar are still being supplied from Damascus. DPKO continues to engage the parties in order to seek the deployment of appropriate technologies for UNDOF, which it considers critical. The UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Observer Group Golan continues to

provide UNDOF with military observers.

On 15 October, the Qunaytirah crossing point, which had been closed since 2014, was reopened, enabling UNDOF to utilise it again.

A team led by Lieutenant General Paolo Serra has conducted an independent review of UNDOF. Selected recommendations drawn from the conclusions of the review may be shared with Council members by the DPKO representative during consultations.

Key Issues and Options

Ongoing issues for the Council are the numerous violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974 and UNDOF's ability to implement its mandate, including the deployment of appropriate technologies. The operating environment of UNDOF experienced changes over the last several months due to Syria's regaining control over areas formerly held by different armed actors. This will have implications for the ability of UNDOF to implement its mandate, including the eventual full return of UNDOF to the Bravo side. In that regard, the re-opening of the Qunaytirah crossing point indicates the parties' conviction that the security situation has improved. The closure of the Qunaytirah crossing point used to be a recurring issue in the Secretary-General's reports as a factor inhibiting UNDOF from implementing its mandate. The Council at some point could consider requesting the

Secretary-General to go back to a six-month reporting cycle instead of 90 days, which was the practice until December 2012. Regarding the mandate renewal, the Council is rather restricted in its options: how UNDOF operates is subject solely to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974. Any changes in the mandate would require agreement by Israel and Syria, which is unlikely.

Council and Wider Dynamics

There is general agreement within the Council that UNDOF's mandate, including its liaison function, 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 in response to the extremely unstable operating environment due to the armed conflict in Syria. Israel and Syria still value UNDOF's presence and want to see the mission return to the Bravo side. Council members support its eventual complete return, mindful of the fact that this would require a continuously 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. Despite the deep divisions between the co-penholders regarding the Syria file, both countries are expected to continue to consider UNDOF as a separate issue and not to politicise it.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

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

The mandate of UNAMA expires on 17 March 2019.

Key Recent Developments

Parliamentary and district council elections were held on 20 October in 32 out of 34 provinces. In Kandahar, elections were postponed for a week after an attack by the Taliban, two days before the election date, in which

local police chief Abdul Raziq was killed. In Ghazni, elections did not take place due to several irregularities. The Council issued a press statement welcoming the holding of the elections while noting the difficult security environment. According to a UNAMA report on election violence, 56 Afghans died and 379 were injured on days when polling took place (20 October and the following

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2405 (8 March 2018) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2019. **Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2018/15** (23 July 2018) was on the electoral process following the conclusion of voter registration on 18 July for this year's parliamentary and district council elections and for the 2019 presidential elections. **S/PRST/2018/2** (19 January 2018) emphasised the importance of advancing regional, interregional and international cooperation to achieve stability and sustainable development in Afghanistan and the Central Asian region. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/824** (10 September 2018) was the latest report on Afghanistan. **Security Council Letter S/2018/37** (11 January 2018) contained the terms of reference for the visiting mission to Afghanistan. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8354** (17 September 2018) was the latest quarterly debate on Afghanistan. **Security Council Press Statements SC/13596** (20 November 2018) condemned in the strongest terms the 20 November terrorist attack against a gathering of religious scholars in Kabul, killing at least 55 people and injuring more than 60. **SC/13551** (23 October 2018) welcomed the holding of elections while noting the difficult security environment and that voting in Kandahar, which had been postponed, needed to still take place. **SC/13545** (18 October 2018) condemned in the strongest terms recent terrorist attacks and underscored the importance of a secure environment for the elections. **SC/13498** (11 September 2018) condemned in the strongest terms the 5 September terrorist attack in Kabul claimed by ISIL and the 11 September attack in Nangarhar, resulting in at least 61 people killed and numerous wounded.

Afghanistan

days for postponed polling), constituting the highest level of casualties in any Afghan election since 2004. As of the publication of the report in November, UNAMA had attributed all but 59 casualties (mostly the result of the Afghan National Army defending election sites against anti-government forces) to anti-government forces, mainly the Taliban. UNAMA described this, together with violence perpetrated by the Taliban leading up to and related to the elections, as “a deliberate campaign intended to disrupt and undermine the electoral process”. Preliminary results of the elections from all provinces were initially to be announced by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) on 20 November. However, the IEC has postponed the announcement.

On 9 November, Russia hosted an international meeting on Afghanistan in Moscow; participants included five members of the Taliban, all of whom are on the 1988 Sanctions Committee list of individuals for targeted sanctions. Also attending was a delegation from the Afghan High Peace Council, a body appointed by the Afghan government to work on reconciliation with the Taliban. The Afghan government did not send a delegation, however.

Following the first round of talks in seven years between representatives of the US and the Taliban in late July, another meeting was held in Qatar from 16 to 19 November. The Taliban continue to say that they will hold direct talks not with the Afghan government, whose legitimacy they do not recognise, but rather with the US government as they seek the withdrawal of US and international troops from Afghanistan. The latest quarterly report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, an oversight body reporting to the US Congress, puts Afghan government “control or influence” at 56 percent of Afghan territory and Taliban control at 18 percent, with the remaining 26 percent contested.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani’s wide-ranging offer to the Taliban, extended during the second meeting of the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation in Afghanistan in February, still stands. It includes a prisoner exchange, a review of the constitution, and the removal of sanctions against insurgents. The Taliban do not respond formally to offers by the Afghan government. Following a three-day ceasefire between the Afghan government and the Taliban over Eid-al-Fitr in June, a conditional ceasefire—as announced by President Ghani on 20 August, the holiday of Eid al-Adha—started, but was not reciprocated by the Taliban. During his most recent Security Council briefing on 17 September, Yamamoto said that despite setbacks “we are in a better position now than at any time in the past 17 years to commence a process leading to talks for a negotiated end to the conflict.”

According to OCHA, 275,000 people were uprooted because of this year’s unusually severe drought, 52,000 more than the number of Afghans displaced due to conflict during the same period.

The drought also had an effect on opium poppy cultivation. The “Afghanistan Opium Survey 2018” conducted annually by the Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics together with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime found that opium poppy cultivation decreased by 20 percent compared to 2017, but that the level of cultivation still represented the second-highest since systematic recording began in 1994. The biggest decreases were recorded in the western and northern regions and were attributed mainly to the drought.

Sanctions-Related Developments

During its 12 November meeting, the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee was briefed by its Chair, Ambassador Kairat Umarov of Kazakhstan, and by Yamamoto.

Key Issues and Options

Afghan civilians still bear the heaviest burden of the security situation, which is further complicated by the presence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist groups. Insurgency in Afghanistan continues to be closely interlinked with illicit drug production and trafficking, activities that reached record levels during 2017, when opium cultivation was up 63 percent over 2016.

Council priorities include following closely the next steps in the framework of the Kabul process, awaiting the final results of the parliamentary and district council elections and a timetable for the 2019 presidential elections, and assessing the results of the 27-28 November ministerial Geneva Conference on Afghanistan, co-chaired by the Afghan government and the UN. A press statement by the Council in relation to all of these developments may be a possibility, considering that there have been Council products on these issues in the past.

Council Dynamics

Council members are generally supportive of UNAMA’s work, and remain concerned about the progressively more volatile security environment and its implications for the civilian population, specifically in the context of elections. Among permanent members, Russia in particular continues to emphasise the threat ISIL poses in Afghanistan and to question the utility of the NATO and US presence in the country, which it maintains does not help the situation and even increases casualties. The issue of attributing responsibility for civilian casualties remains a sensitive matter among the permanent members.

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

Briefing by the Outgoing Chairs of the Security Council Subsidiary Bodies

Expected Council Action

Every December since 2002, the outgoing chairs of subsidiary bodies have provided a briefing on their experience. The five Permanent Representatives completing their countries' two-year terms on the Council at the end of 2018, and their respective chairmanships, are:

- Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorenty Solíz (Bolivia)—the 1540 Non-Proliferation Committee;
- Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie Amde (Ethiopia)—the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa;
- Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan)—the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee; the 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee and the 1267,1989 and 2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee;
- Ambassador Karel J. G. van Oosterom (Netherlands)—the Committee on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2231 Concerning Iran and the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee; and
- Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden)—the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee, and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

Background

When Colombia initiated the practice of briefings by the outgoing chairs of the subsidiary bodies during its December 2002 presidency, it was an important step towards providing a degree of transparency in the work of these bodies. Since then, there have been considerable improvements in the subsidiary bodies' transparency.

The practice of the December briefings has continued, as it affords the departing chairs an opportunity to share lessons learned from the experience and advice to their successors. Since not all subsidiary bodies produce an annual report, this annual briefing has also served over the years as a means of creating a public record of a body's activities.

Key Recent Developments

In 2016, prompted by the change in the date of elections to the Security Council from October to June, Japan—which was then chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (IWG)—drafted a note addressing various aspects of new members' preparation during the period between the election and the beginning of their term, including the selection and preparation of chairs of subsidiary bodies. Following intense negotiations with some of the P5 who were reluctant to move to a more participatory and transparent process, the formulation ultimately agreed called for an informal consultation process on appointments, “undertaken in a balanced, transparent, efficient and inclusive way” and “facilitated jointly by two members of the Security Council working in full cooperation”. It was also agreed that “members of the Security Council should make every effort to agree provisionally on the appointment of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies for the following year no later than 1 October”.

Building on those discussions, members agreed in 2017 on a set of measures aimed at enhancing the transparency of subsidiary organs, improving the selection process and the preparation of chairs, and increasing the interaction and coordination among subsidiary organs and between these bodies and the Council. This occurred in the context of compiling and negotiating a new comprehensive edition of Council working methods, the so-called Note 507. Furthermore, the document restated the agreements about the process for and the timing of the appointment of chairs.

The new selection procedures had been tested in 2016. That year, the Council missed the intended deadline of 1 October for the selection of chairs by almost a month. Nevertheless, the incoming chairs were able to benefit from a much longer preparatory period than any of their predecessors. In 2017, agreement was reached in early October and the list was put under silence on 9 October. In 2018, a number of factors, including differences between the incoming members' interests and the current members' vision of how

the posts should be distributed, resulted in the process taking much longer, and the final chairmanships list was put under silence on 20 November with a deadline of noon the next day. The silence was not broken and the list, still considered provisional, will become formal in January and will be published in document S/2019/2. The vacated chairs will be distributed as follows:

- Belgium—the Committee on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2231 Concerning Iran, the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee, and Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict;
- Dominican Republic—the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee;
- Germany—the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee and the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee;
- Indonesia—the 1540 Non-Proliferation Committee, the 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee, and the 1267,1989 and 2253 ISIL/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee; and
- South Africa—the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

Council Dynamics

The process of appointing chairs of the Council subsidiary bodies in effect from the 1990s through 2015, whereby the P5 assigned chairmanships to elected members, had been a source of controversy and deep dissatisfaction on the part of the appointees. Efforts within the IWG to establish an inclusive and more transparent method resulted in several Notes by the President, but no change in the practice. Back in 2016, during the negotiations over the Note that would address a range of modalities related to the longer transitional period for the incoming members, the process for chairs' selection took the longest to agree.

This new practice worked reasonably well in 2016 and 2017 but hit snags in 2018, including calls by some elected members for the P5 to share the burden of chairing the subsidiary bodies. During the protracted consultations, the ten elected members and the five incoming delegations addressed a joint

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUBSIDIARY BODIES Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8127 (8 December 2017) was last year's briefing by the chairs of subsidiary bodies. S/PV.7620 (11 February 2016) was the debate on the working methods of subsidiary bodies. Notes by the President of the Security Council S/2017/507 (30 August 2017) was a compendium of agreed working methods. S/2016/619 (15 July 2016) contained transitional arrangements for newly elected Council members. Security Council Letters S/2018/1024 (13 November 2018) was to the president of the Security Council from the elected ten and incoming five.

Briefing by the Outgoing Chairs of the Security Council Subsidiary Bodies

letter to the president of the Security Council that was critical of the process and of the current arrangement. The 13 November letter, signed by those 15 permanent representatives,

emphasised “the need for fair burden sharing and an equal distribution of work amongst all members of the Security Council, including its permanent members.” The letter also

proposed making better use within the Council of its members’ expertise by making the chairs of the sanctions committees co-penholders on the relevant files.

Iran

Expected Council Action

In December, the Secretary-General will report on the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran’s nuclear programme. The Council is also expected to receive reports from the Joint Commission, established by the parties to the JCPOA to oversee its implementation, and from the Council’s 2231 facilitator, Ambassador Karel van Oosterom (the Netherlands). Briefings are expected from Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, van Oosterom, and a representative of the EU in its capacity as coordinator of the Joint Commission.

Key Recent Developments

The uncertainty about the future of the JCPOA has persisted since May when the US formally withdrew from the agreement. Iran has continued to implement its nuclear-related commitments under the agreement, however, as verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

At the June briefing on the implementation of resolution 2231, the US reiterated its view that Iran continues to destabilise the Middle East region through its support for terrorist groups and proxy forces. Most other Council members expressed regret over the US withdrawal from the agreement, and some have also raised concerns about reports of Iran’s ballistic missile activity. DiCarlo emphasised the uncertain outlook for the future of the JCPOA and said that all issues that are not directly related to the agreement should be addressed without jeopardising it.

The US has been reimposing sanctions on Iran gradually since May. The first round of sanctions targeting specific sectors of the economy took effect in August. On 5

November, the US imposed the remaining sanctions, targeting Iran’s oil exports, which represent one of the main revenue sources for the country. The US has, however, granted temporary waivers to eight countries, allowing them to buy Iranian petroleum products.

During the high-level week at the UN General Assembly, EU High Representative Federica Mogherini chaired a ministerial meeting of participants in the JCPOA on 24 September. In a joint statement issued after the meeting, the foreign ministers of JCPOA participants reaffirmed their commitment to full and effective implementation of the agreement. They expressed their determination to protect the freedom to pursue legitimate business with Iran in accordance with resolution 2231. To that end, they also welcomed the initiative to establish a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to facilitate payments linked to legitimate economic activity with Iran.

In a press conference that day with Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, Mogherini said that the EU has decided to establish the SPV as a legal entity that would facilitate legitimate financial transactions with Iran and therefore allow European companies to continue doing business with Iran. The SPV is aimed at circumventing and minimising the impact of the US sanctions. Although EU officials planned to have the SPV operational before the US imposed the latest round of sanctions in November, there are still several technical issues to be resolved. The media have reported that one of the more contentious issues is which EU country would host the SPV. It appears that prospective host countries fear that the US could penalise their banking sectors. At press time no decision had been made.

During its presidency in September, the US devoted significant attention to issues

related to non-proliferation. In addition to holding a ministerial meeting on denuclearisation efforts in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, on 26 September US President Donald Trump chaired a summit-level meeting on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Among other issues, Trump criticised the JCPOA and said that the agreement provided Iran with financial resources that it used to support terrorism, develop ballistic missiles, and destabilise the region. On the other hand, French President Emmanuel Macron emphasised that although the US had withdrawn from the agreement, all members are united around the objective of keeping Iran free of nuclear weapons. While noting its imperfections, he stressed that the JCPOA was a step in the right direction towards ensuring a nuclear-weapons-free Iran.

In a 3 October ruling, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered the US to ease sanctions that it reinstated on Iran after withdrawing from the JCPOA. Iran argued that the sanctions violated the 1955 Treaty of Amity, which regulates trade and commerce between the two countries. The Court ordered the US to remove any impediments arising from sanctions on Iran announced in May that would affect humanitarian aid and civilian aviation. The US has rejected the ICJ’s ruling, and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the same day that the US would withdraw from the 1955 treaty.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 15 November, the Third Committee adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in Iran with 85 votes in favour; 30 votes against, including Council members Bolivia, China, Kazakhstan and Russia; and 68 abstentions, including Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea and Kuwait (A/C.3/73/L.42). Among other things, the resolution urges Iran to cease the widespread and systematic use of arbitrary detention; release

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2231 (20 July 2015) endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran. Secretary General’s Report S/2018/602 (12 June 2018) was on the implementation of resolution 2231. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8297 (27 June 2018) was a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the JCPOA.

Iran

persons detained for the exercise of their human rights; and address the poor conditions of prisons. It also expresses serious concern about the ongoing severe limitations and restrictions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief and calls upon Iran to launch a comprehensive accountability process in response to all cases of serious human rights violations, including allegations of excessive use of force against peaceful protesters and cases of suspicious deaths in custody.

On 24 October, the special rapporteur on human rights in Iran, Javād Rehman, presented his report (A/73/398) to the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its 73rd session, as requested in Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution 37/30. The report highlights a number of consistently documented issues, including violations of the right to life, in particular the execution of juvenile offenders; violations of the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment; violations of the right to freedom of assembly, opinion and expression; and violations of the rights of women and girls, as well as those of religious and ethnic minorities. The report also identifies several areas that the special rapporteur intends to address further in the future, including violations of economic, social and cultural rights; the situation of human rights defenders; and the rights of specific groups, in particular those based on disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. The special rapporteur will submit a written report to the HRC at its 40th session in March.

Key Issues and Options

An underlying issue for the Council remains ensuring full compliance with resolution 2231 by parties to the JCPOA and the wider UN membership.

The Council will have to assess the implications of the US withdrawal from the JCPOA on the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the agreement. To address this and other related issues, the Council could consider holding an informal meeting or meeting in consultations with the 2231 facilitator. This meeting could afford members an opportunity to respond to US

criticism and further express concern about the undermining of the agreement.

Given that Iran has not yet taken part in the semi-annual briefings on the implementation of resolution 2231, an option for the Council is to encourage its participation in the public discussion.

Council Dynamics

The current US administration has all along been critical of the JCPOA. Its formal withdrawal from the agreement has not changed Council dynamics drastically, given that most Council members anticipated the US move. Most Council members—among them, China, France, the UK and Russia, which are parties to the agreement—maintain their position that the JCPOA remains valid and that they will continue to adhere to its provisions. Iran has also affirmed its commitment to the implementation of the JCPOA and resolution 2231. JCPOA parties France, Germany and the UK expressed regret and concern over the US withdrawal, while Iran was highly critical of the unilateral US action.

The remaining signatories of the JCPOA, particularly the European countries, seem committed to preserving the agreement and easing economic pressure on Iran amid renewed US sanctions. The US has threatened to sanction all entities that engage in business with Iran. The development of the SPV by the EU could further affect Council dynamics, deepening the rift between the European members and the US.

Looking ahead, should the US pursue Council action on Iran by initiating the process of reinstating UN sanctions via a new resolution, this could further exacerbate the divide between the US and other permanent members, most notably France and the UK, which contend that Iran has been in compliance with the JCPOA.

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