

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Poland holds the presidency of the Security Council in August. It is planning a high-level briefing on the promotion and strengthening of the [rule of law](#) with a focus on international humanitarian law, which will most likely be chaired by Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz. The anticipated briefers are Under-Secretary-General Miguel de Serpa Soares, ICRC President Peter Maurer, and Annysa Bellal, Senior Research Fellow and Strategic Adviser on International Humanitarian Law at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.

In addition, Poland will host a debate on challenges in the [Middle East](#), including human rights and humanitarian issues in the region.

The Council will hold an open debate on the annual report of the Secretary-General on [Children and Armed Conflict](#) early in the month. Foreign Minister Czaputowicz is expected to chair.

There will also be a briefing on the Secretary-General’s strategic-level report on the threat posed by the [Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant \(ISIL or Da’esh\)](#).

The Council is due to renew the [Mali](#) sanctions regime, as well as the mandate of its Panel of Experts. Other African issues that will be considered this month are:

- [Eritrea and Djibouti](#), consultations on relations between the two countries under the “peace and security in Africa” agenda item;

- [Central Africa](#), consultations on the strategic review of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA);
- [Somalia](#), a briefing and consultations on UNSOM and AMISOM;
- [Sudan \(Darfur\)](#), a briefing on UNAMID; and
- [Burundi](#), a briefing and consultations on recent developments.

Council members are expected to meet with troop- and police-contributing countries and to hold consultations on [UNIFIL](#), ahead of the mission’s mandate renewal at the end of the month. Several other Middle East issues will be discussed in August, including:

- [Yemen](#), the monthly briefing on implementation of resolutions 2451 and 2452;
- [Syria](#), the monthly briefings on the humanitarian situation, the political process and the use of chemical weapons;
- [Iraq](#), a briefing and consultations on the UNAMI report; and
- [Middle East \(Israel/Palestine\)](#), the regular briefing and consultations.

The quarterly briefing by the chair of the 1718 [DPRK Sanctions Committee](#) is also anticipated in August.

The Council will also follow developments in [Iran](#) and [Myanmar](#), among other country situations, during the month.

In Hindsight: Article 99 and Providing the Security Council with Early Warning

Of the five articles in the UN Charter assigning functions to the Secretary-General, Article 99 is the most important in the context of international peace and security. It grants the Secretary-General the authority “to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of

international peace and security”. In this way, Article 99 allows the Secretary-General to initiate a Security Council discussion. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld underscored that “[it] is Article 99 more than any other which was considered by the drafters of the Charter to have transformed the Secretary-General from a purely

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administrative official to one with an explicit political responsibility”. The drafters of the Charter were fully aware of the weight of vesting this task in the Secretary-General: as the report of the UN Preparatory Commission points out, “the responsibility it confers upon the Secretary-General will require the exercise of the highest qualities of political judgment, tact and integrity”.

Article 99 is resorted to infrequently, and it is invoked explicitly even less often. The first time the implicit invocation of Article 99 led to immediate Council action was most likely the 13 July 1960 letter from Hammarskjöld requesting an urgent Council meeting on the Congo. While not specifically referring to Article 99, the Secretary-General used its language when he said, “I have to bring to the attention of the Security Council a matter which, in my opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security”. The meeting led to the Council’s authorising the next day the deployment of a UN military operation to assist the government of the Congo.

The Security Council has long been aware of the need for an early warning of impending international crises. At a 1985 meeting on the responsibility of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar pointed out that “as crises have frequently been brought before the Council too late for preventive action, it would seem to follow that the Council might well establish a procedure to keep the world under continuing survey in order to detect nascent causes of tension” (S/PV.2608).

At the Council’s first summit meeting in January 1992, its members charged the Secretary-General with providing “analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient [...] the capacity of the UN for preventive diplomacy”. The presidential statement adopted at the summit meeting agreed that the analysis and recommendations “could cover the role of the UN in identifying potential crises and areas of instability” (S/23500). In response, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued *An Agenda for Peace*, a report in which, among other issues, he outlined a number of additional preventive diplomacy processes and advocated for an increased resort to fact-finding “by the Secretary-General, to enable him to meet his responsibilities under the

Charter, including Article 99”.

While prevention is often espoused as a goal for the Council, it has been difficult to execute. The absence of an early warning, risk analysis, and intelligence-gathering capacity were cited as among the reasons why the UN failed to respond to the genocide in Rwanda and Srebrenica in 1994 and 1995 respectively. A report (S/1999/1257) on the UN’s failure in Rwanda concluded that it was “essential both to continue to improve the capacity of the organization to analyse and respond to information about possible conflicts, and its operational capacity for preventive action”.

In 2012, as the crisis in Sri Lanka unfolded, the UN and the Security Council again were criticised for failing to respond adequately. While the Secretary-General briefed the Council once in an informal interactive format on Sri Lanka, he did not use his Article 99 powers formally to bring the situation to the Council’s attention, which may have helped place the situation on the Council’s agenda. An internal review of the UN’s handling of the situation pointed to the absence of formal and clear early warning as a major lesson. The report also said that “the Secretary-General should make more regular and explicit use of his Security Council convening authority under Article 99 of the Charter”.

More recently, after attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army on government security posts on 25 August 2017 were met with a violent response by the Myanmar military forces, and more than 745,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh, Secretary-General António Guterres wrote to the Council (S/2017/753). He urged a concerted effort to prevent further escalation of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Rakhine State, calling on the Council “to press for restraint and calm to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe”. While not evoking Article 99, he chose to bring the situation to the Council’s attention. This led to the first public briefing on Myanmar since 2009 where the Secretary-General spoke about immediate action that needed to be taken. While the Council was able to adopt a presidential statement on Myanmar in November 2017, it has remained divided on stronger action. In June 2019, an independent review of the UN system’s operation in Myanmar in the lead-up to the mass exodus of Rohingya regretted that member states had not

provided the UN with the necessary political support for effective action.

Starting in 2001 with resolution 1366, the Council adopted several decisions on conflict prevention, recognising the potential of Article 99 and the essential role of the Secretary-General in this context. In 2014, the Council encouraged the Secretary-General in resolution 2171 “to bring to its attention any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations”.

In late 2010, the Council began a practice that could be characterised as being in the spirit of Article 99. The UK, as Council president in November 2010, began what became regular briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on any issues that were causing the Secretariat serious concern, including those not on the Council agenda. For 14 months, with the exception of the two US presidencies, the Council held these “horizon-scanning” briefings monthly. In the face of opposition from some countries being discussed, as well as a number of Council members, these briefings became less frequent, and ended after December 2013.

Early warning seemed to be given another chance with the “Rights Up Front” (later renamed “Human Rights Up Front”) initiative, launched by the Secretariat in late 2013. It sought to bring together all three UN pillars—peace and security, development, and human rights, and called for earlier and more frank briefings by the Secretariat to the Council, including in formal sessions under Article 99. The Secretariat also launched a new format—Situation Awareness Briefings—for its preventive engagement with the Security Council, outside the Council chambers. As with previous efforts, sensitivity to being discussed by the Council has generally led to pushback, making these attempts short-lived. Ultimately, the Secretariat’s heightened attention to human rights did not appear to translate into alerting the Council about worrying signs.

Other ways to apprise the Council of emerging issues have included the “Any Other Business” (AOB) part of Council consultations and the monthly Secretary-General’s lunches and Council wrap-up sessions. The Secretariat regularly asks to brief the Council under AOB and the Secretary-General has raised situations of concern that are not

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on the Council's agenda during his lunches. However, a more structured early warning system has proved elusive.

A case could be made for the Secretary-General to make greater use of his Article 99

powers today, given that the current Council dynamics could make it difficult to get agreement on discussing emerging conflicts. Bringing such situations to the Council's attention would open up the possibility that the

Council might focus on its conflict prevention role and Chapter VII's variety of tools. This in turn might lead the Council to take a step closer to fulfilling the promises of the "never again" pledge.

Status Update since our July Forecast

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

On 2 July, the Council met in consultations for a briefing on the Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) by Special Representative and head of UNRCCA Natalia Gherman. She updated Council members on the activities of UNRCCA since her last briefing in January, addressing issues such as terrorism, foreign terrorist fighters, drug trafficking, organised crime, transboundary water management, and the role of youth in the region.

Myanmar

On 2 July, Special Envoy Christine Schraner Burgener briefed Council members on Myanmar during "any other business". The closed briefing allowed members to raise questions about the situation in Myanmar including likely tensions in the run-up to the general elections in 2020, the Rohingya situation, and the continuing clashes between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar government forces. The UN's activities in Myanmar were also discussed.

Libya

On 3 July, the Council met in consultations after a 2 July air strike on the Tajoura migrant detention centre in a Tripoli suburb that killed 53 people and injured over 130 people. On 5 July, Council members issued a press statement condemning the attack and stressing "the need for all parties to urgently de-escalate the situation and to commit to a ceasefire" (SC/13873). It further called upon all UN member states to fully respect the arms embargo. On 29 July, the Council held its bimonthly meeting on UNSMIL and Libya sanctions. Special Representative and head of UNSMIL Ghassan Salamé briefed via video teleconference. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany, Ambassador Jürgen Schulz, briefed the Council on Libya sanctions in his capacity as chair

of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committees. The briefings were followed by consultations.

Afghanistan

On 3 July, Council members issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms a terrorist attack claimed by the Taliban on 1 July in Kabul (SC/13872). The attack resulted in the death of at least 35 people and more than 70 injured. On 26 July, Council members had a meeting following a recent trip to Afghanistan by a high-level UN delegation with a focus on women, peace and security (S/PV.8587). The delegation, which was in Afghanistan from 20-21 July, was led by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and included Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund Natalia Kanem, and the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. Briefings were given by Mohammed, DiCarlo and women's rights activist Jamila Afghani who participated at the 7-8 July intra-Afghan talks in Doha.

Guinea-Bissau

On 3 July, Council members issued a press statement taking note, inter alia, of the ECOWAS call for the president of Guinea-Bissau to sign a decree of nomination of the government by 3 July on the basis of the proposition made by the Prime Minister, and for the president to stay in office until the holding of the next presidential election, while leaving the full management of government affairs to the newly formed government (SC/13870).

Maintenance of International Peace and Security

On 8 July, Peru convened an informal interactive dialogue on the challenges and opportunities of the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Briefers included Renata Dwan,

Director of the UN Institute for Disarmament Research; Rahma A. Hussein, the former Legal Fellow of the Counterterrorism, Armed Conflict and Human Rights Project at Columbia Law School; and Thomas Markram, Deputy to the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Peace Operations

On 10 July, the Council held a debate on improving triangular cooperation between the Council, the Secretariat, and troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs). The Council was briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; the Force Commander of MINUSMA, Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre; and Dr. Alexandra Novosseloff, a non-resident Senior Fellow at the International Peace Institute (S/PV.8570). Six TCCs/PCCs were invited to participate as well, and a concept note was circulated ahead of the meeting (S/2019/538).

Ukraine

On 16 July, the Council was briefed on the situation in Ukraine by Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Lamberto Zannier (S/PV.8575). Russia requested the meeting to discuss the recently enacted Ukrainian language law which formally took effect on that same day. In his briefing Zannier focused primarily on the language law and noted that Ukraine's sovereign right to strengthen the role of state language should be balanced with efforts to accommodate the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the country. In addition to the law, DiCarlo addressed the broader political situation in the country and issues related to implementation of the Minsk agreements. Russia emphasised the dangers posed by the language law while other speakers, mostly the

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EU members of the Council, stressed that the law does not pose a threat to international peace and security. These members used this opportunity to raise other issues including the political and security situation and the investigation into the downing of MH17.

Youth, Peace and Security

On 17 July, the Council held a briefing on the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda under the agenda item “maintenance of international peace and security” (S/PV.8577). The briefers were Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth; Weyyn Muganda from Kenya, the program director for HAKI Africa; and Sofia Ramyar from Afghanistan, the Executive Director of “Afghans for Progressive Thinking”.

Tribunals

On 17 July, the Council held its semi-annual debate on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) with briefings by the IRMCT’s president, Judge Carmel Agius, and prosecutor, Serge Brammertz (S/PV.8576). Agius and Brammertz briefed on their respective assessment reports (S/2019/417).

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

On 18 July, the Council held a briefing on “Strengthening partnerships for successful nationally-owned transitions”, under the agenda item Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (S/PV.8579). Peru’s Foreign Minister Néstor Popolizio chaired the session. Briefings were made by Secretary-General António Guterres; Foreign Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo of Colombia, on behalf of the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission; Franck Bousquet, Senior Director of the World Bank’s Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group; and Yero Baldeh, Director of the Transition States Coordination Office of the African Development Bank. A concept note, prepared by the Council presidency, was circulated ahead of the meeting (S/2019/540).

Sudan/South Sudan

On 18 July, Council members issued a press statement that condemned the attack on 16 July by unknown assailants on peacekeepers of UNISFA, which resulted in the death of one peacekeeper (SC/13890).

Colombia

The co-leads of the 11-14 July visiting mission to Colombia, Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru) and Jonathan Allen (UK), briefed the Council on the visit on 19 July (S/PV.8580). Also on 19 July, the Council was briefed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia Carlos Ruiz Massieu (S/PV.8581) on the 27 June report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/530). Foreign Minister of Peru Néstor Popolizio chaired the meeting, and Foreign Minister of Colombia Carlos Holmes Trujillo participated as well. On 23 July Council members adopted a press statement stressing the importance of implementing the peace agreement as an interlocking set of commitments (SC/13896).

Cyprus

On 19 July, Council members were briefed in consultations by Elizabeth Spehar, Special Representative and head of UNFICYP, on recent developments and the latest Secretary-General’s report. She also expressed hope that the Cypriot leaders will meet soon. During the meeting, members welcomed recent confidence-building measures, but some also expressed concern over the lack of political process on the island. On 25 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2483 which extended the mandate of UNFICYP in its current configuration until 31 January 2020 (S/PV.8586). The resolution expressed regret over the lack of progress on the political settlement and called for reduction of tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. It further called on all sides to increase efforts to establish, with UNFICYP as facilitator, a mechanism for direct contact at military level in order to alleviate the tensions.

Haiti

On 22 July, Council members held consultations to discuss the situation in Haiti. They were briefed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Helen La Lime on the upcoming transition from MINUJUSTH to the special political mission, due to take place in October.

Israel/Palestine

On 23 July, the Council held its quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East (S/PV.8583). Under-Secretary-General for

Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed. She urged member states to make a conducive environment for peace talks. Jason Greenblatt, President Donald Trump’s special envoy and Special Representative for International Negotiations, spoke on behalf of the US and urged member states to reserve judgement on Trump’s proposed peace plan, though still not saying when it may be released. The representative of Senegal also participated in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and used the meeting to condemn the recent demolition of Palestinian homes. This was echoed by many speakers. While most spoke about the Palestinian question, the representative from Israel focused his remarks on Iran and what he called the “duty to preserve the forces of order by confronting the forces of chaos”.

DRC

On 24 July, Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MONUSCO, briefed the Council. She highlighted the gains made in the six months since elections were held in the DRC. However, she stressed that challenges remain in terms of armed groups in the East and Ebola. Ebola has now killed more than 1,700 people. On 17 July, WHO declared the situation in the DRC a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Ambassador Mansour Ayyad Alotaibi (Kuwait), chair of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee, described the work of the committee over the past year and briefed on his late April/early May visit to the DRC (S/PV.8584). At press time, Council members were scheduled to hold an informal interactive dialogue on Ebola in the DRC on 31 July.

UNOWAS

On 24 July, the Council held its semi-annual briefing on West Africa and the Sahel (S/PV.8585). Special Representative and head UNOWAS Mohammad Ibn Chambas briefed, presenting the Secretary-General’s 5 July report on West Africa and the Sahel (S/2019/549). After the meeting, Côte d’Ivoire circulated a draft presidential statement that it had prepared with Belgium, as co-penholders on West Africa and the Sahel, and negotiations on the text began at the end of July.

Burundi

Expected Council Action

In August, a representative of the UN Secretariat is scheduled to brief the Council on the situation in Burundi in accordance with resolution 2303 of 29 July 2016, which requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on Burundi every three months.

Key Recent Developments

The security and political situation in Burundi has remained unsettled since April 2015 when Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza announced that he would run for a controversial third term later that year, leading to a sharp deterioration of the situation with violence and repression against his opponents. Nkurunziza won a third term and according to a subsequent amendment to the constitution would be able to run again but has stated that he does not plan to do so and will also accept the result of the election. Hundreds of Burundian civilians have been killed since April 2015 in clashes with security forces, and about half a million people have fled the country as a result. While the Burundian government maintains that the security situation is stable 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 Nkurunziza's party, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy. Human Rights Watch reported in June an increase in such abuses against purported members of opposition parties since February, when a new party was registered: the National Congress for Freedom (Congrès national pour la liberté—CNL). The head of the CNL, Agathon Rwasa, is considering running for president.

Freedom of the press, including access to the country by foreign media, has been severely restricted. On 3 July, President Nkurunziza signed a presidential decree appointing Eric Nshimirimana, the head of the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of his party responsible for most of the violence aimed at political opponents, as director-general of the National Radio Television of Burundi

(RTNB). The appointment came against the backdrop of the withdrawal of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)'s operating licence in March and the continued suspension of the Voice of America by Burundi's National Council of Communication. BBC announced the winding up of its operations in Burundi on 16 July.

Arbitrary killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detentions continue as the overall level of oppression and state control over Burundian society, including the political opposition, persists. These actions are taking place in an environment where freedom of expression, association and assembly are suppressed. The repression of these freedoms is of particular concern as the country prepares for presidential elections in 2020.

According to UNHCR, Burundi is the world's tenth-largest refugee-producing country, with 344,304 refugees mostly in Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, as at 30 June. Within the first half of this year, 14,104 refugees voluntarily returned to Burundi. According to the International Organisation of Migration, there were 115,708 internally displaced persons in May.

On 17 July, the World Health Organization declared the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo an international health emergency, naming Burundi as one of the countries most at risk of being affected by Ebola.

Resolution 2303 asked the Secretary-General to provide written reports, as necessary, on grave security incidents, violations of international humanitarian law and violations or abuses of human rights. There has not been a written report on the situation in Burundi since November 2018. The last Council briefing on the situation in the country took place on 14 June, when Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui (via video teleconference) and Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), the chair of the Burundi

configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, briefed the Council. Fernandez-Taranco said that the human rights situation "remains worrying in view of many violations of fundamental civic and political freedoms". Chergui also stated that the AU was still receiving "reports of ongoing cases of human rights violations." Lauber reported that "a number of interlocutors voiced concerns about alleged violent incidents and human rights violations that were not being properly investigated and prosecuted." A majority of Council members echoed concerns over the human rights situation. At the other end of the spectrum, China and Russia again stated that the situation in Burundi should be taken off the Security Council's agenda. The representative of Burundi argued that "our current political and security situation is no threat to international peace and security and does not justify arbitrarily keeping my country on the Council's agenda."

Relations between Burundi and the East African Community (EAC) continue to be strained, with the EAC-led inter-Burundian dialogue—envisioned as a mediated consultative process between the government and the opposition, civil society organisations, including women, young people and members of the media and religious groups—consequently remaining stalled. In his 14 June briefing to the Council, Chergui said that there was no alternative to the inter-Burundian dialogue, which "must resume as quickly as possible".

As of late June, the UN's 2019 humanitarian response plan for Burundi of \$106.3 million had been funded at 30.5 percent, with \$73.8 million outstanding.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 41st session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on 2 July with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi. The commission said that since its last oral presentation to the HRC in March, it had carried out missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, France, Belgium and the UK to collect information on human rights violations committed since May 2018 from victims and direct witnesses of these abuses. (Burundi has not granted the commission's request to visit

UN DOCUMENTS ON BURUNDI Security Council Resolution S/RES/2303 (29 July 2016) requested the Secretary-General to establish a UN police component in Burundi of 228 officers for an initial period of one year and requested reports from the Secretary-General on the situation in the country. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2019/229 (12 March 2019) was on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region. S/2018/1028 (15 November 2018) was on the situation in Burundi, as requested by resolution 2303. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.8550 (14 June 2019) was a briefing on the situation in Burundi by Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support; Smail Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security; and Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. S/PV.8465 (19 February 2019) was a briefing on the situation in Burundi by Michel Kafando, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Burundi; the Permanent Observer of the AU to the UN, Fatima Kyari Mohammed; and Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Burundi

the country.) The commission told the HRC that “serious human rights abuses continue since May 2018, particularly summary executions, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, ill-treatment and sexual violence, as well as restriction of civil liberties” with most victims being opponents of the government or the ruling party. Burundian citizens who had fled the country and have since returned were also targeted, the commission said. It also warned that the elections scheduled for 2020 “could become the scene of a serious deterioration of the human rights situation”. The commission will present a report to the HRC during its 42nd session in September.

Key Issues and Options

The stalled EAC-led mediation and, more broadly, the lack of inclusiveness ahead of the 2020 presidential election remain serious concerns that the Council will need to monitor closely. An option would be to adopt a presidential statement, showing support for the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy in Burundi, noting Nkurunziza’s commitment not to run for president in 2020 and not to contest the election results, urging the EAC to intensify efforts to revive the

inter-Burundian dialogue, and calling on Burundi to take steps towards an inclusive electoral process, including respect for freedom of expression and association.

Another major issue is the continued lack of accountability for human rights violations over the last several years in Burundi, magnified by the closure in February of the UN Human Rights Office in the country at the insistence of the government after a 23-year presence. The Council may encourage Burundi to cooperate fully with all UN bodies.

One possible way for the Council to address some of these issues would be to establish a sanctions committee for Burundi in order to be able to impose targeted sanctions against those obstructing a genuine political dialogue and those responsible for human rights violations.

Council Dynamics

Council members agree that the continued viability of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreements is important as a basis for stability in Burundi. Burundi, for its part,

remains entrenched in its opposition to what they consider interference by the international community in its internal affairs.

To date, the Council has been unable to find a fresh avenue to re-engage with Burundi over the political situation. Some Council members, notwithstanding political, human rights and humanitarian concerns, continue to question the need to keep Burundi on the Council’s agenda, viewing such concerns as internal issues lacking an international peace and security dimension. While considering the programme of work for August, some Council members spoke against holding the quarterly briefing on Burundi, an issue that may arise when the programme is scheduled for adoption at the beginning of the month. Similar difficulties around the quarterly briefing have arisen in the past: a briefing that was originally scheduled to take place on 28 May was postponed until June, at the request of Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo and with the support of the African members of the Council.

Counter-Terrorism

Expected Council Action

In August, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (OCT), and Michèle Coninsx, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), are expected to brief the Security Council on the Secretary-General’s strategic-level report on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or Da’esh).

Background and Key Recent Developments

Under the terms of resolution 2368 of 20 July 2017, the Secretary-General submits a strategic-level report on ISIL to the Council biannually. The reports are intended to reflect

on the gravity of the ISIL threat, as well as the range of UN efforts to support states in countering the threat posed by ISIL. In his February 2019 report, the Secretary-General found that ISIL had continued to transform itself into a covert global network, with a weakened yet enduring presence in Iraq and Syria and with regional affiliates worldwide. For Africa, the report highlighted the threat posed by ISIL in Libya, where police stations in various locations and oil facilities have been targeted. In Afghanistan, ISIL keeps close ties to its core in Iraq and Syria and has created a network of cells in Afghan cities, including Kabul. Globally, the report notes, internationally directed attacks have fallen dramatically from 2015–2016, when ISIL’s external operational activity was at its height.

Nevertheless, ISIL remains the international terrorist group most likely to conduct a large-scale, complex attack in the near future. It retains an interest in attacking aviation and in the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials. Increasing the threat are foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) who are leaving conflict zones and prior returnees who have become active again on release from prison or for other reasons.

Briefing the Council on the report on 11 February, Voronkov emphasised that although ISIL has suffered significant losses, the threat posed by returning and relocating fighters, as well as from individuals inspired by them, remains high. He added that the challenge of ISIL could only be met through a well-coordinated, multilateral

UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2482 (19 July 2019) was on the nexus between terrorism and international organised crime. S/RES/2462 (28 March 2019) was on combatting the financing of terrorism. S/RES/2379 (21 September 2017) established an investigative team to collect, store and preserve evidence of ISIL crimes in Iraq. S/RES/2368 (20 July 2017) renewed and updated the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime. Through an annex to the resolution, eight individuals or organisations were added to the sanctions list. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2019/103** (1 February 2019) was the eighth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da’esh) to international peace and security. **Security Council Letters S/2019/407** (17 May 2019) was the second report of the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD. S/2018/1031 (15 November 2018) transmitted the first report of the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8573** (15 July 2019) was the Council’s second briefing by Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD. S/PV.8460 (11 February 2019) was a briefing on the eighth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL. **Security Council Press Statement SC/13869** (30 June 2019) was on the Council’s 28-29 June visiting mission to Kuwait and Iraq.

Counter-Terrorism

response. He then requested, through the Council, the continued support of the wider membership for UN counterterrorism work. Coninx stressed that with ISIL's territorial losses, more terrorist suspects and offenders, and their families, are in custody. States, she continued, have alerted CTED to their difficulties in adequately assessing the risk posed by such prisoners and managing them in a manner that prevents their further radicalisation. She also stressed that terrorist groups, including ISIL, continue to demonstrate their intention and ability to exploit new technologies and seek innovative ways to circumvent obstacles to their financial, technical and recruitment capabilities.

In other ISIL-related developments, High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said at the opening of the Human Rights Council's 41st session on 24 June that family members of FTFs should be repatriated to their home countries unless they are to be prosecuted for crimes in accordance with international standards. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that there are 29,000 children of foreign fighters in Syria, of whom 20,000 are from Iraq. In total, more than 55,000 suspected ISIL fighters and their families have been detained in Syria and Iraq. Though most are from these two countries, the suspected ISIL fighters come from nearly 50 countries, Bachelet said.

Bachelet also questioned whether trials of FTFs held in Iraq met international standards. In a recent trial, six French ISIL members captured in Syria and handed over to Iraqi authorities were sentenced to death in Iraq in May.

Elsewhere, ISIL claimed responsibility for a 3 June attack in Beni, in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, which killed or wounded 25 people. Local officials, however, claimed that the attack was perpetrated by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Ugandan Islamist rebel group, and that 13 civilians were killed. A possible affiliation between the ADF and ISIL has yet to be substantiated.

On 7 June, Egyptian security forces killed eight suspected ISIL fighters who were involved in a deadly attack on a police checkpoint in the Sinai Peninsula two days earlier, the country's interior ministry said.

There have also been developments regarding the UN Investigative Team for

Accountability of Da'esh (UNITAD), established by resolution 2379 of 21 September 2017 to support Iraqi domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable for crimes it committed in Iraq. On 30 June, Council members issued a press statement following their 28-29 June visiting mission to Kuwait and Iraq, in which they underscored their support for UNITAD and its importance as well as the need for UNITAD operations to respect Iraq's sovereignty. In that statement, they further stressed the importance of UNITAD's independence and impartiality, adding that UNITAD should "make every effort to share knowledge and technical assistance with Iraq."

On 15 July, Ahmad Khan, the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD, gave a briefing to the Council, based on his second report on the activities of UNITAD and further developments since its publication in mid-May. He addressed the need for evidence collected by his team to lead to fair trials "that will stand the test of time". He elaborated on UNITAD's implementation strategy laid out in the second report, which is based on the initial strategic vision outlined in his first report. The strategy entails three preliminary areas for investigation, with monthly benchmarks for progress. The three areas are: attacks committed by ISIL against the Yazidi community in the Sinjar district in August 2014, crimes committed by ISIL in Mosul between 2014 and 2016, and the mass killing of unarmed Iraqi air force cadets from Tikrit Air Academy (also known as "Camp Speicher") in June 2014. On staff recruitment, Khan said that his team of 79 represents all geographical groups at the UN and that 55 percent are female. He further reported that UNITAD moved into its official premises in April.

In their statements, a few members mentioned the issue of how and where to prosecute foreign terrorist fighters currently on Iraqi soil. They also noted that the international crimes that UNITAD is mandated to investigate are not incorporated into the domestic legal system of Iraq and are currently prosecuted as terrorist crimes. A few Council members expressed concern about the possibility that evidence shared by the team might be used in criminal proceedings in which capital punishment could be imposed. Other members stressed that Iraq is free to impose capital punishment, as a matter of state sovereignty.

In other counter-terrorism-related developments, the Council held an open debate on 28 March on combatting the financing of terrorism. During the debate, the Council adopted resolution 2462, which reiterated commitments on criminalising terrorism and the financing of terrorism that had been established by resolution 1373 of 2001 and supplemented by subsequent resolutions. The resolution further decided that states shall ensure that their domestic laws establish serious criminal offenses for the wilful provision or collection of funds, directly or indirectly, with the intention that the funds should be used, or in the knowledge that they are to be used, for the benefit of terrorist organisations or individual terrorists for any purpose. States are to ensure that these measures and all others taken to counter terrorism comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law.

On 9 July, the Security Council held an open debate on the linkages between international terrorism and transnational organised crime. As a follow-up, the Council adopted resolution 2482 on these linkages on 19 July. The resolution expresses concern that terrorists can benefit from organised crime as a source of financing or logistical support. The resolution calls on states to consider establishing appropriate laws and mechanisms that allow for the broadest possible international cooperation. It requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Security Council, within 12 months, a joint report by the OCT and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime with inputs from other relevant UN entities, including CTED and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, on the linkages between organised crime and terrorism.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is to maintain the necessary flexibility and adaptability to address the evolving global threat posed by ISIL. The recent trend to hold joint meetings of related subsidiary organs—the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida/ISIL Sanctions Committee, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the 1988 Afghanistan and 1970 Libya Sanctions Committees—could be continued and expanded to all committees dealing with situations featuring a terrorist threat.

Counter-Terrorism

A key issue for the Council is to ensure over-all implementation of the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida/ISIL sanctions regime, as part of states' wider counterterrorism efforts. At the same time, it is important that states do not hinder humanitarian activities, as highlighted in resolution 2462.

Council Dynamics

Council members are in general agreement about the importance of receiving strategic analysis on ISIL, which can then feed into other counterterrorism efforts or serve as background for the Council's counterterrorism agenda, even if no particular course of

action is foreseen. In the past, Council members received these reports every four months; several Council members felt that this frequency was excessive, and thus the report has been submitted biannually since the adoption of resolution 2368 in July 2017.

Children and Armed Conflict

Expected Council Action

The Council is expected to hold an open debate on children and armed conflict in August. The debate will focus on the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict, which was circulated at the end of July.

The open debate will be chaired by Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz. Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba will present the Secretary-General's annual report. Other speakers are likely to include the Executive Director of UNICEF, Henrietta Fore; Mariatu Kamara, UNICEF Canada's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict; and Majok Peter Awan, a former child soldier and currently a UN child protection officer.

Key Recent Developments

The Secretary-General's annual reports focus on six grave violations against children: recruitment and use; killing and maiming; abductions; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; and the denial of humanitarian access. In 2018, more than 24,000 violations were documented and verified by the UN in 20 country situations as compared to 21,000 in 2017. The number of cases of killing and maiming of children verified by the monitoring and reporting mechanism was 12,038, the highest recorded since that mechanism was established by resolution 1612 in 2005. Although resolution 1882 adopted by the Council in 2009 added killing and maiming as a trigger for inclusion in the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual report, the increasingly complex nature of conflict has made it more

difficult to protect children in such situations. In 2018, there was also a significant increase in attacks on schools and hospitals. More positively, the report documented the release and reintegration of 13,600 children.

The annual reports also contain annexes listing parties that have committed grave violations against children (one including parties active in conflict situations on the Council's agenda, the other one in situations that are not on the list of issues the Council is seized of). In the report for 2017, the list was divided into two sections (A and B)—parties that have not enacted measures and those that have, respectively. The report for 2018 did not add any new listings. Two parties—the Mai-Mai Katanga in the DRC and the White Army in South Sudan—were delisted as they no longer exist. Three parties were moved to Section B as a result of having put in place measures: the Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique in the CAR, the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, and the Kurdish People's Protection Units in Syria. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement moved to Section A owing to its lack of action in implementing the action plan.

On 20 June, the Council adopted resolution 2475 on the situation of persons with disabilities in armed conflict. The resolution followed the 3 December 2018 Arria-formula meeting on this issue. It stressed the specific needs of children with disabilities in armed conflict, encouraging member states to ensure that they have equal access to basic services and humanitarian assistance.

On 15 April, Special Representative Gamba briefed the Council on the effect of the war

in Yemen on children and on her concerns, which included lack of humanitarian access and high levels of killing and maiming. On 22 May, she briefed Council members on her visit to the Central African Republic under "any other business".

On 5 July, the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC), part of the ex-Séléka coalition and a party to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed an action plan with the UN to end and prevent grave violations against children. On 1 July, the Syrian Democratic Forces signed an action plan with the UN to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children under the age of 18. In March, the UN signed a memorandum of understanding with the Yemen government to strengthen the protection of children affected by the armed conflict in Yemen.

The Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict together with UNICEF launched the Global Coalition for the Reintegration of Child Soldiers in September 2018 to encourage greater support for child reintegration programmes. They organised two consultations to exchange experiences on reintegration programming on 11–12 June and on 22 July. Another campaign launched by the Office of the Special Representative is "ACT to Protect Children Affected by Conflict". Its aim is to focus global attention and efforts on ending the six grave violations against children as well as preventing future violations by strengthening collaboration, partnership and synergies among local, regional and international actors.

UN DOCUMENTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2427](#) (9 July 2018) provided a framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle, as well as in sustaining peace efforts. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2019/509](#) (30 July 2019) was the latest annual report on children and armed conflict. [S/2019/453](#) (3 June 2019) was on children and armed conflict in Yemen. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8305](#) (9 July 2019) was an open debate on children and armed conflict. [Other S/AC.51/2019/1](#) (19 July 2019) contained the conclusions on Syria adopted by the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

Children and Armed Conflict

On 11 July, the ICC convicted Bosco Ntaganda of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) between 2002 and 2003. Ntaganda, a commander of the Union des Patriotes Congolais (UPC) and its military wing, the Patriotic Force for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC), was convicted of 13 counts of war crimes and five counts of crimes against humanity, including conscripting and enlisting children under the age of 15 into an armed group and using them to participate actively in hostilities.

Developments in the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Belgium took over from Sweden as the chair of the Working Group in January. By the end of July, the group had met 18 times in formal and informal meetings. It adopted its conclusions on the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict in Syria on 10 July. The report was introduced on 14 January, but differences among Council members, including over how to refer to certain parties and chemical weapons, led to protracted bilateral negotiations. On 30 July the Working Group adopted its conclusions which cover the Secretary-General's fourth and fifth reports on children and armed conflict in Myanmar. Following the release of the Secretary-General's fourth report on Myanmar in December 2017, the Working Group asked for an update as the fourth report did not cover the violence in Rakhine that had started in August 2017. The fifth report was released on 16 November 2018. The Working Group is expected to start negotiations on the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict in Yemen in early August.

The Working Group held video teleconferences (VTCs) with the UN country teams in Mali in February and the DRC in May ahead of the mandate renewals of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC. A VTC update from the

country task force on monitoring and reporting team in Nigeria was expected on 31 July. These VTCs provide an opportunity for the Working Group to monitor progress made on protection of children issues and to obtain information that can be used in integrating these issues into mandate renewal resolutions.

The Working Group held a joint meeting on 29 July with the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, with briefings by Gamba and Special Representative on Sexual Violence Pramila Patten.

Key Issues and Options

An overarching issue is how to prevent violations against children, given the evolving nature of conflict and its impact on children.

Resolution 2427 adopted in July 2018 connected the children and armed conflict agenda to the issues of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Among other points, it highlighted integration of children in peace processes and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups. An issue for the Council is assessing efforts to address these matters. The Council could use the regular briefings on UN peace missions to obtain a better understanding of concrete steps being taken and what sort of Council action would be useful.

A continuing issue is maintaining the core work of the children and armed conflict agenda, such as holding the perpetrators of violations against children accountable and implementing action plans, while addressing emerging issues, such as children associated with violent extremism or children born out of sexual violence.

A further issue is deepening the integration of children and armed conflict issues in the Council's work on country-specific situations. One option would be more situation-specific meetings focused on children and armed conflict. In July 2018, Sweden held a meeting on the humanitarian needs of children and armed conflict in Syria, and in March Special Representative Gamba briefed at a meeting on Yemen. More systematically

including a briefing on children in relevant country-specific meetings is an option. Keeping the Council regularly updated on developments in the children and armed conflict agenda through more regular briefings by the Special Representative following a field visit or by the chair of the Working Group following the adoption of conclusions could also be useful.

In the last few years issues have arisen around the accuracy, impartiality and credibility of the list of perpetrators in the annexes of the report. Greater transparency about the listing and delisting criteria may help address these concerns.

A continuing issue is the need for adequate resources for child protection personnel, particularly in light of peacekeeping budget cuts. A connected issue is the shrinking of humanitarian space in some conflicts and how it affects children. Further discussion of these issues within the Working Group could stimulate fresh ideas for addressing them.

Council and Wider Dynamics

There is overall strong continuing support of the children and armed conflict agenda among Council members. However, the difficult dynamics in the Council over issues such as Syria and Myanmar have filtered down to the subsidiary body level, making it hard to get quick consensus on conclusions in some situations. This has led to a slower pace in adopting conclusions in the first half of 2019, but members are still hopeful that they will be able to make up for this by the end of the year.

Members of the Working Group appear to be generally cooperative and supportive of Belgium's efforts to make the negotiations on the Syria and Myanmar conclusions inclusive and open. A number of Council members, including the Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Kuwait and the UK, are actively involved in the Working Group and, together with Belgium, have promoted the integration of children and armed conflict language in country-specific situations on the Council.

Rule of Law/International Humanitarian Law/Protection of Civilians

Expected Council Action

In August, Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz is expected to preside over a briefing on “the promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security: international humanitarian law”. The anticipated briefers are ICRC President Peter Maurer, the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, UN Legal Counsel Miguel de Serpa Soares, and Dr. Annysa Bellal, senior research fellow and strategic adviser on international humanitarian law at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.

Background and Recent Developments

The briefing organised by Poland is to mark the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the four Geneva Conventions, which regulate the conduct of armed conflict and are considered the cornerstone of international humanitarian law. Adopted on 12 August 1949 and universally ratified, the conventions established protections for vulnerable groups in armed conflict—the wounded and sick on land and at sea, prisoners of war, and civilians, including civilians living under occupation.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the inclusion of protection of civilians as an item on the Council’s agenda and the adoption of resolution 1265 of 17 September 1999, the Council’s first resolution on the protection of civilians, which expressed the Council’s deep concern at the erosion of respect for international humanitarian law during armed conflict.

The Council has since reiterated many times the importance of adherence to international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians, but the latest Secretary-General’s report of May shows the continued devastating impact of armed conflict and its conduct on civilians around the world. Throughout 2018, the report notes, tens of thousands of civilians were killed, injured or maimed as a result of direct or indiscriminate attacks by parties to conflicts, including in the Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Niger, Nigeria, Myanmar, Syria and Ukraine. In 2018, the UN recorded the deaths and injuries of

more than 22,800 civilians in attacks in six situations: almost 11,000 civilians in Afghanistan, more than 2,600 in Iraq, 1,300 in Mali, 1,500 in Somalia, 3,700 in South Sudan, and 2,700 in Yemen. In 2018 there were also widespread attacks affecting civilian objects that are protected under international humanitarian law, which may include houses, schools, hospitals, markets, camps for refugees and internally displaced persons, places of worship, and critical infrastructure. Conflict had ruinous effects on children throughout 2018 and conflict-related sexual violence persists, often as part of a broader strategy. Other specific groups, such as journalists, medical personnel and humanitarian actors, are also being targeted by warring parties.

The report notes that these figures, combined with information from other sources, show that parties are failing in their efforts to spare the civilian population and civilian objects in the conduct of military operations, as required by international humanitarian law—or are choosing not to protect them. The allegations include serious, credible and documented allegations, and evidence of disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks and of states failing to take all feasible precautions to prevent harming protected people under the conventions. Some states ignore the law while others claim to be upholding it. The assertions of compliance by some parties to conflict are called into question by increasing numbers of civilian casualties, and damage to and destruction of civilian objects resulting from their operations.

Finally, the report notes that enhancing accountability for such violations, both of individuals and parties to conflict, is vital for ensuring adherence to international humanitarian law. Yet impunity is rampant as the alleged perpetrators of serious crimes are not systematically investigated and prosecuted.

The Council discussed the promotion and strengthening of the rule of law, with a focus on implementing international humanitarian law obligations, on 1 April, in a meeting chaired by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock, Maurer, and Harvard Law School Professor of Practice

Naz Modirzadeh briefed the Council. An Arrria-formula meeting on protecting humanitarian and medical personnel, chaired by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, was held earlier that day.

Modirzadeh expressed concern that counter-terrorism measures may be interpreted and applied in ways that might undermine humanitarian actors and actions. She noted, for example, that providing impartial medical care to wounded fighters and life-saving goods and services to civilian populations under the de facto control of non-state parties would be characterised by some states as illegitimate and unlawful, using a counterterrorism perspective. She stressed the importance of language contained in resolution 2462 of 28 March on the financing of terrorism which demands that states ensure that their counter-terrorism measures comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law. (The resolution also decided that states shall ensure that their domestic laws establish serious criminal offenses for the wilful provision or collection of funds with the intention that the funds should be used, or in the knowledge that they are to be used, for the benefit of terrorist organisations or individual terrorists for any purpose.)

Key Issues and Options

The overarching issue is whether, and how, thematic discussions about the protection of civilians and international humanitarian law can be translated into concrete measures to mitigate the suffering of civilians in armed conflicts around the world. In this sense, it is important for the Council to consider how this meeting, marking the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, can contribute to their implementation.

A key challenge for the Council is ensuring that compliance with international humanitarian law, and accountability for gross violations of this, as well as other international crimes, feature in its consideration of country-specific issues.

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE RULE OF LAW [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2462](#) (28 March 2019) was on combatting the financing of terrorism. [S/RES/1265](#) (17 September 1999) was the Council’s first thematic resolution on protection of civilians in armed conflict, condemning targeting of civilians, calling for respect for international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law and expressing willingness to take measures to ensure compliance and to consider how peacekeeping mandates might better address the negative impact of conflict on civilians. [Secretary-General’s Report S/2019/373](#) (7 May 2019) was the annual report on protection of civilians, which included a section on “missing persons”. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8499](#) (1 April 2019) was a briefing by ICRC President Peter Maurer and Harvard Law School Professor of Practice Naz Modirzadeh on the promotion and strengthening of the rule of law, with a focus on international humanitarian law.

Rule of Law/International Humanitarian Law/Protection of Civilians

Council and Wider Dynamics

Poland sees the 70th anniversary of the conventions as an opportunity to highlight their contemporary relevance, promote their implementation, and reaffirm the Council's commitment to ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law more generally without focusing on specific country situations or any subtopic of international humanitarian law.

Being universally ratified, the importance of implementing the Geneva Conventions is a consensual issue in the Council. Furthermore,

there is general awareness among Council members of the devastating impact that armed conflict has had on civilians in recent years and the considerable implementation gap. Nevertheless, despite general agreement on the importance of international humanitarian law, divisions among members affect discussions and approaches towards the protection of civilians thematically and in the context of specific conflicts. The P3 and other members tend to stress accountability measures and sanctions as mechanisms for leveraging compliance with international

humanitarian law whereas other members, such as China and Russia, tend to be more circumspect about using such enforcement measures in light of their emphasis on state sovereignty. In addition, political differences and alliances with opposing belligerents among Council members, particularly among the P5, have hindered the Council's ability to play an effective role in protecting civilians in conflicts on the Council's agenda, especially in Syria and Yemen.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In August, 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

The intensification of hostilities in north-western Syria continues. Even though this was considered one of the four “de-escalation” areas agreed by the Astana guarantors (Iran, Russia and Turkey) in 2017, Syrian and Russian air strikes as well as ground attacks have continued. A Council-listed terrorist group that controls a large part of the territory, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, has also engaged in attacks.

Since the recrudescence of attacks in late April, more than 400 civilians have been killed, many more have been injured, and 440,000 people have been displaced within Syria's north-west. Attacks on health care facilities have persisted. The UN has confirmed 45 incidents affecting 35 health facilities since the beginning of the year, and other facilities have partially or totally suspended activities for fear of being attacked. Several health facilities were hit on 10 July, including the Ma'arat National Hospital, one of the largest in the area, whose coordinates had been deconflicted—shared with the parties in order to avoid attacks. Briefing the Council on 25 June, Under-Secretary-General for

Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock had specifically asked that this hospital be spared from harm. The Secretary-General condemned the air strikes and said that perpetrators of serious violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable.

At the request of the humanitarian penholders on Syria (Belgium, Germany and Kuwait), the Council was briefed on 18 July under “any other business” on ongoing air strikes affecting civilians in north-west Syria, including strikes on medical facilities and medical workers. At the meeting, Lowcock asked Council members to take action. He also called on the parties to end the killing of civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure, to investigate breaches of international humanitarian law, and to ensure access to areas currently inaccessible to humanitarian assistance.

The humanitarian penholders proposed press elements echoing the statement issued by the Secretary-General, but not all Council members were able to agree. Divergent positions among Council members on the military operations in the north-west have prevented the emergence of a unified position. Speaking to the press after the meeting, Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia questioned whether some of the attacks on health care facilities had taken place at all.

Beyond the north-west, the humanitarian situation remains critical in other parts of the

country. At a press conference on 18 July in Geneva, Najat Rochdi, the Senior Humanitarian Adviser to the Special Envoy for Syria, said that the situation in the Al-Hol camp in north-eastern Syria is unsustainable for the approximately 70,000 people sheltered there, the vast majority of whom are Syrian and Iraqi women and children. Furthermore, some 25,000 internally displaced people remain in need of humanitarian and protection assistance in the makeshift settlement of Rukban, near the border with Jordan.

In north-eastern Syria, there has been heightened tension between Turkey and its allies regarding the area held by the Kurdish YPG militia, which is part of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The situation has become increasingly fragile following the December 2018 announcement by the US that it would withdraw its troops from Syria.

On 27 June, Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen briefed the Council on his efforts to revive the Syrian-led and -owned political process. He said that international discussions and cooperation can contribute to this process and declared his intention to convene a meeting in Geneva bringing together all key international players, such as the Astana guarantors, the Small Group (Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UK and the US) and China.

The Identification and Investigation Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of

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/2019/541 (27 June 2019) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8567 (27 June 2019) was a briefing on the political process in Syria. S/PV.8561 (25 June 2019) was a briefing on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

Syria

Chemical Weapons, 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, became operational in June 2019. It has identified a non-exhaustive provisional list of nine incidents on which it intends to focus its investigative work. The OPCW has made public that Syria has denied visas and refused to submit confidential information to the members of the team.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 41st session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) received an oral update on 2 July from the chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, who emphasised that the “violent conflict in Syria is not over, nor are its devastating effects on the Syrian people”. He highlighted that over the previous few months, dozens of health facilities were either damaged or destroyed and that schools, markets, and camps for internally displaced persons continue to be struck by both aerial and ground offensives. More than 300,000 individuals have been internally displaced in the north-west of the country over the past three months, and over 6.6 million internally displaced persons countrywide face “appalling squalor and deprivation”, he said. Lack of security and guarantees concerning housing, land, and property rights were described as the largest obstacles to displaced civilians and refugees who wish to return. On 12 July, the HRC adopted a resolution that deplors the fact that the conflict in Syria continues in its ninth year (A/HRC/41/L.25). Among other things, it welcomed Security Council resolution 2474 on missing persons adopted on 11 June and called on parties to the armed

conflict “to take all appropriate measures to actively search for persons reported missing, to enable the return of their remains, and to account for persons reported missing”. The HRC resolution was adopted with 26 votes in favour, seven votes against (including Security Council member China) and 14 abstentions (including Security Council member South Africa).

Key Issues and Options

Despite international engagement supporting the establishment of the constitutional committee, this has yet to take place. It remains an open question whether efforts on the political process will yield results, considering the divisions in the Council, 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 could best support the prospects for a political process based on resolution 2254.

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 prevent a full-fledged military offensive in Idlib.

The Council could suggest that the working group on detainees, abductees, handover of bodies and identification of missing persons—which was set up in December 2017 and 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 with 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 threats of 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

Members’ positions on Syria appear entrenched, with their significant differences reflected in approaches to the situation in north-western Syria and in the Council’s inability to react unequivocally to serious violations of international humanitarian law. The clear divisions on the three areas through which the Council engages on the conflict—humanitarian situation, political process and chemical weapons—continue to hamper an effective Council response.

Belgium, Germany and Kuwait are co-penholders on humanitarian issues in Syria.

UNOCA (Central Africa)

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council will hold consultations to discuss the strategic review of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), due by 1 August. Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita is expected to participate. An outcome addressing the conclusions of the review is possible.

The mandate of UNOCA expires on 31 August 2021.

Key Recent Developments

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 2019 about new or refocused priorities as well as areas that could be improved. The Council expressed its intention to consider these

recommendations, including any proposed changes to the mandate, by 31 August.

On 4 June, Special Representative and head of UNOCA François Louncény Fall briefed the Security Council on the Secretary-General’s semi-annual report on UNOCA. The briefing was followed by consultations. Fall expressed confidence that the findings of the ongoing UNOCA strategic review would contribute to enhancing UNOCA’s

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNOCA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2463 (29 March 2019) renewed MONUSCO’s mandate until 20 December 2019. **Security Council Presidential Statements 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/2019/498** (17 June 2019) was the report on MINUSCA. S/2019/430 (24 May 2019) was the semi-annual report on UNOCA. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8558** (20 June 2019) was the briefing by Mankeur Ndiaye, the Special Representative and head of MINUSCA. S/PV.8538 (4 June 2019) was a briefing by François Louncény Fall, Special Representative and head of UNOCA.

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effectiveness and its role in preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding, in close cooperation with relevant UN entities.

Fall also spoke about several situations in the region. On the terrorist group Boko Haram, he noted that it has intensified its attacks on Cameroon and Chad since late 2018, killing nearly 100 civilians and members of the security forces. Despite the commendable efforts of the affected countries, he continued, the terrorist group still poses a security threat to Central Africa and beyond. He said that the Lord's Resistance Army is an ongoing threat to peace and security in Central Africa, particularly in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On Cameroon, he noted that the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate. Since late 2016, there has been unrest in Cameroon's anglophone north-western and south-western 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, Fall said. He noted that frequent clashes between secessionist armed groups and national defence and security forces have resulted in many civilian casualties, while about 530,000 people are internally displaced and more than 30,000 have taken refuge in Nigeria. The latest UNOCA report notes that an estimated 1,850 people, including civilians, separatist fighters and government forces, had been killed since September 2017, and human rights violations have been committed by security forces and rebel groups. School closures, multiple abductions of students and teachers, movement restrictions, and incidents of sexual and gender-based violence contributed to a climate of fear and intimidation, negatively affected local economies and access to basic social services, and significantly increased protection risks. The report adds that there has been no major progress towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis through dialogue.

The situation in Cameroon has been of particular interest to some Council members. 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 of underprivileged groups in Cameroon; and Father Paul Fru Njokikang, director of Caritas for the Archdiocese of Bamenda in the north-western region of Cameroon, briefed.

Recent developments concerning situations covered by UNOCA include:

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. A new government with representatives from all armed groups was formed on 22 March. The Council was last briefed on CAR on 20 June by Mankeur Ndiaye, the Special Representative and head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA). European External Action Service Managing Director for Africa Koen Vervaeke and AU Special Representative and head of the AU Office in the CAR Matias Bertino Matondo also briefed.

On 17 July, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Ebola crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) a "public health emergency of international concern". Thus far, WHO has refrained from recommending any travel restrictions because of the outbreak. The second-largest outbreak of Ebola on record has surpassed 2,500 confirmed cases in the DRC since August 2018. More than 1,600 people have died. The first cases of Ebola in Goma, the capital of North Kivu province with a population of over a million people, were reported in July. At press time, Council members were scheduled to hold an informal interactive dialogue on Ebola in the DRC on 31 July.

The 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. (For more on Burundi, see the brief in this issue of the Monthly Forecast.)

Key Issues and Options

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

After receiving UNOCA's strategic review, the Council may adopt an outcome document expressing its views on its recommendations and suggested priorities or send a letter to the Secretary-General taking note of the strategic review.

Council members may continue to use the UNOCA briefing to call attention to the deteriorating situation in Cameroon and suggest ways to increase the Council's engagement, such as 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.

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.

During the last few UNOCA meetings, several Council members have focused their interventions on the situation in Cameroon, but there have been contrasting views on the Council's engagement on this issue. During the 4 June briefing, the UK and the US devoted much of their statements to Cameroon. The UK said that there is a "real risk of a long-term, intractable conflict in Cameroon, which could have a negative impact on fragile regional stability, with implications for wider international peace and security". The US expressed concern about human rights abuses and violations in the affected areas amidst reports of attacks on civilians, including extrajudicial killings. Russia has taken the view in recent meetings that the Council should only intervene if requested by Cameroon. On 4 June, it urged all parties to show restraint, noting that the conflict is an

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internal one and that a solution will be found in “national dialogue, with respect for human rights and the rule of law”.

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 about Cameroon during the 4 June meeting, the US referred to the strategic review of UNOCA’s mandate, saying that

the review should ensure that the mandate “is focused on the most pressing challenges in the Central African region”.

The UK is the penholder on UNOCA.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council will hold its monthly briefing on Yemen with Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock is likely to update the Council on the humanitarian situation.

The 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee is also expected to consider the Yemen Panel of Experts’ mid-term update. Resolution 2456, which renewed the Yemen sanctions regime in February, requested that the panel submit the update to the committee by 28 July.

Key Recent Developments

Implementation of the December 2018 Stockholm Agreement continues to be stalled, including its main component, the mutual redeployment of Houthi rebel and Yemeni government forces from the port city of Hodeidah and two nearby smaller ports. While a fragile, frequently violated ceasefire continues in Hodeidah governorate, fighting persists on other front lines, and in July the Houthis continued a campaign of drone attacks against Saudi Arabia.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), which has served as a leading partner with Saudi Arabia in the coalition supporting the Yemeni government, began reducing its military presence in Yemen. This includes withdrawing from Hodeidah, where the UAE led government-affiliated forces during last year’s offensive against the Houthi-held city and ports.

On 14 and 15 July, the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC), chaired by the UN and created to oversee the ceasefire and redeployment of forces set out in the Hodeidah agreement, held its first joint meeting since February with Yemeni government and Houthi representatives, on a ship in the Red Sea. The parties agreed on the

concept of operations for phase two redeployments, meant to demilitarize Hodeidah city. But, as indicated in the RCC chair’s 15 July statement about the meeting, proceeding with implementation of any further redeployments depends on the sides’ agreeing on “local security forces, local authorities and [port] revenues”.

When Griffiths briefed the Council on 18 July (via video teleconference from Amman), he said that resolving the questions of composition of local security forces to take over security functions in Hodeidah and of the management and use of port revenue represented “a major hurdle”. Griffiths said that “any solution of this issue is a temporary one since a more permanent solution to this issue lies in the comprehensive agreement to be negotiated by the parties later”. He stressed the importance of preventing Yemen from being drawn into the regional tensions involving Iran.

During the same meeting, Lowcock highlighted that a funding shortage was stressing the ability of relief operations to address the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. He indicated that this was because Saudi Arabia and the UAE had provided “only a modest proportion” of the \$1.5 billion that they had pledged to the 2019 humanitarian response plan, which was just 34 percent funded. UN agencies were scaling back activities and in two months were expected to close 21 key programmes, according to Lowcock. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), briefed on the WFP’s decision to suspend its general food assistance in Sana’a city on 20 June because of Houthi diversion of food aid for profit. While Beasley said that WFP negotiations with the Houthis were close to producing an agreement to rectify the matter, at press time,

the WFP had yet to announce a deal.

General Michael Lollesgaard, who has headed the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) and chaired the RCC since February, informed members during consultations that he would no longer continue in the position. Lollesgaard’s six-month contract is to end in early August. The UN has not yet announced his replacement.

Regarding UNMHA, on 15 July the Council adopted resolution 2481, renewing the mission’s mandate for six months until 15 January 2020.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 12 July, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed alarm over the imposition of the death penalty by the Specialised First Instance Criminal Court in Sana’a on 30 people, “most of whom are academics, students and politicians affiliated with the Islah party that has been critical of the Houthis”. The spokesperson added that the “UN Human Rights Office has received credible information suggesting that many of those convicted were subjected to arbitrary or unlawful detention, as well as torture and other ill-treatment in custody”.

Key Issues and Options

Implementing, and salvaging, the Stockholm Agreement, which also includes a prisoner exchange and statement of understanding to de-escalate fighting in the city of Taiz, remains a key issue. On Hodeidah, the Yemeni government insists that local security forces that are to replace Houthi and government troops be led by government personnel, and more recently it has claimed that it should be able to appoint new local authorities. For the Houthis, this would be a way for the government to take control of the city without having to fight for it militarily. Resuming peace talks, to focus on a comprehensive political solution, has been delayed until there is

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2481 (15 July 2019) renewed the mandate of UNMHA until 15 January 2020. S/RES/2456 (26 February 2019) renewed the Yemen sanctions regime. Secretary-General’s Report S/2019/453 (3 June 2019) was on children and armed conflict in Yemen. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8578 (18 July 2019) was a briefing on Yemen.

Yemen

more progress in implementing the Stockholm Agreement. The difficulty in resolving the question of local security forces, however, is very much a political issue linked to future power-sharing arrangements to be addressed in peace talks.

Continuing Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia and fighting on Yemen's other front lines risk unravelling the Stockholm process. The UN reports over 30 front lines with active fighting. Wider regional tensions with Iran also risk involving Yemen and worsening the conflict.

The humanitarian situation remains critical, with conditions described by Lowcock during the 18 July briefing as worsening for most Yemenis. According to OCHA, 10 million Yemenis require food aid to survive. Access restrictions and interference are most prevalent in Houthi-held northern areas where the majority of Yemen's population lives, though bureaucratic impediments by the government and the coalition also hamper response efforts. A related issue is the need for the parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law amidst widespread abuses

during the conflict and heavy civilian casualties. At press time, the Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict was expected to begin negotiating conclusions on Yemen towards the end of July, based on the Secretary-General's 3 June report on children and armed conflict in Yemen, which covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2018.

Council members may issue a press statement, which the Council could elevate as a presidential statement, calling for the parties to further implement the Stockholm Agreement by resolving outstanding issues over local security forces and revenues; to de-escalate violence, including the halting of cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia; and welcoming recent UAE redeployments. Another possibility is for Council members to request the Secretary-General to explore options for deploying international forces to provide local security in Hodeidah, an idea floated by one Council member during the July consultations.

Council Dynamics

Council members have been united in seeking to support the Special Envoy and his

mediation efforts. In recent months, the P5, through their ambassadors to Yemen, have coordinated messaging to pressure the respective sides.

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 a 15 May briefing that it would be willing to host a new round of consultations. Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Peru and Poland sometimes coordinate their positions on Yemen, especially on humanitarian issues.

Since the escalation of tensions between the US and Iran, the US has used increasingly strong language about Iran's involvement in Yemen in support of the Houthis. A 24 June statement by the US Secretary of State described the war as "conceived of and perpetuated by" Iran.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen. Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru) chairs the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee.

Debate on "Maintenance of international peace and security: Challenges to peace and security in the Middle East"

Expected Council Action

The August Council presidency, Poland, is organising a debate on "Maintenance of international peace and security: Challenges to peace and security in the Middle East". Briefers from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are expected to participate. It is also likely that countries from the region and some regional organisations will be invited.

The debate is aimed at taking a holistic view of conflict in the region, focusing especially on their humanitarian and human rights aspects.

Key Recent Developments

Middle East issues are a consistent presence

on the Council's programme of work. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict continues to be discussed every month at the Council under the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question", with a quarterly open debate. For several years now, the Council has received monthly briefings on three aspects—political, humanitarian and chemical weapons-related—of the conflict in Syria under the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East". Under the same item, the Council has received frequent briefings on the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen. Other situations in the region that are a focus of considerable Council attention, including at times outside of the regular reporting schedule, include Iraq, with regular briefings on UNAMI and on the UN Investigative

Team for Accountability of Da'esh, and Iran, with semi-annual meetings held under the agenda item "non-proliferation". The Council visited Iraq in June, to show support for and gain a better understanding of the difficult recovery process, especially after retaking its territory from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. With respect to Iran, tensions have recently escalated around the Strait of Hormuz and additional meetings have been held, usually in consultations.

The Council primarily considers conflicts in the Middle East through country-specific contexts. It rarely discusses common threats, challenges and dynamics affecting the region as a whole. However, some Council members have recently begun exploring ideas and approaches to the Middle East with a view to

UN DOCUMENTS ON MIDDLE EAST [Security Council Letter S/2018/524](#) (1 June 2018) transmitted Russia's concept note for its debate on the Middle East and North Africa held 25 June 2018. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8293](#) (25 June 2018) was a debate on the theme "Maintaining international peace and security: comprehensive review of the situation in the Middle East and North Africa".

Debate on “Maintenance of international peace and security: Challenges to peace and security in the Middle East”

changing the status quo of current conflicts. The August debate follows in the footsteps of these approaches.

On 21 March, France and Germany organised an informal interactive dialogue on “Fostering dialogue and cooperation as a response to conflicts and common challenges in the Middle East and North Africa” to explore better ways to take into account regional dynamics, root causes of conflict in the region, and common security challenges. Speakers included representatives of the International Peace Institute, International Crisis Group, and the UN Development Programme. In their concept note, the organisers said that the informal interactive dialogue sought to “provide space for cross-cutting discussions on the common threats and challenges in the Middle East and North Africa and have Council members reiterate their support to international law, multilateralism and peaceful settlement of conflicts, particularly through the UN’s mediation role”. France and Germany also wanted to brainstorm “ways for the Council to overcome divisions and tackle collectively regional challenges, through promoting regional dialogue and cooperation, and, in each country of the region, strong state institutions that are respectful of human rights and the rule of law”.

In Council meetings over the past months, Russia has called for an inclusive regional security architecture to promote security and cooperation in the Persian Gulf and beyond. In June 2018, Russia organised a debate during its Council presidency to focus on the root causes of the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and ways to address them. Russia’s Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Vershinin, chaired the debate; in addition to Council members, 23 countries and regional organisations participated.

Key Issues and Options

The participants are expected to address a

wide range of issues, given the broad geographical and thematic scope of the meeting. At press time, it seemed that the meeting would be focused on the Middle East and would not include discussion of North Africa. While previous Council meetings have explored the root causes and symptoms of conflict, Poland is expected to suggest a different approach. It would like to see this debate consider the opportunities created by initiatives on the ground—essentially, the openings made possible by people-to-people interactions and developing local businesses to increase economic activity. Instead of conflict, Poland would like to highlight the contributions of the Middle East through the centuries and focus on how the Council and the international community can assist in changing the current situations. In this regard, one issue for this meeting is how the Council can promote inter-communal and inter-societal exchanges to foster dialogue and understanding in the region. For this, Poland may consider having civil society briefers that are involved in such initiatives.

Another issue is how the Council can develop a holistic, consensus-driven approach to addressing the challenges of the region. Some members, in particular Russia in its concept note for the June 2018 meeting, have expressed the wish for similar discussions to lead to the development of “a common, unifying, non-confrontational agenda for the Security Council”. It suggested many options, such as “a genuinely global front against terrorism and all its manifestations” and the launching of a new regional dialogue initiative similar to the Helsinki Process in the 1970s.

At press time, Poland had not yet decided whether there would be an outcome. If creating a Council product proves too difficult—which given Council members’ varied positions on these issues it might be—Poland could consider a presidential summary of the meeting to put views on the record. This has

been used in other meetings, such as open debates on working methods. An additional possibility may be a visiting mission to the region. Kuwait and Russia have suggested in the past a visit to Israel-Palestine; it could be expanded to include other Middle East countries. The Israel-Palestine visit suggestion has been met with heavy opposition, however.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The differences between Council members on individual files will come up again at this meeting. However, Poland is likely to seek to encourage Council members to move beyond their differences and explore in their statements how the Council can better consider cross-cutting issues and common security challenges. It is possible members could identify areas of common interest in which the Council could achieve unity and contribute more effectively to regional peace and security.

Some members may share their views on how military and political interference in the internal affairs of states contributes to destabilisation, and the importance of reaffirming commitment to the supremacy of state sovereignty and rejecting military approaches to resolving crises. They may also criticise unilateral action and call for coordinated approaches approved by the Security Council. Some may also raise the need to respect cultural diversity and the historical context of particular situations.

Other members may highlight respect for human rights, adherence to international humanitarian law, and accountability as effective means of addressing potential and unfolding crises. These members may further emphasise the role of women and youth in preventing and resolving conflicts and underscore the need to address social and economic inequalities that can serve as triggers of conflict. Some members may also underscore the role of mediation, including the importance of the Secretary-General’s good offices.

Somalia

Expected Council Action

In August, the Security Council will have a briefing and consultations on the report on the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSAM). The Council may also hear an update from the Secretary-General in a separate meeting on ongoing developments towards the normalisation of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea.

The mandate for UNSAM expires on 31 March 2020. The mandate authorising the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) expires on 31 May 2020.

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

The armed group Al-Shabaab remains active and dangerous. On 12 July, it claimed responsibility for an attack on the Asasey Hotel in Kismayo, Somalia. A suicide bomber blew up the entrance to the hotel using a car packed with explosives, and a 14-hour gun battle followed, with Al-Shabaab members taking over different parts of the hotel. Twenty-seven people were killed and 56 injured. (On 15 July, the Council issued a press statement that condemned the terrorist attack in Kismayo.) Additionally, a suicide bomber killed 11 government officials when she blew herself up in the office of the mayor of Mogadishu, Abdirahman Omar Osman (who was injured in the attack) on 24 July.

According to recent reports, Al-Shabaab's numbers are estimated to be between 5,000 and 10,000, controlling roughly 20 percent of Somalia. The AU-UN joint assessment of AMISOM, which the Secretary-General sent in a 13 May letter to the Council, said that the increase in the number and frequency of Al-Shabaab attacks in Mogadishu is a dangerous security development. This increase

was also noted in the Secretary-General's report of 15 May. According to UNSAM's Human Rights and Protection Group, 757 civilian casualties were recorded between 14 December 2018 and 4 May, 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.

The resolution renewing AMISOM's authorisation was adopted unanimously on 31 May, as was the UNSAM mandate renewal on 27 March. AMISOM's mandate remains largely unchanged. The main issue during negotiations appears to have arisen around the possible drawdown of AMISOM troop levels. The initial draft circulated by the UK, the penholder on Somalia, proposed a reduction of 1,000 troops by the end of December, but a compromise was reached in light of objections by the three African Council members (A3). The resolution established that a 1,000-troop drawdown must occur by the end of February 2020, but at the same time said that the Council will consider adjusting its decision based on the readiness of Somali security forces to take over responsibilities from AMISOM and a threat assessment to be conducted jointly by the AU, UN and Somalia before the planned drawdown.

In addition, while maintaining the minimum number of police personnel at 1,040, the resolution specifies that a temporary surge in police personnel will be considered by the Council if the Somali security plan for the elections, which has yet to be developed by the government, calls for such an addition. (Under the mandate, AMISOM may add police personnel within the troop ceiling set by the Council.)

The AU-UN review said that elections in Somalia are a key indicator of progress on the country's path towards becoming a fully functioning federal state. However, there has been little movement on necessary

preparations. AMISOM concluded a four-day workshop on electoral security and dispute resolution for Somali senior government officials involved in election planning in June in Uganda, but the electoral law that would allow for the registration of parties and candidates for the 2020 elections has not yet been adopted. These would be Somalia's first free and fair elections since 1969.

On 30 May, James Swan, a former US ambassador to Djibouti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was named the new special representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNSAM. He also served as US Special Representative for Somalia from 2011 to 2013. Since his appointment, he has been traveling in Somalia and the region. Members will be interested to hear his first impressions.

The Djibouti and Eritrea Developments

Eritrea has been a concern for the Council since 2000, largely in the context of its border dispute with Ethiopia. Eritrea also then became involved in the situation in Somalia, and on 18 May 2009, the Council adopted a presidential statement requesting the Somalia Sanctions Monitoring Group to follow up on "concern over reports that Eritrea has supplied arms to those opposing the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in breach of the UN arms embargo." The arms embargo in Somalia had been put in place in July 2002 and expanded in 2008. IGAD and the AU called in May 2009 for Eritrea to be placed under targeted sanctions due to its activities affecting Somalia and the region. Meanwhile, since February 2008, Eritrea had also been involved in a border dispute with Djibouti which escalated to an armed conflict in June 2008. Due to a lack of cooperation from Eritrea—ranging from ignoring Secretary-General's calls for restraint to outright refusal to allow a Security Council fact-finding mission to visit the country in July-August 2008—the Council imposed an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on Eritrea in December 2009 in resolution 1907 and decided to expand the mandates of the Somalia Sanctions Committee and its Monitoring Group to include the

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2472](#) (31 May 2019) renewed the authorisation of AMISOM until 31 May 2020 and authorised reductions to achieve a maximum level of 19,626 uniformed AMISOM personnel by 28 February 2020. [S/RES/2461](#) (27 March 2019) renewed the mandate of UNSAM 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 authorisation of AMISOM until 31 May 2019. [S/RES/1907](#) (23 December 2009) imposed an arms embargo and targeted sanctions against Eritrea. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2009/15](#) (18 May 2009) called on the Sanctions Monitoring Group to investigate reports that Eritrea had supplied arms to insurgent groups in Somalia. (It also condemned the renewed fighting by Al-Shabaab and other extremists in Somalia and demanded an immediate end to the violence.) [Secretary-General's Reports S/2019/393](#) (15 May 2019) was the previous report on Somalia. [S/2019/154](#) (19 February 2019) was the most recent report from the Secretary-General of developments towards the normalisation of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea. [Security Council Letter 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. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13883](#) (15 July 2019) condemned the terrorist attack in Kismayo on 12 July 2019.

Somalia

measures against Eritrea. The resolution also demanded that Eritrea acknowledge its border dispute with Djibouti and engage in talks, as well as share information on missing Djibouti soldiers apparently taken prisoner by Eritrea.

Following the signing of a peace agreement on 9 July 2018, ending a 20-year conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the subsequent signing of the Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation on 16 September 2018 by the two countries, the Council began considering the possibility of lifting the Eritrea sanctions. On 6 September 2018 Eritrea and Djibouti announced the restoration of diplomatic ties, following a trilateral high-level meeting with Ethiopia, and the presidents of the two states met in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. On 14 November 2018, in resolution 2444, the Council lifted the arms embargo, travel bans, asset freezes and targeted sanctions on Eritrea. The resolution also said that, notwithstanding the lifting of sanctions on Eritrea, the Council would continue monitoring the Djibouti-Eritrea relationship and asked the Secretary-General to report on the situation every six months. The next report is due on 15 August.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The Chair of the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), briefed the Council in consultations on 26 June. Along with the 120-day report, the current tension between the committee's Panel of Experts and Somalia was discussed. At press time, the Panel of Experts had been unable to gain permission to make a formal visit to Somalia. The relationship between Somalia and the UN, complicated since the expulsion of former Special Representative Nicholas Haysom from Somalia in early 2019, remains challenging.

In compliance with resolution 2444, the UN Secretariat visited Somalia in the last week of

June to prepare a technical assessment of the arms embargo. A report is due by 31 July, and Council members may discuss it in their August meetings. Somalia would like to see the embargo lifted.

Key Issues and Options

The key immediate issue for the Council regarding Somalia is the urgency of adopting the electoral law, to allow enough time for preparations. The Council could adopt a presidential statement to encourage Somalia to act quickly in this regard. The Council president could also meet bilaterally with the Somali ambassador to underline the Council's view on the importance and urgency of this matter.

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

This is the first meeting on Somalia under the new schedule put in place through resolution 2461, which calls for reports every 90 days instead of every 120 days as in the past. The goal is to maintain attention on Somalia's efforts to achieve political benchmarks.

Regarding the Djibouti-Eritrea situation, the Council will be interested in receiving an update on the most recent developments, and particularly in hearing whether the Secretary-General believes that progress has been achieved in the six months since his last report. The Council could issue a press statement acknowledging steps taken and calling for more actions from the parties as they move towards normalisation.

Council and Wider Dynamics

In the past, including during last year's negotiations on resolution 2431, renewing the authorisation of AMISOM, positions on the pace of troop reductions reflected the underlying divisions among Council members. This happened again in May. AU Special Representative for Somalia and head of AMISOM Francisco Caetano José Madeira stated during the briefing on 22 May that the AU is opposed to any AMISOM drawdown at this point. The A3 supported this view during negotiations, cautioning against downsizing AMISOM prematurely on the basis that Somalia is not currently ready to take over greater security responsibilities. The A3 broke silence on a draft resolution, asserting that any drawdown would be a threat to Somalia and that any troop reductions should be based on a threat assessment to be undertaken beforehand.

The P3 (France, the UK and the US) supported reductions by the end of 2019, but other Council members, such as China, Kuwait and Russia, expressed support for the A3/AU position as they felt the views of the region should be respected. Compromise eventually led to the resolution that was adopted.

The AU continues to press the Council to do more to ensure predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM. In addition to the logistical support provided through the UN Support Office in Somalia and voluntary contributions from the UN trust fund for AMISOM, several Council members have been willing to consider providing direct funding to AMISOM through UN assessed contributions. The US, however, remains opposed to the idea.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is expected to receive a briefing on the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in accordance with resolution 2479, which requested the

Secretary-General to provide the Security Council with an oral update about the situation on the ground 60 days after the adoption of the resolution.

The mandate of UNAMID expires on 31

October 2019.

Key Recent Developments

On 5 July, following mediation efforts by the AU and Ethiopia, the Transitional Military

UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR Security Council Resolution S/RES/2479 (27 June 2019) renewed UNAMID's mandate until 31 October 2019. **Secretary-General's Report S/2019/445** (30 May 2019) was the strategic assessment of UNAMID. **Security Council Letter S/2019/517** (17 June 2019) transmitted a decree of the TMC by which it was decided to use the team sites handed over by UNAMID for civilian purposes. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8566** (27 June 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2479. **S/PV.8549** (14 June 2019) was a briefing on UNAMID.

Sudan (Darfur)

Council (TMC) and the civilian-led opposition coalition, the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), reached a preliminary agreement towards the formation of a Transitional Sovereign Council to lead the country for a period of three years and three months ahead of elections. It was agreed that the body would comprise 11 members, with five representatives from each side and the final member to be agreed by the parties, and that the TMC would chair the body for 21 months followed by the FFC for 18 months. The parties also agreed to set up an independent committee to investigate the crackdown on protestors in Khartoum on 3 June, which reportedly resulted in over 100 civilian deaths. On 17 July, the parties initialled a constitutional document dealing with the various transitional subsidiary organs that would be established. At press time, planned talks between the parties to discuss remaining aspects of a final agreement were cancelled by the FFC following the reported killing of five children during protests in the northern city of El-Obeid on 29 July.

On 27 June, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2479, extending UNAMID's mandate until 31 October. The resolution was a technical rollover of the mandate set out in 2429 adopted on 13 July 2018 and did not authorise any changes to the role of the mission or any further reductions in its troop and police ceiling. Resolution 2479 also requested the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission to provide the Council with a special report by 30 September containing an assessment of the situation on the ground and recommendations for the appropriate course of action regarding the drawdown of UNAMID, as well as a joint AU-UN political strategy detailing options for a follow-on mechanism to UNAMID.

The idea of rolling over the mission's mandate for less than a year without any changes was put forward by the UK and Germany in their statements at the last UNAMID briefing on 14 June. The UK said this approach "would provide time for progress on the broader political situation...time for the issue regarding the handover of UNAMID's team sites to be resolved, and it would enable the United Nations and the African Union to develop a political strategy to address the outstanding challenges that will remain following UNAMID's departure." Germany expressed a similar view at the briefing, as did several

other Council members. (For more details, see our [What's In Blue](#) story of 26 June.)

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 26 June, Ambassador Joanna Wronecka (Poland), chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, provided the quarterly briefing to Council members on the committee's work, including the joint informal consultations on 21 June with the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee to discuss the presence of Darfuri armed groups in Libya and South Sudan. Wronecka also updated the Council on her intention to visit Sudan, saying that "[g]iven the current political and security situation in the Sudan, the dates for the visit have yet to be determined".

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 July, a joint statement was released by the independent expert on human rights in Sudan, Aristide Nononsi; the special rapporteur on the right to peaceful assembly and association, Clément Nyaletsossi Voule; and the special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye, denouncing several shutdowns of Internet services in Sudan, starting on 3 June. They said it "is in clear violation of international human rights law and cannot be justified under any circumstances". The statement added that "[a]ccess to information and communication services is crucial at times of protests. Restricting or blocking access to Internet services not only adversely affects the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and participation, but it also has severe effects on protesters' demands' regarding economic and social rights".

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is to continue to follow developments in Sudan, including the situation in Darfur, and to assess the possible effects of potential further troop reductions on the security and human rights situations. These assessments are likely to be informed by the oral update from the Secretary-General in August on the situation on the ground and the findings and recommendations of the special report, which members expect to receive by 30 September.

A further issue is to assess progress 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 toward the benchmarks and indicators "to help guide the Security

Council's considerations on the future of UNAMID's mandate". The 30 May strategic assessment report on UNAMID recommended that the benchmarks and indicators "be streamlined to serve as long-term progress indicators, beyond the departure of UNAMID", in three priority areas: developing an updated strategy on the Darfur peace process; strengthening Sudanese rule of law institutions; and long-term support to stabilisation, including durable solutions for internally displaced persons. Council members may be interested in receiving further updates related to progress in this regard.

Council Dynamics

There continue to be differences amongst Council members on the situation in Sudan, including the impact of the current political situation on Darfur, as was again apparent during negotiations on resolution 2479 and the statements made following its adoption on 27 June. The UK said the decision in resolution 2479 "to pause the withdrawal" of UNAMID "recognizes that Darfur is affected by wider instability in the Sudan and that there is a need for the continued protection of civilians in Darfur". The UK called for the Rapid Support Forces (paramilitary forces) to withdraw from all former UNAMID team sites, as committed to by the TMC, and for a transition to a legitimate civilian-led government. If these conditions are not met and the situation in Darfur has not improved by the end of October when UNAMID's mandate is set to expire, a transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding will be unable to continue, the UK said. In its statement the US said that "security in Khartoum is intrinsically tied to security in Darfur," adding that "if negotiations stall or security conditions continue to deteriorate, we will look more closely at the planned UNAMID drawdown." South Africa in its statement thanked Council members "for agreeing that now is not the time to continue the drawdown" of UNAMID. Russia reiterated its call for "refraining from insistent attempts to link the state of affairs in Darfur to the situation evolving in the greater Sudan" and emphasised that it was "opposed to attempts of any kind to change the plan for the mission's drawdown".

The UK and Germany are co-penholders on the issue; Poland chairs the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Expected Council Action

In August, the Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, is expected to brief the Council on the most recent developments in the situation in Iraq and on the two latest Secretary-General's reports—on UNAMI and on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. Both reports are due in August.

UNAMI's mandate expires on 31 May 2020.

Key Recent Developments

Following last year's 12 May parliamentary elections and his 2 October election as president, Kurdish politician Barham Salih, who has held regional and federal office, named independent Shi'a politician Adel Abdul Mahdi as prime minister. The formation of the Iraqi government continues. The position of education minister is still outstanding, with two consecutive female candidates not having received enough votes to be confirmed for the position.

On 28-29 June, Council members conducted a visiting mission to Kuwait and Iraq. In Kuwait, members met with the UNAMI Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Alice Walpole; the head of the ICRC regional delegation for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Omar Odeh; the World Bank resident representative in Kuwait, Ghassan Khoja; the UN resident coordinator in Kuwait, Tarek El-Sheikh; and the Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Sabah. In Iraq, the Council met with the following: Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, President Barham Salih, representatives of the Kurdish Regional Government, Foreign Minister Mohamad Al-Hakim, the leadership of UNAMI, the UN Country Team in Iraq, the UN Investigative Team to

Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), the Iraqi parliament (representatives of political parties as well as minority groups), and members of civil society. Council members held a press conference at the end of the mission and issued a press statement on 30 June. On 11 July, the co-leads of the mission, Kuwait and the US, briefed the Council on the visiting mission.

On 15 July, Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD, gave a briefing to the Council, based on his second report on the activities of UNITAD and further developments since the report's publication in mid-May.

UNITAD was set up through resolution 2379 of 21 September 2017. In it, the Council requested the Secretary-General to establish an investigative team to support Iraqi domestic efforts to hold the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) accountable for crimes it committed in the country "by collecting, preserving, and storing evidence in Iraq of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide". Additionally, UNITAD is responsible for promoting accountability globally for atrocity crimes committed by ISIL in order to counter ISIL narratives that have led people to join the terrorist group. UNITAD is characterised by resolution 2379 as "impartial, independent, and credible", operating within its Terms of Reference, the UN Charter, UN best practices and relevant international law including international human rights law. Support for UNITAD is part of UNAMI's mandate.

In his briefing, Khan addressed the need for evidence collected by his team to lead to fair trials "that will stand the test of time". He elaborated on UNITAD's implementation strategy that was laid out in the second report. The strategy entails three initial areas for investigation, with monthly benchmarks for progress. The three areas are: attacks committed by ISIL against the Yazidi community

in the Sinjar district in August 2014, crimes committed by ISIL in Mosul between 2014 and 2016, and the mass killing of unarmed Iraqi air force cadets from Tikrit Air Academy (also known as "Camp Speicher") in June 2014. On UNITAD's recruitment process, Khan elaborated that his team of 79 staff represents all geographical groups at the UN and that 55 percent are female. He stressed, however, that seconded personnel are "sorely needed". He further reported that UNITAD moved into its official premises in April. In their statements, a few members mentioned the issue of how and where to prosecute foreign terrorist fighters currently on Iraqi soil. Some members also pointed out that the international crimes that UNITAD is mandated to investigate are not incorporated into the domestic legal system of Iraq and are currently prosecuted as terrorist crimes. Khan's next report is due in November.

By late June, the UN's 2019 humanitarian response plan for Iraq of \$701.2 million was funded at 41.1 percent, with \$412.8 million outstanding.

Sanctions-Related Developments

Since May, the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee has removed 56 entities from its sanctions list.

Key Issues and Options

The Council will continue to follow Iraqi progress in forming a government and how the government responds to the Iraqi people's long-held demands for basic services, including water and electricity, across the country.

The Council will also keep monitoring UNITAD's activities. Some members' statements during Khan's 15 July briefing indicated their continuing concerns about the possibility that evidence shared by the team might be used in criminal proceedings in which capital punishment could be imposed. Other members stressed during the briefing that this falls under Iraq's sovereign right, a point shared by Iraq.

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAQ [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2470](#) (21 May 2019) extended the mandate of UNAMI until 31 May 2020. [S/RES/2379](#) (21 September 2017) established an investigative team to collect, store and preserve evidence of ISIL crimes in Iraq. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/1](#) (19 February 2019) 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 the national archives. [Secretary General's Reports S/2019/365](#) (2 May 2019) was on UNAMI. [S/2019/352](#) (29 April 2019) was the 22nd report on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. [Security Council Letter S/2019/407](#) (17 May 2019) was from the Special Adviser and head UNITAD, transmitting the second report on the activities of UNITAD. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8573](#) (15 July 2019) was the second briefing by Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD. [S/PV.8571](#) (11 July 2019) was a briefing on the Security Council's visiting mission to Kuwait and Iraq. [S/PV.8531](#) (21 May 2019) was the latest briefing by the Special Representative and head of UNAMI, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, on the latest Secretary-General's report on UNAMI and the Secretary-General's 21st report on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13869](#) (30 June 2019) was on the Security Council visiting mission to Iraq and Kuwait. [Sanctions Committee Documents SC/13868](#) (28 June 2019) was a press release on the removal of 13 entities from the sanctions list. [SC/13855](#) (24 June 2019) was a press release on the removal of 17 entities from the sanctions list. [SC/13807](#) (14 May 2019) was a press release on the removal of four entities from the sanctions list. [SC/13768](#) (8 April 2019) was a press release on the removal of 13 entities from the sanctions list. [SC/13766](#) (4 April 2019) was a press release on the removal of nine entities from the sanctions list.

Iraq

The mandate of UNITAD will have to be reviewed ahead of 21 September, having been authorised for an initial period of two years by resolution 2379.

As chair of the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee, Poland could seize upon the momentum and political will of Council members and the Iraqi government to advance the delisting of entities and follow up on concrete proposals on lifting the freeze on Iraqi assets.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members remain unanimous in their support for UNAMI, Iraq's post-ISIL reconstruction needs, and the positive development of Iraq-Kuwait relations. Regional dynamics continue to affect Iraq: during the visiting mission, Iraqi stakeholders made clear to Council members that Iraq has no intention of taking sides and becoming a theatre for regional and Iran-US tensions. It was further

emphasised that the country is still at war with ISIL. Turkey continues to have troops stationed in Iraq, over Iraq's objections.

The US is the penholder on Iraq issues in general, and the UK is the penholder on Iraq-Kuwait issues. Ambassador Joanna Wronecka (Poland) is the chair of the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which expires on 31 August.

Key Recent Developments

On 22 July, Council members were briefed in consultations by Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jan Kubiš. Lacroix presented the main findings from the latest Secretary-General's report which noted a lack of progress on disarmament of armed groups. Kubiš emphasised as a positive development the Lebanese parliament's adoption of the 2019 budget. Kubiš also briefed Council members on his regional engagements.

The US has continued its campaign of maximum pressure on Iran and its affiliated entities throughout the region. Lebanon has been affected, given its many links with Iran. In an effort to curb the influence of Hezbollah, on 9 July, the US imposed sanctions on three senior officials of the group—Lebanese parliament members Amin Sherri and Muhammad Hasan Raad, and one of the group's security officials, Wafiq Safa who is Lebanese. The US claims that these individuals exploited their positions within the government to advance both Hezbollah's terrorist activities and Iran's interests.

The sanctions drew a varied response from the Lebanese political establishment. Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri, whose party Amal Movement has been allied with Hezbollah in the parliament, condemned the sanctions, describing them as an assault on

Lebanon. While expressing regret over the sanctions, Lebanese President Michel Aoun said that Lebanon would follow up on this issue with US authorities. Prime Minister Saad Hariri stressed that the sanctions would not affect the work of the parliament.

Hezbollah's bloc in the parliament dismissed the sanctions, saying that they will not change the group's convictions and its behaviour. In a 13 July televised address to his supporters, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah spoke about the wider regional context in light of the escalation of tensions between the US and Iran, saying that the group would back Iran should conflict with the US break out. Furthermore, he said that the US has been trying to open a channel of communication with the group, although he did not provide any details to support this assertion.

Hezbollah made major gains in the 2018 parliamentary elections in Lebanon, winning 12 out of 120 seats in the parliament. Hezbollah has also gained influence in the government, in which three individuals affiliated with group hold cabinet positions. The US has been concerned about Hezbollah's rising influence in Lebanon. During his visit to Lebanon earlier this year, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo publicly warned Lebanese officials to distance themselves from Hezbollah, which the US considers a terrorist organisation.

The US has been heavily invested in efforts to facilitate talks between Israel and Lebanon on the demarcation of their maritime border. Media reports suggest that the process has stalled. Speaker of the Parliament Berri, who is also Lebanon's point person on

this issue, has insisted that talks also include issues related to the land border and that the UN play a lead role in mediation. Israel, on the other hand, has seemed to prefer US mediation and the exclusion of issues related to the land border in the talks. The two sides also differ in their preferences for the timeframe for the negotiations, with Israel favouring a limited timeframe and Lebanon calling for open-ended talks.

Acting US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Satterfield has engaged in shuttle diplomacy between Israel and Lebanon to outline the parameters for eventual talks. On 27 June, Satterfield was confirmed as the US ambassador to Turkey, and it remains unknown whether he will continue his shuttle diplomacy between Israel and Lebanon in his new role.

Women, Peace and Security

Resolution 2433 "requests the Secretary-General and the troop-contributing countries to seek to increase the number of women in UNIFIL, as well as to ensure the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations". Women currently constitute 5 percent of military and 29 percent of civilian peacekeepers in UNIFIL.

Key Issues and Options

Despite the volatile security environment in the region, the situation in UNIFIL's area of operations has remained relatively calm. The Council is concerned, however, about the lack of progress in implementing the main objectives of resolution 1701, including a permanent ceasefire and disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon.

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2433 (30 August 2018) extended UNIFIL's mandate for another year. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) expanded UNIFIL by 15,000 troops and expanded its mandate. **Secretary-General's Report S/2019/574** (17 July 2019) was on the implementation of resolution 1701. **Security Council Press Statement SC/13696** (8 February 2019) welcomed the formation of the new unity government in Lebanon.

Lebanon

A principal problem for the Council is that Hezbollah and other non-state actors still maintain significant amounts of weaponry. This inhibits the government's ability to exercise full authority over its territory, poses a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability, and contravenes its obligations under resolutions 1559 and 1701. A related issue is Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war and the movement of arms from Syria to Hezbollah.

The Council will continue to monitor developments related to the US-mediated talks between Israel and Lebanon on maritime border demarcation. An issue for the Council is to consider whether UNIFIL could play a role in this process.

Council Dynamics

The Council is united in its support for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. The Council has also continued to emphasise that the Lebanese Armed Forces should play a critical role in addressing security challenges in the country.

Council members' positions diverge on the security dynamics in the region and the role of the mission. During the 2018 negotiations on the draft UNIFIL resolution, Russia emphasised that no changes should be made to the mandate of the mission. Most other members, including France, the penholder, also support the view that the mission's tasks and mandate should not change and that the mission contributes to stability in the region. These members are cautious about drastic

changes in the mission's mandate because of their potential impact on the fragile calm that has been maintained in southern Lebanon for over a decade.

The US has taken the view that the mission should play a more active role in confronting the threats it considers most serious in this context: those posed by Iran, Hezbollah and the proliferation of weapons in southern Lebanon. On the political front, the US has raised concerns about Hezbollah's growing role in the new Lebanese government. On the mission's configuration, the US has strongly advocated for a reduction of UNIFIL's Maritime Task Force, leading towards its eventual termination.

France is the penholder on Lebanon.

Mali

Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is due to renew the Mali sanctions regime, which expires on 31 August, as well as the mandate of the Panel of Experts, which expires on 30 September.

The mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) expires on 30 June 2020.

Key Recent Developments

On 28 June, the Council adopted resolution 2480 renewing MINUSMA's mandate. While the mission's primary strategic priority remains to support the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, this resolution created a second strategic priority for MINUSMA focused on the situation in the centre of Mali. In particular, MINUSMA is "to facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive politically-led Malian strategy to protect civilians, reduce intercommunal violence, and re-establish State authority, State presence and basic social services in Central Mali".

Council members have grown increasingly concerned about the deterioration of the security situation beyond the north, which was the initial geographic focus of the mission.

In late March, the Council's visiting mission to Mali coincided with the massacre of 160 Fulani civilians, including women and children, in the village of Ogossagou in central Mali, reportedly by Dogon armed elements (Dozos). Since then, there has been a spate of intercommunal attacks, some retaliatory in nature.

Frustrated by the limited implementation of the 2015 peace and reconciliation agreement, in resolution 2480, the Council specified the progress it is expecting to see in the next year. The identified areas are: constitutional reform; decentralisation; security sector reform; development of the north; and the full, effective and meaningful participation of women.

Sanctions remain one of the critical tools at the disposal of the Council. The resolution expressed the Council's intention to respond with sanctions should these priority measures not be implemented by the end of MINUSMA's mandate in June 2020. Although progress on the implementation of the agreement has been slow, the resolution recognised some positive results over the last year as a result of "some level of political will and international pressure, including through the prospect of

sanctions". The resolution also stressed that listed individuals shall not benefit from any financial, operational or logistical support from UN entities deployed in Mali.

Resolution 2374, unanimously adopted on 5 September 2017, established a targeted sanctions regime on Mali, including the possibility of imposing a travel ban and assets freeze on individuals and entities engaged in actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Mali. On 20 December 2018, the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee imposed a travel ban on three individuals. On 10 July 2019 five additional individuals were banned from travel. The listings were proposed by France and were based on statements included in a confidential annex to reports prepared by the Panel of Experts. Listed individuals include members of the Coordination and Platform coalitions of armed groups and a member of Parliament from the ruling political party. In deciding to list them, the committee highlighted the involvement of some of these individuals in activities to destabilise Mali, including activities funded by organised crime. In August, the committee is expected to consider the final report of the Panel of Experts.

UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2480](#) (28 June 2019) renewed MINUSMA's mandate for one year. [S/RES/2432](#) (30 August 2018) renewed the targeted sanctions regime on Mali and the mandate of the Panel of Experts. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8568](#) (28 June 2019) was the meeting at which resolution 2480 was adopted. [S/PV.8547](#) (12 June 2019) was a briefing by Mahamat Saleh Annadif, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MINUSMA. [Sanctions Committee Document S/2019/137](#) (21 February 2019) was the Panel of Experts' midterm report.

Mali

Regarding the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S), resolution 2480 expressed the Council's support for the provision by MINUSMA of "life support consumables", such as rations and fuel, to all FC-G5S battalions on the condition that the joint force or other partners deliver this support outside Mali and that units receiving such assistance are in strict compliance with the UN human rights due diligence policy. This signals a change from resolution 2391 of 8 December 2017, according to which MINUSMA could support only those FC-G5S forces operating on Malian territory (two of the force's seven battalions).

Key Issues and Options

Following the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate with the addition of a second strategic priority regarding the centre, the challenge will be to implement this mandate while continuing to devote close attention to the

north, without additional troops, and with fewer resources than those originally proposed by the Secretary-General to the Fifth Committee.

Council members could continue bilaterally to pursue ways of increasing pressure on the parties to advance the implementation of the agreement. In pushing for progress in the priority areas identified in resolution 2480, Council members are likely to be mindful that these developments depend as much or more on the engagement and good faith of the parties as on the mission itself.

As the sanctions committee considers additional designations or delisting requests, making sure that sanctions are having the intended effect and changing the behaviour of spoilers, as opposed to further alienating them, is a related issue.

Council Dynamics

During the negotiations on resolution 2480,

France proposed to include as an annex to the draft new designations to the 2374 sanctions list. Several Council members maintain that designations should be addressed through procedures in the sanctions committee, and expressed a preference that designations not be tied to the adoption of the MINUSMA mandate. France accepted this request and proposed the designations at the committee level.

As Council members negotiated the resolution, there were some discussions about distinguishing between "primary" and "second" strategic priorities or having two strategic priorities of equal significance, but in the end this distinction remained in resolution 2480.

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

DPRK (North Korea)

Expected Council Action

In August, the chair of the 1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Christoph Heusgen (Germany), is expected to brief Council members in consultations on the 90-day report about the committee's work.

Key Recent Developments

The period following the collapse of the second US-DPRK summit in Hanoi in February was marked by the absence of continued engagement between the two countries on denuclearisation and other issues. More recently, over the past several weeks, there has been a surge of diplomatic activity around the DPRK. During his visit to South Korea in June, US President Donald Trump issued an allegedly impromptu invitation to DPRK leader Kim Jong-un to meet at the demilitarised zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas. On 30 June, Trump and Kim held an

hour-long meeting at the DMZ. In a symbolic gesture during a media photo opportunity, Trump and Kim walked across the demarcation line into DPRK territory. The meeting did not have a specific agenda, nor did it produce a formal outcome. Both sides agreed, however, to resume stalled negotiations on denuclearisation.

On 20 June, Chinese President Xi Jinping began an official two-day visit to Pyongyang, during which he met with Kim. The talks focused mainly on economic cooperation between the two countries. During the visit, Xi emphasised the importance of the situation on the Korean Peninsula and its implications for regional stability. He expressed hope that the US-DPRK talks would continue. Kim noted that the DPRK had taken action to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula but criticised the other side, alluding to the US, for the lack of positive response. Yet he emphasised that the DPRK was willing to

remain patient and address the concerns of each side through dialogue.

In an 11 June letter addressed to the chair of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, the US submitted a report containing details of the DPRK's continued violations of sanctions. The US alleged in the report that the DPRK has continued to engage in the illegal procurement of petroleum products, exceeding the import limits established by the sanctions regime. The US has requested the committee to issue statements that would inform member states about the DPRK's breach and call on members to enforce sanctions. The cover letter was co-signed by two dozen member states, including Japan and the Republic of Korea. It appears that two members of the committee have blocked action by the committee on this issue. A similar situation occurred in July last year when US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo brought to the attention of Council members in an informal

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2464 (10 April 2019) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 24 April 2020. **S/RES/2407** (21 March 2018) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 24 April 2019. **S/RES/2397** (22 December 2017) tightened sanctions on the DPRK. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/16** (29 August 2017) condemned the launch of a missile over the territory of Japan and urged the DPRK to comply with previous Council resolutions and presidential statements. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8507** (10 April 2019) was the adoption of a resolution renewing the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 24 April 2020. **S/PV.8363** (27 September 2018) was a ministerial-level meeting on efforts to denuclearise the DPRK. **S/PV.8362** (26 September 2018) was a high-level meeting on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. **Sanctions Committee Document S/2018/1148** (21 December 2018) was the annual report of the sanctions committee.

DPRK (North Korea)

meeting the reports of alleged DPRK sanctions breaches regarding oil imports. At that time, the US openly blamed Russia and China for blocking the committee from addressing the issue.

In May, the US seized one of the DPRK cargo ships that the US alleges were used to export coal and evade UN sanctions. The vessel had been held in an Indonesian port since April 2018 after it was discovered that the ship came from the DPRK. The DPRK has since requested that the US release the vessel, claiming that US actions violate the spirit of the agreement between Trump and Kim reached in Singapore last year. At press time, the vessel remained in US custody, now in American Samoa.

Key Issues and Options

While the environment is still volatile, tensions on the Korean peninsula have decreased significantly over the last year. The DPRK has continued to refrain from testing long-range ballistic missiles. The Council continues to be concerned with maintaining stability on the peninsula but has kept a relatively low profile on the DPRK, with most diplomatic activity taking place outside its purview. The Council has been cautious about pronouncing itself on bilateral diplomatic developments, but members could consider a formal product showing support for a third summit before the end of 2019.

A continuing issue for the Council is finding the right balance between applying sanctions and simultaneously exploring the diplomatic track. An option is to explore ways to modify the sanctions on the DPRK to encourage further engagement on the diplomatic front.

Some Council members are concerned about the impact of sanctions on the humanitarian situation in the DPRK. The Council could seek more regular interaction with OCHA to obtain more detailed information for its consideration of humanitarian

exemptions. Another option would be to consider having the Panel of Experts assisting the sanctions committee add an expert on humanitarian issues who could analyse the impact of sanctions on the civilian population.

The ongoing dire human rights situation in the DPRK remains an issue. Although there seemed to be insufficient support among members to discuss this in 2018, an option would be for the Council to hold a meeting on the human rights situation in the DPRK in 2019.

Council Dynamics

The Council has continued to maintain a low profile on the DPRK while diplomatic efforts outside the Council play out. Over the past several months, Council dynamics have been dominated by diverging views between the US and Russia on the role of sanctions in dealing with the nuclear threat of the DPRK. The US continues to promote a policy of maximum pressure on the DPRK, while Russia and China have shown more interest in considering some form of sanctions relief. During negotiations on the latest resolution renewing the mandate of the Panel of Experts, Russia stressed that the Council should address the impact of sanctions on the humanitarian situation in the DPRK.

Most Council members remain cautious in their optimism about the DPRK's denuclearisation and supportive of inter-Korean and US-DPRK diplomatic efforts. Some members have shown interest in a new approach toward the Council's relationship with the DPRK—including responding to positive developments through Council outcomes and other means of showing support for a serious dialogue on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula—but there has been little movement in this direction.

The US is the penholder on the DPRK, and Germany chairs the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee.

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