

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Russia has the Security Council presidency in September. It plans to have two ministerial-level debates during the high-level week of the UN General Assembly in late September. The first will be on [cooperation between the UN and Regional Organisations](#), with a focus on the role of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The other debate will be on [peace and security in Africa](#). Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov is expected to preside, and the Secretary-General may brief, at both debates.

The Council is also expected to have its comprehensive annual briefing on the reform of [UN peacekeeping](#) from Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix, followed by a debate.

Another debate scheduled for September is for the quarterly meeting on [Afghanistan](#). The briefers are expected to be Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA, Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), as chair of the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee, and representatives of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the UN Counter-Terrorism Office. The Council will also need to renew the mandate of UNAMA, which expires on 17 September.

An adoption is also anticipated to renew the

mandate of UNSMIL in [Libya](#), which expires on 15 September. Ahead of the adoption, briefings by the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, and the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany Ambassador Jürgen Schulz, are anticipated. Other African issues this month include briefings and consultations on the missions in [Guinea-Bissau](#) and [South Sudan](#).

A review of the mandate of the [UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL](#) is also anticipated in September.

Other Middle East issues that will be considered in September include:

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

Regarding Latin America, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the [UN Verification Mission in Colombia](#) before it expires on 25 September.

The Council will also be watching developments in the [Democratic People's Republic of Korea](#), [Iran](#) and [Myanmar](#).

In Hindsight: Security Council Reform

When the UN Charter was drafted in 1945, it stipulated that the Security Council would be composed of five permanent members and six elected members. By the 1960s there was a desire to expand Council membership, reflecting the increase in UN membership from the 51 founding member states to 113 by 1963. That year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 1991 A (XVIII), which added four non-permanent members to the Council. The ratification process was

completed in 1965. Almost 55 years later, there has been no further change in Council membership. Those in favour of reform maintain that the Council's membership no longer reflects geopolitical realities and point to the continuing increase in UN membership, which now stands at 193.

At the request of Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Guyana, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Nigeria and Sri Lanka, "the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership

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In Hindsight: Security Council Reform

of the Security Council” was added to the General Assembly agenda in 1979. In 1993, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/26 establishing an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) “to consider all aspects of the question of increase in the members of the Security Council, and other matters related to the Security Council”. From that point on, the General Assembly began holding both formal and informal discussions on the topic.

In March 2005, as part of a report on wider UN reform and in preparation for a world summit planned for September, Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed two models for Security Council reform. In the period leading up to the summit, three groups also put forward alternative reform models. The Group of Four (G4, composed of Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan) favoured expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories, with the additional permanent members composed of the G4 members plus two African member states and foregoing the right to veto for a period of time. The 12-member Uniting for Consensus group submitted a proposal for no expansion in permanent members, but instead a doubling of non-permanent seats, with six African seats, five to Asia-Pacific, four to Latin American and Caribbean states, three to WEOG, and two to the Eastern European group. The African Group proposed to increase the body’s membership from 15 to 26 through expansion in both categories, with Africa granted two permanent seats with the right of veto and five non-permanent seats; this position stemmed from the “Ezulwini consensus”.

World leaders adopted an outcome document by consensus on 16 September 2005. On Security Council reform, it said that member states “support early reform of the Security Council...in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions”.

After an eventful 2005, discussion on Council reform has appeared less prominent, although a number of initiatives have continued. The General Assembly has held several meetings annually to exchange views. In 2007, a group of 25 nations tabled a draft resolution calling for expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with better representation of the developing

world. The group—which was nicknamed “Group L69” after the symbol of the tabled resolution—proposed adding six new permanent members, two from Africa, two from Asia, one from Latin America and the Caribbean, and one from WEOG. Additionally, L69 advocated for a rotating non-permanent seat for “small island developing states,” or SIDS. The text was never put to a vote. The Arab Group, made up of 22 members, also continued to promote the idea of a permanent seat for one of its members.

In 2008 the General Assembly adopted Decision 62/557 “to commence intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) in informal plenary of the General Assembly”. This marked a move from oral exchanges of views to seeking a text on which discussions could be based. The first round of the IGN was held on 19 February 2009. The General Assembly has renewed its mandate annually, and it remains the principal vehicle for Council reform discussions today. The 2008 decision outlined five main issues for reform: categories of membership to the Council, the question of the veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council and working methods, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. The question of new members and their status has long proved the thorniest.

The IGN negotiations were chaired from 2009 to mid-2014 by Afghanistan, followed by Jamaica in 2015 and Luxembourg in 2016. In 2017 it moved to a system of co-chairs. Most recently, Luxembourg and the United Arab Emirates served as co-chairs during the 73rd session of the General Assembly. The IGN tends to hold its meetings during the spring segment of each session, between approximately February and May.

In December 2009, 129 member states signed a letter requesting the IGN chair to present a text with options to serve as a basis for negotiations. Trying to accommodate the different views, the chair came up with a document in 2010, later revised, summarising member states’ positions. Despite holding several meetings each spring in which member states discussed topics that included categories of membership, proposals for enlargement of the Council, and the role of the chair in this process, no text obtained the support of all member states.

In 2015, Jamaica as chair of the IGN presented the “Framework Document” outlining

the pillars of the proposed reform. The goals of this document were to create a foundation for further intergovernmental negotiations and to move closer to text-based negotiations. It included submissions from 120 member states on their positions and six letters from groups and member states that did not want their proposals in the text itself due to fundamental differences of approach. The president of the General Assembly at the time, Sam Kutesa, called this document “a sound basis upon which member states can engage in text-based negotiations during the next phase of the IGN”. Instead of developing and working through the positions of the Framework Document, however, new papers were created in the following years. Each of these papers found varying levels of acceptance by the members involved in the intergovernmental negotiations. Earlier this year, the co-chairs produced a revised paper, listing areas of convergence and disagreement. As members prepare to continue discussions during the Assembly’s 74th session, it seems that they will base these on the 2015 Framework Document and the 2019 co-chairs’ revised paper.

With discussions within the General Assembly entering their 26th year, some crucial questions remain unresolved. One view is that the principles of reform must be fully accepted, creating a negotiating text. Another view is that this process should follow the practice of other UN processes, in which a negotiating text is used to reach compromise on different positions.

Even how to vote on a future product may be contested. GA resolution 53/30 (1998) stipulated that no resolution on the question of Security Council reform could be adopted without the agreement of at least two-thirds of its members. Some members, however, have called for near-consensus for Security Council reform products, given the consequences of reform on the Council’s work and outcomes.

A further challenge in this lengthy informal process has been the lack of official records of the IGN meetings. Several members have suggested allowing the meetings to be webcast to create institutional memory.

Obviously, the support of the Security Council’s permanent members (P5) will ultimately be required for Security Council reform. Any change in the Charter, which would be needed to change the membership structure, must be ratified by the P5, several of

In Hindsight: Security Council Reform

whom have publicly supported some reform proposals but who have not had to take a decision because of the lack of a shared position among the wider membership.

In 1963, the way forward looked clear,

and non-permanent Council seats could be added. When the IGN started ten years ago, member states were initially optimistic that compromise could be reached. But recommendations that reflect a fundamental shift in

approach towards permanent Council membership may founder in the absence of greater unity among the general membership.

Status Update since our August Forecast

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 1 August, Council members issued a press statement on the DRC (SC/13907). In the statement Council members welcomed President Félix Tshisekedi's efforts towards reconciliation and steps he has taken to open political space. They also welcomed his initiatives to promote regional cooperation. The statement expressed concern about the ongoing Ebola outbreak and reiterated the appeal to donors and partners to provide the necessary support in order to close the humanitarian funding gap. On 2 August, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the Ebola outbreak, in which, among other things, it condemned attacks and threats against medical personnel and humanitarian personnel and demanded safe and unhindered access for humanitarian and medical personnel to patients and others in need (S/PRST/2019/6). Later in August, Council members held a 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee meeting to discuss the proposed programme of work for the Group of Experts.

DPRK (North Korea)

On 1 August, Council members held a meeting under "any other business" on the situation in the DPRK, which was initiated by France, Germany and the UK to discuss recent missile launches conducted by the DPRK. In a joint statement to the press the three ambassadors of those countries condemned ballistic missile tests by the DPRK saying that they constitute a violation of Security Council resolutions. On 27 August, Council members held another meeting under "any other business" to discuss the latest missile tests conducted by the DPRK. The UK, France and Germany initiated this meeting and made a joint statement to the press following the meeting. On 29 August, the Chair of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Christoph Heuss (Germany), briefed Council members in

consultations on the 90-day report about the committee's work.

Children and Armed Conflict

On 2 August, the Council held an open debate on children and armed conflict (S/PV.8591). The open debate was chaired by Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz. The briefers included Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba, who presented the Secretary-General's latest report on children and armed conflict (S/2019/509) and Executive Director of UNICEF Henrietta Fore, who highlighted the needs of conflict-affected children and UNICEF's work in addressing the needs of children in armed conflict situations. The other speakers were 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. Both Kamara and Awan shared their experiences as children directly affected by the war in Sierra Leone and South Sudan, respectively. Kamara, who had her hands chopped off by rebels during the civil war in Sierra Leone, highlighted the importance of support for children with disabilities, and Awan, who had been recruited as a child soldier, stressed the need for psychosocial support. Poland had circulated a concept note for the debate suggesting members focus on a number of themes including the high number of children killed and maimed, and the continuing issue of rape and other forms of violence (S/2019/605). In their statements Council members also focused on the need for adequate child protection advisers in peacekeeping and political missions, the importance of implementing action plans and reintegration. The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict met on 27 August to discuss its conclusions on the report on children and armed conflict in Yemen. (S/2019/453).

Counter-Terrorism

On 6 August, Council members condemned a terrorist attack in Cairo, Egypt, that took place on 4 August, which resulted in at least 20 killed and many others injured (SC/13911). On 27 August, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, and Michèle Coninsx, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, briefed the Security Council (S/PV.8605) 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) (S/2019/612).

West Africa and the Sahel

On 7 August, the Council adopted a presidential statement on West Africa and the Sahel, which followed the 24 July briefing (S/PV.8585) by the Special Representative and head of UNOWAS, Mohammed Ibn Chambas. Among various issues addressed, the statement welcomes a planned strategic review of UNOWAS, inviting the Secretary-General to present to the Council its recommendations and his observations by 15 November.

Peace and Security in Africa

On 8 August, Council members met in consultations under the agenda item "Peace and security in Africa" to discuss relations between Djibouti and Eritrea. Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita briefed in reference to the Secretary-General's letter of 2 August (S/2019/627). She apparently stressed that both countries remain committed to normalising relations and encouraged more confidence-building measures to maintain the positive momentum.

Georgia

On 8 August, Council members held a meeting under "any other business" on the situation in Georgia. The meeting was initiated by

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the EU members of the Council to mark the 11-year anniversary of the outbreak of conflict in Georgia. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, briefed members on the recent developments in the country. Following the meeting, the US and the EU members of the Council, including incoming member Estonia, held a press stakeout. They regretted the lack of progress in implementing the existing agreements while also reiterating their support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. Furthermore, they emphasised that Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia demonstrates a lack of respect for the rules-based international order and contributes to destabilisation of the region.

Peacekeeping

On 9 August, the Military Staff Committee held a meeting on the situation in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the situation concerning Western Sahara (MINURSO). On 23 August, the Military Staff Committee held a meeting on the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System and the question concerning Haiti (MINUJUSTH). On 23 August, the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations held a meeting on the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping Commitments.

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

On 9 August, the ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa met to discuss preparations for this year's annual joint consultative meeting and informal joint seminar between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa.

Rule of Law

On 13 August, the Security Council held a briefing on “the 70th Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions—upholding humanity in modern conflict”, presided over by Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz (S/PV.8596). Briefers were ICRC President Peter Maurer; the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, UN Legal Counsel Miguel de Serpa Soares; and Dr. Annyssa Bellal, senior research fellow and strategic adviser on international humanitarian law at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. On 20 August,

the Council adopted a presidential statement, (S/PRST/2019/8) reaffirming the fundamental importance of the four 1949 Geneva Conventions for the protection of those affected by armed conflict (S/PV.8599).

Lebanon

On 13 August, Council members held consultations on UNIFIL. Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Mohamed Khaled Khiari briefed members on UNFIL ahead of the mandate renewal. On 29 August, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2484, extending the mandate of UNIFIL in its current configuration for another year.

UNOCA (Central Africa)

On 14 August, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita briefed Council members in consultations on the strategic review of the scope of the mandate and activities of UNOCA (S/2019/625).

Jammu and Kashmir

On 16 August, Council members held consultations on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Oscar Fernández-Taranco, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, and General Carlos Humberto Loitey, the UN Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations, briefed. Fernández-Taranco apparently discussed the political and security situation in Kashmir, while Loitey spoke about the activities of the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan.

Adoption of the draft annual report to the General Assembly

On 20 August, the Council adopted its annual report to the General Assembly for 2018. Presenting the report, the drafter of its introduction, the UK, encouraged future presidencies in charge of presenting the report to the Assembly “to report to Council members on relevant suggestions and observations raised during the debate” (S/PV.8597). At press time, the General Assembly's debate was expected to be held in early September.

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

On 20 August, the Council held a debate under the agenda item “Maintenance of international

peace and security: Challenges to peace and security in the Middle East” (S/PV.8600). In her briefing, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet to the Secretary-General, said that the international community must work together to help the region take advantage of its opportunities. She cited examples of continued challenges and stressed that the UN stands ready to support efforts for peace. Primary actions must be taken to prevent “the most acute flashpoints” from erupting while at the same time move parties to conflict towards dialogue. Both US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz talked about the creation of Warsaw Process Working Groups to tackle challenges of the region. The intention was also announced to have a follow-up to the Warsaw meeting in 2020. Other speakers, which included members from the region and regional groups, also spoke about the need for education, protection of children, development, gender equality, and respect for states' sovereignty.

Somalia

On 21 August, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNSOM James Swan briefed the Council (S/PV.8601) on the latest UNSOM report (S/2019/661). Head of the AU Mission in Somalia Francisco Madeira, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten, and Executive Director of the Somali Women Development Centre Amina Arale also briefed.

Myanmar

There were two meetings on the situation in Myanmar in August. On 21 August, Council members discussed the return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar under “any other business”. The meeting was requested by Belgium, France, Germany, the UK and the US following the Myanmar government's announcement that it had cleared 3,450 people for repatriation on 22 August from a list of 22,000 provided by Bangladesh. Members were briefed by the High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Director of the Bureau of Policy and Programme Support Haoliang Xu. On 23 August, there was an Arria-formula meeting organised by Germany, Peru and Kuwait on “Mass Atrocity Crimes in Myanmar: Where do we stand on accountability?”

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Sudan (Darfur)

On 21 August, Council members issued a press statement welcoming the 17 August agreement on the establishment of a new civilian-led transitional government and transitional institutions in Sudan (SC/13927). Among other things, the press statement also welcomed “the pledge of the parties to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms... [and] the commitment to create a national independent committee to investigate the violent acts committed on 3 June and other incidents of human rights violations and abuses.” On 26 August, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed the Council (via video teleconference) on UNAMID. The briefing was in accordance with resolution 2479 of 27 June, requesting 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. AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui also briefed (via video teleconference).

Protection of Religious Minorities

On 22 August, an open Arria-formula meeting was held on: “Advancing the safety and security of persons belonging to religious minorities in armed conflict”. The meeting was organised by Poland in partnership with the UK and the US and non-Council members Brazil, Canada, and Jordan. The meeting was planned to coincide with the inaugural “International Day Commemorating the

Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief”, which was established by a General Assembly resolution adopted on 28 May (A/73/L.85). Poland’s Foreign Minister, Jacek Czaputowicz, chaired the meeting. Briefers were: Sali AbdoulAziz, the Head of Partnerships of the Coordination des Organisations Musulmanes de Centrafrique, which was established in 2014 to advocate on the discrimination against Muslim Central Africans; Naveed Walter, the president of Human Rights Focus Pakistan, an organisation that works to protect and promote human rights of religious minorities, women and children; and Dalal Khairo, a Yazidi writer from Iraq who survived the crimes of the Islamic State and promotes Yazidi rights.

Threats to International Peace and Security

On 22 August, the Council held a briefing on the 18 August intermediate-range cruise missile test conducted by the US (S/PV.8602). China and Russia requested this meeting under the agenda item “threats to international peace and security” citing the destabilising effects of the US cruise missile test. Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu briefed the Council. She raised concerns over proliferation of missiles and expressed alarm over the absence of universal agreement for their regulation. Furthermore, Nakamitsu also emphasised that the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear

Forces Treaty (INF) should not be a cause for unrestricted competition in missile development, acquisition and proliferation. Most Council members expressed regret over the collapse of the INF and called for resumption of dialogue. The US and the EU members of the Council blamed the collapse of the INF on Russia and its violations of the treaty. On the other hand, Russia accused the US of violating the treaty. China said that the US and Russia should have resolved their differences through dialogue while stressing that the US withdrawal from the INF will have negative effects beyond the treaty.

Burundi

On 28 August, Michael Kingsley, Director of the Central and Southern Africa Division of the UN Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), the chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as representatives from neighbouring countries, participated in an informal interactive dialogue with Council members.

Mali

On 29 August, the Security Council adopted a resolution renewing the sanctions regime on Mali and the mandate of the Panel of Experts. The sanctions measures (travel ban and asset freeze) target individuals and entities engaged in actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Mali.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In September, 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.

Key Recent Developments

In August, fighting erupted between southern separatists and the Yemeni government, both of which have been nominally allied with the

Saudi Arabia-led coalition against the Houthis rebel group. Forces affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council (STC) took control of Aden, the government’s interim capital since 2015, and fighting spread to other southern governorates.

The sequence of events that has pushed southern Yemen towards possible civil war began on 1 August, when a ballistic missile fired by the Houthis struck the al-Galaa base in Aden during a military parade. At least 36 soldiers were killed, all members of the

Security Belt, a southern militia that according to the Yemen Panel of Experts is supported by coalition member the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The STC, formed in 2017 with the stated goal of creating an independent south Yemen, claimed that Yemen’s main Sunni Islamist Islah party was complicit in the missile attack. Islah is a prominent actor within the Yemeni government.

Fighting between forces affiliated with the STC and the government broke out on 7 August following the funeral procession of

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/9 (29 August 2019) was on recent developments in southern Yemen and efforts to resume comprehensive political negotiations **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8598** (20 August 2019) was a briefing on Yemen.

Yemen

a senior Security Belt military commander, Monier “Abu al-Yamamah” al-Yafie, who had been killed in the missile strike. By 10 August, separatists took control of military bases and government institutions, including the presidential palace and Central Bank. (Yemeni President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi has continued to reside in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, throughout the war.) According to OCHA, as many as 40 people were killed over the four days of fighting, with 260 injured.

On 10 August, Saudi Arabia invited all the parties in Aden to Jeddah for talks. The Saudi-led coalition called for an immediate ceasefire, warning that military force would be used against anyone who violated it, and called for southern forces to withdraw from the positions they had seized.

The Yemeni government described the developments as a coup and said it would participate in talks only after southern forces withdrew from areas forcibly seized and return arms that were taken from the military bases. The STC stated its willingness to attend the summit and repeated calls to be included in UN peace talks as the only way to solve the “southern problem”. It withdrew from some government buildings but refused to give up captured military bases. In a 19 August letter to the Security Council president ahead of the Security Council’s 20 August meeting on Yemen, the STC said that the international community should “accept the new realities on the ground”. That night, Security Belt forces captured two more military camps, giving it control of Zinjibar, the capital of neighbouring Abyan governorate. Fighting subsequently spread to Shabwa governorate, where government forces seized areas held by the Shabwani Elite Forces, another STC-affiliated militia supported by the UAE.

At the Council briefing on 20 August, Griffiths condemned “the unacceptable efforts by the Southern Transitional Council to take control of state institutions by force”. Yemeni ambassador Abdullah Ali Fadhel al-Saadi, addressing the Council, condemned the UAE’s support for the STC, asserting that “without the full support provided by the United Arab Emirates to plan, stage and finance this rebellion, it would not have occurred”.

On 26 August, Saudi Arabia and the UAE issued a joint statement on the formation of

a joint committee to oversee the disengagement of separatist and government troops and reiterated the call for talks in Jeddah. The statement reaffirmed their commitment to confront the Houthi rebellion and rejected the “defamation” campaign against the UAE over events in the south. By 28 August, a new battle for Aden began, as government forces sought to re-take the city. On 29 August, the government accused the UAE of airstrikes outside of Aden that killed at least 30 soldiers.

The Council adopted a presidential statement on 29 August, calling for restraint, the preservation of Yemen’s territorial integrity, and welcoming Saudi Arabia’s proposed dialogue in Jeddah. It also expressed full support for the Special Envoy’s efforts to resume comprehensive negotiations, without delay, between the government and the Houthis.

During August, there was also a resurgence of attacks by violent extremist groups. In Aden, on 1 August, the same day as the missile attack on al-Galaa base, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant claimed responsibility for a bomb attack at a police station that killed 12 police. An attack by Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula the next day in Abyan killed at least 20 government soldiers.

Implementing last December’s Stockholm Agreement between the Houthis and the government to demilitarise the port city of Hodeidah and two nearby smaller ports, exchange prisoners, and de-escalate fighting in Taiz remained stalled. A ceasefire in Hodeidah continues, but has been violated frequently by the two sides, and due to disagreement on the composition of local forces to take over security of the city and ports, there has been only limited progress towards the mutual redeployment of forces as set out in the agreement. During the 20 August briefing, Griffiths said he had recently submitted a proposal to the parties to enable some of the first phase of redeployments in the Hodeidah agreement. There has been no tangible progress on the Stockholm Agreement’s two other components.

On 9 August the World Food Programme (WFP) announced that it had signed an agreement with the Houthis to safeguard food assistance. This allowed the WFP to resume food distribution in Sana’a city, which it had partially suspended in June due to alleged diversion of food aid for profit.

On 21 August, OCHA’s Yemen office released a statement on the funding shortfall

to address Yemen’s humanitarian crisis, where 24 million people require some form of assistance. The shortfall had already led to the closure or scaling down of relief programmes, prevented the start-up of several planned large-scale projects and will force the closure of 22 more programmes within the next two months. At the 20 August Council briefing, Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Ursula Mueller stated that the gap was due to “Yemen’s neighbours in the coalition” having only provided a “modest share” of promised funding. By 21 August, Saudi Arabia and the UAE had delivered \$286.6 million of the \$1.5 billion they committed at a high-level February Yemen pledging event.

Earlier in the month, the Associated Press published a report about alleged corruption involving more than a dozen UN aid workers in Yemen. UN, World Health Organisation and UNICEF spokespersons said in response that investigations were being conducted into the purported misconduct, which included personal enrichment from relief funds and contracts as well as allowing a Houthi leader to travel in UNICEF vehicles.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a press briefing on 6 August, the spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed deep concern over developments in Yemen “that have had a serious impact on civilians across the country, including in Aden, Taiz, San’a, Sa’dah Al Dhale and other areas”. The spokesperson added that “armed groups affiliated with Al-Qaida and ISIS also appear to have intensified their activities in the country”. On 11 September, the Human Rights Council is expected to hold an interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of technical assistance to Yemen (A/HRC/42/33).

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 23 August, the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee met to consider the Yemen Panel of Experts midterm update. The report, submitted at the end of July, noted presciently that pursuing a peace process that views Yemen’s conflict in ‘binary terms’, that is, between the Houthis against the government and coalition, is likely to be impeded by competition between armed forces affiliated with the Yemeni government and the UAE. The report sets out the multiplicity of actors and violent confrontations that exist in Yemen. Among other observations, it comments that “four years after [resolution 2216] was adopted, the text is increasingly seen as a barrier to a negotiated peace”.

Yemen

Key Issues and Options

Events in the south threaten to further fragment Yemen and have undermined the coalition against the Houthis. Planned talks in Jeddah between the government and STC are considered critical.

Implementing the Stockholm Agreement remains important, but there is an increased sense of urgency to resume peace talks on a comprehensive political solution to the war, as events in the south demonstrate the broader risk of Yemen's conflict worsening. Since the Stockholm Agreement, a new round of talks between the government and Houthis has been on hold until there is greater progress implementing the agreement. But its main component, the deal on Hodeidah, has remained blocked over the disagreement on the composition of local forces, an issue that appears increasingly unlikely to be resolved independently of a broader political solution. Regarding peace talks, an important issue is how to make these more inclusive of other sectors of Yemeni society, including the south—which until 1990 constituted a separate state,

the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and which contains a diversity of views besides the positions espoused by the STC.

Continuing Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, fighting on Yemen's different fronts and wider regional tensions with Iran risk worsening the conflict. The resurgence of violent extremist groups is also of increasing concern.

Moreover, the humanitarian situation remains critical. 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.

In September, on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly, the UK, which is the Council's penholder on Yemen, is planning to organise a foreign minister-level meeting on Yemen to assist the Special Envoy in advancing the political process.

Council Dynamics

Council members have been united in seeking to support the Special Envoy and his mediation efforts. More recently, they have

welcomed Saudi Arabia's initiative to host a dialogue to address the crisis in the south. However, differences still arise, which prevented agreement, for example, on a press statement that the UK initiated in early August to address a range of developments in Yemen.

Kuwait is part of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition and champions coalition positions. It has highlighted in recent months the importance of full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement for the parties to return to peace talks, of which Kuwait hosted a previous round in April 2016. Russia sometimes raises concerns about singling out the Houthis at the expense of maintaining greater balance in Council products. Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Peru and Poland sometimes coordinate their positions, especially on humanitarian issues. The US shares coalition concerns about—and at times seeks to highlight—Iran's role, which it views as destabilising.

Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru) chairs the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), set to expire on 15 September. Briefings by the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, and the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany Ambassador Jürgen Schulz, are also anticipated.

The mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee expires on 15 February 2020.

Key Recent Developments

Libya's capital, Tripoli, continues to be the scene of fighting that started on 4 April when General Khalifa Haftar, head of the eastern-based militia known as the Libyan National Army (LNA), launched an offensive towards Tripoli and against the internationally recognised and UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) based there. Libya does not have professional security forces, and the GNA currently relies on armed groups for its security.

Haftar's offensive halted a UN-supported political process and caused indefinite

postponement of the National Conference that had been scheduled for 14-16 April. The aim of the National Conference was for Libyans to agree on the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections and a constitutional referendum. After initial military gains by the LNA around Tripoli, the front lines have remained mostly static since mid-April (an approximate date), with increasing air strikes and indiscriminate artillery shelling of densely populated civilian areas, including in Murzuq, south-western Libya. At the beginning of July, the LNA lost control of the city of Gharyan, the first city it had taken over in

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA **Security Council Resolutions** [S/RES/2473](#) (10 June 2019) renewed the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya bound to or from the country that they have reasonable grounds to believe are violating the arms embargo. [S/RES/2441](#) (5 November 2018) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee as well as the measures related to the illicit export of crude oil from Libya until 15 February 2020; it was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (China and Russia). [S/RES/2437](#) (3 October 2018) renewed the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. [S/RES/2434](#) (13 September 2018) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2019. **Secretary-General's Reports** [S/2019/380](#) (10 May 2019) was on the implementation of resolution 2420. [S/2019/18](#) (7 January 2019) was on UNSMIL. [S/2018/807](#) (31 August 2018) was on the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons on the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya. **Security Council Meeting Records** [S/PV.8595](#) (10 August 2019) was an emergency meeting on Libya. [S/PV.8588](#) (29 July 2019) was the latest briefing by the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé. [S/PV.8540](#) (10 June 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2473. [S/PV.8523](#) (8 May 2019) was the semi-annual briefing by ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda on recent developments concerning cases in Libya. **Security Council Press Statements** [SC/13916](#) (11 August 2019) condemned in the strongest terms an attack on a UN convoy on 10 August in Benghazi. [SC/13910](#) (5 August 2019) expressed full support for a truce between the Libyan conflict parties for Eid al-Adha, to be accompanied by confidence-building measures. [SC/13873](#) (5 July 2019) condemned a 2 July air strike on a Tripoli suburb that killed 53 people and injured over 130 others at the Tajoura migrant detention centre. **Sanctions Committee Document** [S/2019/570](#) (15 July 2019) was the 24th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities.

Libya

April. The conflict is fuelled by support from abroad, including military support channelled to both the GNA and the LNA in violation of the UN arms embargo. Haftar continues to portray himself as fighting against terrorists and violent extremists, which has garnered military and political support from a number of UN member states, including some Council members.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has increased attacks in LNA-dominated areas in the south of the country as the LNA's focus has shifted to Tripoli, according to the 24th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team to the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida/ISIL Sanctions Committee. The report estimates that the number of ISIL fighters in Libya is "in the low hundreds".

On 3 July, the Council held consultations following an air strike on a Tripoli suburb that was attributed to LNA forces, in which 53 people were killed and over 130 others were injured at the Tajoura migrant detention centre. On 5 July, Council members agreed on a press statement condemning the air strike. The statement further stressed "the need for all parties to urgently de-escalate the situation and to commit to a ceasefire" and rapidly return to UN-led political mediation. It called upon all UN member states to fully respect the arms embargo.

During his latest briefing to the Council, on 29 July, Salamé said that both parties to the fighting have violated international humanitarian law. Asking the Council for support, he said that the detention centres should "be shuttered" and that UNSMIL has "a plan for an organized and gradual closure of all detention centres". On the issue of refugees and migrants, Salamé urged European countries "to respond to the Secretary-General's repeated pleas, revisit policies and move migrants and refugees to safety". As a factor fuelling the conflict, he noted "the hatred and invective on social media and satellite television stations". On foreign support for the parties, he said that "Libyans are now fighting the wars of other countries that appear content to fight to the last Libyan and to see the country entirely

destroyed in order to settle their own scores".

Salamé proposed three steps for an end to the conflict: a humanitarian truce during Eid al-Adha, including confidence-building measures between the parties; a high-level conference of "concerned countries"; and a "Libyan meeting of leading and influential personalities from all over the country". A 5 August press statement expressed Council members' full support for a truce. The GNA agreed to the truce, as did the LNA which had initially rejected it and limited it to the suburbs of Tripoli and for only a few days. The GNA further announced the closure of three detention centres.

On 10 August, a UN convoy was attacked in Benghazi, killing three UNSMIL staff and wounding ten people. The Council held an emergency meeting on Libya that afternoon and on 11 August issued a press statement condemning the attack. At press time, the perpetrators of the attack remained unknown.

As for the humanitarian consequences of the attack on Tripoli launched by the LNA in early April, on 15 July the World Health Organisation put the number of deaths at 1,093, including 106 civilians, with 5,752 wounded, including 294 civilians. The number of displaced people stands at more than 105,000, according to 9 August estimates by UNHCR.

At press time, the UN's 2019 humanitarian response plan for Libya of \$201.6 million was funded at 30.7 percent, with \$139.7 million outstanding.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 3 July, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, released a statement following the death and injury of dozens of migrants and refugees in Tajoura Detention Centre, which was hit by an airstrike the previous night. "The fact that the coordinates of this detention facility and the knowledge that it housed civilians had been communicated to the parties to the conflict indicates that this attack may, depending on the precise circumstances, amount to a war crime", the statement said. During its 42nd session, the Human Rights Council is scheduled to receive an oral update on Libya on 25 September from the High Commissioner, followed by an interactive dialogue with the participation of Salamé.

Key Issues and Options

An immediate issue for the Council is the renewal of UNSMIL's mandate. Considering the situation on the ground, Council members may be interested in adapting the mandate accordingly. Bearing in mind the complexities of the situation in Libya, the Council could add a request for more frequent written reporting by the Secretary-General in order for all members to stay more closely informed of developments.

An ongoing issue is the military escalation, which threatens to deepen long-standing political and economic divisions between different parts of Libya. Individual Council members could use their influence to put pressure on the parties and countries to adhere to the arms embargo. In the longer term, a Council visiting mission to Libya or a full-fledged visit by the Libya Sanctions Committee could be considered.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Since the launch of the GNA assault on Tripoli, Council members have not been able to agree on a resolution calling for a ceasefire. After three months, Council members agreed on a press statement, followed by two more in August, endorsing a ceasefire, while overall divisions between members remain. Council resolutions and presidential statements routinely call upon UN member states to cease support for parallel institutions in Libya, but some countries, including permanent members of the Council, fail to respect these calls and also continue to support Haftar militarily. Militias affiliated with the GNA also receive military support from abroad. Reportedly, Turkey and Qatar support the GNA militarily while Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates provide military support to the LNA. Political support for Haftar comes from France, Russia, and the US.

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

Syria

Expected Council Action

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

Key Recent Developments

Since late April, the situation in Syria has been marked by the recrudescence of the conflict in Idlib and neighbouring areas in north-western Syria. At a 30 July briefing, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, said that “bombing and shelling by the Government of Syria, backed by the Russian Federation, has produced carnage in the so-called de-escalation zone of Idlib”. In mid-August, the Syrian army took control of the town of Khan Shaykhun, in Idlib province, which is strategically located along the Damascus-Aleppo M5 highway. At a 29 August briefing, Belgium, Germany and Kuwait announced the circulation of a draft resolution aiming at urgently alleviating the humanitarian situation in north-western Syria.

The offensive has led to increasing attacks on health care facilities and personnel, most of whose coordinates the UN had “deconflicted”—shared with the parties in order to avoid attacks. Also briefing the Council on 30 July, Susannah Sirkin, the director of policy and partnerships for Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), highlighted how these attacks have been “a defining factor and a deliberate, inhumane and illegal strategy of war”. From March 2011 through July 2019, PHR corroborated 578 such attacks, 91 percent of which were perpetrated by the Syrian government and its allies.

At the meeting, Council members displayed divergent positions. While most stressed the need for accountability for these attacks, Russia questioned the information provided by the UN and said that the main objective of Western members of the Council was “to sustain a terrorist enclave in Idlib”. Lowcock went into detail regarding the information used by the UN, stating that it came from direct or verified sources and that it had been triangulated, reviewed and confirmed. In a 16 July letter, Syria argued that 119 hospitals and health care centres in Idlib had been taken over by terrorist groups and could thus not be considered

civilian objects protected under international humanitarian law. Lowcock challenged this assertion, giving examples of some of the hospitals mentioned in the letter that continue to serve their purpose.

The spate of attacks led ten Council members—Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, the UK and the US—to meet with the Secretary-General on 27 July to request the launch of an investigation. On 1 August, the Secretariat announced the establishment of an internal UN Headquarters Board of Inquiry to investigate the “destruction of, or damage to facilities on the deconfliction list and UN-supported facilities” in north-western Syria. However, it remains unclear whether the Board of Inquiry will identify perpetrators and make its conclusions public or even share them directly with the Council. On 15 August, Mark Cutts, the UN Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, announced that airstrikes in Ma’arat Humeh had killed a paramedic and an ambulance driver as well as a rescue worker the day before. At the request of the UK, the Council discussed the attack under “any other business” on 16 August.

For the first time since the beginning of the conflict, on 7 August, at the request of the US, supported by eight other Council members, the Council held a meeting solely focused on the situation of detainees, abductees and missing persons in Syria. At the meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, acknowledged that, although the UN was not able to verify the numbers, reports suggest that more than 100,000 people have so far been detained, abducted, disappeared or gone missing, largely, but not only, through the actions of the Syrian government. She assessed the detainee releases so far as insufficient in scale. Only 109 people have been released in four exchanges agreed to in the framework of a working group comprising Iran, Russia, Turkey and the UN, with the International Committee of the Red Cross as an observer.

She reiterated the call for the parties to move beyond “one for one” exchanges and engage in unilateral releases. She also urged the working group to meet in Geneva and

to hold meetings more regularly. Dr. Hala Al Ghawi, physician and founder of Syria’s Bright Future, a civil society organisation, and Amina Khouliani, founder of Families for Freedom, also briefed the Council. Dr. Hala asked the Council to adopt a resolution to put pressure on the Syrian government and all warring sides immediately to release the names of all detainees, stop torture and mistreatment, grant unconditional access to detention facilities for international humanitarian organisations and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syria, and share the real cause of death and burial location with the families of the deceased. Khouliani, a former detainee herself, shared with the Council the case of her three brothers, who were killed in detention by the Syrian government.

Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen has continued discussions with the parties, as well as with the Astana guarantors (Iran, Russia and Turkey), on convening a credible, balanced and inclusive constitutional committee as soon as possible. In July he said that international discussions and cooperation could contribute to a broader political process and declared his intention to convene a meeting in Geneva to bring 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 Chemical Weapons (OPCW), established to identify perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks in Syria following a June 2018 decision of the Conference of State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, 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 42nd session, the Human Rights Council is scheduled to hold an interactive dialogue on 17 September with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria and consider its report (A/HRC/42/51).

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. [Secretary General’s Report S/2019/674](#) (21 August 2019) was on the humanitarian situation in Syria. [Security Council Letters S/2019/639](#) (6 August 2019) was a joint statement by the Astana guarantors after a 2 August meeting. [S/2019/572](#) (16 July 2019) was a letter by Syria justifying the targeting of hospitals and health care centres in Idlib. [S/2019/541](#) (27 June 2019) transmitted an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of Syria’s chemical weapons programme. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8593](#) (7 August 2019) was a briefing on the situation of detainees, abductees and missing persons in Syria. [S/PV.8589](#) (30 July 2019) was a briefing on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

Syria

Women, Peace and Security

During the 7 August briefing on the situation of detainees, abductees and missing persons, DiCarlo specifically addressed the situation of women. She argued that they were not only direct victims of arbitrary detention, abduction and related crimes, but also at risk of losing legal rights to housing, land, and property if their husbands or male relatives disappear and the affected families are unable to explain their whereabouts or lack the legal documentation to prove their death. DiCarlo concluded that these circumstances make it even harder for women to sustain their entire family.

Key Issues and Options

Despite international engagement, the constitutional committee has yet to be established. 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 the escalation of conflict in north-western Syria.

In the wake of the 7 August meeting on detainees, abductees and missing persons, the Council could encourage the parties to focus on promoting the simultaneous release of unequal numbers of detainees and abductees.

The Council could request from the Secretariat a briefing in consultations to focus on the threats of instability in north-eastern Syria involving Turkey and Kurdish armed groups, 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

Council members continue to be deeply divided over the situation in Syria. In addition to divisions regarding the conflict and its evolution, there is no unanimity in their assessment of the information presented by the UN in Council meetings. Given the deadlock, Council members have devised creative ways to bypass the lack of consensus. The 27 July démarche of ten Council members to the Secretary-General, or the reading in the stakeout of press elements that failed to garner unanimous support (on 18 July by the humanitarian penholders and on 10 May by 11 Council members), are examples of this.

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

Peacekeeping Operations

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council will receive a comprehensive briefing on the reform of UN peacekeeping from the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, which will be followed by a debate.

Background

Resolution 2378, adopted on 20 September 2017, requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive annual briefing to the Council on UN peacekeeping reform. The resolution also requested that as part of this briefing, the Council receive updates on the continuing efforts to fill the existing gaps in force generation and capabilities, as well as other needs for peacekeeping to respond effectively and appropriately to peace and security challenges.

Six months after the adoption of resolution 2378, on 28 March 2018, the Netherlands

organised an open debate on “Collective action to improve UN peacekeeping operations”. At the meeting, Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted the urgent need for “a quantum leap in collective engagement” and announced the launch of “Action for Peacekeeping” (A4P), an initiative aimed at renewing political commitment to peacekeeping operations.

So far, 152 member states and four regional organisations have endorsed the September 2018 Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations, which contains 45 commitments across eight thematic areas:

- advancing lasting political solutions;
- implementing the women, peace and security agenda;
- strengthening the protection provided by peacekeeping operations;
- improving the safety and security of

peacekeepers;

- supporting effective performance and accountability;
- strengthening the impact of peacekeeping on sustaining peace;
- improving peacekeeping partnerships; and
- strengthening the conduct of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations.

Although the declaration included intentionally vague language regarding follow-up of the commitments, Lacroix’s briefing is expected to provide an opportunity to review their implementation, which depends on actions by member states and the Secretariat. The Secretariat, in particular, is expected to describe measures it has taken to implement the declaration both in the field and at headquarters. For those commitments that are not the exclusive responsibility of the Secretariat, some member states have volunteered to become “champions”: to promote

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEKEEPING [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2447](#) (13 December 2018) was on strengthening support for the police, justice and corrections areas in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. [S/RES/2436](#) (21 September 2018) was on peacekeeping performance. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/4](#) (7 May 2019) was on peacekeeping training and capacity-building. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8570](#) (10 July 2019) was a debate on improving triangular cooperation among the Council, the Secretariat, and troop- and police-contributing countries. [S/PV.8552](#) (18 June 2019) was a briefing by the heads of two military components. [S/PV.8521](#) (7 May 2019) was an open debate on “Investing in peace: improving safety and performance of United Nations peacekeepers”. [S/PV.8413](#) (5 December 2018) was a debate on “Post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security and stability”. [S/PV.8407](#) (20 November 2018) was an open debate on strengthening peacekeeping operations in Africa [S/PV.8393](#) (6 November 2018) was a briefing on UN Policing. [S/PV.8349](#) (12 September 2018) was a debate on peacekeeping reform. [S/PV.8218](#) (28 March 2018) was an open debate on peacekeeping. [General Assembly Document A/72/19](#) (15 March 2018) was the final report of the C34.

Peacekeeping Operations

progress on particular areas and to convene key stakeholders around shared priorities. On 23 August, the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations held a meeting on the implementation of the commitments ahead of the one-year anniversary of the declaration.

Over the past year, the Council has held several meetings focusing on certain matters covered by the declaration. These have included a debate on peacekeeping reform particularly focused on performance, organised by the US on 12 September 2018, immediately following the first comprehensive briefing; a briefing on UN policing organised by China on 6 November 2018; an open debate on strengthening peacekeeping operations in Africa, also organised by China, on 20 November 2018; a high-level briefing on post-conflict economic recovery organised by Côte d'Ivoire on 5 December 2018; an open debate on performance and capacity-building organised by Indonesia on 7 May; and a debate on improving triangular cooperation among the Council, the Secretariat, and troop- and police-contributing countries organised by Peru on 10 July.

Key Issues and Options

Council members and the larger UN membership have differing views on several issues related to peacekeeping. Member states were unable to agree on the annual report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) in its last session in February-March as a result of substantive differences, particularly regarding funding modalities of AU peace support operations. The upcoming briefing will be an opportunity to take stock one year after the Declaration of Shared Commitments. Building on the briefing, Council members could identify the areas where more work needs to be done and devise a plan to deliver on the commitments, both at the Council and bilaterally.

Council and Wider Dynamics

With almost universal endorsement and buy-in of the declaration at the highest levels of a broad range of governments, the Secretariat has used it to conceive a fresh basis for a conversation on peacekeeping. However, critical differences persist. While it endorsed the document, Russia expressed reservations about

the inclusion of language tying human rights efforts to the protection of civilians and for peacekeepers using for that purpose “all necessary means”, as well as references to engagement with civil society and the local population. Although all its members have endorsed the declaration bilaterally, the Council itself has not done so. A 7 May 2019 presidential statement welcomed “efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General to mobilize all partners and stakeholders in support of more effective United Nations peacekeeping through his initiative ‘Action for Peacekeeping’”. It specified that it recognised the added value brought by the Declaration of Shared Commitments on Peacekeeping Operations to training and capacity building.

The polarisation in the Council has also permeated mission-specific discussions on peacekeeping. Of the mandating resolutions adopted in the 12 months since September 2018, six were not adopted unanimously, while this was the case for only 13 resolutions between 2010 and September 2018.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council is scheduled to renew the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), set to expire on 17 September. The Council will also hold its quarterly meeting on Afghanistan and will consider the latest Secretary-General's report on UNAMA, due in early September. Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA, is expected to brief. Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), as chair of the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee, and representatives of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the UN Counter-Terrorism Office may also brief.

Key Recent Developments

Several negotiating tracks geared towards

peace in Afghanistan continue to be pursued. On 20 August, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, travelled to Doha for the ninth round of talks with the Taliban. The Taliban continue to insist on holding talks with the US government as they seek the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan rather than with the Afghan government, whose legitimacy they do not recognise. In exchange for a timeline for US and NATO troop withdrawal, the talks are aimed at having the Taliban guarantee that they will not allow armed groups on Afghan territory to launch attacks in or outside Afghanistan. An intra-Afghan dialogue and a ceasefire are also goals of the talks. During a June trip to Kabul, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo expressed hope for an agreement before

1 September. Presidential elections are scheduled for 28 September. Talks on 7 and 8 July, co-hosted by Germany and Qatar, included representatives from the Afghan government, the Taliban, and civil society. The participants attended these intra-Afghan talks in their personal (as opposed to institutional) capacities. The outcome document of the talks asks the conflict parties to consider committing “to minimize the civilian casualties to zero”.

On 19 June, the Council held a debate on the situation in Afghanistan. In his briefing, Yamamoto stressed that all efforts towards peace in Afghanistan need to have as an objective direct formal negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban aimed at a peace agreement.

In July and August, the Council adopted

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2460 (15 March 2019) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 September 2019. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2019/509 (20 June 2019) was the annual report on children and armed conflict. S/2019/493 (14 June 2019) was the latest report on Afghanistan. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.8587 (26 July 2019) was a briefing on Afghanistan with a focus on women, peace and security. S/PV.8555 (19 June 2019) was the quarterly meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. S/PV.8485 (15 March 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2460, extending UNAMA's mandate until 17 September 2019. **Security Council Press Statements** SC/13921 (20 August 2019) condemned a 17 August terrorist attack in Kabul on a wedding hall, resulting in at least 70 civilians dead and at least 180 injured, claimed by the Islamic State Khorasan Province; it further condemned the 19 August attacks in Jalalabad, the day of Afghanistan's centennial independence celebrations. SC/13906 (1 August 2019) condemned several terrorist attacks: one on 31 July on a bus on the Kandahar-Herat Highway, resulting in at least 34 people dead and at least 12 injured, and others that took place on 25 July in Kabul, Takhar and Nangarhar provinces and on 29 July in Kabul. SC/13872 (3 July 2019) condemned a terrorist attack in Kabul, claimed by the Taliban, resulting in at least 35 people killed and 70 injured.

Afghanistan

three press statements condemning several terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. A 3 July press statement followed a terrorist attack in Kabul, claimed by the Taliban, that resulted in at least 35 people killed and more than 70 injured. A 1 August press statement was in response to a terrorist attack on 31 July on a bus on the Kandahar-Herat Highway, that killed at least 34 people and left at least 12 injured, and other terrorist attacks that took place on 25 July in Kabul, Takhar and Nangarhar provinces and on 29 July in Kabul. On 19 August, Afghanistan celebrated 100 years of independence from British protectorate status. During festivities in the city of Jalalabad, about ten explosions resulted in at least 100 people wounded. The main celebrations were halted because of a 17 August attack on a wedding in Kabul, resulting in at least 80 dead and 160 injured, claimed by the Islamic State Khorasan Province, an affiliate of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The Council condemned these attacks in a 20 August press statement.

UNAMA's 30 July quarterly report on protection of civilians in armed conflict points to a continued trend towards pro-government forces being responsible for more civilian deaths than anti-government elements.

Afghanistan remains the country with the highest number of child casualties, with 3,062, according to the Secretary-General's 20 June report on children and armed conflict, covering January to December 2018.

According to the 24th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida/ISIL Sanctions Committee, the second-largest concentration of active foreign terrorist fighters is currently found in Afghanistan (after Idlib, Syria). Numbering between 8,000 and 10,000, they are mostly aligned with Al-Qaida. The report further said that "concerns remain about the short- and long-term threats posed by ISIL- and Al-Qaida-aligned groups and foreign terrorist fighters who have established themselves on Afghan territory". On the relationship between Al-Qaida and the Taliban, the report emphasised that Afghanistan continues to be considered a safe haven for Al-Qaida leadership because of its strong and long-standing relationship with the leadership of the Taliban.

According to the 10th report of the Monitoring Team of the 1988 Afghanistan

Sanctions Committee, Afghanistan continues to have the largest number of ISIL fighters outside Syria and Iraq. Approximately 2,500 to 4,000 fighters remain in two provinces in the east of the country. On the Taliban, the report notes that the number of districts under Taliban control has roughly doubled in comparison to the previous year. During the one-year reporting period, Taliban income from narcotics was \$400 million, as estimated by Afghan authorities.

At press time, the UN's 2019 humanitarian response plan for Afghanistan of \$611.8 million was funded at 39.5 percent, with \$370.3 million outstanding.

Women, Peace and Security

On 26 July, the Council held a meeting following a 20 to 21 July trip to Afghanistan by a high-level UN delegation with a focus on women, peace and security. The delegation 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. Mohammed, DiCarlo and women's rights activist Jamila Afghani briefed. Mohammed said that during their trip, the participants had "heard a strong call from Afghan women for peace—but for peace that safeguards their hard-won rights and does not backtrack on what has been achieved." She added that the UN had received reports of attacks on women's rights, including honour killings and stoning in areas controlled by the Taliban. DiCarlo referred to the announcement of the Independent Electoral Commission that 9.6 million voters are registered, noting that there are more than 500,000 newly registered voters, of which 36 percent are women. Afghani said that the security threats women are facing, such as attacks on schools and workplaces, limit the exercise of their political, civil, social and cultural rights. During the 19 June quarterly meeting on Afghanistan, Sima Samar, chairperson of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, also spoke of fears of "going back to the time when Afghans, especially women and minorities, were denied their rights and freedoms". Ongoing talks with the Taliban were raising concerns "about the commitment of the parties to preserving Afghan progress on human rights, freedom, democracy and economic development".

Key Issues and Options

One immediate issue facing the Council is a possible agreement between the US and the Taliban and how it may endorse such an agreement. Another immediate issue for Council members in September is the renewal of the

UNAMA mandate. Afghanistan will face several possible political scenarios if there is an agreement between the US and the Taliban. The Council may have to address if and how that would change UNAMA's role, which is currently primarily supporting the electoral process. An option for the Council would be to adopt another "technical rollover" of UNAMA's mandate for a few months and await further developments. Generally, the Council may also aim at clarifying UNAMA's mandate in the resolution while shortening the text.

The last Council meeting on Afghanistan in June took the form of a debate, giving states outside the Council with interests in the country, including states of the region, the opportunity to speak. Ahead of the mandate renewal and considering ongoing developments in the situation, Council members may instead be interested in having a briefing, followed by consultations, to allow for a more interactive and frank discussion with Yamamoto, as they had in March.

Council Dynamics

Council members are generally united in their support for UNAMA and are committed to a peace process. They remain concerned about the overall security, political, and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Several members of the Council are engaged in different talks aimed at a peace agreement, which do not always include the Afghan government. Most members routinely emphasise that a peace process in Afghanistan has to be Afghan-led.

Ahead of UNAMA's last mandate renewal in March, Council members held several rounds of negotiations and bilateral meetings, but no agreement could be reached on the original draft resolution, leading the co-penholders to pursue a six-month technical rollover of the mandate. China and the US were deadlocked on whether to maintain a reference to the Chinese "Belt and Road Initiative" (language agreed to in preceding resolutions) in the context of welcoming regional economic cooperation.

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

Guinea-Bissau

Expected Council Action

The Council is expected in September to hold a briefing and consultations on Guinea-Bissau. Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita will brief. The mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) expires on 28 February 2020.

Key Recent Developments

Guinea-Bissau remains mired in a political crisis that started when President José Mário Vaz dismissed popular prime minister and reformer Domingos Simões Pereira in August 2015. The constant turmoil has pitted Vaz and his political allies against his own party, The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC).

The Security Council went on a mission to Guinea-Bissau on 15-16 February to encourage authorities and political actors to keep to the 10 March electoral date for parliamentary elections, which were postponed twice during 2018. (The last legislative elections were in April 2014; in the period since, Guinea-Bissau has had seven prime ministers.) The Security Council visiting mission's arrival coincided with the official start of the election campaign, amidst an increasingly tense and polarised environment, including student protests one week earlier in the capital, Bissau, that turned violent after being infiltrated by political actors. During their visit, members also advocated for institutional reforms, including the constitutional review that is intended to clarify the powers of the presidency and prime minister, and for holding the presidential election later this year.

On 28 February, the Council adopted resolution 2458, extending the UNIOGBIS mandate for 12 months and endorsing the Secretary-General's recommendations for the prospective completion of UNIOGBIS' mission by 31 December 2020.

On 10 March, legislative elections were held, with 21 parties competing for 102 seats. Voter turnout was 85 percent. International monitors and Bissau-Guinean civil society organisations assessed the polls as fair and credible. The PAIGC won 47 seats, retaining its position as the legislature's first party. The Movement for Democratic Change, known

as MADEM G-15 and created in July 2018 by PAIGC dissidents who have allied with Vaz, won 27 seats. The Party for Social Renewal (PRS), which is also aligned with Vaz, won 21 seats after holding 41 seats in the outgoing legislature. The PAIGC formed a governing coalition with three smaller parties: the newly formed United People's Assembly (APU/PDGB), which won five seats and is led by 2014 independent presidential candidate Nuno Gomes Nabiam; and the Union for Change and the New Democracy Party, which both won one seat.

An impasse soon arose over electing the National Assembly (ANP) Bureau, which serves as the ANP leadership, and appointing the new government. The situation increased tensions and led to a series of protests in Bissau starting in May. By June, despite elections having been held in March, the government was still not constituted.

On 18 June, Vaz finally set the date of the presidential election for 24 November, doing so just days before his five-year term was set to expire on 23 June

From 19 to 20 June, a high-level ministerial delegation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) visited Bissau—the third ECOWAS mission since March. The delegation expressed ECOWAS' determination to impose new sanctions on those obstructing political progress, according to a communiqué. Following the visit, on 22 June, Vaz appointed Aristides Gomes as prime minister after he had been nominated by the PAIGC in place of party leader Simões Pereira, their original nominee. Gomes had been serving as a “consensus” prime minister since April 2018 to organise the legislative elections. MADEM-G15 submitted a new candidate for the National Assembly's Second Vice President, withdrawing the name of its party leader Braima Camara, which ended the impasse over the ANP Bureau.

However, Vaz did not appoint Gomes' proposed government as requested by the ECOWAS mission. On 26 June, the ANP approved a resolution calling for the immediate cessation of Vaz's constitutional functions as president and his replacement by ANP President Cipriano Casama.

On 29 June, during the 55th summit of

ECOWAS heads of state and government in Abuja, West African leaders called on Vaz to appoint a new government by 3 July, based on the prime minister's proposal, and a new attorney general, to be chosen by consensus. Vaz could remain as president until the presidential election though the new government should conduct all affairs, according to the summit communiqué. Council members issued a press statement on 3 July taking note of ECOWAS' position and welcoming its decision at the summit to extend the mandate of the 600-person military force known as the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) until April 2020.

Later that day, Vaz appointed the government based on Gomes' proposal, and a new attorney general. The government is made up of the PAIGC and its allies, and is notable for the role of women, who hold eight of 16 ministerial portfolios and three of 15 Secretaries of State positions.

In other developments, on the eve of the legislative elections, Guinea-Bissau recorded its largest seizure of cocaine: 789 kilos, hidden in the false bottom of a truck. Malian businessman Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri, who was involved in organising the shipment according to information obtained by the Mali Panel of Experts assisting the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee, was sanctioned (travel ban) by the committee in July for using financial gains from drug trafficking to support terrorist groups.

In a major corruption case known as Operation Rice of the People, the judiciary police in April seized more than 170 tons of rice donated by China at two locations, a warehouse reportedly owned by presidential adviser Botche Candé and a farm owned by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Nicolau dos Santos. Investigators said the rice was being readied for illegal sale. His security detail thwarted an attempted arrest of dos Santos on 11 April. On 21 May, Prime Minister Gomes ordered the inspector-generals of the Agriculture and Interior Ministries to assume managerial responsibilities of their respective ministries due to the involvement of dos Santos and the interior minister in the scandal and for interfering with the judiciary police's investigation.

UN DOCUMENTS ON GUINEA-BISSAU Security Council Resolution S/RES/2458 (28 February 2019) renewed UNIOGBIS' mandate for one year. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/7** (7 August 2019) was on West Africa and the Sahel, which took note of the compromise leading to the prime minister's appointment and setting the date for the presidential election. **Security Council Press Statements SC/13870** (3 July 2019) took note of ECOWAS' decisions on Guinea-Bissau at its 29 June summit. **SC/13746** (26 March 2019) congratulated Guinea-Bissau on its 10 March legislative elections.

Guinea-Bissau

On 29 July, the UN announced the appointment of a new Special Representative and head of UNIOGBIS, Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, succeeding José Viegas Filho, who completed his assignment on 18 May.

Key Issues and Options

Preparations for the presidential election in November are a key issue. A run-off election would be required if no candidate receives a simple majority. Institutional reforms, including the constitutional review, are likely to remain on hold until after the elections. The political crisis, along with poor governance, is contributing to socio-economic instability. Starting in May, public services were halted regularly as workers organised weekly strikes over salary arrears and demands for higher wages, while a teachers' strike that started in October 2018 continued. Another key issue is the ongoing preparation for UNIOGBIS' transition and its prospective closure by 31 December 2020.

Within the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee, members are expected to consider in September the Secretary-General's annual report, issued each August, with

recommendations on continuing the Guinea-Bissau sanctions regime, which imposes a travel ban on ten military officials who were involved in the 12 April 2012 coup. The last four years of political crisis have been attributed to political actors opposed to the military. This year's report was expected to make recommendations for ending the sanctions regime in the event of a smooth presidential election and accession of a new president, prime minister and chief of general staff of the armed forces.

One option for the Council is to adopt a presidential statement with a strong message about completing the presidential election process this year. An option for the sanctions committee is to lift sanctions on some currently-designated individuals, signalling the benefit to the military of continuing not to interfere in the political situation.

Council and Wider Dynamics

On Guinea-Bissau, the Council tends to follow the lead of ECOWAS, seeking to support its decisions or agreements. In Bissau, representatives from ECOWAS, the AU, the Community of Portuguese Language

Countries (CPLP), the UN and the EU often act together to defuse tensions. Members have continuing concerns about transnational criminal organisations, drug traffickers and terrorist groups in the region exploiting the political instability. Despite the military's refrain from interfering in the political crisis, members remain attentive to this risk given Guinea-Bissau's history.

While members agree on the goal of ending UNIOGBIS next year, some have cautioned about the need to complete the electoral cycle before implementing significant changes to its configuration. In a 7 August presidential statement on West Africa and the Sahel, the Council reiterated its call for UNIOGBIS to gradually draw down and transfer its tasks to the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

Côte d'Ivoire is the penholder on Guinea-Bissau. Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba of Equatorial Guinea chairs the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee. The two countries co-led the mission to Guinea-Bissau, organised during Equatorial Guinea's Council presidency.

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council will receive a briefing on the Secretary-General's 90-day report on South Sudan. Consultations are expected to follow the briefing. Council members also expect to receive a written report from the Secretary-General during September on future planning for the protection of civilians sites. This report is to include "an assessment of each protection of civilians site, a review of the current model for providing security to these sites, recommendations clarifying the roles and responsibilities of UNMISS and other relevant stakeholders, and recommendations for steps necessary to foster a secure environment for the safe, informed, voluntary, and dignified return or relocation of residents of protection of civilians sites", as requested in resolution 2459.

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

Key Recent Developments

The overall level of political violence remains diminished since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) on 12 September 2018. However, slow implementation of the R-ARCSS has contributed to uncertainty around the peace process. Ethnic and intercommunal violence continues, as do sporadic clashes between government and opposition forces in some parts of the country. The human rights, humanitarian, food security and economic conditions in the country remain dire, with an enormous impact on civilians.

According to the terms of the R-ARCSS, 12 May was to mark the end of the eight-month pre-transitional period and the start of the 36-month transitional period, with elections to be held 60 days before the end of the transitional period. In early May, the

parties extended the deadline for the end of the pre-transitional period by six months, until 12 November, to complete outstanding tasks required during this period as set out in the R-ARCSS. The most recent report of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission on the status of the implementation of the R-ARCSS, which covers 1 April to 30 June, concludes that "there was a marked slow-down in implementation" and that "very little progress was made in accomplishing the pre-transitional tasks" required under the R-ARCSS. Of the 59 activities required to be completed during the pre-transitional period, 27 are complete, 17 are ongoing and 15 are still pending, the report said. Critical outstanding tasks include the cantonment and training of a unified army and agreement on the number and boundaries of states.

On 21 August, the Intergovernmental

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2459 (15 March 2019) extended the mandate of UNMISS. Secretary-General's Report S/2019/491 (14 June 2019) was the 90-day report on South Sudan. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8560 (25 June 2019) was a meeting on South Sudan.

South Sudan

Authority on Development (IGAD) convened talks with the parties in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to discuss implementation of the R-ARCSS. An IGAD communiqué adopted that day “[r]ecommends to the IGAD Heads of State and Government to convene face-to-face meeting of the top leadership of the parties to discuss and resolve outstanding issues...[and] to hold an Ordinary Summit of IGAD in mid-September 2019 to deliberate on and decide, among others, the status of Dr. Riek Machar.” Machar has not yet returned to South Sudan from Sudan. (Under the terms of the R-ARCSS, Machar is to be first vice-president of the country during the transitional period, set to commence in November.)

The Council was last briefed on South Sudan on 25 June by Special Representative for South Sudan and head of UNMISS David Shearer, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour, and South Sudanese civil society member Lydia Minagano. (See our What’s in Blue story of 24 June.)

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 21 June, the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee held joint informal consultations with the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee and the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee to discuss the presence of Darfuri armed groups in Libya and South Sudan. On 21 August, the committee was briefed during informal consultations by the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, in accordance with resolution 2428, as renewed by resolution 2471.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 3 July, UNMISS published a report presenting the findings of an investigation conducted by the UNMISS Human Rights Division (HRD) into violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law attributed to government forces and opposition armed groups in the Central Equatoria region between September 2018 and April. The report said that the “persistence of human rights violations and abuses in this area...represents a significant negative trend”. During the reporting period, the HRD documented 95 incidents, including 30

attacks on villages, leading to the unlawful killing of 104 civilians and the wounding of 35 others, as well as the abduction of at least 187 civilians for forced recruitment, forced labour and sexual slavery. At least 99 women and girls, some as young as 12, were targeted with acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence during the reporting period. “In light of the deteriorating human rights situation in Central Equatoria and its potential impact on the implementation of R-ARCSS, UNMISS encourages the parties to the conflict to adhere to the 2017 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, to which they are all signatories”, the report said, among other recommendations. The Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan conducted its seventh field mission to South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia from 19 to 29 August. During its 42nd session, the Human Rights Council is scheduled to receive an oral update from the commission on 16 September, followed by an interactive dialogue.

Women, Peace and Security

At the briefing on 25 June, Minagano focused her statement on “the gendered nature of the conflict, especially its impact on women and girls”; “the need to strengthen women’s meaningful participation in the implementation of the peace agreement, as well as decision-making processes”; “the critical need for security sector reform”; and “the importance of consulting with civil society in South Sudan, particularly women-led organizations.” She emphasised that South Sudanese people will not be able to move forward without challenging those in their communities who tolerate gender-based violence and ensuring accountability for such crimes.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue is how the Council can support the parties in South Sudan, as well as IGAD and other regional actors, in the implementation of the R-ARCSS given the continued delays in completing key tasks required during the pre-transitional period. An option would be to adopt a presidential statement calling for full implementation of the agreement and expressing the Council’s support in this regard. Council members could also consider imposing, or threatening to impose, further targeted sanctions against those who undermine the process.

Another key issue is considering the upcoming report from the Secretary-General on future planning for the protection of civilians sites, notably the site-specific assessments, clarifications on the roles and responsibilities of UNMISS and others, and the steps needed to make durable solutions possible for all displaced persons, as requested in resolution 2459. An option would be for members to use this information to assess the role of UNMISS in this context, given that resolution 2459 contained new language mandating the mission to “support the facilitation of the safe, informed, voluntary, and dignified return or relocation of IDPs from United Nations protection of civilian sites, in coordination with humanitarian actors and other relevant stakeholders, and within existing resources”.

Council Dynamics

Council members continue to follow the situation in South Sudan and support the roles played by IGAD and the region working towards a political resolution of the conflict. Some Council members are optimistic about the situation in the country since the signing of the R-ARCSS, in particular given the decrease in political violence, while other Council members are more critical in light of slow progress in implementing key tasks during the pre-transitional period, as expressed in statements made at the 25 June briefing. Germany, South Africa, the UK and the US stressed the need for President Salva Kiir and Machar to meet. Several members referred to the persistence of human rights violations and abuses, including Belgium, France, Indonesia, Poland and the US. Members such as Belgium, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Peru and Poland expressed concern over the continued prevalence of sexual violence.

The US is the penholder on South Sudan. Ambassador Joanna Wronecka of Poland chairs the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Colombia

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, which expires on 25 September.

Key Recent Developments

Council members carried out a visiting mission to Colombia on 11 to 14 July to demonstrate the Council's support for the implementation of the 2016 peace agreement between the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and the government, as well as to gain a better grasp of the complexities in the agreement's implementation. In Bogotá, Council members met with top government officials, the leadership of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) political party, parliamentarians, the UN country team, civil society, and key entities involved in the implementation of the agreement.

While they were there, President Iván Duque formally requested the extension of the UN Verification Mission's mandate for another year. Council members also went to Cauca, Colombia's department with the highest number of killings of former combatants and social leaders, where they visited a Territorial Area for Training and Reintegration (TATR). Among the issues discussed was the need to expand a comprehensive and effective state presence, including civilian and security institutions, that can contribute to addressing the current security vacuum. The co-leads of the visit, Ambassadors Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru) and Jonathan Allen (UK), briefed the Council on 19 July.

Also on 19 July, the Council received a briefing from Carlos Ruiz Massieu, the Special Representative and head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, on its work. At the meeting, which was chaired by Peruvian Foreign Minister Néstor Popolizio, Ruiz Massieu echoed the Secretary-General's assessment of the peace process as "mixed" and identified outstanding challenges. He emphasised both the need to increase the number of productive projects for former combatants to promote reintegration and the importance of paying attention to the specific needs of the approximately 8,000 former combatants living outside the TATRs.

Ruiz Massieu highlighted the gravity of

the security situation in former conflict areas, such as Cauca, particularly for human rights defenders and social leaders, as well as former combatants. Addressing the Council, Colombian Foreign Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo discussed the measures taken to prevent killings, which have decreased recently, although he acknowledged that the results are far from satisfactory. Ensuring the security of former combatants who are dispersed throughout the national territory outside the TATRs is another significant challenge, he said.

Transitional justice continues to be a polarising element of the agreement even after President Duque signed the statutory law of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP) on 6 June. During their visit, Council members heard concerns from the heads of the three components of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repatriation (the SJP, the Truth Commission, and the Search Unit for Missing Persons) about a proposed 30 percent cut in their budgets as part of the government's cost-saving measures. In a press statement adopted on 23 July, Council members stressed that the transitional justice system should be able to work "independently and autonomously, with the necessary political and financial support".

A related issue is the case of one of the former leaders of the FARC-EP, Seuxis Pausias Hernández (aka Jesús Santrich). He was detained in 2018 on drug-trafficking charges following a federal indictment in the US, and his case was taken up by the SJP and Colombia's Supreme Court. He was eventually released and took his seat in the House of Representatives on 11 June. While scheduled to appear before the Supreme Court as part of a preliminary investigation into his alleged involvement in drug trafficking, he decided to abandon his protection detail in late June and remains at large. In a video released on 29 August, Santrich and Iván Márquez, another former FARC-EP leader, announced a "new phase of armed struggle" in Colombia. Although several former FARC-EP leaders have decided not to honour their commitments under the agreement, during his briefing Ruiz Massieu highlighted that the great majority of former FARC-EP members, as well as the leadership of the FARC political party, remain strongly committed to the peace process.

At the meeting, Council members encouraged progress in other areas that remain critical to the implementation of the agreement, including access to land, agrarian reform and illegal crop substitution. Echoing the words of the Secretary-General, the 23 July press statement emphasised the Council's understanding of the agreement as "an interlocking set of commitments".

Key Issues and Options

A key issue is addressing the mistrust among political actors in Colombia and ensuring that the peace agreement is fully implemented. Reducing political polarisation and insecurity is particularly important as Colombia prepares to hold local and departmental elections in October. Addressing the destabilising role of armed groups, including former FARC-EP members that have taken up arms again, is a related issue.

As Council members negotiate the renewal of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, they could start considering the prospects for sustaining the engagement of the Council beyond next year. According to the November 2016 peace agreement, the mission, which started operating in September 2017, was originally to have a duration of three years but could be extended if necessary.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are unified in their support for the peace process in Colombia, and they continue to showcase engagement in Colombia as a rare bright spot among several other conflict situations where it struggles to play an effective role.

The unity of the Council's position on Colombia stands in sharp contrast to its divisions on Venezuela. At the 19 July meeting, the US representative highlighted Colombia's leadership role by "recognising interim President Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's legitimate leader and by supporting more than 1.5 million Venezuelans fleeing the manmade crisis in Venezuela". Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia (Russia) countered that "the resolution to Colombia's domestic issues depends not on the situation in Venezuela, but first and foremost on Colombians themselves".

The UK is the penholder on Colombia.

UN DOCUMENTS ON COLOMBIA [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2435](#) (13 September 2018) renewed the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia until 25 September 2019. [Secretary-General's Report S/2019/530](#) (27 June 2019) was the latest report on the work of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8581](#) (19 July 2019) was a briefing by Ruiz Massieu. [S/PV.8580](#) (19 July 2019) was a briefing by the co-leads of the 11-14 July visiting mission to Colombia. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13896](#) (23 July 2019) stressed the importance of implementing the peace agreement as an interlocking set of commitments.

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council is expected to review the mandate of the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), which expires on 21 September.

Key Recent Developments

UNITAD was set up through resolution 2379 of 21 September 2017 for an initial period of two years, following a request by the Iraqi government. The Council had asked 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. According to resolution 2379, UNITAD is to be “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. The investigative team has an assessed budget of around \$19.5 million for 2019; additionally, it relies on voluntary contributions made to the trust fund established by resolution 2379 as well as in-kind contributions.

On 31 May 2018, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of Karim Asad Ahmad Khan as Special Adviser and head of UNITAD. UNITAD formally began its work on 20 August 2018, and in line with the 90-day deadline set out in resolution 2379, the Special Adviser's first report was

published on 16 November 2018. The resolution further set a 180-day reporting cycle for subsequent reports and asked the Special Adviser to present his reports to the Council. Khan's first briefing took place on 4 December 2018, followed by a second briefing on 15 July.

UNITAD's implementation strategy entails three initial areas for investigation: 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. UNITAD's investigations are focused on those ISIL members who bear the greatest responsibility among the leadership as well as regional and mid-level commanders.

During the Council's 28-29 June visiting mission to Kuwait and Iraq, members met with the Special Adviser and his team. In a 30 June press statement on the trip, Council members underscored their support for UNITAD.

On 28 August, the Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, briefed 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.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 12 August, the Human Rights Council's special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Agnès Callamard, released a statement expressing serious concern over the situation of seven French nationals awaiting execution

in Iraq on charges of “membership of a terrorist organization” following their arrest by the Syrian Democratic Forces and subsequent transfer to Iraq in February “at the alleged request of the French Government or with its suspected involvement”, the statement said. “In these circumstances, the transfer of persons to Iraq for prosecution is illegal”, Callamard said, adding that she was “particularly disturbed by allegations that France may have had a role in this transfer, given the risk involved of torture and unfair trials and that they would likely face the death penalty”.

Key Issues and Options

The immediate issue for the Council is the review of UNITAD's mandate. If the government of Iraq continues to support UNITAD in its current form and requests its extension, an option for the Council would be to renew UNITAD without changes.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members generally support UNITAD; the same seems to remain true for Iraq. Some members indicated during Khan's 15 July briefing their continued concern about the possibility that evidence shared by the investigative team might be used in criminal proceedings in which capital punishment could be imposed. Other members stressed that this falls under Iraq's sovereignty, a viewpoint shared by Iraq. A few members mentioned the issue of how and where to prosecute foreign terrorist fighters currently in Iraq. 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.

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

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAQ [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2379](#) (21 September 2017) established an investigative team to collect, store and preserve evidence of ISIL crimes in Iraq. [Secretary General's Reports S/2019/660](#) (5 August 2019) was on UNAMI. [S/2019/632](#) (6 August 2019) was the 23rd report on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. [Security Council Letters S/2019/407](#) (17 May 2019) was from the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD, transmitting the second report on the activities of UNITAD. [S/2018/1031](#) (16 November 2018) was from the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD, transmitting the first report on the activities of UNITAD. [S/2018/773](#) (15 August 2018) was a letter from the Secretary-General, notifying the Council of his appointment of Karim Asad Ahmad Khan as Special Adviser and head of the investigative team, which was to begin its work on 20 August 2018. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8606](#) (28 August 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 23rd report on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property. [S/PV.8573](#) (15 July 2019) was the second briefing by the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD Karim Asad Ahmad Khan. [S/PV.8571](#) (11 July 2019) was a briefing on the Security Council's visiting mission to Kuwait and Iraq. [S/PV.8412](#) (4 December 2018) was the first briefing by Karim Asad Ahmad Khan. [S/PV.8052](#) (21 September 2017) was the adoption of resolution 2379. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13869](#) (30 June 2019) was on the Security Council visiting mission to Kuwait and Iraq. [Sanctions Committee Document SC/13868](#) (28 June 2019) was a press release on the removal of 13 entities from the sanctions list.

Cooperation between the UN and Regional Organisations

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council is expected to hold a ministerial-level meeting on the cooperation between the UN and Regional Organisations, with a focus on the role of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov will preside. Secretary-General António Guterres may brief the Council. Other briefers may include the Secretaries-General of the CSTO, SCO and CIS.

Background

While the UN Charter established the Council as the principal organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, it also envisioned a role for regional organisations in achieving peaceful settlements of local disputes as long as such efforts were subordinate to the Council. Over the years, the meetings on cooperation between the UN and different regional organisations have become a regular feature of the Council's work. The AU, the EU and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe are some of the organisations that have developed more institutionalised relations with the Council.

Russia has sought to promote greater cooperation between the UN and regional organisations operating in the Eurasian region. During its October 2016 presidency of the Council, Russia organised the first meeting on cooperation between the UN and the CSTO, the SCO and the CIS. The objective of the debate was to draw the Council's attention to the contribution these organisations have made in countering threats to peace and security in the region and to encourage their further cooperation with the UN, including the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy

for Central Asia (UNRCCA).

The September meeting will focus more specifically on the role of the CSTO, the SCO and the CIS in countering terrorism and extremism. In their work, these organisations place a strong emphasis on regional security issues, among which terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime have been the most prominent. In May 2018, the representatives of the three organisations formalised their cooperation on counter-terrorism when they signed a memorandum of understanding committing them to enhancing their collaboration and information-sharing.

Given their shared objectives in the Central Asian region, these organisations maintain regular contact with the Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. The situation in Afghanistan, in particular, has been a common concern for them because of the implications for regional security, including terrorism and cross-border drug trafficking.

In June, the SCO held a summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, of leaders of its member states, including President Xi Jinping of China and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. The leaders signed a joint declaration stressing the need to improve their cooperation in addressing threats to peace and security in the SCO region. The declaration reiterated their support for the UN and for strengthening the role of the Security Council in its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Among other issues, the declaration also called for international cooperation in combating terrorism and emphasised the importance of implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program, which was endorsed by resolution 2231.

Council Dynamics

Russia has held the view that the CSTO, the SCO and the CIS share similar objectives

with the UN and that cooperation between the UN and these organisations should be strengthened further. During the October 2016 meeting, Russia said that there was a lack of general understanding of the activities of these organisations and that some Council members had tried to downplay their role. The P3 members (France, the UK and the US) have been generally critical of these organisations, viewing them as a vehicle for a few of its most dominant members to enhance their influence in the region. The division among Council members in the perception of these organisations has been evident in the context of the Council's considerations of UNRCCA.

Until early 2015, Council members issued a press statement following each briefing, encouraging increased cooperation and coordination among the Central Asian countries, UNRCCA, and "relevant regional organisations". In September 2015 Russia, the penholder on UNRCCA, sought to add specific references to CSTO, SCO, CIS in addition to OSCE and EU. The P3 opposed these additions, and no press statements could be agreed upon for more than two years. As a Central Asian state, Kazakhstan tried to overcome those differences during its 2017-2018 term on the Council. Under the Kazakh Council presidency in January 2018, the Council found consensus on a press statement which, among other things, encouraged greater cooperation between UNRCCA and "relevant regional organisations" without making specific references to CSTO, SCO and CIS. No press statements were issued following the meetings on UNRCCA in June 2018 and January and July 2019.

Among current Council members, Russia is a member of all three organisations and China is a member of the SCO.

UN DOCUMENTS ON COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UN AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS Secretary-General's Report S/2018/592 (17 August 2018) was the report on cooperation between the UN and regional and other organisations. Security Council Letter S/2016/867 (14 October 2016) transmitted a concept note for the 28 October 2016 meeting on cooperation between the UN and the CSTO, the SCO and the CIS. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7796 (28 October 2016) was a debate on cooperation between the UN and the CSTO, the SCO and the CIS. Security Council Press Statement SC/13179 (25 January 2018) welcomed further cooperation and coordination between UNRCCA, the Central Asian States, and relevant regional organisations, including those organisations of which the Central Asian States are members. General Assembly Documents A/73/941 (5 July 2019) was a letter by Russia on behalf of the members of the SCO addressed to the Secretary-General containing the Bishkek Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO.

Peace and Security in Africa

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council will hold a debate at the initiative of Russia, as Council president for the month, under the agenda item “Peace and Security in Africa”.

Background

Over the past nine months, the Council has held several thematic open debates on different aspects of the issue of peace and security in Africa, namely cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations and strengthening peacekeeping operations in Africa.

During its November 2018 presidency, China held an open debate on strengthening peacekeeping operations in Africa. Secretary-General António Guterres and Smaïl Chergui, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, briefed the Council. The objective of the open debate was to mobilise the international community to increase its level of attention to, and investment in, African peace and security in general, and peacekeeping operations there, in particular. The concept note invited participants to address how to improve AU-UN cooperation on peace and security issues “while respecting Africa’s leading role in resolving its own security issues”. (See our What’s in Blue story of 16 November 2018.)

Under the presidency of Côte d’Ivoire, on 6 December 2018, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations, focusing on the role of states, regional arrangements and the UN in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

Secretary-General António Guterres briefed, together with the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat. (See our What’s in Blue story of 5 December 2018.)

On 27 February, during the presidency of Equatorial Guinea, the Council held a high-level open debate under the agenda item “Cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations: Silencing the Guns in Africa” on how the AU and UN can cooperate to end conflict in Africa. Equatorial Guinea convened the meeting to address several questions on AU-UN cooperation, such as how to preserve achievements and strengthen tools to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The open debate followed an Arria-formula meeting held in October 2018 on this issue, co-chaired by Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, South Africa and the AU.

At the debate, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2457. While expressing concerns over the challenging security environment in Africa (including threats caused by terrorism, maritime piracy, transnational organised crime, and tensions between farmers and pastoralists, among others), the resolution acknowledged that “the building of a conflict free Africa essentially rests on the African Union, its Member States, their people and their institutions...while also recognizing the need for international cooperation and partnership to help accelerate progress towards the realization of this continental goal”. In this regard, the resolution encouraged the UN and AU “to strengthen their efforts to coordinate their engagement”. It

also called on the Secretary-General, in consultation with the AU Commission Chairperson, to provide updates “when appropriate” on the status of implementation measures towards enhancing the support of the UN to the AU. (See our What’s in Blue story of 26 February for more details on the open debate.)

Council Dynamics

Along with the three African members of the Council, it appears that China and Russia have increasingly demonstrated their interest in engaging on thematic considerations of peace and security in Africa, as evidenced notably by the open debate convened by China in November 2018 and the upcoming debate to be convened by Russia. It seems that Russia has consulted with the three African members of the Council in formulating the focus for September’s debate. At the open debate on 27 February, Russia stressed the need to “put the emphasis on discussing the efforts of African countries themselves to solve the problems they are facing in the area of peace and security and the ways that the international community may be able to help them to do that”.

Some Council members may view next month’s debate as an opportunity to engage on the issue ahead of the 13th annual joint consultative meeting in October of members of the Security Council and members of the AU Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2457 (27 February 2019) was adopted during a meeting on cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8473 (27 February 2019) was on cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations. S/PV.8414 (6 December 2018) was on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations. S/PV.8407 (20 November 2018) was on strengthening peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Security Council Report Staff

Karin Landgren
Executive Director

Joanna Weschler
Deputy Executive Director

Shamala Kandiah Thompson
Deputy Executive Director

Paul Romita
Senior Policy Analyst

Victor Casanova Abos
Policy Analyst

Teale Harold
Policy Analyst

Lindiwe Knutson
Policy Analyst

Vladimir Sesar
Policy Analyst

Eran Sthoeger
Policy Analyst

Vanessa Tiede
Policy Analyst

Benjamin Villanti
Policy Analyst

Robbin VanNewkirk
Website Manager

Audrey Waysse
Operations Manager

Maritza Lopez
Administrative Assistant

Anna Haven
Research Assistant

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Design Point Five, NY

Security Council Report
711 Third Avenue, Suite 1501
New York NY 10017

Telephone +1 212 759 6394

Fax +1 212 759 4038

Web securitycouncilreport.org
whatsinblue.org

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