

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Kuwait will hold the presidency in June. Three high-level briefings are planned: on [protection of civilians and missing persons in armed conflict](#), on [conflict prevention and mediation](#), and on [regional cooperation](#). All three briefings will be chaired by Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. OCHA Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock and a representative from the ICRC are expected to brief at the “missing persons in conflict” meeting. Secretary-General António Guterres; Mary Robinson, the chair of the Elders; and Ban Ki-moon, a deputy chair of the Elders, are the anticipated briefers for the conflict prevention and mediation briefing. Guterres and the League of Arab States (LAS) Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul-Gheit may brief during the third of the meetings, on cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States.

Kuwait, the chair of the Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, is also planning to hold an open debate on [working methods](#).

Adoptions are scheduled to renew the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) sanctions and the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of [Libya](#). A further three adoptions are scheduled to renew the mandates of the missions in [Darfur](#) (UNAMID), the [Golan Heights](#) (UNDOF) and [Mali](#) (MINUSMA). Ahead of the adoptions there will be consultations on UNDOF, and briefing and consultations on UNAMID and MINUSMA as well as TCC meetings on all three missions.

Meetings on other African issues this month include:

- [Central African Republic](#), on the activities of MINUSCA;
- [Somalia](#), a briefing by the chair of the 751 [Somalia Sanctions Committee](#);

- [South Sudan](#), on the activities of UNMISS;
- [Sudan](#), the semi-annual briefing by the ICC prosecutor and the quarterly briefing by the chair of the 1591 [Sudan Sanctions Committee](#); and
- [UNOCA/LRA](#), an update on the activities of UNOCA (Central Africa) and the regional strategy to combat the Lord’s Resistant Army. In addition to the monthly meeting on the situation in the [Middle East](#), including the Palestinian question, other Middle East issues that will be considered include:

- [Syria](#), the monthly briefings on the humanitarian situation, the political process, and the use of chemical weapons;
- [Iran](#), the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran’s nuclear programme; and
- [Yemen](#), an update on the implementation of resolution 2452, which established the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement. The annual briefing by force commanders will be by commanders of peacekeeping missions in [Cyprus](#) (UNFICYP) and [Darfur](#) (UNAMID).

In June, the Council will have the second of three briefings on the situation in [Kosovo](#) scheduled this year.

Regarding Asian issues there will be the regular debate on [Afghanistan](#).

There may be a [Council visiting mission](#) during the month.

Finally, the [General Assembly is scheduled to elect five non-permanent Security Council members](#) on 7 June. Six member states—Estonia, Niger, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam—are running for the five available seats. Estonia and Romania are contesting the single Eastern European Group seat, while the other four candidates will run unopposed.

30 May Year
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In Hindsight: Security Council Elections 2019

The 73rd session of the UN General Assembly is expected to hold elections on 7 June for five non-permanent members of the Security Council for the term 2020-2021. (For more detailed information, please see our 14 May research report *Security Council Elections 2019*.)

Background

The five seats available for election in 2019 according to the customary distribution among regions will be as follows:

- two seats for the African Group (currently held by Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea);
- one seat for the Group of Asia and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (the Asia-Pacific Group, currently held by Kuwait);
- one seat for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC, currently held by Peru); and
- one seat for the Eastern European Group (currently held by Poland).

The Western European and Others Group (WEOG) is not contesting any seats this year as both its seats, currently held by Belgium and Germany, come up for election every other year.

Six member states—Estonia, Niger, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam—are currently running for the five available seats. Estonia and Romania are contesting the single Eastern European Group seat, while the other four candidates will run unopposed.

Four of the six candidates have served on the Council previously: Niger has served once, nearly 40 years ago (1980-1981); Romania has served four times, starting with one year as a result of the split term in 1962 and 1963 between Romania and the Philippines (1962, 1976-1977, 1990-1991 and 2004-2005); Tunisia has served three times (1959-1960, 1980-1981 and 2000-2001); and Viet Nam has served once (2008-2009). Estonia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have never served on the Council.

Voting Procedures

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

member states are present and voting.

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

There have been several instances in which extended rounds of voting were required to fill a contested seat. Such situations have usually been solved by the withdrawal of one of the contenders or the election of a compromise candidate, rather than by agreeing on a split term. The sole exception to this practice since 1966 was the 2016 agreement between Italy and the Netherlands to split the 2017-2018 term.

Potential Council Dynamics in 2020

This will be the fourth Council election since its timing was brought forward from October to June. As a result, the incoming members enjoy a longer preparatory period, including three months of participation as observers in Council consultations of the whole, Council subsidiary bodies, and some informal Council meetings. Although it is difficult to assess how the Council's dynamics might evolve next year, the priorities raised in the campaigns by the candidates, as well as their long-standing interests, provide some indication (discussed in alphabetical order below).

During its campaign, Estonia placed cyber-security high on its list of priorities, including in the context of responding to threats of cyber-attacks and developing international norms and standards to deal with this issue. Tunisia and Romania also highlighted cyber-security in their campaigns. Estonia is the only candidate that is a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group (ACT). In this regard, if elected, Estonia is likely to seek to advance the goals of ACT, including those involving working methods of the Council aimed at enhancing non-members' interaction with the Council. The goals of ACT are likely to resonate with other Council members that, while not part of the group, are committed to enhancing the accountability, effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council.

A key issue facing Niger is the deteriorating

security situation in West Africa and the Sahel. Niger faces a "triple threat" as a result of the conflict in Mali to its east, the war in Libya to its north, and the presence of Boko Haram in the south-east, so it can be expected to take a particular interest in these issues. As part of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel), Niger is likely to be especially interested in the Council's engagement on this and also in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), to which Niger is a significant troop contributor.

During its Security Council campaign, Romania placed peacebuilding high on its list of priorities. Romania chaired the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2018 and has served as vice-chair in 2019. If elected, Romania can be expected to foster cooperation between the Security Council and the PBC. During its most recent term on the Security Council from 2004 to 2005, Romania was particularly engaged around preventive diplomacy and post-conflict reconstruction as well as cooperation between the UN and regional organisations. If elected, Romania is expected to focus again on these issues.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines campaigned on emphasising the need to address the effects of climate change and the linkages between climate and security. Estonia similarly identified this issue as high on its list of priorities. Romania, Tunisia and Viet Nam also highlighted the issue. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is also likely to take a keen interest in the situation in Haiti, given its geographical proximity. Also, given its involvement in regional dialogue efforts in Venezuela, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines may want to be active in the Council's engagement on the issue.

Tunisia can be expected to emphasise African issues, which make up the bulk of the Council's agenda. Given that it contributes most of its UN troops to MINUSMA, Tunisia is likely to take particular interest in this file. Representing the candidature for the Arab swing seat, Tunisia is also expected to be involved on Middle East issues, in particular Israel/Palestine. As with Romania and Viet Nam, Tunisia has indicated that one of its priorities is the strengthening of ties with regional bodies, notably the AU and the League of Arab States.

During Viet Nam's previous term on the Security Council from 2008 to 2009, it was particularly engaged around issues relating

In Hindsight: Security Council Elections 2019

to post-conflict reconstruction, terrorism, sanctions, peacekeeping and improving the transparency of the work of the Council. Viet Nam is likely to seek to further its contribution to these issues. It is also likely

to take a particular interest in the situation in South Sudan, given that it contributes most of its UN troops to the UN Mission in South Sudan. As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the chair of

the organisation in 2020, Viet Nam is likely to advocate for stronger engagement with regional arrangements and to be actively engaged on the Council's consideration of the situation in Myanmar.

Status Update since our May Forecast

Cyprus

On 2 May, the Security Council members held consultations on Cyprus to discuss the latest report of the Secretary-General on his good offices (S/2019/322). After the meeting they issued press elements in which they welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to ask Jane Holl Lute to continue her consultations. They emphasised the urgent need to work toward the political settlement and urged both sides to agree on terms of reference for result-orientated negotiations. Council members stressed the need to avoid any actions that could jeopardise the chances of success and urged the implementation and further development of confidence building measures.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 8 May, the Council held its biannual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) (S/PV.8522). The High Representative for BiH, Valentin Inzko, briefed and presented the latest report of the Office of the High Representative (S/2019/364). Inzko told the Council that no state-level Council of Ministers or new federal government has been appointed since general elections seven months ago and divisive and destabilising rhetoric persists.

Arria-Formula Meeting on Israel Settlements and Settlers

The permanent missions of Indonesia, Kuwait and South Africa organised an Arria-formula meeting on 9 May entitled "Israeli Settlements and Settlers: Core of the Occupation, Protection Crisis and Obstruction of Peace". Present at the meeting were Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi; the Foreign Minister of the Observer State of Palestine, Riyad al-Maliki; the US special representative for international negotiations, Jason Greenblatt; and many other representatives from both Council members and the wider UN membership.

Four panellists spoke about the history and legal ramifications of Israeli settlements. At the end of the meeting, Marsudi said that a summary would be written to assist the Council in further deliberation on the issue.

Sudan/South Sudan

On 14 May, the Security Council unanimously adopted 2469 renewing the mandate of UNISFA until 15 November 2019 (S/PV.8524). The resolution decided to reduce the authorised troop ceiling to 3,550 and increase the authorised police ceiling to 640 personnel. It also requested the Secretary-General to appoint a civilian Deputy Head of Mission for UNISFA.

Lebanon

On 14 May, the Council held closed consultations on the implementation of resolution 1559. Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed on the latest Secretary-General's report and the most recent developments in Lebanon. After the meeting, Council members agreed on press elements in which they reaffirmed strong support for sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon; welcomed institutional progress and reconstruction efforts followed by the formation of new government; and reiterated that the Lebanese Armed Forces are the only legitimate armed forces in the country.

Venezuela

On 14 May, Council members were briefed under "any other business" on developments in Venezuela at the request of Belgium, France, Germany, Poland and the UK. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock and Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed Council members. France also gave an update on the work of the International Contact Group.

G5 Sahel Joint Force

On 16 May, the Council held a briefing on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (S/PV.8526). Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita briefed on the Secretary-General's latest report on the force (S/2019/371). The Council also heard briefings from Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Alpha Barry of Burkina Faso (as the rotating presidency of the G5 Sahel), AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel Pierre Buyoya, EU Special Representative for the Sahel Angel Losada, and Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Yury Fedotov. Council members issued a press statement following the meeting, welcoming the recent steps taken by the G5 Sahel states towards the full and effective operationalisation of the force and encouraging its continued scale-up to demonstrate tangible operational results (SC/13811).

1540 Committee

On 20 May, Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), chair of the 1540 Committee, which focuses on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, briefed the Council as part of an annual briefing by the chairs of the counter-terrorism-related committees. He emphasised the importance of full implementation of resolution 1540 and prevention of proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons to terrorist groups and other non-state actors (S/PV.8528).

Counter-Terrorism

On 20 May, Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), chair of the 1540 Committee and of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee; and Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez (Peru), chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) delivered the joint annual briefing by the chairs of three of the Council's subsidiary counter-terrorism

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bodies (S/PV.8528). On 16 May, the ISIL and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee was briefed by the Ombudsperson. On 23 May, the CTC convened to discuss the interrelation between counter-terrorism and international humanitarian law.

Ukraine

On 20 May, the Council met on Ukraine at the request of Russia because of concerns regarding a recently enacted Ukrainian language law that Russia said ran counter to the spirit of the 2015 Minsk agreements and resolution 2202. Several delegations objected to holding the meeting on the issue, and a procedural vote took place. The meeting was not held, as the proposal failed to garner the required nine votes in favour. Five Council members voted in favour of holding the meeting (China, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Russia and South Africa), six voted against (Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, the UK, and the US), and four abstained (Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kuwait and Peru). The general view among those members voting against the meeting was that it was not timely to discuss such an issue given that Ukraine was inaugurating its new president that day and that most members did not have enough time to examine the language law. Russia emphasised the threat posed by the new law for the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine.

Iraq

On 21 May, the Council adopted resolution

2470, unanimously renewing the mandate of UNAMI until 31 May 2020 (S/PV.8531). Following the adoption, the Special Representative and head of UNAMI, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's latest reports on UNAMI (S/2019/365) and the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives (S/2019/352).

Children and Armed Conflict

On 21 May, the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict was briefed by video teleconference by the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting of MINUSMA on the implementation of the Mali conclusions of the Working Group adopted last year. On 22 May, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba briefed Council members on her visit to the Central African Republic under "any other business".

Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

On 24 May, Security Council members held an Arria-formula meeting on "Peacekeeping Impact on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace", organised by Côte d'Ivoire and Indonesia. Briefers included Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for the Rule of Law and Security Institutions Alexander Zouev, and Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support Oscar Fernandez-Taranco.

EU-UN

On 24 May, UN Security Council members held an informal meeting with members of the EU Political and Security Committee. The topics discussed were the Sahel region, peacekeeping operations, Libya and Afghanistan.

Ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

On 29 May, there was a meeting of the ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa on: "The root-causes of conflicts in Africa: Illicit exploitation and trade in natural resources as a key driver of conflict, what options for conflict prevention, management and resolution". The briefers were Bience Gawanas, Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa; Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa; Léonce Ndikumana, Director of the African Development Policy Program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and Vital Kamerhe, President of the Union for the Congolese Nation.

DPRK

On 30 May, the chair of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Christoph Heusgen (Germany), briefed the Council in consultations on the work of the committee during the past three months. The briefing was primarily focused on developments related to the work of the committee and the implementation of the sanctions.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In June, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths is expected to brief the Council on the implementation of resolutions 2451 and 2452. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock and General Michael Lollesgaard, the chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) and head of the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), are also likely to brief.

During June, the Secretariat is further expected to present a review of UNMHA to the Council, as requested in resolution 2452. The mandate of UNMHA expires on 16 July.

Key Recent Developments

The Houthi rebel group conducted a "unilateral" redeployment of their military forces from the ports of Hodeidah, Saleef and Ras Isa over a four-day period from 11 to 14 May. UNHMA monitored and verified the

withdrawals, which were the first redeployments since the December 2018 Stockholm Agreement established a ceasefire in Hodeidah governorate and outlined a phased mutual redeployment of Houthi rebel and Yemeni government forces from the three ports and Hodeidah city. A statement by Lollesgaard on 14 May confirming the redeployments said that much work remained to remove military manifestations (including barriers, trenches and tunnels) but that cooperation

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2456 (26 February 2019) extended the Yemen sanctions regime for one year. S/RES/2452 (16 January 2019) established UNMHA for an initial period of six months. S/RES/2451 (21 December 2018) endorsed the agreements reached during consultations held in Sweden. Security Council Letter S/2019/391 (14 May 2019) was from Saudi Arabia on the Houthi drone attacks against the oil pumping stations. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8525 (15 May 2019) was a briefing on Yemen.

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had been very good. On 15 May, the Council was updated on the situation by Griffiths and Lollesgaard (through video teleconference) during a briefing and consultations on Yemen.

During a press conference after the meeting, Lollesgaard said that the UN accepted a unilateral Houthi offer to withdraw from the ports since negotiations on the operational plan for phase two redeployments—leading to the sides fully withdrawing from Hodeidah city—and over the composition of local forces to take over security responsibilities could still take months. Until these issues were resolved, the sides could not conduct the second step of the plan for phase one redeployments. (According to the agreement on the phase one redeployments, reached in the preceding months, the Houthis should first withdraw from the three ports, followed, in a second step, by the parties redeploying from the “kilo 8” triangle in Hodeidah city to enable access to the Red Sea Mills where 51,000 metric tonnes of wheat have been inaccessible for relief efforts since October.)

Instead of continuing to wait for agreements on phase two redeployments and local security forces, the unilateral Houthi withdrawal from the ports could, according to Griffiths and Lollesgaard, allow the UN to deploy teams from the UN Development Programme and inspectors from the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) to support the Yemeni port authorities and increase the capacity of the ports and inspections, which the agreement on Hodeidah envisioned. During the 15 May press conference, Lollesgaard said that once the plan for phase two and the composition of local security forces are resolved, the RCC would still verify the Houthi withdrawal from the ports.

The Yemeni government rebuffed the developments. It criticised the fact that it was not included in the monitoring, as provided for by the RCC, which was established for the tripartite supervision by the UN, government and Houthis of the Hodeidah agreement’s implementation. It further expressed concerns that Houthi personnel are simply embedded in the coast guard that took over security responsibilities for the ports. “We underscore the fact that any attempt by the Houthi militias to withdraw from the ports without any supervision, monitoring and approval by the [RCC] and its three parties would be a violation of agreements reached in recent months and would undermine the efforts of the international community”, said

Yemen’s ambassador, Abdullah Ali Fadhel al-Saadi, at the 15 May briefing.

In a 22 May letter to the Secretary-General, Yemeni President Abdo Raboo Mansour Hadi criticised the Special Envoy’s understanding of the complexities of the Yemeni conflict, saying that the government would give him one final chance to implement the Stockholm Agreement.

On 14 May—the same day the UN confirmed the redeployments—the Houthis carried out drone attacks against two oil-pumping stations in Saudi Arabia, which leads the military coalition supporting the Yemeni government. Saudi Arabia blamed Iran for ordering the attacks, which occurred amid rising tensions in the region between the US and Iran. On 16 May, coalition airstrikes in Sana’a killed at least six people, including five children, and wounded at least 41, according to media reports and the UN. On 21 and 23 May, Houthi bomb-laden drones attacked an airport with a military base in Najran, Saudi Arabia. Heavy fighting continued on other fronts in Yemen, including the southern al-Dhale governorate and Abs district of Hajjah governorate.

On 5 May, a World Food Programme (WFP)-led technical team reached the Red Sea Mills from the south through government-held territory. It has since been assessing how much of the grain can be salvaged. Following a CNN news report on Houthi theft of food aid, the WFP issued a statement on 20 May threatening a phased suspension of operations in Houthi-controlled areas. The statement said that the greatest challenge to WFP operations was coming from the obstructive and uncooperative role of some of the Houthi leaders, including repeated obstacles to its independent selection of beneficiaries. Days earlier, Lowcock seemed to indicate that this was not a major problem, saying at the Council briefing that a recent UN-commissioned survey found that 94 percent of randomly selected intended beneficiaries of food aid confirmed that they had received food baskets.

Key Issues and Options

The implementation of the Stockholm Agreement remains a key issue. This is very much dependent on agreements on an operational plan for phase two redeployments and the politically sensitive question of the composition of “local security forces” in Hodeidah. Lollesgaard is leading negotiations on the phase two redeployments, and Griffiths

is mediating discussions on the local security forces. Advancing the other elements of the Stockholm Agreement—the prisoner exchange and the statement of understanding on Taiz to improve humanitarian access to the front-line city—remains stalled. The Yemeni government’s reaction to the unilateral redeployments and criticism of Griffiths over the unilateral redeployments has jeopardised the Stockholm process. Fighting elsewhere and the escalation of Houthi drone attacks on Saudi Arabia risk further undoing the agreement.

The humanitarian crisis remains the world’s largest, with more than 24 million people requiring aid, 10 million people at risk of famine, and a notable rise in cholera this year. During his last briefing, Lowcock indicated that relief efforts were contributing to some improvement, with the number of districts estimated to be at risk of famine having declined by 20 percent compared to a year ago. Access restrictions by the parties—particularly in Houthi-controlled territory, as highlighted by the WFP statement—remain a key issue.

Regarding UNMHA, as of 15 May, the mission maintains on the ground 15 to 18 monitors out of the authorised level of up to 75 monitors. The Houthis’ slow approval process for visas has been holding up deployment of 30 additional monitors.

The Council may adopt a presidential statement welcoming the Houthi redeployments from the ports, urging that this step be followed by further actions to fulfil the agreement on Hodeidah and the broader Stockholm Agreement, and expressing its support for the Special Envoy and General Lollesgaard. It could further call for a de-escalation on other front lines to build confidence and support new peace talks. If the impasse around the accord continues, the Council may consider the option of strengthening the 2140 Yemen sanctions regime by adding obstruction of the Stockholm Agreement to its designation criteria.

Council Dynamics

Despite Yemeni government criticism, most members welcomed the Houthi redeployments, and members, including the P5, continue to support the Special Envoy. The redeployments staved off what would likely have been a strong push by coalition countries and some Council members for the Council publicly to single out the Houthis for obstructing the Stockholm Agreement, which, according to some analysts, could have been

Yemen

counter-productive, especially since both sides have put up impediments during the last five months. The UK suggested a presidential statement to welcome the developments and UN efforts and encourage the parties to take further steps. But it held back from circulating a text, apparently perceiving that other developments, including the escalation in

Houthi and Saudi attacks, would complicate the ability to reach the consensus required for a Council statement.

Kuwait is part of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition and champions coalition positions. It has sought to facilitate political efforts, hosting peace talks in 2016 and providing aircraft to transport the Houthi delegation

to last December's consultations in Sweden. Germany announced at the 15 May briefing that it would be willing to host a new round of consultations. The US shares coalition concerns about, and at times seeks to highlight, Iran's role, which it views as destabilising.

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

Conflict Prevention and Mediation

Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council will hold a briefing on the "Maintenance of international peace and security: Conflict prevention and mediation". Secretary-General António Guterres and Mary Robinson, the chair of the Elders, a diverse and independent group of global leaders working to promote peace and human rights, are expected to brief. Ban Ki-moon, a current deputy chair of the Elders, is likely to brief as well. Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah is expected to preside. No formal outcome is anticipated from the meeting.

Key Recent Developments

On 29 August 2018, the Council held an open debate on mediation and settlement of disputes under the UK presidency. Guterres; Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, who is a member of the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation; and Mossarat Qadeem, co-founder of PAIMAN Alumni Trust, a civil society organisation that works to prevent violent extremism in Pakistan, briefed. The UK Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the UN, Lord Ahmad, chaired the meeting. Guterres emphasised that prevention "includes an investment in mediation, peacebuilding and sustainable development" in addition to diplomacy. Welby highlighted reconciliation as a means to achieving sustainable peace and preventing the recurrence of violent conflict. Qadeem underscored the impact of women mediators on peace processes, saying that women "place greater relative weight on interaction-specific aspects than men do and often perceive most negotiations

to include a relationship dimension" and that "women mediators can ensure that processes and agreements are more gender-sensitive and thus more comprehensive and legitimate".

The most recent Council outcome on conflict prevention as a thematic issue was a presidential statement initiated by then-Council member Kazakhstan and adopted on 18 January 2018. The statement, which was based largely on agreed language, recalled that a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy should include early warning, preventive deployment, mediation, peacekeeping, non-proliferation, accountability measures, and post-conflict peacebuilding; it recognised that these components are interdependent, complementary and non-sequential. The statement noted the role of women and youth in conflict prevention. It also focused on the importance of addressing the regional dimensions of conflict, including through regional arrangements and diplomacy, and emphasised the key role that civil society can play in promoting efforts to sustain peace.

On 5 March, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo informally briefed members, providing a global overview of the risks and tensions with regard to national elections. This appears to have been an early effort, supported by a number of Council members, towards informal, monthly horizon-scanning sessions with the Secretariat on thematic and regional issues of potential concern.

Key Issues and Options

One key issue is to determine how the Council can conduct upstream prevention or early conflict mitigation, which is particularly

challenging given the political sensitivities of discussing issues not already on the agenda. Finding discreet and creative ways to engage with such matters could continue to be explored by members. Monthly informal horizon-scanning meetings, such as the meeting held on 5 March, could provide one modest way of discussing potential risks to international peace and security.

The Secretary-General's monthly lunch provides another potential avenue for such conversations, on both country-specific and regional aspects. Strategic use of Arria-formula meetings, such as the 13 May meeting on Cameroon, and discussing country situations under regional agenda items offer other fruitful ways to engage on these matters. Next month's briefing could be an opportunity to grapple with how the Council can hold meaningful discussions about addressing emerging threats and conflicts.

Another issue for the Council is how it can most effectively support the prevention and mediation efforts of other actors within the UN system, as well as regional, sub-regional, national, and local actors. In this regard, the Council could consider requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report with recommendations of the best ways the Council could work with other actors and utilise its comparative advantages to support mediation processes and conflict prevention. The report could outline examples of Council best practices in specific cases that could help inform its future work on prevention and mediation.

A further important matter is how the Council can encourage peace operations to facilitate local dispute resolution mechanisms where useful. This is consistent with

UN DOCUMENTS ON CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MEDIATION Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/1 (18 January 2018) was on conflict prevention. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8334 (29 August 2018) was an open debate during the UK presidency on "mediation and settlement of disputes". S/PV.8185 (21 February 2018) was a briefing during the Kuwaiti presidency on the principles and purposes of the UN Charter in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Conflict Prevention and Mediation

the notion that mandates should be driven by the need to achieve political solutions, a key theme of the 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. In recent years, the Council has begun to pay increased attention, in its mandating, to the importance of community engagement.

Underlying Issue

A core problem for the Council is knowing when and how to act, and generating the political will to do so, in ways that forestall or mitigate violent conflict. The best information is useless if rhetorical support for prevention is not translated into concrete and appropriate action. Differing views on the nature of state sovereignty—as well as political divisions among the permanent members and other influential member states—have frequently made it difficult for the Council to decide when, how and even whether to act at early stages of crises.

Council Dynamics

All Council members have expressed their support for conflict prevention and mediation at the thematic level. However, the Council's track record in countries such as Syria, Mali and Libya, among others, does not match this thematic support. In part, the Council's shortcomings reflect the complexity of these conflicts, with a proliferation of national and international stakeholders with varying agendas. But the inability of the Council to prevent and mediate conflict effectively also stems from the prevailing political divisions and contrasting views about state sovereignty among the permanent members, which tend to block action by the Council in cases where national interests could be at stake or where there are disagreements about which tools should be used.

Kuwait's decision to pursue a briefing on conflict prevention and mediation is reminiscent of the signature event of its February

2018 presidency, a ministerial-level briefing on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter in the maintenance of international peace and security. During that meeting, Kuwait emphasised that the Council should “further activate” tools of the Charter in Chapter VI on the peaceful settlement of disputes, such as mediation, negotiation and arbitration. It further stressed “the important and key role played by the Secretary-General in bringing any matter to the attention of the Security Council, pursuant to Article 99 of the UN Charter.”

Recent efforts to resurrect “horizon-scanning” sessions—albeit in a more discreet way than the sessions held between November 2010 and March 2012, which were on the monthly programme as a briefing in consultations by the then-Department of Political Affairs—have been initiated by the elected members.

Open Debate on Security Council Working Methods

Expected Council Action

During its presidency in June, Kuwait plans to hold an open debate on working methods of the Security Council. The debate—with briefings by James Cockayne of UN University and Karin Landgren, the Executive Director of Security Council Report—will be the second such meeting organised by Kuwait, who, as chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (IWG), made working methods one of the priorities for its 2018-2019 Council term. There is likely to be a chair's summary issued after the meeting.

Background and Key Recent Developments

The February 2018 open debate on working methods was held relatively soon after the most recent version of the comprehensive compendium of Council's working methods, referred to as “Note 507”, was issued on 30 August 2017. Many of the speakers, which in addition to all Council members included 42

UN members at large, focused their interventions on aspects of Note 507 that in their view needed particularly vigorous implementation or on areas of Council practice that had not been captured in the 2017 compendium. The IWG has used several of the issues raised during the debate as guidance to plan its subsequent work.

During its six formal and seven informal meetings and several informal discussions held since, the IWG has focused on issues that include the penholder system, the chairing of Council subsidiary bodies, aspects of sanctions, burden-sharing within the Council, Council visiting missions, modalities for the incoming members and the inclusion of certain types of informal meetings on the monthly programme of work and in the UN Journal. At press time, several draft notes by the president of the Security Council on these and other topics were being negotiated among IWG members.

Key Issues and Options

An important issue for the Council will be assessing the state of implementation of previous agreements on working methods as well as identifying areas where more work may be needed. In this context, the issue of burden-sharing and effective use of the Council's collective resources is a topic some members may wish to address in their comments.

Member states not on the Council may want to focus in particular on issues related to the flow of relevant information from the Council, such as the timing of submission of the Security Council annual report to the General Assembly or the format of wrap-up sessions and interaction between the Council and members at large, for example with troop- and police-contributing countries.

Member states that have announced or are contemplating their candidacy for the Council are likely to want to contribute to the discussion about modalities for incoming members, which has been ongoing since the General Assembly moved the election of

SECURITY COUNCIL DOCUMENTS ON WORKING METHODS Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/19 (30 October 2015) was the first presidential statement adopted by the Council on its working methods. **Notes by the President of the Security Council Containing Working Methods Compendia** S/2017/507 (30 August 2017) S/2010/507 (26 July 2010) S/2006/507 (19 July 2006) **Open Debates on Working Methods** S/PV.8175 (6 February 2018) S/PV.7740 (19 July 2016) S/PV.7539 and Resumption 1 (20 October 2015) S/PV.7285 and Resumption 1 (23 October 2014) S/PV.7052 and Resumption 1 (29 October 2013) S/PV.6870 and Resumption 1 (26 November 2012) S/PV.6672 and Resumption 1 (30 November 2011) S/PV.6300 and Resumption 1 (22 April 2010) S/PV.5968 and Resumption 1 (27 August 2008) S/PV.3483 (16 December 1994)

Open Debate on Security Council Working Methods

Security Council members from October to June, thus allowing elected members to prepare more thoroughly for their two-year terms.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The June debate will be the Council's 11th open debate on working methods. Since 2010, holding this annual discussion of working methods with the participation of member states not on the Council has become an accepted practice. Earlier, there had been considerable reluctance, largely on the part of the permanent members, to discussing working

methods publicly and receiving suggestions and critiques from outside the Council. Except for the first open debate, held in 1994 on the initiative of France, all have been organised by an elected member, and an elected member has presided over all of them.

Historically, there have been opposing approaches within the Council regarding the timing and desirability of committing working methods to writing. Some members, mostly but not exclusively permanent ones, have argued that detailed descriptions of a practice may deprive the Council of the

flexibility to address quickly changing environments, or of the time needed to test and develop new or emerging practices.

Members not on the Council have generally been in favour of detailed codification, arguing that otherwise the Council's work remains opaque, which makes it difficult for them to provide input on matters of concern. Some have also called for an end to the "provisional" status of the Rules of Procedure of the Security Council.

UNOCA/LRA

Expected Council Action

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

The mandate of UNOCA expires on 31 August 2021.

Key Recent Developments

The region covered by UNOCA continues to present multiple challenges, including several security and political hotspots that are on the Council's agenda.

The Global Peace Agreement in the Central African Republic (CAR) was signed by the CAR government and 14 armed groups in Bangui on 6 February. It addresses justice and reconciliation, governance, and transitional security arrangements. On 22 March, after AU-hosted consultations in Addis Ababa, President Faustin-Archange Touadéra announced the formation of a new cabinet, in which all 14 armed groups were represented.

On 9 April, the Council adopted a presidential statement, stating its readiness to review the arms embargo measures on the CAR government through suspension or progressive lifting of these measures in the light of progress achieved on key benchmarks laid

down in the statement. (For more on CAR, see the brief in this issue of the *Forecast*.)

After two years of election delays in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Felix Tshisekedi was inaugurated as president on 24 January. Following several months of postponement because of continued disagreements between Tshisekedi's coalition and former President Joseph Kabila's party, Tshisekedi appointed Sylvestre Ilunga Ilukamba as prime minister on 20 May.

The Council adopted resolution 2463 on 29 March, renewing the mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) until 20 December. The resolution calls for an independent strategic review of MONUSCO by 20 October, leading to a plan for a phased, progressive and comprehensive exit strategy. (For more on DRC, see the brief in this issue of the *Forecast*.)

The security and political situation in Burundi remains unsettled. While the Burundian government maintains that the security situation is good throughout the country, serious human rights abuses continue to be committed daily with impunity, mainly by the government and the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of President Pierre Nkurunziza's party. Furthermore, these actions are taking place in an environment where freedom of expression, association and assembly are suppressed as the country prepares for elections in 2020.

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 Northwest and Southwest Regions, rooted in claims of long-standing political and economic discrimination by the Francophone authorities against the Anglophone minority. The government has rejected calls by separatists for independence; neither side has demonstrated a genuine willingness to find a compromise. According to the latest UNOCA report, continued fighting between security forces and armed elements have caused several casualties as civilians, including children, have been victims of extrajudicial killings, abductions, restrictions of movement, and limited access to health-care and education. There have also been reports of torture, rape, sexual exploitation and the destruction of property, including schools, in Anglophone areas. According to a 2 May report by the International Crisis Group, 1,850 people have died as a result of the conflict thus far.

On 13 May, the Dominican Republic, Germany, the UK and the US organised an Arria-formula meeting on "the humanitarian crisis in Cameroon". Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock; Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council Jan Egeland; Esther Omam Njomo, the executive director of Reach Out Cameroon, a local NGO focused on the well-being

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNOCA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2463 (29 March 2019) renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 20 December 2019. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/3** (9 April 2019) established benchmarks for suspending or progressively lifting arms embargo measures on the government of the CAR. **S/PRST/2018/17** (10 August 2018) welcomed the renewal of UNOCA's mandate for another three years, from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2021. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/1065** (29 November 2018) was on UNOCA. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8421** (13 December 2018) was a briefing by François Louncény Fall, Special Representative and head of UNOCA.

UNOCA/LRA

of underprivileged groups in Cameroon; and Father Paul Fru Njokikang, director of Caritas for the Archdiocese of Bamenda in the Northwest Region of Cameroon, briefed.

In a presidential statement on 10 August 2018, 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 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.

Key Issues and Options

The central issues for the region are the security conditions in the CAR and eastern DRC. The overall political situation in the DRC after the elections, in Burundi ahead of the 2020 elections, and their potential regional implications will continue to concern the Council.

Following the Arria-formula meeting on Cameroon, Council members may use the UNOCA briefing to continue 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 holding further informal meetings. The Council may also request UNOCA to make Cameroon a priority after the conclusion of UNOCA's strategic review by 1 August.

Council Dynamics

Council members are concerned about the political turmoil in several countries and the effect it could have on security and stability in the region.

Some Council members have expressed interest in the situation in Cameroon. During the 13 December 2018 briefing on UNOCA, Cameroon featured in the interventions of several Council members who presented contrasting views on Council engagement on this issue. The UK and the US devoted the majority of their statements to Cameroon. The UK said that "unless action is taken and the situation improves, concern over the situation in Cameroon is likely to increase among Security Council members and become a more

prominent part of our discussions". On the other hand, while noting with concern the reports coming out of Cameroon, Russia warned: "[I]t is important not to cross the line between prevention and intervention in States' internal affairs. There is every evidence that a number of our colleagues have come very close to that. For the time being, we have every reason to believe that Cameroon is capable of dealing with this tricky issue by itself. We are willing to help, but only if our partners in Cameroon deem it necessary".

The Arria-formula meeting allowed Council members to engage on the political turmoil in Cameroon through the prism of the humanitarian crisis that has resulted. Speaking on Cameroon during the 13 December 2018 meeting, the US referred to the strategic review of UNOCA's mandate, saying that it would work to ensure that this mandate "is appropriately focused on the most pressing political challenges in the Central African region".

The UK is the penholder on UNOCA.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to renew the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya, bound to or from the country, that they have reasonable grounds to believe are violating the arms embargo. The current authorisation expires on 11 June.

The mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expires on 15 September 2019, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee expires on 20 February 2020.

Key Recent Developments

The inspection authorisation, first put into effect in resolution 2292 in 2016, was renewed for another 12 months last year, without changes, in resolution 2420. The authorisation also allows for member states to seize and dispose of arms and ammunition found during the inspection of these vessels. The Secretary-General is requested to report on the implementation of resolution 2420 within 11 months of its adoption. According to his latest report, arms coming from Libya have contributed to the expansion of terrorist influence in the region, exemplifying the need for the full implementation of the arms embargo. Arms flowing into the

country, including by sea, reportedly contribute to the ongoing conflict in Libya. The EU military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED Operation SOPHIA) operates as the only regional arrangement under the authorisation, and reported 1,083 hailings, three vessel inspections, and 84 friendly approaches. No arms or related materiel were seized.

During his most recent briefing to the Council on 21 May, the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, highlighted the launch of a military offensive towards Tripoli on 4 April by General Khalifa Haftar, head of the eastern-based militia known as the "Libyan National Army"

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2441 (5 November 2018) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee as well as the measures related to the illicit export of crude oil from Libya until 20 February 2020; it was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (China and Russia). S/RES/2437 (3 October 2018) renewed the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. S/RES/2434 (13 September 2018) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2019. S/RES/2420 (11 June 2018) renewed the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya bound to or from the country that they have reasonable grounds to believe are violating the arms embargo. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2019/380 (10 May 2019) was on the implementation of resolution 2420. S/2019/19 (7 January 2019) was on UNSMIL. S/2018/807 (31 August 2018) was on the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons on the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.8530 (21 May 2019) was the latest briefing by the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé. S/PV.8523 (8 May 2019) was the semi-annual briefing by ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda on recent developments concerning cases in Libya. **Sanctions Committee Document** S/2018/812 (5 September 2018) was the Panel of Experts' final report.

Libya

(LNA). Haftar opposes the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA), based in Tripoli. Salamé said that Libya was “on the verge of descending into a civil war which could lead to the permanent division of the country”.

At press time, the UN’s 2019 humanitarian response plan for Libya of \$201.6 million was funded at 9.4 percent, with \$182.6 million outstanding.

Sanctions-Related Developments

In his latest briefing to the Council on 21 May, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany, Ambassador Jürgen Schulz, who chairs the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, referred to the 26 March arrest and detention by Tunisian authorities of Moncef Kartas, one of the arms experts on the Panel of Experts supporting the 1970 Committee. The committee met on 15 April on the matter, and Schulz met with the chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the UN on 18 April. Kartas, a German-Tunisian dual national, is accused of espionage. On 15 May, the UN spokesperson said that the arrest is “in violation of the privileges and immunities that have been granted to Mr. Kartas in the interests of the United Nations” and “requested Mr. Kartas’ immediate release and for the charges against him to be dropped”. On 21 May, a Tunisian appeals court decided to release Kartas; while he was able to return to Germany, the case against him is still open.

ICC-Related Developments

On 8 May, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda delivered her semi-annual briefing on the status of cases in Libya, cooperation of states, and investigations and monitoring of potential crimes committed since February 2011, including crimes against migrants.

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, whose extradition has been sought by the ICC, has been at large since he was set free by the Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq Brigade, a Zintan-based militia, in June 2017. According to the final report of the Panel of Experts, his

lawyer says that he resides in Zintan. On 4 April, Pre-Trial Chamber I rejected Gaddafi’s 5 June 2018 inadmissibility challenge; he appealed the ruling on 11 April.

Former internal security chief Mohamed Khaled al-Tuhamy, allegedly responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in 2011 in Libya, also remains at large.

Two arrest warrants (of 15 August 2017 and 4 July 2018) were issued by Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC for Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al-Werfalli, a commander participating in Haftar’s 2014 Operation Dignity (attacking Islamists) in Benghazi. To date, Al-Werfalli has not been surrendered to the ICC despite reports that he turned himself in to the LNA after news that he had executed ten people on 24 January 2018 became public.

Women, Peace and Security

In a 2 May letter to the president of the Security Council, the chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Libya to the UN strongly criticising a briefing given by Inas Miloud, co-founder and director of Tamazight Women’s Movement of Libya, during the annual open debate on sexual violence in conflict at the Council. In response, a letter was sent on 10 May to the president of the Security Council by the Ambassadors of Belgium, the Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Peru, Poland and the UK, stating that “Notwithstanding the disagreement of the Government of National Accord with the content of Ms. Miloud’s briefing, we trust that she will be allowed to continue her work unhindered.”

Key Issues and Options

The immediate issue for the Council in June is the renewal of the authorisation for high-seas ship inspections granted to member states under resolution 2292, in support of the implementation of the arms embargo. Ahead of the renewal, the Council could hold an informal interactive dialogue with the commander of the EU military operation EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia,

Enrico Credentino, and a representative of the European External Action Service, as was done in the last two years.

An ongoing issue is the military escalation, largely driven by long-standing political and economic divisions between the east and west of the country. The Council could adopt a resolution calling upon the parties to cease military activities and re-commit to mediation towards a political solution, also showing their support for Salamé and UNSMIL’s efforts. Council members individually could use their influence to put pressure on the parties and countries in the region to adhere to the arms embargo.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Last year, the authorisation was unanimously renewed without any substantive negotiations prior to adoption, and no member gave a statement before or after the vote.

Council resolutions and presidential statements routinely call upon UN member states to cease support for and official contact with parallel institutions in Libya, but some countries, including permanent members of the Council, fail to respect these calls and also continue to support Haftar militarily. Militias affiliated with the GNA publicly stated on 18 May that they, too, receive military support from abroad. The Panel of Experts of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee continues to allege that the United Arab Emirates violates the arms embargo and that Egypt provides military support to the LNA.

The UK is the penholder on Libya, sharing the pen with Germany on the sanctions file. Schulz chairs the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee.

Kosovo

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to hold its second of three briefings on the situation in Kosovo scheduled for this year. The Special Representative and head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

(UNMIK), Zahir Tanin, will brief on recent developments and the latest report by the Secretary-General. In line with established practice, Serbia is likely to participate at a high level while Kosovo will probably be represented by its ambassador to the US.

Key Recent Developments

Resolution 1244, which established UNMIK in 1999, did not specify the reporting cycle or the frequency of meetings on Kosovo, but the Council has adopted the practice of holding meetings at three-month intervals. Leading up

UN DOCUMENTS ON KOSOVO Security Council Resolution S/RES/1244 (10 June 1999) authorised NATO to secure and enforce the withdrawal of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces from Kosovo and established UNMIK. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2019/102** (1 February 2019) was the report on UNMIK. **Security Council Letter S/2018/1111** (14 December 2018) was a request by Serbia for a Council meeting to address the situation in Kosovo. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8459** (7 February 2019) was a meeting on the situation in Kosovo. **Other S/2019/120** (7 February 2019) was a Note by the President of the Council on the newly agreed schedule for meetings on Kosovo.

to the most recent meeting in February, Council members reached an agreement on a Note by the President that modified the frequency of meetings. The note said the Council would hold three meetings on Kosovo this year (February, June and October) and two meetings annually starting in 2020 (April and October). During the first several days of February, Council members could not reach consensus on the programme of work, because some members opposed the inclusion of a briefing on Kosovo. The presidential note came as a compromise to avoid a procedural vote.

During the 7 February briefing, Tanin and some members expressed concern over the lack of progress in dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina as well as rising tensions between the two. An issue at the centre of the discussions was Kosovo's imposition of 100 percent tariffs on imports from Serbia. Kosovo initially imposed tariffs in November 2018 in response to what it perceived as a campaign by Serbia against Kosovo's bid to join Interpol. Kosovo's prime minister, Ramush Haradinaj, has taken the position that the tariffs will be maintained until Serbia formally recognises Kosovo. An impasse in the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina has continued for almost a year, without progress on implementing the existing agreements, most notably the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb Municipalities (ASM/CSM) in northern Kosovo. In an effort to revive the dialogue, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron hosted a regional Balkan summit in Berlin on 29 and 30 April. The summit brought together the leaders of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia. EU High Representative

for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini attended and held bilateral talks with, among others, President Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia and President Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo. Vučić reiterated that Serbia would continue the dialogue after Kosovo revoked tariffs on Serbian imports, while Thaçi insisted that Serbia recognise Kosovo. There was no breakthrough at the summit, but the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo agreed to continue discussions in Paris at the beginning of July. In remarks to the media, Thaçi criticised the EU for its inability to make any advances in the Western Balkans. He called for greater involvement by the US in the dialogue on the final agreement on Kosovo.

Issues and Options

In light of the ongoing tensions between Belgrade and Pristina, the Council's primary concern is to maintain stability in Kosovo. The Council will continue to monitor diplomatic efforts to advance the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and any efforts towards reaching a final agreement on Kosovo.

The EU has been the main facilitator of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, which resulted in the 2013 Brussels agreement on the normalisation of relations between the two. While there was progress in some areas, an issue for the Council remains the lack of implementation of the main aspects of the agreement and what role, if any, UNMIK might play in facilitating its implementation.

Some members of the Council, the P3 in particular, have previously questioned the reporting cycle and called for downsizing the mission in light of the relative overall stability on the ground. While the Council reached an agreement on a more limited

reporting cycle in February, it could request the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of UNMIK to consider the effectiveness of the mission.

Council Dynamics

Kosovo remains a low-intensity issue for the Council and is followed closely mainly by members with a specific interest in the region. This is in part due to the pre-eminence in Kosovo of regional organisations, including the EU, NATO and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Nevertheless, deep divisions among permanent members have continued to characterise the Council's consideration of the Kosovo issue. France, the UK and the US recognise Kosovo's independence and tend to be supportive of its government, while China and Russia do not recognise its independence and strongly support Serbia's position. Earlier this year, the P3 and EU members of the Council eventually prevailed in their months-long effort to reduce the frequency of meetings on Kosovo.

The US has been the most vocal proponent of a drawdown and eventual withdrawal of UNMIK, citing the level of stability in Kosovo. The US has also asserted that the mission is overstuffed and over-resourced for its limited responsibilities and that these resources could be put to better use in more pressing situations on the Council's agenda.

The issue of modifying UNMIK's mandate is likely to become more prominent. Alone among missions regularly discussed by the Council, UNMIK's mandate is open-ended. Any attempt to change it would require a new resolution, which Russia would strongly oppose and most likely block.

Protection of Civilians: Missing Persons in Armed Conflict

Expected Council Action

In June, Kuwait plans to hold a briefing on “missing persons in conflict” under the protection of civilians agenda item. This is a new subtopic for the Council. The briefing will be chaired by Kuwait’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Also expected to brief is OCHA Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock and Peter Maurer, president of the ICRC. Kuwait plans to circulate a concept note before the briefing. A resolution is a possible outcome.

Key Recent Developments

It is hard to quantify the scale of missing persons in conflict, but the available statistics show that a vast number have gone missing because of conflict, migration and disaster. The International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) reports that in Sri Lanka 20,000 people remain missing ten years after the end of the civil war. In Cyprus, 493 Turkish Cypriots and 1,508 Greek Cypriots were officially reported as missing by both communities to the ICMP as a result of intercommunal fighting in the 1960s, the Turkish invasion in 1974 and the eventual division of the island. In Colombia, the ICRC put the number of missing from decades of civil war at around 80,000. There are many other conflicts with numbers in the tens of thousands.

The Council mostly discusses missing persons in the context of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) agenda item (as at 29 April, the number of missing persons in the aftermath of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is 369). On 19 February, the Council adopted a presidential statement that welcomed the cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of missing Kuwaiti property, including national

archives. However, Kuwait is clear that its intention in holding this signature event is to address the problem of missing persons in armed conflict in general, not as it relates to its own national experience.

This will be a new thematic approach for the Council. While the problem is frequently mentioned in context-specific discussions and documents, the only general outcome has been a 2000 presidential statement on “Humanitarian aspects of issues before the Security Council” where the issue of missing persons is mentioned briefly. In January 2016 the UK organised an Arria-formula meeting to, according to its concept note, “highlight the cross-cutting, global problem of missing persons in the context of international peace and security and to discuss effective strategies to ensure greater international cooperation in addressing this issue”. It focused on many factors that result in missing persons: conflict, disasters, organised crime, migration and other causes.

The latest Secretary-General’s protection of civilians report, issued on 7 May, said that “more than 10,000 cases of missing persons have been opened by the International Committee of the Red Cross in relation to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, while it has received 13,000 requests from families in Nigeria for support in finding missing relatives”. The Secretary-General called on all parties to conflicts to “ensure respect for international humanitarian law as it relates to missing persons: to prevent enforced disappearance; to take all feasible measures to account for those reported missing; and to uphold the right of their families to receive information on their fate and whereabouts”.

The ICRC is the principal organisation working on tracing missing persons worldwide. On its website, it stresses that both combatants and civilians can go missing during conflict and that there is a responsibility

for governments, the military authorities and armed groups to end the uncertainty surrounding the missing person’s whereabouts. The ICRC stresses that the absence of a loved one causes not only psychological grief but also has bureaucratic consequences: without some sort of proof establishing that a person is missing in conflict, those left behind are unable to receive benefits to which they may be entitled.

Council Dynamics

Some Council members have expressed concern about the continued fragmenting of the protection of civilians topic. While this did not lead to resistance for this meeting’s inclusion on the programme of work, some members worry about a product, and about the proliferation of responsibilities for peacekeepers leading to mandates that will be harder to implement, and potentially weakening the protection of civilians agenda as a whole.

For Kuwait, the issue of missing persons in armed conflict is a reality its people continue to face since the first Gulf war almost 30 years ago. The global focus of the briefing has helped in gaining members’ agreement to hold it. Kuwait, as well as other Council members, believe holding this meeting could help fill in the gaps in an area of the protection of civilians agenda that they believe has been overlooked.

While the UK is the penholder on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, Kuwait has been leading the work on a resolution that would be aimed at helping guide future efforts to include language on missing persons in country-specific resolutions. Kuwait seeks to have the resolution adopted by consensus, and has been meeting bilaterally with other Council members. The first reading of the draft resolution was held 24 May and negotiations are ongoing.

UN DOCUMENTS ON MISSING PERSONS PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2019/1 (19 February 2019) was a presidential statement in which the Council welcomed the cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of missing Kuwaiti property, including national archives. **S/PRST/2000/7** (13 May 2000) concerned the importance of considering humanitarian issues in maintaining international peace and security, particularly relating to the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict. In terms of missing persons, it noted “the importance of inclusion of humanitarian elements” in several items, including agreements on missing persons. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2019/373** (7 May 2019) was the Secretary-General’s annual report on protection of civilians, which included a section on “missing persons”.

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is due to renew the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) before its 30 June expiry. The Council also expects to receive a briefing from Mahamat Saleh Annadif, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of MINUSMA, followed by consultations.

The sanctions regime expires on 31 August, followed by the expiry of the mandate of the Panel of Experts on 30 September.

Key Recent Developments

June marks the four-year anniversary of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The renewal of MINUSMA's mandate is expected to be a critical juncture as the Council considers options "for a potential significant adaptation" of MINUSMA.

As a result of the Council's increased frustration with the limited implementation of the agreement, resolution 2423, adopted on 28 June 2018, identified several areas where the Council expected progress to be achieved. Following a proposal of the US, the Council expressed its intention to consider modifying the mission's mandate significantly in the absence of significant progress. The areas of anticipated progress included the holding of presidential elections; the decentralisation of state administration; the operationalisation of the interim administrations in northern Mali; the cantonment and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes, as well as on an inclusive and consensual security sector reform; the establishment of mixed patrols by government forces and armed groups in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu; the socio-economic development of northern Mali; and the equal and meaningful political participation of women.

The Secretary-General's 5 March report acknowledged the limited progress in some of these key areas; however, it highlighted the critical role that MINUSMA plays in support of the implementation of the agreement. It further said that more progress has been achieved within the past six months than at

any time since the signing of the agreement.

Council members discussed this assessment during a visiting mission to Mali in late March and adopted a presidential statement on 3 April encouraging the parties to undertake several critical measures. In it, the Council requested the Secretary-General to provide options for a potential significant adaptation of MINUSMA. This request, which is largely a result of negotiations between France and the US, was made with the stated aim of "enhancing [MINUSMA's] effectiveness to support the implementation of the Agreement through a greater focus on priority tasks, without jeopardizing the stability of Mali and its region, MINUSMA's central role in supporting the implementation of the Agreement, as well as MINUSMA's capacity to interact with other security presences".

To make progress on the implementation of the agreement, the presidential statement encouraged the Malian parties to adopt a revised roadmap with a clear, realistic and binding timeline focused on a limited number of priorities, including the completion of a constitutional reform following an inclusive and collaborative process, the adoption of a comprehensive plan for the effective redeployment of reconstituted and reformed Malian Defence and Security Forces (MDSF) to northern Mali, and the establishment of the Northern Development Zone.

The situation in the centre of Mali has deteriorated. On 23 March, while Council members were visiting Mali, more than 160 Fulani civilians, including women and children, were killed in Ogossagou, reportedly by Dogon armed elements (Dozos). This was the worst massacre to have occurred in central Mali, where long-standing intercommunal tensions between Fulani herders and Dogon hunters have been aggravated by the impact of jihadist groups and counter-terrorism operations by the MDSF and other groups. In a 27 March statement, the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, raised concerns about the growing role of ethnic identity in the conflict in central Mali, in which entire communities are being stigmatised as

terrorists or as affiliates of armed groups. He said that this dynamic was not sufficiently recognised either by national authorities or by the international community, "who are focusing mostly on the peace process in the north and on the threat posed by jihadist movements". Furthermore, the limited presence of the Malian state is manifested in the conduct of military operations but not through the provision of basic services. While MINUSMA is scaling up its presence in the centre, the situation there lacks an overall political framework, such as that outlined by the agreement for northern Mali.

Following increased insecurity and social unrest, Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga and his cabinet resigned on 18 April, a day before the National Assembly was set to vote on a no-confidence motion. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta appointed former finance minister Boubou Cisse as prime minister on 22 April. On 2 May, the government and several political parties (including some of the political opposition) signed a political agreement that led to the formation on 5 May of an inclusive cabinet, comprising members of the opposition, civil society and technocrats.

The MDSF, French forces and MINUSMA continue to be targeted. A 20 April attack against a MINUSMA convoy between Douentza and Boni (Mopti) resulted in the death of an Egyptian peacekeeper, with four injured. On 19 May, a Nigerian peacekeeper was killed and another was injured in an attack by unidentified assailants in Timbuktu. That same day, three Chadian peacekeepers were wounded by an improvised explosive device in Tessalit (Kidal).

An issue that is expected to be addressed in the resolution renewing MINUSMA's mandate is the mission's support for the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S). Under resolution 2391 of 8 December 2017, MINUSMA can support only those FC-G5S forces that operate on Malian territory (two of the force's seven battalions). In line with a similar request by the Group of Five for the Sahel, the Secretary-General recommended in a 6 May report that the

UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2432](#) (30 August 2018) renewed the targeted sanctions regime on Mali and the mandate of the Panel of Experts. [S/RES/2423](#) (28 June 2018) renewed MINUSMA's mandate for one year. [S/RES/2391](#) (8 December 2017) outlined the ways in which MINUSMA is expected to support the FC-G5S and described how the UN will be reimbursed for its assistance. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/2](#) (3 April 2019) encouraged the Malian parties to adopt a revised roadmap. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2019/371](#) (6 May 2019) was on the FC-G5S. [S/2019/262](#) (26 March 2019) was on the situation in Mali. [S/2019/207](#) (5 March 2019) was on the implementation of resolution 2423. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8497](#) (29 March 2019) was a high-level meeting on Mali with the participation of Secretary-General António Guterres and Prime Minister Maïga. [S/PV.8492](#) (27 March 2019) was on the Council's visiting mission to Mali and Burkina Faso. [Security Council Press Statements SC/13813](#) (19 May 2019) condemned the attacks against MINUSMA vehicles in Timbuktu and Tessalit, in which a peacekeeper from Nigeria was killed and several others were injured. [SC/13811](#) (16 May 2019) was on the operationalisation of the FC-G5S. [SC/13789](#) (22 April 2019) condemned the 20 April attack on a MINUSMA convoy in Mopti, in which a peacekeeper from Egypt was killed and four were injured.

Mali

Council authorise MINUSMA to provide life-support consumables, such as rations and fuel, not only to FC-G5S units operating in Malian territory but to all FC-G5S battalions, on the condition that the joint force or other partners deliver this support and that units receiving such assistance are in strict compliance with the UN human rights due diligence policy. The 16 May press statement on the FC-G5S said that Council members considered MINUSMA's mandate renewal as an opportunity "to explore this request".

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 40th session, on 22 March, the Human Rights Council adopted (without a vote) a resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for Mali, extending the mandate of the independent expert on human rights in Mali for one year (A/HRC/40/26). Among other things, the resolution strongly condemns violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law as well as the escalation of intercommunal violence in the past year. It calls on the government, with the support of MINUSMA and the international community, "to continue its efforts towards

[national reconciliation and to prevent violence in identified hotspots of tension](#)".

Key Issues and Options

In renewing MINUSMA's mandate, Council members could consider ways to increase pressure on the parties to advance the implementation of the agreement without undermining the work of a mission that operates in an extremely challenging environment. The Council could specify the objectives that it expects will be achieved by the next renewal while mindful that these developments depend as much or more on the engagement and good faith of the parties as on the mission itself.

Despite the restrictive financial environment for peace operations, the Council could insist on coherence between the mission's mandated tasks and the financial resources allocated to implement them, particularly in light of emerging challenges such as the situation in central Mali.

Council members could follow through

on the recent report of the Panel of Experts of the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee, which included a confidential annex with a list of eight individuals and an entity that could be sanctioned for their destabilising activities in Mali.

Council Dynamics

Dynamics in the Council have been marked by the different positions regarding MINUSMA, in particular between the US and France. While all Council members have expressed frustration at the pace of implementing the agreement, the US advocates significant changes to the mandate whereas France has pushed for staying the course in light of progress in the last few months and the role that MINUSMA plays in supporting other security presences deployed in Mali and the region.

France is the penholder on Mali and Ambassador José Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) chairs the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee.

Briefing on Cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council will hold a ministerial-level briefing on cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States (LAS). Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah will chair the meeting. Secretary-General António Guterres and LAS Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul-Gheit may brief.

Background

Improving partnerships and cooperation with regional organisations has become an increasingly prominent theme for the Council and other parts of the UN system. Since 2007, the Security Council has held an annual consultative meeting with the AU Peace and Security Council, and in 2001 and 2010, respectively, it started holding an annual briefing on the work of the Organization for Security

and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and on UN-EU cooperation.

Such cooperation is less developed with the League of Arab States. Representatives of the LAS addressed the Council on several occasions with the onset of the "Arab Spring" uprisings and subsequent proliferation of conflicts, especially in Syria, where the LAS was involved in the initial mediation efforts. The position of Joint Special Envoy for Syria on behalf of the UN and the LAS was created, filled first by Kofi Annan and then by Lakhdar Brahimi. In September 2012, during Germany's presidency, the Council held a high-level meeting on peace and security in the Middle East focusing on the relationship between the Council and the LAS. Its outcome was a presidential statement in support of the LAS's contribution to collective efforts for the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the Middle

East, expressing the Council's determination to take effective steps to further enhance cooperation between the two organisations. The 2012 session was held under the Council's "Middle East" agenda item, whereas next month's meeting will be organised under the agenda item on cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations in maintaining international peace and security.

In May 2016, the Council held its first consultative meeting with members of the LAS in Cairo during the Council's visiting mission to Somalia, Kenya and Egypt. The meeting focused on the Middle East peace process, Somalia, Libya, and developments in the Syrian conflict. Members of both bodies called for greater cooperation between the two organisations on issues pertaining to international peace and security and to stability in the Arab region. Some members

UN DOCUMENTS ON COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UN AND THE LAS Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2012/20 (26 September 2012) welcomed the intensifying cooperation between the UN and the Arab League, reiterated the Council's commitment to comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace and welcomed the appointment of the Joint Special Representative for Syria. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/592** (17 August 2018) was the bi-annual report on cooperation between the UN and regional and other organisations. **Security Council Letter S/2019/306** (10 April 2019) transmitted to the Council the Tunis Declaration and Statement on Golan from the 30th ordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.6841** (26 September 2012) was a high-level meeting on the Middle East and on enhancing cooperation between the Arab League and the UN; the Council was briefed by the Secretaries-General of the UN and the League of Arab States. **General Assembly Document A/RES/73/267** (22 December 2018) was on cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States.

Briefing on Cooperation between the UN and League of Arab States

called for institutionalising the relationship and making this type of consultative meeting a regular occurrence. But since the 2012 presidential statement and 2016 consultative meeting, progress towards an enhanced relationship has been limited. An anticipated Council briefing in August 2017 on cooperation with the LAS, scheduled during Egypt's presidency, did not take place.

More broadly, the Secretary-General's August 2018 report on cooperation between the UN and regional organisations says that the UN supports the LAS to strengthen its capacities in relation to conflict prevention, management, mediation and negotiation, and peacekeeping; maintains contacts on different country situations, including Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen and the question of Palestine; and has sought to cooperate on water-related issues, human rights, global refugee and migration challenges, and counter-terrorism. It also says efforts are continuing to open a UN liaison office to the LAS in Cairo,

which was agreed in 2016. A General Assembly resolution adopted in December 2018 on cooperation between the UN and the LAS requested that the UN coordinate with Egypt to expedite the opening of the liaison office.

In March, the Secretary-General addressed the 30th ordinary session of the Council of the LAS. He highlighted that the Israeli-Palestine conflict, Yemen, Libya and Syria, along with the terrorism threat, are situations that could benefit from a comprehensive regional approach. He noted that the UN liaison office to the LAS would open soon.

Key Issues and Options

The upcoming meeting is being organised to further enhance the cooperation between the UN and the LAS in resolving conflicts, as many of the situations on the Council's agenda are wars in Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Organising the meeting is also seen as a way to implement the Council's September 2012 presidential

statement. Key issues include how to encourage cooperation between the two organisations across the conflict cycle: from prevention and peacebuilding to peace-making and post-conflict reconstruction. An option, and objective of Kuwait, is to establish the practice of an annual meeting on cooperation with the LAS, which future Arab Council members could organise, similar to the Council practice related to the EU, OSCE and AU PSC.

No product is envisaged, but as steps towards advancing cooperation, members may encourage the Secretary-General to appoint the head of the UN liaison office. In this regard, they may welcome the 28 May appointment of Khaled Mohamed Khiari as the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East and Asia-Pacific regional division created as part of his reforms of the UN peace and security architecture.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council will receive the monthly briefings on the humanitarian situation, the political process, and the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Key Recent Developments

Since mid-April, there has been an intensification of hostilities in north-western Syria—which is considered one of the four “de-escalation” areas agreed by the Astana guarantors (Iran, Russia and Turkey) in 2017—that has included Syrian and Russian airstrikes and a ground offensive. At the request of the humanitarian penholders on Syria (Belgium, Germany and Kuwait), Council members discussed on 10 May the humanitarian impact of the escalation of hostilities in north-western Syria, particularly in Idlib, in consultations with OCHA's Director of Operations and Advocacy, Reena Ghelani.

The humanitarian penholders proposed a draft press statement that did not get the unanimous support needed to be issued. When it

became clear that a meaningful statement was not possible, 11 Council members (all except China, Indonesia, Russia and South Africa) decided to read it at the stakeout. The statement condemned the loss of civilian life and expressed alarm at the targeting of population centres and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. The statement urged the concerned parties to recommit and comply fully with the September 2018 ceasefire brokered by Russia and Turkey.

As the escalation continued despite the setting up of a Turkish-Russian working group to re-establish a cessation of hostilities, the Council held a briefing on the situation in the north-west on 17 May. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, warned that if the offensive pushed forward, “we risk catastrophic humanitarian fallout and threats to international peace and security”. While she discussed the need to address the presence of the Council-listed terrorist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in Idlib, she emphasised that combating

terrorism cannot be allowed to supersede obligations under international law. Also briefing the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, stressed how the three million people in Idlib were among the most vulnerable populations in Syria even before the recent escalation, particularly the one million children and the 1.3 million people who fled to Idlib from other parts of the country. Lowcock told the Council that at least 18 medical facilities have been damaged or destroyed by air strikes, shelling or other fighting. Furthermore, 49 health facilities have partially or totally suspended activities for fear of being attacked. Although he fell short of assigning responsibility, he called the Council's attention to the fact that the location of these facilities had been deconflicted—shared with the parties in order to avoid attacks—and that at least some of the attacks were carried out using modern air force and so-called smart and precision weapons. Council members expressed divergent positions on the military operations in the north-west.

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2449 (13 December 2018) renewed the authorisation for cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access to Syria. S/RES/2254 (18 December 2015) focused on the key elements of a political solution to the Syrian crisis. S/RES/2118 (27 September 2013) was on the verification and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. Security Council Letter S/2019/355 (29 April 2019) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8527 (17 May 2019) was on the situation in north-western Syria.

Syria

Most Council members called for all parties to uphold international humanitarian law, protect civilians and urgently de-escalate the situation, but China and Russia emphasised the importance of fighting terrorism.

In north-eastern Syria, there have been increased operations by Turkey and its allies in Tal Rifaat. The area is held by the Kurdish YPG militia, which is part of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), and the escalation of hostilities started around the same time as in Idlib. The situation has become increasingly fragile following the December 2018 announcement by the US that it would withdraw its troops from Syria.

The conditions in the camp of Al-Hol near the Iraqi border remain dire. Some 75,000 people, more than 90 percent of whom are women and children, are sheltered there after being displaced by hostilities between the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the SDF.

Regarding the political process, Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen continues discussions with the parties, as well as the Astana guarantors, on convening a credible, balanced and inclusive constitutional committee as soon as possible that could help to unlock a broader political process.

The Identification and Investigation Team of the OPCW, established to identify perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks in Syria following a decision of the Conference of State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in June 2018, is expected to become operational imminently. On 15 May, China and Russia, which opposed the establishment of such a team, circulated a draft resolution to Council members highlighting the need to avoid the politisation of the OPCW and saying that in the absence of the relevant state's consent, the Council remains

the only organ authorised to impose legitimate compulsory measures on states, including those arising from noncompliance with the provisions of the CWC.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 9 May, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria "noted with grave concern the recent spike in hostilities throughout north-western Syria, warning any further escalation would invariably result in a humanitarian and human rights catastrophe" following "reports of numerous attacks by pro-government forces against civilian areas, causing high numbers of casualties including of women and children". The statement said that over 290,000 individuals have been internally displaced in the north-west over the past three months. In another statement, on 9 May, the commission noted "with grave concern that tens of thousands of civilians displaced by recent battles to capture the last enclaves of the so-called 'Islamic State' in eastern Syrian are languishing in makeshift camps...[and that] detained individuals are enduring appalling and inhumane conditions of shelter, health, and hygiene".

Key Issues and Options

Given the crucial role of the Astana guarantors 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 efforts to avert a full-fledged military offensive in Idlib. Furthermore, they could meet informally with OCHA to discuss the recent attacks on medical facilities and schools, many of which had been deconflicted.

Despite international engagement on the establishment of the constitutional committee, there are questions as to whether any effort on the political process is likely to yield results, considering the trajectory of the conflict and the consolidation of control by the Syrian government. Council members could

organise a retreat to hold an informal and frank discussion with Pedersen to consider how, individually and collectively, they can best support the prospects for a political process based on resolution 2254.

Building on the information provided by DiCarlo in her 27 March briefing, the Council could suggest that the working group on detainees, abductees, handover of bodies and identification of missing persons, which includes the Astana guarantors and the UN, meet in Geneva in the near future and move beyond one-for-one exchanges to focus instead on the simultaneous release of unequal numbers of detainees/abductees. The Council could hold a meeting specifically to shed light on this little-discussed issue and call on the guarantors to use their influence on the government to engage in good faith on this matter.

The Council could request a briefing in consultations by the Secretariat to focus on the potential for instability in north-eastern Syria, call on the actors involved to exercise restraint, and support good-offices efforts to address long-standing grievances.

Council members could invite the Director-General of the OPCW to participate in an informal interactive dialogue on the work of the organisation on Syria.

Council Dynamics

The clear divisions among Council members over the situation in north-western Syria and the Council's inability to react unequivocally to violations of international humanitarian law exemplify the entrenched nature of members' positions on Syria. The impact of these divisions on the three areas through which the Council engages on the conflict continues to frame the evolution of the conflict.

Belgium, Germany and Kuwait are copenholders on humanitarian issues in Syria.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) ahead of its expiry on

30 June. Prior to the adoption of the resolution, Council members expect to receive a strategic review of the mission by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the

African Commission. The Council will also receive a briefing on UNAMID, followed by consultations, as well as the semi-annual briefing of the ICC Prosecutor related to the

UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR Security Council Resolution S/RES/2429 (13 July 2018) renewed UNAMID's mandate until 30 June 2019. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/19** (11 December 2018) was on the Secretary-General's proposed benchmarks and indicators. **Secretary-General's Report S/2019/305** (10 April 2019) was the 90-day report on UNAMID. **Security Council Letter S/2019/366** (29 April 2019) was from the Secretary-General requesting that the strategic review be submitted one month later on 1 June. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8513** (17 April 2019) was a briefing on UNAMID. **Security Council Press Statement SC/13817** (21 May) condemned the looting of the West Darfur Headquarters of UNAMID.

Sudan (Darfur)

court's work on Darfur. 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.

Key Recent Developments

On 11 April, President Omar al-Bashir was ousted by the Sudanese military following ongoing protests in many parts of the country calling on al-Bashir, who has ruled Sudan for nearly three decades, to step down. The protests, which began in December 2018, were sparked by food and fuel shortages and culminated on 6 April when thousands of protesters gathered outside al-Bashir's residence in Khartoum. On 11 April, Sudan's Defence Minister, General Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf, said to be an al-Bashir ally, appeared on state television and announced the military's detention of al-Bashir, the suspension of the constitution, and the start of a two-year transitional period to be overseen by the military and followed by elections. However, protests continued and on the following day Ibn Auf stepped down and Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah Burhan assumed power.

On 15 April, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) adopted a communiqué that strongly condemned the "coup d'État" and demanded that the Sudanese military hand over power to a transitional civilian-led political authority within 15 days, failing which the PSC would suspend Sudan's participation in all AU activities. On 22 April, the AU PSC adopted another communiqué extending the deadline by 60 days and outlining further steps to be taken.

The military has said it does not intend to extradite al-Bashir, despite the ICC arrest warrants issued against him in 2009 and 2010. On 13 May, Sudan's public prosecutor announced charges against al-Bashir and others for "inciting and criminal complicity" in the deaths of demonstrators. The announcement came as unidentified forces, allegedly wearing uniforms of the Sudanese Armed Forces/Rapid Support Forces, reportedly used live ammunition at protests in Khartoum, killing six people, including an army officer, and wounding about 100 others. On 15 May, the Transitional Military Council and the opposition alliance, called the Declaration of Freedom and Change Forces, announced they had agreed on a three-year transition to civilian rule. However, key differences on issues such as the composition of

the transitional body remained unresolved at press time.

According to the Secretary-General's most recent report, covering 4 January to 3 April, UNAMID's reconfiguration is proceeding as scheduled in accordance with resolution 2429, in which the Council decided to reduce the troop ceiling from 8,735 to 4,050 military personnel over the course of the mandate period while maintaining the authorised police personnel at 2,500. The report only covers the situation in Darfur through 3 April (that is, prior to al-Bashir's ouster), but it observed that the overall security situation in Darfur remained relatively stable except for intermittent clashes between government forces and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid in the Jebel Marra area. Intercommunal clashes remained low despite a slight increase since the last reporting period, but the report said that "[o]ngoing human rights violations, in particular sexual and gender-based violence, including those violations reportedly perpetrated by Government security personnel, continue to be of grave concern and an obstacle to lasting peace".

More than 1.6 million internally displaced persons are still living in camps throughout Darfur. The report noted that "ongoing political and economic uncertainty pose a number of challenges for a responsible exit of the peacekeeping mission and a transition to peacebuilding, including the question of interlocutors at the national and local levels of the government for joint planning and oversight, which will be critical for the national ownership and sustainability of the process...[as will] the mobilization of resources for a seamless transition".

On 21 May, the Council issued a press statement strongly condemning the looting of the West Darfur Headquarters of UNAMID on 14 May and calling on the Sudanese authorities to facilitate the responsible handover of UNAMID sites. The Council was last briefed on UNAMID on 17 April.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is what modifications to make to the UNAMID mandate, force structure and troop levels to reflect the current realities facing the mission, in particular in the context of its reconfiguration and drawdown as set out in resolution 2429, which referred to the mission's exit in June 2020 "provided that there is no

significant change in the security situation in Darfur". A related issue is assessing the potential effect of further troop reductions on the security and human rights situations. An option is for such assessments to be informed by the findings and recommendations of the strategic review, which members expect to receive by 1 June. A possible option is a shorter term rollover of the mission's mandate given the current uncertainties around the political situation.

A further issue is to assess progress made on the benchmarks and indicators of achievement for the exit of the mission set out in the Secretary-General's report of 12 October 2018. The Council took note of these in its 11 December 2018 presidential statement and asked the Secretary-General to prioritise reporting on progress against the benchmarks and indicators "to help guide the Security Council's considerations on the future of UNAMID's mandate".

Council Dynamics

There continue to be differences amongst Council members on the situation in Darfur, as was again apparent during the discussion following the 17 April briefing. Germany said that "decisions on the future of UNAMID must be shaped by developments on the ground" and emphasised the need "to take a close look" at the timeline. The UK said the "latest political developments have a direct impact on Darfur" and called for "a gradual and sensible approach, guided by the situation on the ground". Other members such as Belgium, France and Peru expressed similar positions. The US expressed concern over "the impact of the events in Khartoum on the security and stability of Darfur" and stressed the need for "measurable and sustainable progress on prioritized benchmarks, in particular, demonstrating the government's ability and capacity to protect and provide for the Darfur people and addressing the root causes of the conflict". Absent such progress, the US said it "is supportive of the Council considering all options".

However, Kuwait expressed the need for the Council "to continue the implementation of UNAMID's exit strategy", saying that "what is happening in the Sudan is a domestic affair that should not be interfered with". Russia said that the Council "has no mandate to discuss the evolving political processes in that country" and that UNAMID's

Sudan (Darfur)

withdrawal should progress; China similarly called for “non-interference in the internal

affairs of states”.

The UK and Germany are co-penholders

on the issue; Poland chairs the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council is expected to extend for six months the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which expires on 30 June. The Department of Peace Operations (DPO) is expected to brief Council members in consultations on the Secretary-General’s latest 90-day report on UNDOF, due in June, and the most recent developments.

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. UNDOF 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 implementation of the mandate entails observing any violations of the 1974 Agreement, reporting them, and liaising with both sides. The mission’s observation role has been limited since its September 2014 relocation from the Bravo (Syrian) to the Alpha (Israeli-occupied) side because of the armed conflict in Syria. As of 15 May, UNDOF comprises approximately 1,064 personnel. The UN General Assembly last year approved a budget of \$60,295,100 from July 2018 through June 2019.

On 27 May, Israel confirmed with UNDOF that Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) had carried out a rocket attack targeting the Tal Al Shaar area on the Bravo side that same day. According to the Syrian state media organisation SANA, one Syrian soldier was killed and another injured. The IDF stated that the airstrike was carried out in response to anti-aircraft fire by Syria. A 28 May statement by the Secretary-General expressed concern about the “developments in the Golan”, called upon the parties to adhere to the 1974 Agreement and liaise with UNDOF.

On 25 March, US President Donald Trump signed a presidential proclamation recognising Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. UN spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said on the same day that Secretary-General António Guterres considers “that the status of Golan has not changed.” Previously scheduled consultations on UNDOF on 27 March were changed into a public briefing under the agenda item “The Situation in the Middle East” to discuss the situation as well as UNDOF’s activities. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacekeeping Affairs, and Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, briefed, and representatives from Israel and Syria participated.

In that meeting, the US representative said that the proclamation did not affect the 1974 Agreement, nor did it undermine UNDOF’s mandate. Other Council members reiterated that the Golan Heights is occupied territory. Lacroix said the ceasefire between Israel and Syria was being maintained, but violations of the 1974 Agreement continued to occur. These included firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line, civilians crossing the ceasefire line from the Bravo side, and the presence of unauthorised equipment and personnel in the areas of separation and limitation. The 1974 Agreement does not allow military forces other than those of UNDOF in the area of separation. Lacroix further said that UNDOF has consistently protested the violations, calling upon both sides to exercise restraint.

On UNDOF’s phased return to the Bravo side, Lacroix reported progress, including visits to vacated observation posts and positions to assess whether the conditions would allow for a return of UNDOF personnel. He also stressed that there is still a “significant threat” to UN personnel stemming from explosive remnants of war and the possible presence of sleeper cells of armed groups. For the mission to implement its mandate effectively, Lacroix

re-emphasised the need to deploy appropriate technologies and utilise fully the Qunaytirah crossing point, both of which require cooperation and support from the two sides. Before its closure in 2014, the Qunaytirah crossing point was used for humanitarian crossings, facilitated by UNDOF and in cooperation with the ICRC. On 28 April, the ICRC observed a transfer of two former prisoners from Israel to Syria through the crossing point.

In his 19 March report, covering the period from 21 November 2018 to 14 March, the Secretary-General detailed violations of the 1974 Agreement on both sides. These include military presence and activities in the area of separation on the Bravo side by Syrian Armed Forces, firing across the ceasefire line by the Israel Defense Forces, and the presence of unauthorised equipment and weapons in the area of limitation on the Alpha side. The UN Truce Supervision Organization in Observer Group Golan continues to support UNDOF with military observers. The Secretary-General stressed that it was important for the Council to influence the parties to ensure the safety and security of UNDOF and its ability to implement its mandate.

In a 20 April press statement, UNDOF announced that its head of mission and force commander, Major General Francis Vib-Sanziri of Ghana, had died unexpectedly on 19 April. On 29 May, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of Major General Shivaram Kharel of Nepal as acting Head of Mission and Force Commander.

Key Issues and Options

Ongoing issues for the Council are the numerous violations of the 1974 Agreement and UNDOF’s ability to implement its mandate, including the deployment of appropriate technologies, and the eventual full return of UNDOF to the Bravo side. Regarding the mandate renewal, the Council is restricted in

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS Security Council Resolution S/RES/2450 (21 December 2018) renewed the mandate of UNDOF until 30 June 2019. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2019/248** (19 March 2019) was the latest report on UNDOF. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8493** (27 March 2019) was a briefing by Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacekeeping Affairs, and Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations. **S/PV.8436** (21 December 2018) was the adoption of resolution 2450, renewing UNDOF’s mandate until 30 June 2019.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

its options: how UNDOF operates is subject solely to the 1974 Agreement. Any changes in the mandate would require agreement by Israel and Syria, which remains unlikely. The Council, in renewing UNDOF's mandate, could consider changing the Secretary-General's reporting cycle back to six months instead of 90 days, which had been the practice until December 2012.

Council and Wider Dynamics

At press time, it was not clear whether the change in the US's long-standing position would complicate the mandate renewal negotiations. Generally, Council members agree that UNDOF contributes to stability in the region, given the absence of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria, both of which still value UNDOF's presence. Council members

support its eventual complete return to the Bravo side, mindful of the fact that this would require a continuously favourable security environment to maintain the confidence of troop-contributing countries.

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

Peacekeeping

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council will hold its annual briefing with the heads of military components of UN peace operations. The anticipated briefers are: Lieutenant General Leonard Muriuki Ngondi, the Force Commander of AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), and Major General Cheryl Pearce, the Force Commander of UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The briefings are expected to focus on cooperation with host states. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix may also brief. No formal outcome is anticipated from the meeting.

Background

The force commander briefings, which have been held annually since 2010, focus on the operational challenges of implementing mission mandates. Last year, the meeting focused on two issues: the need to adapt to changing security and operational environments and the implementation of Council mandates. The briefers were: Major General Jean-Paul Deconinck, Force Commander of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); Lieutenant General Frank Mushyo Kamanzi, Force Commander of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS); and UNAMID's commander Lieutenant General Ngondi. Lacroix also addressed the Council.

Ngondi is briefing the Council again this year, albeit under different circumstances, as the political situation in Sudan has changed, after the Sudanese military ousted President Omar al-Bashir in early April, following

ongoing protests in many parts of the country calling for him to step down after nearly three decades in power. Council members will likely be interested in how Sudan's Transitional Military Council has interacted with the mission and what these interactions have meant for UNAMID's operations. Ngondi will be describing the mission's relations with the host state in a context in which the mission continues its reconfiguration and drawdown, as set out in resolution 2429, which referred to the exit of the mission in June 2020 "provided that there is no significant change in the security situation in Darfur".

Pearce may describe UNFICYP's efforts to facilitate inter-communal contacts and develop confidence-building measures between the parties. She may further describe the mission's interactions with the parties in maintaining the buffer zone on the island.

Key Recent Developments

On 7 May, the Council held an open debate on "Investing in Peace: Delivering Quality Training and Capacity Building to Improve Safety and Security and Performance of UN Peacekeepers". Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi chaired the meeting. Secretary-General António Guterres; the force commander of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Lieutenant General Elias Rodrigues Martins Filho; and the director of the secretariat of the International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, Björn Holmberg, briefed the Council. During the debate, Guterres updated the Security Council on efforts to enhance the

training of UN peacekeepers, improve the conduct and discipline of peacekeepers, and increase the number of women in UN peace operations. Martins Filho described efforts to enhance the capacity of MONUSCO troops through pre-deployment and in-mission training and said that the mission's "command and control arrangements have been strengthened through regular field visits by the force leadership, brigade commanders and force headquarters staff". Holmberg emphasised the importance of "in-mission, scenario-based training for senior- and middle-management teams" in peace operations, as well as the need for expanded mentorship for mission leadership.

A presidential statement was adopted at the meeting. It recognised the added value of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on Peacekeeping Operations—which has been signed by 151 member states and four organisations—with regard to training and capacity building. The statement further recognised that "the mandate of each peacekeeping mission is specific to the need and situation of the country concerned, and that the Security Council expects full delivery of the mandates it authorizes".

Issues and Options

As the Secretariat engages in efforts to reform peacekeeping, Council members could draw lessons on how they agree on strategic objectives for peace operations, design mandates, and monitor the capacity to achieve them. This could also include a more concerted effort to receive military advice and operational information from force commanders,

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEKEEPING Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/4 (7 May 2019) was on peacekeeping training and capacity-building. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8521 (7 May 2019) was an open debate on "Investing in peace: Improving safety and performance of United Nations peacekeepers". S/PV.8251 (9 May 2018) was a briefing by the heads of three military components (MINUSMA, UNAMID and UNMISS).

Peacekeeping

for example by having them brief the Council alongside heads of missions.

Council Dynamics

In past years, Council members have found

the force commander briefings useful because of the substance of the discussions and the interactive format, which encourages them to ask questions. The success of these sessions prompted then-Council member Australia to

organise a briefing with the heads of police components of peacekeeping operations during its November 2014 presidency. Since then, a meeting with the heads of police components has also been held annually.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

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

The mandate of UNAMA expires on 17 September.

Key Recent Developments

On 15 March, Germany and Indonesia, the co-penholders on Afghanistan, put the “technical rollover” resolution 2460 to a vote; the Council adopted it unanimously, extending the mandate of UNAMA until 17 September without changes. Although Council members held several rounds of negotiations and bilateral meetings, no agreement could be reached on the original draft resolution, after which the decision was made by the penholders to pursue a technical rollover. China and the US were deadlocked on whether to maintain a reference to the Chinese “Belt and Road Initiative” (language agreed in preceding resolutions) in the context of welcoming regional economic cooperation. After the adoption, German Ambassador Christoph Heusgen expressed his regret that “issues that have nothing to do with it and are not related to the excellent work and mandate of UNAMA made it impossible to achieve the resolution for which we had originally aimed”. The next mandate renewal had been intended to take place after the presidential elections, which at the time of the adoption of resolution 2460 were scheduled for July. At press time, the presidential elections had been re-scheduled for 28 September.

Several talks geared towards peace in Afghanistan are being pursued. Following the

first round of talks in seven years between representatives of the US and the Taliban in late July 2018, the sixth such meeting was held in Doha, Qatar, from 1 to 9 May. The Taliban continue to insist on holding direct talks with the US government rather than the Afghan government, whose legitimacy they do not recognise, as they seek the withdrawal of US and international troops from Afghanistan. Also in Doha, Yamamoto met on 25 April with the co-founder of the Taliban, Mullah Baradar Akhund, and the Taliban negotiating team, in line with established practice. Yamamoto addressed issues related to the peace process, humanitarian assistance, and human rights.

From 29 April to 3 May, a “Loya Jirga” (Grand Council) was held in Kabul, intended to discuss the way forward with the Taliban. The more than 3,200 Afghan participants included politicians and tribal leaders. The resulting declaration offers 23 points as a framework for future peace negotiations.

Several other Afghanistan-focused international meetings were held recently. On 25 April, special representatives of the Russian president, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, and the US State Department met in Moscow on Afghanistan and issued a trilateral declaration. On 23 April, a “Europe-US” meeting was held in London on “Supporting Peace in Afghanistan”; countries participating adopted a joint statement as well. Both outcomes emphasised that any peace process starts with the Afghan people.

UNAMA's third anti-corruption report, published in May, welcomed a strengthened institutional, normative and legal framework to address corruption in Afghanistan but cautioned that implementation requires a sustained effort. Last year, Afghanistan ranked 172 out of 180 on Transparency

International's Corruption Perception Index (moving up from 177 in 2017).

The latest quarterly report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), an oversight body reporting to the US Congress, issued on 30 April, stated that SIGAR had been notified by the US-commanded NATO Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan that the mission no longer assessed government and insurgent “control or influence” over Afghan territory and population.

UNAMA's quarterly report of 24 April on “Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict” points out “with concern that Pro-Government Forces were responsible for more civilian deaths than Anti-Government Elements” during the reporting period.

On 11 March, the Council held a briefing on the situation in Afghanistan. Briefers included Yamamoto; Afghanistan's National Security Adviser, Hamdullah Mohib; and Deputy Executive Director of the Afghan Women's Network, Storai Tapesh. In his briefing, Yamamoto stressed the vital need for talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. However, progress in peace talks including the Taliban may mean a regression in civil rights, including women's rights, and Yamamoto acknowledged that Afghan citizens have fundamental and legitimate concerns in that regard. This briefing was followed by consultations to allow for a more detailed discussion on ongoing peace talks in a closed format.

The Independent Electoral Commission's announcement of all the final results of last year's parliamentary and district council elections continues to be postponed.

At press time, the UN's 2019 humanitarian response plan for Afghanistan of \$611.8

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2460 (15 March 2019) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 September 2019. **Secretary-General's Report S/2019/193** (28 February 2019) was the latest report on Afghanistan. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8485** (15 March 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2460, extending UNAMA's mandate until 17 September 2019. **S/PV.8481** (11 March 2019) was the quarterly meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. **Security Council Press Statement SC/13781** (15 April 2019) condemned the announcement by the Taliban of a spring offensive.

Afghanistan

million was funded at 20.5 percent, with \$486.4 million outstanding.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 13 March, the 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee met with and was briefed by the newly appointed Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the UN, Adela Raz, and Afghanistan's National Security Adviser, Hamdullah Mohib. In other developments, exemptions from the travel ban for 11 members of the Taliban were requested and granted for the purposes of peace talks.

ICC-Related Developments

On 20 November 2017, ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda requested authorisation from the Court's judges to initiate an investigation into alleged international crimes in the context of the ongoing armed conflict in Afghanistan since 2003. These included war crimes (committed by the Taliban and their affiliated Haqqani Network, Afghan security forces, the US armed forces, and the US Central Intelligence Agency) and crimes against humanity (committed by the Taliban and their affiliated Haqqani Network). The victims representation process at the ICC concluded on 31 January 2018. The judges received a report prepared by the Victims Participation and Reparations Section; a redacted version of the report was made public on 20 February 2018.

On 12 April, the judges of Pre-Trial Chamber II unanimously rejected the prosecutor's request. Although it met the requirements for jurisdiction and admissibility, they said the context of the situation in Afghanistan renders the "prospects for a successful investigation and prosecution extremely limited". The judges concluded that an investigation "would not serve the interests of justice", a criterion set out in the Rome Statute of the ICC. Reacting to the decision, the Office of the Prosecutor said it will consider all available legal remedies.

Women, Peace and Security

According to UNAMA, out of 18 incidents targeting education in the first quarter of 2019, four were attacks by the Taliban on girls' schools, including setting buildings and equipment on fire, affecting the education of about 300 girls.

Key Issues and Options

Council priorities include awaiting the final results of the 2018 parliamentary and district council elections and a timetable for the 2019 presidential elections, and how the Council can support UNAMA in implementing its mandate, including support for the election and the political processes. In order for

Council members and Yamamoto to have a more interactive and frank discussion after the briefing, the Council may again meet in consultations as opposed to a debate only.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are generally supportive of UNAMA's work, remain concerned about the security, humanitarian and political situation in Afghanistan, and are committed to the peace process. Several members of the Council are engaged in different talks aiming at a negotiated peace agreement, which do not always include the Afghan government. Most members routinely emphasise that a peace process in Afghanistan has to be Afghan-led. Looking forward, including the upcoming mandate renewal, it remains to be seen how the stalemate between the US and China on the Chinese "Belt and Road Initiative" can be resolved.

Germany and Indonesia are co-penholders on Afghanistan, and Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia) chairs the 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee.

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In June, Mankeur Ndiaye, the Special Representative and head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), will brief the Council on the Secretary-General's MINUSCA report, due on 15 June. The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Central African Republic (CAR) configuration, Ambassador Omar Hilale (Morocco), may also brief.

The mandate of MINUSCA expires on 15 November 2019.

Key Recent Developments

The Political Peace Agreement in the CAR was signed by the CAR government and 14 armed groups in Bangui on 6 February,

following negotiations in Khartoum that began on 24 January under the auspices of the AU. It addresses justice and reconciliation, governance, and transitional security arrangements. It stipulates that the signatories will establish a commission to review justice issues and submit recommendations to the National Assembly; the Commission of Truth, Justice and Reconciliation; and a follow-up mechanism established to oversee the agreement's effective implementation. The agreement does not include an amnesty for militia leaders but grants the president a "discretionary right to issue pardons". Under the agreement, mixed security units will be formed comprising members of the armed groups and state security forces, and members of the former armed groups will

be allowed to participate in the government. On 13 February, Council members issued a press statement welcoming the signing of the agreement.

The agreement comes against a backdrop of the inability of the government, led by President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, to establish state authority outside a few urban areas, thus undermining the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the population. The largely Christian anti-Balaka movement, operating in south-western CAR, has been targeting Muslims. Ex-Séléka armed factions, which are largely Muslim, have retained, if not strengthened, their positions and influence in their respective strongholds and continue to benefit from illicit taxation and illegal exploitation of natural resources.

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2454 (31 January 2019) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2127 Central African Republic Sanctions Committee. S/RES/2448 (13 December 2018) extended the mandate of MINUSCA and the authorisation to use all means to provide operational support to MINUSCA until 15 November 2019. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/3** (9 April 2019) established benchmarks for suspending or progressively lifting arms embargo measures on the government of the CAR. **Security Council Letter S/2019/145** (15 February 2019) was the Secretary-General's letter containing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8467** (21 February 2019) was a briefing by departing Special Representative and head of MINUSCA Parfait Onanga-Anyanga on the latest MINUSCA report. **Security Council Press Statements SC/13755** (28 March 2019) welcomed the consensus reached by the signatory parties to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR regarding the formation of an inclusive government. **SC/13701** (13 February 2019) welcomed the signing of the Global Peace Agreement in the CAR. **Sanctions Committee Document S/2019/210** (4 March 2019) transmitted the names appointed to the Panel of Experts on the CAR.

Central African Republic

The agreement faced its first major setback in March, when several armed groups withdrew from Touadéra's newly formed government, arguing that they were under-represented. On 22 March, after AU-hosted consultations in Addis Ababa, Touadéra announced a new cabinet, in which all 14 armed groups are represented.

On 24 March, a presidential decree named three of the leaders of the armed groups, all suspected of widespread violence, as special military advisers to the prime minister's office.

On 26 March, Ndiaye briefed the Council under "any other business" on the consultations in Addis Ababa and their results. The Council welcomed the consensus reached by the parties on the formation of an inclusive government in a press statement on 28 March.

This is the latest of several peace agreements that have been signed in the CAR over the years between warring factions, and it remains to be seen if and how it will be implemented. On 5 April, MINUSCA peacekeepers clashed with rebels from the Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC), a signatory to the agreement, after the group set up roadblocks on the only road leading to Cameroon. Five FDPC members were killed, and one peacekeeper was injured.

Building on the peace agreement, six armed groups signed a local peace agreement in Bria on 9 April, aiming to end violence in the eastern region of Haute-Kotto.

Between 19 and 21 May, rebels attacked several villages in Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, killing at least 49 people. The attacks have been attributed to the 3R (Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation), rebel groups, a signatory to the peace agreement. The Secretary-General condemned the attack on 23 May, urging the CAR to investigate and swiftly bring those responsible to justice.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 31 January, the Council renewed the CAR sanctions regime until 31 January 2020 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee until 28 February 2020. The resolution expressed the Council's intention to establish, no later than 30 April, "clear and well-identified key benchmarks regarding the reform of the security sector, the disarmament,

demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation process, and the management of weapons and ammunition, that could serve in guiding the Security Council to review the arms embargo measures on the Government of the CAR", based on an assessment of progress on the benchmarks, to be carried out by the Secretary-General by 31 July.

On 9 April, the Council adopted a presidential statement, stating its readiness to review the arms embargo measures on the government of the CAR through suspension or progressive lifting of these measures in the light of progress achieved on key benchmarks laid down in the text.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 40th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held a high-level interactive dialogue on 20 March on human rights in the CAR. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, said that the signing of the Global Peace Agreement by the government and 14 armed groups on 6 February "marked an important milestone", but that "the human rights situation remained highly volatile". Marie-Thérèse Keita Bocoum, the independent expert on human rights in the CAR, told the HRC that despite the peace agreement, reports persisted of human rights violations and breaches of humanitarian law. Musa Gassama, head of the human rights component of MINUSCA, told the HRC that the political, socio-economic and security context in the country remained prone to multifaceted violence and human rights violations and that 880 civilians, including 146 women and 117 children, were killed in 2018. Armed groups accounted for 98 percent of documented human rights abuses and international humanitarian law violations, Gassama said.

Developments in the Peacebuilding Commission

On 10 May, the CAR configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission met with Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui after their 10-13 April visit to the CAR. During their visit, the two co-chaired the first meeting of the International Support Group on the CAR, aimed at encouraging the international community to engage in the peace process and to support the urgent humanitarian needs of the country.

Issues and Options

Progress on the political track and support for the African Initiative, which led to the conclusion of the peace agreement, are central issues, and under resolution 2448, which extended the mandate of MINUSCA in December, the

mission is to play a more significant part in the facilitation of the initiative. A related issue concerns questions about the armed groups' commitment to the political agreement and to the political process as a whole. A credible threat of targeted sanctions might provide an incentive for armed groups to commit to the process, and sanctions against those responsible for attacks against civilians, MINUSCA and humanitarian workers might also help to curb violence. Furthermore, targeting actors who enable the economic activities of armed groups may further pressure them to adhere to the agreement.

In the longer term, following the signing of the peace agreement, the Council will monitor its implementation to assess whether the situation on the ground requires changes in MINUSCA's mandate.

Council and Wider Dynamics

MINUSCA's mandate renewal and the possibility of lifting the arms embargo on the CAR government exposed differences of views between the permanent members on the CAR. On the mandate renewal, Russia's insistence that its political role and military assistance to the CAR be reflected in Council outcomes creates a new dynamic, reflecting Russia's increasing interest in the region. On sanctions, the adoption of benchmarks for potentially lifting the arms embargo on the government also reflects a shift in the Council's position, as some Council members pushed for the CAR's wishes on this issue to be taken into account. In the past, and despite the explicit position of the CAR government, the P3, along with several other Council members, were of the view that limited progress in security sector reform did not warrant contemplating the lifting of the arms embargo.

All Council members share the hope that the peace agreement will improve the situation and restore peace and security in the CAR. While some members have concerns about the agreement's content—for example, on accountability—Council members are waiting to see whether the agreement is implemented before expressing reservations.

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

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council will receive a briefing on the Secretary-General's 90-day report on South Sudan as requested in resolution 2406. Consultations are expected to follow the briefing.

The mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) expires on 15 March 2020.

Key Recent Developments

The overall level of political violence has been diminished since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) on 12 September 2018. However, ethnic and inter-communal violence continues, as do clashes between government and opposition forces in the Greater Upper Nile and the Greater Equatoria regions. The human rights, humanitarian, food security and economic conditions in the country remain dire, with an enormous impact on civilians.

According to the terms of the R-ARCSS, 12 May was to mark the end of the eight-month pre-transitional period and the start of the 36-month transitional period, with elections to be held 60 days before the end of this transitional period. In April, opposition leader Riek Machar, who has not yet returned to Juba from Sudan, called for this deadline to be extended, given that key tasks required during the pre-transitional period had not been completed.

A 2 May statement by the interim chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee said that 59 key tasks were to be implemented prior to the commencement of the transitional period; of these, 27 have been completed. The statement said there are 17 tasks ongoing and 15 pending. These include determining the number and boundaries of states and the composition and restructuring of the Council of States by the Independent Boundaries Commission; refraining from acts of sexual and gender-based violence; cantonment, disarmament, screening, demobilisation, selection, unification and training of forces; and the demilitarisation of civilian centres. The cantonment of forces was identified as especially critical, with no cantonment sites currently operational.

The Intergovernmental Authority on

Development (IGAD) convened a meeting from 2 to 3 May in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and Machar. According to a 3 May IGAD statement, the parties discussed the status of the implementation of the R-ARCSS and observed that pre-transitional tasks that are critical for the formation of the Revitalized Government of National Unity, such as the cantonment, screening, training, unification and deployment of forces and the determination of the number and boundaries of states, are pending. The statement identified a lack of political will, and financing as well as time constraints as major challenges to implementation. At the meeting, the parties agreed to extend the pre-transitional period by an additional six months to enable the implementation of the critical pending tasks.

A joint UN/AU/IGAD mission led by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix; the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smaïl Cheroui; and the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, Ismail Wais, visited Juba, South Sudan, from 10 to 12 May. According to a spokesperson for the Secretary-General, the aim of the visit was to provide support to the peace process and the full implementation of the R-ARCSS, following the 3 May agreement extending the pre-transitional period by six months. The delegation met with Kiir; senior government officials; the National Pre-Transitional Committee, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the R-ARCSS; women's organisations; and members of the international community. While the delegation acknowledged the need for a six-month delay to resolve key issues, it said this should be the last extension, according to the spokesperson.

The Council was last briefed on South Sudan on 8 March. (See our What's in Blue story of 7 March.)

Sanctions-Related Developments

Council members received the final report of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee on 9 April. Regarding the arms embargo, which also covers the provision of military assistance and training, the report notes the presence of armed Uganda People's Defence Forces in the Equatorias; the ongoing arrival of cargo aircraft at Juba International Airport at night, of which there is no meaningful monitoring; and the

failure of customs agencies of neighbouring states to provide inspection reports to the committee. As for the travel ban, the report noted overall significant progress towards the use of the exemption process. Regarding the asset freeze, the report documented several companies covering a variety of sectors linked to designated individuals and outlined limitations on the effective enforcement of the asset freeze in the region. On 30 May, the Council adopted a resolution renewing the South Sudan sanctions regime for one year.

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. Council members could also consider imposing, or threaten to impose, further targeted sanctions against those who undermine the process.

Council Dynamics

Council members are following the situation in South Sudan closely and are supportive overall of the R-ARCSS and the roles played by IGAD and the region towards a political resolution of the conflict. Some Council members may be more optimistic about the progress made by the parties since the signing of the R-ARCSS, in particular given the decrease in political violence, while other members are more critical regarding the need for major deadlines to be met and for this to translate into improvement in regard to sexual violence, human rights and the humanitarian situation.

Russia abstained on resolution 2459, which renewed the mandate of UNMISS on 15 March. In a statement after the vote, it emphasised that significant progress has been made in implementing the R-ARCSS and criticised the resolution for not expressly welcoming the R-ARCSS. It said that the resolution was "overloaded with text on gender issues and human rights". China and Kuwait also made statements pointing to the improved situation in the country since the signing of the R-ARCSS.

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

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2459 (15 March 2019) extended the mandate of UNMISS. Secretary-General's Report S/2019/191 (28 February 2019) was the 90-day report on South Sudan. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8484 (15 March 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2459. Sanctions Committee Document S/2019/301 (9 April 2019) was the final report of the Panel of Experts.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is due to renew the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts assisting the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee. The Council may also choose to discuss the DRC more broadly as post-electoral developments and the Ebola epidemic continue to unfold.

The mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) expires on 20 December 2019.

Key Recent Developments

It has now been over 100 days since Félix Tshisekedi became president of the DRC, and work to form a government continues. Disagreements between Tshisekedi's coalition and former President Joseph Kabila's party have seemed to stall the process, since the two groups have agreed to work together in government. On 20 May, Sylvestre Ilunga Ilukamba was announced as the new prime minister. This marked a compromise between Tshisekedi and Kabila, as Ilukamba is considered a Kabila ally. In the past, he served as the head of the DRC's national railway company and as finance minister for former President Mobutu Sese Seko.

The Council met to discuss MONUSCO and the Secretary-General's report on 18 March, during which briefings were provided by Special Representative and head of MONUSCO Leila Zerrougui and Anny Tenga Modi, executive director of Afia Mamaa, a civil society organisation. Zerrougui commended the involvement of the Council in the DRC during the past year, especially in regard to elections. She said the situation was far calmer than in December and January, and highlighted Tshisekedi's efforts in support of peace, rule of law, democracy, and the protection and promotion of human rights, such as the release of political prisoners.

On 29 March, the Council renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 20 December through resolution 2463, maintaining the current troop ceiling and strategic priorities. It also added the requirement that a strategic review of MONUSCO be completed by 20 October, leading to a plan for a phased, progressive and comprehensive exit strategy. During the adoption meeting, the DRC's representative requested the sanctions regime

to designate the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) as a terrorist group.

At press time, 1,920 cases of Ebola and 1,281 deaths had been confirmed, since August 2018. These include at least 99 health workers who were infected, of whom 34 died. The current concern is the high fatality rate, which hovers around 66 percent.

The outbreak remains limited to eastern provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, but countries in the region are on high alert, especially given the continued large movements of people due to conflict in eastern DRC. On 13 May the EU announced an additional 5 million euros in funding for the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other partners. Response centres continue to be targets of violence due to extreme mistrust by communities of healthcare workers and the causes of the Ebola crisis at large. A WHO doctor was killed in April in an attack on a hospital in Butembo.

Sanctions-Related Developments

Last year's renewal of the DRC sanctions regime was little changed and continued to affirm that sanctions will apply to individuals and entities designated by the committee that meet criteria outlined in previous resolutions. These include engaging in or providing support for acts that undermine the peace, stability or security of the DRC as well as planning, directing, sponsoring or participating in attacks against MONUSCO peacekeepers or UN personnel, including members of the Group of Experts. According to its report published in December 2018, there were 35 individuals and nine entities on the committee's sanctions list.

Resolution 2463 welcomed the work of the UN team deployed by the Secretary-General to assist the Congolese authorities in their investigation into the March 2017 killing of two members of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee Group of Experts – Michael Sharp (US) and Zaida Catalán (Sweden-Chile) – and the four Congolese nationals accompanying them, and called on the authorities to ensure that all perpetrators are brought to justice and held accountable.

In May, the sanctions committee visited the DRC and the region. All members of the Council were represented. Because the new government had not been formed, engagement with government officials was limited. On 24 May the committee met with the Group of Experts to discuss their final report.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 40th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held a high-level interactive dialogue on 19 March on human rights in the DRC. Presenting

the High Commissioner's report (A/HRC/40/47), Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, said that OHCHR remained deeply concerned about continuing intercommunal violence in the country. Bacre Waly Ndiaye, the team leader of the international experts on the situation of human rights in the Kasai region, told the HRC that although the situation in Kasai had stabilised, "the crisis was far from over [as] militias were still active in the province, forced labour was rife, and the numbers affected by sexual slavery were greater than initially thought, as were the numbers of child soldiers". Zerrougui also briefed. In April, the UN Joint Human Rights Office documented 569 human rights violations throughout the DRC, a significant increase as compared to the previous two months.

Key Issues and Options

The pressing issue in June is the need to renew the sanctions regime before it expires on 1 July. The Council can use the sanctions resolution to reiterate its main messages about the need to see political progress on the ground after elections. It can also threaten to impose further sanctions or target those who act to undermine the stability of the DRC.

It seems likely that given the continued instability of DRC politics and ongoing violence, there may not be significant changes to the sanctions regime. However, some 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee members who participated in the May visit came away with the impression that more should be done to protect the country's natural resources from illicit and conflict-fuelling exploitation. More listing criteria relative to this issue could be discussed.

The Council may, in coordination with regional actors, reiterate its call on all stakeholders to remain committed to translating calls for stability and institutional reform into practice.

The Council could choose to visit the DRC to gather information ahead of any decision to revise MONUSCO's mandate in December. However, it seems unlikely they would visit before the results of the strategic review.

Council Dynamics

While resolution 2463 was ultimately adopted unanimously, the negotiations were contentious. Council members agreed that the DRC authorities should work towards the stabilisation and strengthening of the capacity of state institutions and that the UN and

Democratic Republic of the Congo

regional organisations should help in this regard.

But there have been disagreements over the future of MONUSCO and how such a future should be created. South Africa, since beginning its term on the Council this year, has

played a significant role in discussions of the situation in the DRC, with mandate duration a particular concern. During negotiations, it advocated a 12-month renewal of MONUSCO's mandate as important for regional stability, and some other members supported

this position. The nine-month renewal was the compromise achieved.

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

Iran

Expected Council Action

In June, the Council expects to receive the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme. The Council also expects reports from the Joint Commission, established by the parties to the JCPOA to oversee its implementation, and from the Council's 2231 facilitator, Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium). Briefings are expected from Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, Pecsteen, and a representative of the EU in its capacity as coordinator of the Joint Commission.

Key Recent Developments

The recent escalation of tensions in US-Iran relations added another layer of uncertainty to the eventual fate of the JCPOA. Over the past several weeks, the US has considerably increased economic pressure on Iran in an effort to change what the US perceives as Iran's destabilising behaviour in the region. In April, the US decided not to renew waivers on Iran's oil exports past their expiry on 2 May. The waivers granted exclusive rights to eight countries to procure Iran's oil despite previously imposed US sanctions. The US decision further isolated Iran's oil sector from world markets and compromised the country's main source of revenue. In targeting Iran's nuclear sector, the US also ended waivers that allowed Iran to transfer enriched uranium out of the country and to store or transfer heavy water. The US introduced another round of sanctions on 8 May targeting Iran's aluminium, copper, iron and steel sectors.

On 5 May, US National Security Advisor John Bolton announced that the US would reposition the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. Besides noting that this move is a response to a credible Iranian threat to US interests in the region, Bolton did not provide further information.

Iran responded to the latest round of US sanctions on 8 May by issuing a 60-day ultimatum to the remaining parties to the JCPOA (China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the EU) to provide Iran with sanctions relief on its oil and financial sectors. Without relief, Iran said it would resume uranium enrichment activities and construction of the Arak nuclear reactor, which would constitute a direct violation of the JCPOA. A day later, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini and the foreign ministers of France, Germany and the UK issued a joint statement calling on Iran to adhere to its commitments under the JCPOA while also noting that they would continue efforts to facilitate legitimate trade with Iran. The statement rejected Iran's ultimatum, however, and called on Iran to avoid any actions that could raise tensions further.

Mogherini has continued to emphasise that the EU remains committed to preserving the JCPOA as long as Iran continues to comply with its commitments under the deal. Earlier this year, France, Germany and the UK set up a mechanism that would mitigate the effects of US sanctions in Iran and facilitate some trade between the EU and Iran. However, this mechanism has yet to become operational.

On 13 May, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) reported that four oil cargo vessels

had been damaged in an apparent sabotage plot off its coast. Saudi Arabia's government said that two of its vessels were targeted. The two other vessels were UAE-flagged ship and a Norwegian-flagged commercial ship. A day later, the Saudi government reported that some of its oil-pumping sites were targeted in an apparent drone attack. Subsequently, Houthi rebels in Yemen, who are allegedly receiving support from Iran, claimed responsibility for the drone attack.

On 15 May, the US State Department ordered the evacuation of non-essential government employees from Iraq, citing a credible threat. The US has previously raised concerns over Iran's influence in Iraq, particularly among Shi'a militias in the country.

In April, the US designated the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a foreign terrorist organisation. This is the first time the US has applied this type of designation to a component of another state's government. The IRGC is under direct control of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, and operates independently of Iran's traditional armed forces. The US has accused the IRGC of providing financial and weapons support for terrorist organisations in the region, including various Shiite militias in Iraq.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 40th session, the Human Rights Council adopted on 22 March a resolution on human rights in Iran with 22 votes in favour, seven against and 18 abstentions. The resolution extended the mandate of the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran for one year (A/HRC/40/18). It also called on the government to cooperate fully with the special rapporteur and to permit access to visit the country.

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAN [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2231](#) (20 July 2015) endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13762](#) (2 April 2019) supported the goals of the Non-proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. [Secretary-General's Report S/2018/1089](#) (6 December 2018) was the Secretary-General's sixth report on the implementation of resolution 2331. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8500](#) (2 April 2019) was a high-level meeting organised by Germany on "Supporting the Non-proliferation Treaty ahead of the 2020 Review Conference". [S/PV.8418](#) (12 December 2018) was the semi-annual briefing on the implementation of resolution 2231.

Iran

Issues and Options

The recent developments surrounding the JCPOA and rising tensions between the US and Iran present the Council with a number of issues. Chief among these at the moment is ensuring full compliance with resolution 2231 by parties to the JCPOA and the wider UN membership.

The Council will follow closely the developments related to the recent incidents in the Persian Gulf and a build-up of military assets in the area. An option for the Council would be to urge all sides to use restraint and avoid provocations that could lead to full-on escalation.

The Council will need to assess the implications of the US withdrawal from the JCPOA and the impact of the US's unilateral sanctions measures on the implementation of resolution 2231, which endorsed the agreement. Although Council members will be able to address some of these issues during the regular meeting on implementation of resolution 2231, an option for the Council would be to organise an informal meeting in consultations with the 2231 facilitator

to further consider this issue. Such a meeting could provide an opportunity for a more frank exchange among Council members.

Iran has announced that it could resume nuclear-related activities it halted after signing the JCPOA if the remaining signatories to the agreement fail to provide financial relief from the US sanctions. Should Iran breach the agreement, other signatories to the JCPOA could formally notify the Council, which would initiate a so-called “snapback mechanism” that would effectively reinstate sanctions on Iran that were in place prior to the adoption of resolution 2231.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The decision of the current US administration to withdraw from the JCPOA has further isolated the US from the rest of the Council members in respect of the general position on the agreement. Most Council members—among them China, France, Germany, 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. While Iran has been highly critical of the unilateral US moves, it has remained in compliance with the agreement. However, following the latest round of US sanctions, on 8 May Iran indicated that it would restart uranium enrichment activities if the remaining signatories do not mitigate the effects of US sanctions within 60 days. The Council dynamics could significantly change should Iran breach the agreement because it could potentially lose the support of the remaining signatories to the JCPOA, most notably the EU countries, which are heavily invested in preserving the agreement.

In addition to issues related to the JCPOA, the Council will have to contend with the risk that has been signalled of a possible military confrontation between the US and Iran, which could potentially alter the Council dynamics further. In light of the recent escalation of tensions in the region, EU members, China and Russia have called for restraint on the part of both Iran and the US. China and Russia have said publicly that the recent US actions contributed to the heightening of tensions.

Somalia

Expected Council Action

In June, the Chair of the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Marc Pecteen de Buytsverve (Belgium), is expected to brief the Council in consultations.

At press time, the Council was scheduled to renew the mandate of AMISOM on 31 May.

The partial lifting of the arms embargo on Somali security forces, the authorisation for maritime interdiction to enforce the embargo on illicit arms imports and charcoal exports, and humanitarian exemptions to the sanctions regime expire on 15 November. The mandate of the Somalia Panel of Experts expires on 15 December.

Key Recent Developments

On 22 May, Deputy Special Representative Raisedon Zenenga of the UN Assistance

Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) briefed the Council on the latest UNSOM report. Other briefers were AU Special Representative for Somalia and head of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) Francisco Caetano Madeira (via video teleconference), and Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Ursula Mueller.

In his 15 May report, the Secretary-General conveys his concern about the challenging security environment and the continued impact on humanitarian operations of military operations and clashes among armed groups. The report notes that the Al-Shabaab terrorist group has increased its activities in recent months against security forces and civilians. At the same time, there has been an increase in security operations against Al-Shabaab, degrading its operational capability. According to UNSOM's Human Rights and

Protection Group, between 14 December 2018 and 4 May, 757 civilian casualties were recorded, of which 72 percent were attributed to Al-Shabaab, 9 percent to state security forces and 10 percent to unknown perpetrators, including six civilian casualties attributed to air strikes conducted by unknown aircraft. Humanitarian needs across Somalia remain high, with 4.2 million people requiring aid and protection.

In the briefing, Madeira also spoke about the joint AU-UN review of AMISOM to consider progress on the security transition in Somalia. The review laid down two options for AMISOM's future configuration, intended to cover the period until the completion of the elections cycle at the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021:

- maintaining the current troop ceiling while allowing for reductions based on

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2461 (27 March 2019) renewed the mandate of UNSOM until 31 March 2020. S/RES/2444 (14 November 2018) lifted sanctions on Eritrea and extended various elements of the Somalia sanctions regime until 15 November 2019. S/RES/2431 (30 July 2018) renewed the mandate of AMISOM until 31 May 2019. **Secretary-General's Report S/2019/393** (15 May 2019) was on Somalia. **Security Council Letters S/2019/388** (10 May 2019) contained the findings and recommendations of the AU-UN joint review of AMISOM's mandate. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8533** (22 May 2019) was a briefing on the situation in Somalia.

Somalia

progress on the ground, in light of the slow pace of generating capable Somali security forces: or

- progressive reduction of AMISOM's uniformed personnel ceiling (currently 20,626) by 1,000 or 2,000 troops to take place by the end of February 2020, on the premise that Somalia plans to take over 12 forward operating bases by the end of 2019.

In addition, the review recommends that AMISOM's police component, now set at a minimum of 1,040 police personnel out of the troop ceiling, be strengthened by two additional formed police units of 160 personnel each, commensurate with any reduction of AMISOM military personnel.

The review notes that, on the one hand, avoiding further prescribed reductions increases the likelihood of continued

insufficient progress on the implementation of the Somali transition plan and on building Somali security capacity within projected timelines. On the other hand, a premature reduction in AMISOM troops based on set timelines runs the risk of exposing civilians to harm due to lack of Somali readiness to take over security responsibilities from AMISOM. Madeira urged the Council to endorse the first option provided in the review and avoid further troop reductions at this time.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 15 May, the Somalia Sanctions Committee met with its Panel of Experts for its mid-term update.

Key Issues

The Council may reiterate previous calls, most recently in resolution 2444 of 14 November 2018, renewing the sanctions

regime, for Somalia and other member states to meet their obligations in implementing the sanctions regime, particularly with respect to the arms embargo and charcoal ban, and impose or threaten to impose sanctions on individuals involved in the illicit trade in charcoal.

More broadly on Somalia, a key issue is ensuring that AMISOM retains the capability and means to strengthen and assist the Somali forces so that these forces can progressively take the lead in providing security, while avoiding a premature handover of security responsibilities. Closely related is the need for predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM and Somali security institutions throughout this process.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is expected to adopt a resolution that will detail the transition of the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) to a non-peacekeeping UN presence.

The mandate of MINUJUSTH expires on 15 October.

Key Recent Developments

On 12 April, the Council renewed MINUJUSTH for a final six months through resolution 2466 and endorsed transitioning to a Special Political Mission (SPM). This echoed a recommendation by the Secretary-General in his most recent MINUJUSTH report. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council within 30 days with “operational details of the proposed SPM, including specific objectives and information regarding its proposed deployment, staffing, and structure”.

On 13 May, the Secretary-General submitted his recommendations in a letter to the president of the Council on the potential operational details for the SPM, including

objectives, structure, and size. Aligning with previous reports, the Secretary-General said that the SPM would focus on strengthening political stability and good governance, the preservation and further advancement of a peaceful and stable environment, and the protection and promotion of human rights.

In the document, the Secretary-General recommended “a special political mission with an advisory mandate, led by a special representative at the Assistant Secretary-General level, who would report to the Secretary-General through the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.” The Secretary-General also said that the SPM would be a stage in the transition towards a context in which Haitian institutions would be able to promote stability and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which are 17 goals established by the General Assembly in September 2015 and intended to address the global challenges related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. These efforts could address instability drivers and create political solutions to

benefit Haiti during the transition period with the support of the UN country team and the commitment of Haitian institutions and the international community.

To address human rights, which many Council members view as vital in this context, the Secretary-General suggested that OHCHR continue to provide support to UN joint efforts in Haiti. Eventually, after the SPM leaves, a human rights office could be created. The Secretary-General also noted that the Haitian government has emphasised reduction of gang violence as a key priority. Therefore, the SPM would advise the government on creating a strategy to deal with this violence by building stronger links to communities.

The Secretary-General stressed the need to have “strong cooperation and coordination” with various stakeholders, including the UN Country Team, regional organisations, bilateral partners, and international financial institutions. He suggested the deployment of up to 30 civilian and seconded personnel to serve as police and corrections advisers. In total, the SPM would number 80-100

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2466 (12 April 2019) was the final six-month renewal of MINUJUSTH. S/RES/2410 (10 April 2018) extended the mandate of MINUJUSTH for another year under Chapter VII and set a timeline for the gradual drawdown of formed police units. Secretary-General's Report S/2019/198 (1 March 2019) was the latest report on MINUJUSTH. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8510 (12 April 2019) documented the adoption of resolution 2466 and the positions of some countries after the vote. Security Council Letters S/2019/387 (13 May 2019) contained expanded recommendations from the Secretary-General for the SPM.

Haiti

members, though the total number is unlikely to be listed in a resolution and will be determined by Fifth Committee negotiations.

Key Issues and Options

The focus remains on making progress towards achieving the benchmarks necessary for the transition to a non-peacekeeping UN presence in Haiti. The Council will also continue to monitor the situation on the ground and its impact on the nature of the UN's presence. The most immediate task for the Council is mandating an SPM in Haiti. It is likely to be for 12 months and may change the reporting cycle for the Secretary-General from every three months to every four, or perhaps twice a year.

The Council could also choose to visit Haiti through a Council Mission, perhaps closer to October's elections and MINUJUSTH's withdrawal.

Council Dynamics

During negotiations on resolution 2466 in April, some Council members expressed their preference for a single resolution that would include MINUJUSTH's six-month renewal and concrete plans for an SPM in order to provide more stability during the transition. They also wished to give the Secretariat as much time as possible to prepare for the post-MINUJUSTH presence.

The resolution was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (Russia and the Dominican Republic). They abstained for different reasons, and these reasons could come

back into play during negotiations on the details of the SPM. The Dominican Republic was concerned that MINUJUSTH's withdrawal would coincide with Haiti's scheduled elections and potential instability. Russia maintained that Haiti's human rights situation is not a threat to international peace and security and therefore disputed the use of Chapter VII, which authorises enforcement action in order to restore international peace and security, in this case related to human rights and justice. France and Germany countered this with direct references welcoming the use of Chapter VII for human rights monitoring. This difference may be a moot point given that SPMs are under Chapter VI.

Peru said that any exit strategy must consider the security conditions on the ground and the ability of Haiti to ensure security throughout its territory. It has voiced support for swift negotiations on the future mechanism and would like to see a robust SPM established with the necessary human and financial resources. Proposed German language about strengthening the resilience of Haiti with respect to climate change was not included, and further discussion on this can be anticipated in the context of a future resolution. China has already indicated in some public statements the importance with which it views unity on Haiti and so is likely to want to see a consensual text.

The US is the penholder on Haiti. At press time, a draft resolution had not yet been circulated but it is expected to happen soon.

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