

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Belgium has the February presidency of the Security Council. It has decided to hold an open debate on [transitional justice](#), and will also hold a high-level briefing on “[Integrating child protection into peace processes to resolve conflict and sustain peace](#)”. Belgian King Philippe and Queen Mathilde are expected to be in attendance, and King Philippe will most likely make a statement. Both the debate and the briefing will be presided over by the country’s foreign minister, Philippe Goffin.

There will be two other meetings, briefings both, on thematic issues: on [the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant](#) and the Secretary-General’s tenth strategic-level report; and on [small arms](#), to consider the Secretary-General’s sixth biennial report on the topic.

Two meetings on European organisations are expected: the annual briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe ([OSCE](#)), and the annual meeting on strengthening the partnership with the EU, with a briefing by the [EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy](#).

Several African issues will be addressed in February. The Council expects briefings, followed by consultations, on [Central African Republic](#), [Guinea-Bissau](#) and [Somalia](#). It will hold an informal interactive dialogue on [Burundi](#). It will hold consultations to receive a briefing

on the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee. It is also expected to adopt resolutions extending the mandates of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office (UNIOGBIS) in Guinea-Bissau, 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, and the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

On [Yemen](#), there will be a briefing in consultations and the adoption of a resolution renewing financial and travel ban sanctions and the mandate of the Yemen Panel of Experts. There will be the three regular meetings on Syria: briefings followed by consultations on the political and humanitarian situation and a meeting in consultations on chemical weapons. The regular briefing and consultations on Israel/Palestine will also take place.

The Council will receive its first briefing, followed by consultations, on the new special political mission, the UN Integrated Office in Haiti ([BINUH](#)).

Regarding Asia, a briefing in consultations is expected on the work of the [1718 Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Sanctions Committee](#).

Council members will most likely follow closely developments in Myanmar and South Sudan, although no meetings on these issues were scheduled at press time.

In Hindsight: The Security Council in 2019

In 2019, geopolitical tensions continued to be reflected in Council action. Difficult and protracted negotiations were a regular feature, with pushback on previously agreed language from past resolutions. This difficult dynamic among Council members is apparent in the 2019 statistics. Formal Council decisions were at their lowest number since 1991. There were fewer formal meetings and consultations than in 2018,

occupying slightly less time, too.

In addition, more time was spent in sanctions committees and working groups, which met 172 times in 2019, compared to 144 times in 2018. Informal formats—Arria-formula and informal interactive dialogue meetings—stood at about the same number.

Finding consensus on the most contentious issues was difficult. Six draft resolutions failed to

31 January 2020
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be adopted due to either vetoes or insufficient votes—over ten percent of the 58 resolutions tabled. The three vetoes, the same number as in 2018, were on Syria (two) and Venezuela (one). Two Syria draft resolutions and one Ukraine draft resolution were not adopted because of insufficient votes. Eight resolutions out of 52 adopted had fewer than 15 votes: just over 15%, compared to just over 16% non-unanimous resolutions in 2018. These abstentions came on sanctions resolutions (South Sudan and Somalia), peacekeeping mandate renewals (Haiti and Western Sahara), and for the first time on a women, peace and security resolution. Members abstaining on the different drafts included China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Russia, and South Africa.

There were only two procedural votes, after four in 2018. They were on Ukraine and Venezuela, both over an objection to the provisional agenda for the meeting. The lower number of procedural votes may signal greater uncertainty, in 2019, that nine votes would be available on some issues. As in 2018, a meeting on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which for four years had been held following a procedural vote, was not requested because of calculations that there would be insufficient votes to have the meeting.

There were 22 Arria-formula meetings, surpassing the 21 in 2018, which had been the highest since the start of this format in 1992. Members appear to be using this format for issues that are likely to be blocked if brought to the Council for a formal discussion.

One new issue, Venezuela, was added to the formal agenda of the Council. Adding it proved to be polarising, requiring a procedural vote. For the first time since 1965, the Council met on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir under the agenda item “The India-Pakistan Question”.

One new mission was established: the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), and one follow-on mission, the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), which succeeded a peacekeeping mission, the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti.

TRENDS IN 2019

An Overall Decline in the Number of Decisions

The Council adopted 67 decisions (resolutions and presidential statements) in 2019, the lowest in 18 years. The number of resolutions has been falling since 2016, and although the 52 adopted in 2019 was only two fewer than in 2018, it was the lowest in six years. Most resolutions continued to be mandate extensions and sanctions renewals, but there were also resolutions on thematic issues, including terrorism; protection of civilians; and women, peace and security. Presidential statements fell even more drastically, from 21 in 2018 to 15 last year. The low number may be attributed to greater difficulty in reaching consensus, resulting in presidential statements either not being adopted or Council members choosing not to use this format, particularly following a presidency's signature event. The Council was unable to reach agreement on a draft text following the closure of the mission in Haiti although it is customary for the Council to issue a presidential statement on such occasions. Presidential statements in 2019 were largely used to urge implementation of an agreement, or to show support for a new agreement or the work of an organisation or a regional office. Presidential statements were also adopted following meetings on peacekeeping, the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, Iraq-Kuwait and missing persons, and the League of Arab states.

Press statements, which for some years had been the Council's most common format for responding to specific violent incidents, fell sharply from 88 in 2018 to 67 in 2019. One reason for this may be that Council members were more selective about issuing press statements following attacks by terrorists and against civilians, which dropped from 54 percent of all press statements in 2018 to 43.4 percent in 2019.

The fall in the number of formal outcomes correlates to the difficulty in getting agreement. A number of outcomes were negotiated but not adopted, including draft presidential statements on mediation and mercenaries and a draft resolution on the financing of African-led peacekeeping missions. Members may also have been more reluctant to suggest outcomes in the face of potential vetoes or tough negotiations that could result in watered-down consensus outcomes.

Fewer Public Meetings, More Consultations

There was a small drop in the number of formal public and private meetings and consultations, from 396 in 2018 to 384 in 2019. However, there appears to have been a shift in the trend of the last three years, which favoured meeting in public rather than in consultations, as Council members acknowledged the desire for better balance between the transparency of public meetings and the need for private discussion. Council members met 135 times in consultations, compared to 120 in 2018: a 12.5 percent increase.

Formal meetings dropped by 10.4 percent. After a record-high number of public meetings—275 in 2018 and 282 in 2017—the Council held 243 public meetings in 2019. Fifteen private meetings were held, slightly more than in 2018. Unusually, this format, typically used for meetings with troop-contributing countries, was used for a discussion about chemical weapons in Syria with the head of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as the closed setting allowed the Council to have a frank discussion with a briefer not from the Secretariat.

In May 2019, during the Secretary-General's retreat for Council members, the UK suggested that a new informal format for frank discussions among the permanent representatives was needed. Indonesia, as president for the month of May, hosted the first meeting in this format, referred to as “sofa talks”.

A Council Divided

Strained relations among the permanent members (P5) on the global stage continued to affect Council dynamics. For the last few years, Russia and the US have been on opposing sides in conflicts in the Middle East and Europe. There are rising tensions with China, which has become increasingly assertive globally and in the Council. At the same time, the US has retreated from active engagement in multilateral institutions and is increasingly focused on domestic issues and on pursuing issues bilaterally.

In the Council, Russia and the US remain deadlocked on Syria, on which Russia cast its 14th veto in December 2019, and on Ukraine. The situation in Venezuela came in as a new divisive issue. China has begun to take strong positions on issues that affect its

In Hindsight: The Security Council in 2019

wider domestic priorities. It has been particularly assertive on Afghanistan, threatening to veto the renewal of the UNAMA's mandate over language related to its Belt and Road Initiative, and on Jammu-Kashmir, on which it initiated a Council meeting and proposed a draft text.

France, the UK and the US (P3), which had been a united block for years, now have differing positions on issues ranging from the Sahel to Iran. The biggest change has come from the US, which on issues such as sexual and reproductive health rights in conflict, the ICC, and climate and security

appears more aligned with China and Russia than with France and the UK.

The elected members (E10) have continued to meet regularly among themselves as well as with the Secretary-General. They have joined forces around working methods and made their first statement as a group in a Council meeting during the working methods open debate in June. The E10 made a joint media statement in November 2019 on Israeli settlement activity but have found it more difficult to rally around Syria humanitarian issues than they have in the past.

Difficulty in reaching agreement on

several issues has led regional sub-groups to show Council support on divisive issues. In 2019, the recently departed, present and future EU members of the Council presented seven joint statements and appeared together at press stakeouts. The statements were on the DPRK, Gaza, Georgia, the Middle East, Turkish military action in north-eastern Syria, and Ukraine, which was the subject of two statements. For what appears to be the first time, the African members (A3) made joint statements, including when the Council failed to support the AU's call for a transition to civilian rule in Sudan.

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UNOWAS

On 8 January, the Security Council held a briefing (S/PV.8698) on West Africa and the Sahel with Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), who presented the Secretary-General's latest report on the region (S/2019/1005). Consultations followed the public session. The mandate is traditionally renewed for a three-year period through an exchange of letters with the Secretary-General.

Sudan (Darfur)

On 8 January, Council members met under "any other business" to discuss the situation in Darfur. Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita briefed members on recent intercommunal violence in West Darfur, which resulted in the death of several dozen civilians, as well as the looting of UNAMID's former headquarters in South Darfur. Following the meeting, the president of the Council, Ambassador Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam), delivered elements to the press condemning these two incidents.

The UN Charter

On 9 January, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate on "Maintenance of international peace and security: upholding the UN Charter" as an opportunity for member states to reflect on and reaffirm their commitment to upholding Charter principles, particularly in the context of international peace

and security (S/PV.8699 and Resumption 1 & 2). Viet Nam's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Pham Binh Minh, chaired the meeting while Secretary-General António Guterres and Chair of the Elders Mary Robinson briefed. The list of speakers had 111 member states, which led to the open debate continuing over the following two days. A presidential statement was adopted during the meeting (S/PRST/2020/1).

Colombia

On 13 January, the Security Council was briefed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carlos Ruiz Massieu on the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the UN Verification Mission in Colombia and the most recent developments (S/PV.8702). On 15 January, Council members issued a press statement in which they reiterated "their full and unanimous support" for the peace process (SC/14081). Among other things, they expressed serious concern about grave security conditions in various parts of the country as well as the continued targeting of community and social leaders and former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army members. They welcomed progress by the three components of the Integral System for Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-repetition and stressed the critical role these components play in the peace process and the need for them to be able to work independently and autonomously.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 13 January Security Council members held an informal interactive dialogue on the situation in eastern DRC with representatives of countries of the region, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MONUSCO Leila Zerrougui, and UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region Huang Xia. The US, who called for the meeting, wanted to bring together various stakeholders to discuss how to support the DRC government in its efforts to stabilise eastern DRC.

On 20 January, Council members met under "any other business" to discuss the independent assessment report on the protection of civilians and neutralisation of armed groups in Beni and Mabasa Territories prepared by Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz. The report made several recommendations on how the UN could improve its role in the protection of civilians in those two territories. The UN Department of Peace Operations will use the assessment's recommendations to develop an Action Plan for implementation.

Jammu and Kashmir

On 13 January, the Security Council was briefed by Assistant Secretary-General Mohamed Khaled Khiari and Brigadier General El Hadji Babacar Faye, Officer in Charge of the Office of Military Affairs (OMA) on Jammu and Kashmir under "any other business" at China's request. This follows a 12 December letter (S/2019/944) from the

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foreign minister of Pakistan to the President of the Security Council and a request from China for a meeting in December 2019. Most members reiterated their position that this was an issue that needed to be settled bilaterally between India and Pakistan.

Mali

On 15 January, the Council held a briefing, followed by consultations, on Mali (S/PV.8703). Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix presented the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2019/983) on Mali and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and a Secretary-General's letter on security challenges, MINUSMA's performance, and transition planning (S/2019/1004). On 17 January, Council members issued a press statement (SC/14083), noting some progress in the implementation of the 2015 Mali Peace and Reconciliation Agreement but expressing serious concern about the delays in the implementation of many of its substantive provisions. Among other points, members welcomed the Secretary-General's plan, reflected in his report, to adapt MINUSMA by increasing its protected mobility, agility and flexibility.

Cyprus

On 20 January, Council members were briefed in consultations by Elizabeth Spehar, Special Representative and head of UNFICYP, on recent developments and the latest Secretary-General's report (S/2020/23). On 30 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution S/RES/2506 which extended the mandate of UNFICYP for another six months.

Middle East (Israel/Palestine)

On 21 January and 22 January, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (S/PV.8706 and Resumption 1). Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, briefed. Both DiCarlo and Mueller spoke about the negative impact of the increase in Israeli settlements and demolition of Palestinian structures. Member states spoke on various topics, ranging from the need for the Security Council to act in support of the two-state solution to regional developments such as protests in Iran.

UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia

On 22 January, Council members met in consultations for a briefing on UNRCCA by Special Representative and head of UNRCCA Natalia Gherman. She updated Council members on the activities of UNRCCA since her last briefing in July, addressing issues such as terrorism, foreign terrorist fighters, regional cooperation, transboundary water management, and the role of women and youth in the region.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

On 30 January, the Security Council heard a briefing (S/PV.8711) on the cooperation between the UN and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Secretary-General António Guterres and ASEAN Secretary-General Dato Lim Jock Hoi briefed the Council. This briefing, held under the agenda item "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security", was the first Council meeting focused on cooperation with ASEAN.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In February, the Council is expected to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and renew the measures related to the illicit export of crude oil from Libya ahead of their expiry on 15 February 2020.

The mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expires on 15 September 2020.

Key Recent Developments

Libya's capital, Tripoli, has been the scene of fighting for over nine months, starting on 4 April 2019 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 Libyan 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. In his 15 January report on UNSMIL, the Secretary-General described Libya as having "endured a downward spiral of conflict".

In July 2019, the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, proposed three steps to end the conflict: a truce, a high-level conference of "concerned

countries", and a "Libyan meeting of leading and influential personalities from all over the country".

The proxy dimension of the Libyan conflict keeps intensifying in breach of UN sanctions. Reportedly, Turkey and Qatar support the GNA militarily while Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates provide military support to the LNA, and different Chadian and Sudanese armed groups support both sides. According to Libyan and US officials, mercenaries of the private but reportedly Kremlin-affiliated Russian military company Wagner Group are also involved on the ground in support of the

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2491 (3 October 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 that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. S/RES/2486 (12 September 2019) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2020. 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 20 February 2020; it was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (China and Russia). **Secretary-General's Report S/2020/41** (15 January 2020) was the latest report on UNSMIL. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV. 8710** (30 January 2020) was the latest meeting on UNSMIL and Libya sanctions. **Sanctions Committee Document S/2019/914** (29 November 2019) was the latest final report of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee.

LNA. On 2 January, the Turkish parliament approved the deployment of troops to Libya. Following a request by the GNA, Turkey started sending troops on 5 January. The latest report by the Secretary-General says that “the dangers and direct consequences of foreign interference are increasingly evident. To increase the number of fighters, there has been growing involvement of mercenaries. The presence of such professional fighters has been linked to an escalation in violence”. Speaking at a press stakeout following Council consultations on Libya on 6 January, Salamé directed his remarks to the countries involved in Libya: “Take your hands out of Libya. The country is suffering too much from foreign interference”.

On 8 January, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called for a ceasefire in Libya starting on 12 January. An attempt to have both the head of the GNA, Fayez Al-Sarraj, and Haftar sign a ceasefire agreement in Moscow failed, with Haftar leaving Moscow without signing. Briefing the Council on 30 January on the latest developments in Libya, Salamé reported that “the truce holds only in name.”

At the Berlin Conference on Libya, high-level representatives from Algeria, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Turkey, the Republic of the Congo, the United Arab Emirates, the UK, and the US, and High Representatives of the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, and the League of Arab States, adopted conclusions on 19 January on six areas (“baskets”) related to the conflict in Libya. The conference represented the second of Salamé’s three steps. With these conclusions, the participants committed to refraining from “interference in the armed conflict or in the internal affairs of Libya” and urged all international actors to do the same. They further called upon the United Nations “to facilitate ceasefire negotiations between the parties, including through the immediate establishment of technical committees to monitor and verify the implementation of the ceasefire”.

They also called on the Council to impose “appropriate sanctions on those who are found to be in violation of the ceasefire arrangements and on Member States to enforce these”. Regarding the arms embargo, participants committed themselves “to

unequivocally and fully respect and implement the arms embargo” established by the Council and called “on all international actors to do the same”. The participants further agreed to establish an International Follow-Up Committee (IFC) to coordinate efforts to implement the conclusions. Sarraj and Haftar were both in Berlin but not formally a part of the conference. Shortly before the conference, forces allied with the LNA effectively shut down nearly all of Libya’s oil fields and terminals, leading to massive revenue loss for the Libyan state.

UNSMIL began to work on the six baskets before the conference. The six baskets are: political, economic and financial, security, arms embargo, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Sarraj and Haftar have each nominated five representatives for the military 5+5 committee (part of the “security” basket). At the time of writing, a first meeting, initially anticipated for 28 January, had not taken place.

Council members met in consultations on Libya on 6 January and 21 January. They adopted press elements at both meetings. On 21 January, the Council was briefed by the Secretary-General on the Berlin conference. Ambassador Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam), president of the Council in January, read out press elements, saying that Council members welcomed the conclusions, reiterated their support for Salamé’s work, and urged the parties to the conflict to engage in the 5+5 committee to conclude a ceasefire agreement as soon as possible. He added that the members of the Council would follow up on the conclusions in the coming days. At a press stakeout following the consultations, the Secretary-General emphasised that “one of the parties of the conflict has not yet expressed publicly support to the conclusions”, referring to Haftar.

According to the Secretary-General’s latest report on UNSMIL, 140,000 people have fled since Haftar’s assault on Tripoli, 284 civilians have been killed, and 363 have been injured.

The UN’s 2019 humanitarian response plan for Libya of \$201.6 million has been funded at less than 50 percent, with 50.2 percent or \$101.3 million outstanding.

Key Issues and Options

An immediate issue for the Council is the renewal of both the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and the measures related to the illicit export of crude oil from Libya. Upon renewing the panel’s mandate, an option for the Council would be to make sure that the panel has the necessary gender expertise, as requested in resolution 2441. Another option would be to request the panel to increase its written reporting to the Council to closely monitor the implementation of the Berlin conference conclusions.

An ongoing issue is the military conflict, which threatens to deepen long-standing political and economic divisions between different parts of Libya, contributing to the overall instability of the country. At the time of writing, the Council was considering an endorsement of the Berlin conference conclusions. Council members will continue following closely the progress made by Salamé in his proposed three steps and in implementing the six baskets of the Berlin conference conclusions. Council members are eager to see a permanent ceasefire between the parties to enable further progress on the Berlin conference conclusions.

In the longer term, a Council visiting mission to Libya or a full-fledged—covering the whole country—visit by the Libya Sanctions Committee could be considered.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Libya has been a divisive issue within the Council. 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. Now that the various countries, including Council members, that support the conflicting parties have signed up to the Berlin conference conclusions, there may be prospects for more unity in the Council’s approach to the Libya file.

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

Small Arms

Expected Council Action

In February, the Council will hold a briefing to consider the Secretary-General's sixth biennial report on small arms, submitted in accordance with the presidential statement adopted on 29 June 2007, which requested a biennial report to the Council, beginning in 2008.

Background and Recent Developments

As a thematic issue, small arms was first considered by the Council in September 1999. However, the Council's attention to this issue has been somewhat inconsistent. It adopted six presidential statements on small arms between 1999 and 2007, but there were no discussions about the issue from 2008 to 2013 with the exception of a briefing in a closed meeting on the Secretary-General's 2011 report on small arms.

The Council adopted its first thematic resolution on small arms, resolution 2117, in September 2013. In it, the Council sought to strengthen its response to small arms-related threats to international peace and security. In May 2015, the Council adopted resolution 2220, which urged member states to enhance their cooperation in curtailing illicit arms transfers and the accumulation and misuse of small weapons while focusing on the effects of these activities on civilian populations. It emphasised the role of UN peacekeeping operations relating to arms embargoes and capacity-building for host governments, encouraged information-sharing and cooperation among relevant actors, and called on states to support weapons collection, disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and stockpile management.

The Secretary-General's most recent report underscores that the destabilising accumulation, illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to initiate, sustain and exacerbate armed conflict and pervasive crime. The report presents an overview of recent trends and developments, including the Secretary-General's launch in May 2018 of a new disarmament agenda, "Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament", which among other things calls for deeper efforts at the national level and the establishment of a new

trust facility, the Saving Lives Entity fund, to support country-level work on this issue. The report also deals with how "small arms issues can be constructively and effectively mainstreamed into the work of the Security Council". In this regard, it provides specific recommendations for ensuring that matters pertaining to small arms and light weapons and ammunition are effectively integrated into several thematic areas, namely the protection of civilians, peace operations, arms embargoes, women and peace and security, children and armed conflict, counter-terrorism, and transnational organised crime. The report concludes that "[c]ompartimentalized treatment of the small arms and light weapons issue is not sufficient to address the seriousness and magnitude of the challenges".

On 18 December 2017, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's fifth biennial report on the spread of small arms, light weapons and their ammunition.

Women, Peace and Security

The Secretary-General's report on small arms and light weapons stresses that the women, peace and security agenda is most pertinent in integrating issues related to small arms and light weapons among the Council's overall agenda. The report further emphasises that the small arms and light weapons agenda should be included in all four of the main pillars of the women, peace and security agenda: protection, participation, prevention, and relief and recovery. As a possible starting point, the report suggests the inclusion of language about "how small arms and light weapons facilitate acts of sexual and gender-based violence" and, in relation to the participation aspect of the agenda, how they may impede the political participation of women in political processes.

The Secretary-General also refers to resolution 2242 on women, peace and security, which encourages the empowerment of women "to participate in the design and implementation of efforts related to the prevention, combating and eradication of the illicit transfer, and the destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons". The resolution further "calls upon Member States, United Nations entities, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations [...] to mitigate the risk of women from (sic) becoming active players in the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons". In that context, the Secretary-General addresses the general need for effective small arms and light weapons

policies to include a gender dimension. By way of example, he points out that because an insufficient number of women work in national security forces, together with traditional stereotyping, women and girls – out of choice or through force – are employed as arms smugglers as they do not undergo security screenings similar to men. In terms of member states' engagement, the Secretary-General suggests the synchronisation of the women, peace and security national action plans with the small arms and light weapons national action plans.

Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is the implementation of previous outcomes on small arms, most notably resolutions 2117 and 2220. Another key issue is considering the recommendations made in the Secretary-General's report to more effectively integrate small arms and light weapons considerations into the Council's work, both thematically and in country-specific contexts. An option for the Council would be to adopt a resolution or presidential statement that would welcome the Secretary-General's report and endorse some of its recommendations. Furthermore, the Council could request the Secretary-General to consistently integrate small-arms issues into all planning and review processes for UN operations at the earliest possible stage, address small-arms issues in all relevant reports, and provide further recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Council Dynamics

Council dynamics on small arms tend to be complicated. This was particularly evident during the Council's negotiations on its two most prominent outcomes on this issue, resolutions 2117 and 2220. In the first attempt to pass a resolution on small arms, an initiative of then-Council member Argentina in 2006, the Council failed to adopt it because of strong objections by the US, which at the time argued that the issue was best dealt with in the General Assembly. When resolution 2117 was adopted in 2013 at the initiative of then-Council member Australia, Russia abstained, citing the omission of an amendment it had proposed aimed at preventing the transfer of small arms to non-state actors.

When resolution 2220 was adopted in 2015, Russia and China abstained, along

UN DOCUMENTS ON SMALL ARMS Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2220 (22 May 2015) was on small arms and contained new provisions aimed at strengthening UN coordination and action on small arms, promoting effective implementation of UN arms embargoes, and supporting the Arms Trade Treaty. S/RES/2117 (26 September 2013) was the first thematic resolution on small arms adopted by the Council. Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2007/24 (29 June 2007) was on small arms and requested that the Secretary-General submit a biennial report to the Council, beginning in 2008. S/PRST/2001/21 (4 September 2001) requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Council a report on small arms. Secretary-General's Reports S/2019/1011 (30 December 2019) was the sixth biennial report on small arms and light weapons. S/2017/1025 (6 December 2017) was the fifth biennial report on small arms and light weapons. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8140 (18 December 2017) was a briefing on the Secretary-General's fifth biennial report on small arms and light weapons.

Small Arms

with then-Council members Angola, Chad, Nigeria and Venezuela. Once again, the core issue during negotiations was the transfer of small arms to non-state actors. Russia also objected to certain provisions of the resolution regarding the expansion of the power of specialised committees and UN missions in controlling the transfers of small arms, which Russia believes should be the sole

responsibility of the government concerned.

Another issue that tends to be contentious is any suggestion that the Council call on states to ratify or accede to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Among the current Council members, six have not joined the ATT: China, Indonesia, Russia, Tunisia, the US, and Viet Nam. (While the US is a signatory, it has not ratified or acceded to the ATT.)

At the briefing on 18 December 2017, Russia referred to the ATT as “a weak document that is not capable of fully enabling the implementation of its own provisions”. The US expressed some concerns about the Secretary-General’s report, including on issues related to domestic misuse of small arms in non-conflict settings and references to the tracing of small-arms ammunition.

OSCE Briefing

Expected Council Action

In February, Albanian Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Edi Rama, the current Chairperson-in-Office for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), is expected to provide a briefing to the Security Council on the activities of the organisation.

Background

The Council has received annual briefings by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office since 2004. The chairmanship of the OSCE rotates yearly, and on 1 January, Albania succeeded Slovakia in this function. February’s debate will give the Chairperson-in-Office an opportunity to inform the Council about Albania’s main priorities as chair and discuss possible avenues for cooperation.

Albania announced that its agenda will include efforts to combat corruption, human trafficking and the spread of hate speech across the region. Prime Minister Rama further indicated that the conflict in eastern Ukraine would be a top priority on his agenda in the upcoming year. The OSCE is the leading organisation responsible for monitoring the implementation of the 2015 Minsk agreements, which outline a roadmap for resolving the conflict in eastern Ukraine and were endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2202 (2015). The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) gathers daily information related to ceasefire violations and the withdrawal of heavy weapons in eastern Ukraine.

Given the OSCE’s access to information on the ground, Rama’s briefing will serve as an important opportunity for Council

members to hear about developments in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. In late 2019, political negotiations led to incremental progress on some elements of the agreement, which in turn helped facilitate a gradual easing of tensions in eastern Ukraine.

On 9 December 2019, a meeting of the Normandy format—a group consisting of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine that was created in 2014 with the aim of resolving the conflict in Ukraine—took place in Paris. The summit, which was the first gathering of the Normandy format in over three years, also served as a platform for the first meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. While the summit did not facilitate major breakthroughs in the political stalemate between Russia and Ukraine, agreements were made on several confidence-building measures, such as prisoner exchanges, creation of new disengagement areas, and the opening of new crossing points along the contact line. On 29 December 2019, the OSCE monitored and facilitated an exchange of 200 prisoners between Russia and Ukraine in line with the agreements made at the Normandy format summit.

The leaders of the Normandy format agreed to meet again within four months after the December 2019 summit to discuss such issues as control of the Ukrainian-Russian border and the organisation of local elections in eastern Ukraine. These issues, along with the question of the status of the rebel-held areas in eastern Ukraine, remain the most contentious points of disagreement between Russia and Ukraine. While the Minsk agreements call for the

holding of local elections in eastern Ukraine, each side has a different interpretation of the conditions that should be met before such elections can take place. At the Normandy format summit, President Zelenskyy emphasised that elections cannot take place in eastern Ukraine until all foreign military forces and equipment are withdrawn and Ukraine regains control of the border. However, President Putin maintained that under the Minsk agreements, Ukraine can regain control of the border only after the holding of the elections. If these disagreements are resolved and elections are held in eastern Ukraine, the OSCE will be responsible for facilitating the elections, in accordance with the terms outlined in the Minsk agreements.

According to OSCE figures, the past year has seen a decrease in the level of violence in eastern Ukraine, with civilian casualties in 2019 falling to the lowest level since the beginning of the conflict in 2014. Violations of the ceasefire agreement in eastern Ukraine continued in 2020, despite the agreement reached between the leaders of Ukraine and Russia at the Normandy format summit to commit to full implementation of the ceasefire. While the number of violations in January dropped sizeably compared to the figures in late 2019, these violations continue to destabilise the situation on the ground in eastern Ukraine. Following incidents on 18 and 19 January, in which two Ukrainian soldiers were killed and ten wounded, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko expressed Kyiv’s intention to discuss the recent uptick in violence with Germany and France.

In addition to the situation in Ukraine, the Chairperson-in-Office is likely to address

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE OSCE Security Council Resolution S/RES/2202 (17 February 2015) endorsed the “Package of measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements” signed on 12 February 2015. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8479** (7 March 2019) was a briefing by Slovakian Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. **S/PV.4964** (7 May 2004) was the first public briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE.

OSCE Briefing

other conflict situations in the OSCE's area of operations during February's briefing. The OSCE plays a role in international efforts regarding frozen conflicts in Georgia,

Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria. Given that these conflicts are not regularly discussed by the Council, some members might want to use the opportunity of the

briefing to hear about the OSCE's mediation efforts in these situations.

Counter-Terrorism

Expected Council Action

In February, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (OCT), and Michèle Coninx, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), are expected to brief the Security Council on the Secretary-General's tenth strategic-level report on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or Da'esh). In the past, Council members received these reports every four months; however, several Council members felt that was excessive, and so the report has been submitted biannually since the adoption of resolution 2368 in July 2017.

Background and Key Recent Developments

Under the terms of resolution 2368 of 20 July 2017, the Secretary-General submits a strategic-level report on ISIL to the Council biannually. The reports are intended to reflect the gravity of the ISIL threat as well as the range of UN efforts to support states in countering that threat. In his July 2019 report, the Secretary-General found that despite its territorial defeat in Syria, ISIL remains committed to the global relevance of its so-called caliphate. According to the report, it continues to draw upon its affiliates and inspires attacks, and possesses an estimated residual wealth of \$300 million. The report also highlights acute concerns about the challenges posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), returnees and relocators, and the increasing number of attacks in areas controlled by the Syrian government.

Beyond the Middle East, there has been a noticeable increase in ISIL- and

Al-Qaida-linked recruitment in Africa, according to the report. The "West Africa Province" is now one of the strongest ISIL offshoots, with approximately 4,000 fighters. ISIL also presents an evolving threat in Central Africa. In Europe, radicalisation in prisons and the risk presented by returnees upon their release from prison remain significant concerns, particularly given their direct input into home-grown terrorism and domestically inspired attacks. Asia continues to experience the ISIL threat despite military pressure: the jihadist group is estimated to have between 2,500 and 4,000 fighters there, including FTFs. In Southeast Asia, the report notes two troubling developments among ISIL affiliates: the role of women in planning and executing attacks and explicit targeting of places of worship. The report warns that the decline in attacks directed by ISIL may only be temporary.

Briefing the Council on the report on 27 August 2019, Voronkov underscored that the fall of Baghouz, ISIL's last stronghold in Syria, did not remove the threat posed by ISIL, which continues to evolve into a covert network and remains the international terrorist group most likely to conduct a large-scale attack in the near future. He also emphasised that despite significant challenges concerning the repatriation of their nationals, especially women and children, from ISIL territories, several member states—including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan—have repatriated women and children, including orphans, from Iraq and Syria. He also highlighted three new initiatives being spearheaded by the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) that address law enforcement and border security, protection

of vulnerable targets such as places of worship, and a global capacity-building programme to counter the financing of terrorism. During his briefing, Voronkov furthermore presented key principles developed by the UNOCT that focus on screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of suspected terrorists and their families, as well as the related practical implementation and customised support being provided by UNOCT, other United Nations entities, and various regional and field presences to the states that request it.

During the same briefing on 27 August, Coninx stressed that the international community must pay urgent attention to the large numbers of women and children who are detained because of their association with ISIL. She was also adamant that any post-repatriation strategies include short-, medium- and long-term components, addressing prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of the returnees. She emphasised that CTED remains fully engaged with its partners and stands ready to assist member states in addressing these challenges.

In other ISIL-related developments, some detainee camps in Syria serve as incubators for possible ISIL resurgence, according to Michael Stephens of the Royal United Services Institute, an independent think tank in London focused on defence and security research. After the fall of Baghouz in March 2019, the al-Hawl camp admitted 64,000 women and children, many of whom have links to ISIL, with the camp rapidly falling under the control of a group of radicalised women. While official numbers are not available, several prisoners fled when Turkey began its shelling offensive against the Kurdish forces in the area in October 2019.

UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2490](#) (20 September 2019) renewed the mandate of UNITAD until 21 September 2020. [S/RES/2462](#) (28 March 2019) was on combatting the financing of terrorism. [S/RES/2396](#) (21 December 2017) addressed the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. [S/RES/2395](#) (21 December 2017) renewed the mandate of the CTED until 31 December 2021. [S/RES/2379](#) (21 September 2017) established an investigative team to collect, store and preserve evidence of ISIL crimes in Iraq. [S/RES/2368](#) (20 July 2017) renewed and updated the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime. Through an annex to the resolution, eight individuals or organisations were added to the sanctions list. [Secretary-General's Report S/2019/612](#) (31 July 2019) was the ninth strategic-level report on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security. [Security Council Letters S/2019/878](#) (13 November 2019) was from Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD, transmitting the third report on the activities of UNITAD. [S/2019/407](#) (17 May 2019) was the second report of the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8626](#) (25 September 2019) was a ministerial-level debate on counter-terrorism cooperation in Central Asia. [S/PV.8675](#) (26 November 2019) was Khan's third Council briefing. [S/PV.8605](#) (27 August 2019) was a briefing on the ninth report on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh).

Counter-Terrorism

In December 2019, ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack in Nigeria's north-eastern Borno state in which 11 people were killed. A 56-second video released by the ISIL "news agency" Amaq said the attack was part of ISIL's campaign to avenge Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's targeted killing in October 2019. On 9 January, ISIL assaulted a Niger military base, leaving 89 Nigerien soldiers and 77 ISIL militants dead.

There have also been developments regarding the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), established by resolution 2379 of 21 September 2017 to support Iraqi domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable for crimes it committed in Iraq.

On 20 September, the Council unanimously renewed UNITAD's mandate for another 12 months. On 26 November, Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, the Special Adviser and head of UNITAD, briefed the Council on his third report and most recent developments. Kachi Amo Saloh, a Yazidi survivor who joined the discussion from Iraq via video teleconference, spoke about losing family members to ISIL crimes and his support for UNITAD and the implementation of its mandate. (For more, please see our 25 November 2019 What's In Blue story.)

During the briefing, Khan discussed UNITAD's evolution from "start-up to real operations" over the previous six months. He also addressed significant progress in collecting, gathering and analysing evidence of ISIL crimes in Mosul, Sinjar, and the

Tikrit Air Academy (also known as Camp Speicher). Khan elaborated on UNITAD's two field-based missions conducting active investigations in the Ninawa governorate, where ISIL targeted judges, religious clergy, journalists and health-care officials. Through these missions, UNITAD identified several individual ISIL members as "primary targets for further investigations" in relation to the three areas, which were discussed during his previous briefing in July. On staff recruitment, Khan said that his team had grown to 107 members and represented all geographical groups at the UN. Women occupy half of the senior leadership positions.

In other counter-terrorism-related developments, the Council held a ministerial-level debate on 25 September 2019 on counter-terrorism cooperation in Central Asia. Secretary-General António Guterres emphasised that efforts to counter terrorist ideology must be founded on respect for the dignity and human rights of all. Several speakers embraced that sentiment and, in their statements, focused on the need to fully respect international law, especially human rights law, in the context of counter-terrorism operations. Some stressed that success in countering terrorism lies in respect for human rights principles within the UN framework.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is to maintain the necessary flexibility and adaptability to address the evolving global threat posed by ISIL as well as ensuring the overall implementation

of the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida/ISIL sanctions regime as part of wider counter-terrorism efforts. However, it is important that states do not hinder humanitarian activities, as highlighted in resolution 2462.

Council members may want to address the key principles developed by UNOCT and presented by Voronkov during his briefing in August 2019 and hear about their practical impact.

Council Dynamics

Counter-terrorism is one of the issues where there is a high degree of consensus among Council members, who are in overall agreement about the importance of receiving strategic analysis on ISIL, which can then feed into other counter-terrorism efforts or serve as background for the Council's counter-terrorism agenda, even if no specific course of action is foreseen. Council members differ, however, in their approach to FTFs and their families. For example, during negotiations over resolutions 2395 and 2396 in December 2017, renewing the mandate of the CTED and addressing the threat of FTFs, respectively, several Western states argued that screening processes need to reflect some discernment between FTFs and their families rather than an automatic assumption that the families are complicit. However, Russia argued that FTFs should be held criminally liable and that family members travelling with FTFs are complicit by default and should be held accountable.

Children and Armed Conflict

Expected Council Action

As Council president in February and the chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Belgium is planning a high-level briefing on "Integrating child protection into peace processes to resolve conflict and sustain peace", to be presided over by the country's Foreign Minister, Philippe Goffin. Belgian King Philippe and Queen Mathilde are expected to be in attendance,

and King Philippe will most likely make a statement. The anticipated briefers are Secretary-General António Guterres, AU Peace and Security Commissioner Smaïl Chergui and Jo Becker, chair of the advisory board of the NGO network Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict. On the same day as the briefing, there will be a related high-level event to launch the practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations

of armed conflict. A presidential statement is a possible outcome.

Background and Recent Developments

Since 1999, Council resolutions and presidential statements have included language on the need for parties to integrate child protection provisions into all peace negotiations, ceasefire and peace agreements, and to take into account children's views where possible.

UN DOCUMENTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT Security Council Resolution S/RES/2427 (9 July 2018) provided a framework for integrating protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle as well as in sustaining peace efforts. **Secretary-General's Reports S/2019/509** (20 June 2019) was the latest annual report on children and armed conflict. **S/2019/727** (10 September 2019) was on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan. **S/2019/453** (3 June 2019) was on children and armed conflict in Yemen. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8591** (2 August 2019) was an open debate on children and armed conflict. **Other S/2019/981** (20 December 2019) was the annual report of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. **S/AC.51/2019/2** (20 August 2019) contained the conclusions on Myanmar adopted by the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. **S/AC.51/2019/1** (18 July 2019) contained the conclusions on Syria adopted by the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

Children and Armed Conflict

Of the 12 resolutions adopted on children and armed conflict, ten have included language on integrating child protection provisions during peace negotiations, ceasefire and peace agreements. The most recent resolution, adopted in 2018, highlighted the need to consider child protection issues from the early stages of peace processes.

The Council adopted a presidential statement on 31 October 2017 that encouraged the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, to carry out “lessons learned initiatives in order to compile comprehensive best practices on the children and armed conflict mandate, including practical guidance on the integration of child protection issues in peace processes”. This guidance is expected to be launched ahead of the Council briefing.

On 2 August 2019, the Council held an open debate on children and armed conflict, based on the Secretary-General’s 2019 annual report on children and armed conflict. Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz chaired the meeting. Gamba; Henrietta Fore, the executive director of UNICEF; UNICEF Canada Ambassador, Mariatu Kamara, whose hands were amputated during Sierra Leone’s civil war; and Majok Peter Awan, a former child soldier and currently a UN child protection officer, briefed the Council.

On 26 November 2019, Council members held an Arria-formula meeting co-hosted by Belgium, Peru, Poland and the UK on how to better support children once they have been separated from armed forces and armed groups. The meeting focused on how bridging the “humanitarian-development-peace nexus” can lead to more sustainable and successful reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups. It also looked at how incorporating children’s views can lead to more effective strategies for reintegration and post-conflict recovery.

In October 2019, Gamba visited Somalia. She commended the government of Somalia for its commitment to speeding up the implementation of action plans to end and prevent the recruitment and use, and the killing and maiming, of children. She conveyed her concern over the rising levels of grave violations against children. Somalia has the highest number of grave violations against children of all the situations listed in the annexes to the Secretary-General’s annual report.

Gamba visited Myanmar from 15 to 20 January and met with senior Myanmar officials and a range of key stakeholders involved in child protection. Eight parties in Myanmar are listed in the annexes to the Secretary-General’s annual report, including the national army (Tatmadaw), which signed an action plan in 2012. (The annual reports contain annexes listing parties that have committed grave violations against children: one includes parties active in conflict situations on the Council’s agenda, the other, in situations that are not on the list of issues the Council is seized of). During the visit, Gamba highlighted how children have suffered from the hostilities in Myanmar, particularly in Rakhine, Shan and Kachin States, and also acknowledged progress in the implementation of the action plan on recruitment of children. She urged the Tatmadaw to commit to a joint action plan with the UN on ending and preventing killing, maiming and sexual violence, violations for which it is also listed.

Developments in the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict visited Mali from 8 to 11 December 2019. The delegation was made up of 11 members of the Security Council, who visited Bamako and Mopti. The objectives of the visit included following up on the May 2018 conclusions on children and armed conflict in Mali, discussing challenges and opportunities to advance the children and armed conflict agenda in Mali, assessing progress in the implementation of the action plan signed by Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad in March 2017, and engaging with other armed groups. The Working Group delegation met with senior UN and government officials, the UN country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children, the High Islamic Council, local and international non-governmental organisations, representatives of armed groups, and the local Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict. They also met with a representative from the Group of Five for the Sahel.

In 2019, the Working Group held 12 formal meetings and met 27 times in informal consultations. It adopted conclusions on the Secretary-General’s reports on children and armed conflict in Syria and Myanmar.

Negotiations are currently ongoing on the reports on Afghanistan, the Central African Republic and Yemen. The report on Colombia was introduced in the Working Group at the end of January.

In 2019, the Working Group also held video teleconferences (VTCs) with the UN country task force on monitoring and reporting on Mali in February, the DRC in May, Nigeria in July, Sudan in October, and the Philippines in November. These briefings provide an opportunity for the Working Group to monitor progress on protection of children issues and to obtain information that can be used in integrating these issues into mandate renewal resolutions in situations where there are peace operations.

A new working method initiated by the chair is a monthly briefing of the Working Group by the incoming president of the Council on the programme of work, which allows working group members to plan ahead for country-specific situations that may be of interest in the context of the children and armed conflict agenda.

Key Issues and Options

The overarching issue is what the Council can do to raise awareness of the importance of incorporating child protection considerations in peace processes. Beyond incorporating appropriate language in its resolutions, the Council could choose to more proactively raise this issue during regular briefings on UN peace operations in order to better understand the challenges faced by mediators and others involved in peace processes. It could also request the Secretary-General to include integration of child protection issues in reporting on peace processes, as a discrete section in the annual report and in his periodic reports on relevant peace operations.

A related issue is the lack of guidance for those involved in peace processes. The Council could address this in a presidential statement encouraging mediators to use the guidance. It could also include a commitment for this issue to be incorporated in resolutions on all relevant peace operations.

Council Dynamics

Council members are generally supportive of the children and armed conflict agenda. However, the difficult dynamics among Council members have had a direct impact

Children and Armed Conflict

on the Working Group's ability to agree on conclusions, particularly on the situations that were the first to be addressed by the Working Group last year: Myanmar, Syria and Yemen. Although the Working Group began to negotiate different conclusions in parallel in the latter half of 2019, it was not possible to adopt as many conclusions as had been anticipated.

The Working Group met more times than any other subsidiary body in 2019. Areas covered included the introduction of reports; briefings on the Global Horizontal Note, which provides an update on situations in

the Secretary-General's annexes; and negotiations and adoptions of conclusions. In addition, there were regular VTCs and briefings on the programme of work. Besides the chair, several other Working Group members have shown a dedication to the issue, including in 2019 the Dominican Republic, France, Germany and the UK. However, frequent changes in personnel by the US may suggest a lack of commitment to the issue while China appears to no longer have a dedicated children and armed conflict expert, choosing instead to send its country-specific experts to the meetings. It is too soon to get a sense of

the positions of the new members although early indications are that Tunisia is likely to be sensitive to counties in its region in negotiations on the conclusions on the report of children and armed conflict in Yemen and Estonia is expected to be an active participant. Negotiations on the anticipated draft presidential statement are likely to provide a clearer picture of the dynamics among Working Group members going forward.

Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve (Belgium) chairs the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

Transitional Justice

Expected Council Action

In February, the Council is expected to hold an open debate on transitional justice at the initiative of Belgium. The open debate will be held under the broader agenda item "peace-building and sustaining peace" and a concept note will be circulated ahead of the meeting. Belgium's Foreign Minister, Philippe Goffin, is expected to preside. At press time, no outcome was anticipated.

Background and Key Recent Developments

While the Security Council has considered transitional justice indirectly in various contexts over the past several decades, the open debate in February will be the first time the Council holds a meeting on transitional justice as a thematic issue. The open debate is expected to focus on how the Security Council can better support transitional justice initiatives in country-specific contexts. In this regard, a central aim is for those member states with experience in dealing with transitional justice initiatives to share their views, including lessons learned.

A 2004 report of the Secretary-General on the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies defined that term as a "full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempts

to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. These may include both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, with differing levels of international involvement (or none at all) and individual prosecutions, reparations, truth-seeking, institutional reform, vetting and dismissals, or a combination thereof". In 2010, the Secretary-General issued a note providing the guiding principles and framework for the UN's approach to transitional justice processes and mechanisms. It outlines key components of transitional justice and ways to further strengthen these activities.

Since 2005, the Council has used the term "transitional justice" in resolutions across several different country-specific issues on its agenda. These include Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen.

The Human Rights Council (HRC) has been particularly engaged on the issue of transitional justice. In 2011, the HRC adopted resolution 18/7 which decided to appoint a special rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence. The position is currently held by Fabian Salvioli (Argentina). The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is a lead entity within the

UN system in this area, including assisting with developing standards and operational tools and designing and implementing transitional justice mechanisms.

On 19 November 2019, at the initiative of the UK, the Council held an open debate to discuss the role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security, at which transitional justice was referred to. Secretary-General António Guterres; Alpaslan Özerdem, dean of the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University; and Ilwad Elman, director of programs and development at the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre, briefed. The Secretary-General referred to the effective use of transitional justice mechanisms, including truth and reconciliation commissions, in Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and elsewhere. "Transitional justice must be transformative justice that addresses gender imbalances, is rooted in local realities and is based on broad consultation", he said, adding that throughout the world, "the UN supports nationally led and victim-centred transitional justice processes." Member states discussed their own experiences with reconciliation mechanisms. There was also an emphasis on the need to adapt to increasingly complex situations and ensure inclusivity at every stage.

UN DOCUMENTS ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2004/34 (6 October 2004) was on post-conflict national reconciliation and welcomed the Secretary-General's 23 August 2004 report and his decision to prioritise the strengthening of the UN's work on the rule of law and transitional justice. S/PRST/2004/2 (26 January 2004) was on post-conflict national reconciliation and asked the Secretary-General to give consideration to the views expressed in the 26 January 2004 open debate, in the preparation of his report on the rule of law and transitional justice. Secretary-General's Report S/2004/616 (23 August 2004) was a report on the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8668 (19 November 2019) was an open debate on the role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security. S/PV.4903 (26 January 2004) was an open debate on the role of the UN in post-conflict national reconciliation. Other Guidance note of the Secretary-General (March 2010): UN Approach to Transitional Justice (Available at: www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/TJ_Guidance_Note_March_2010FINAL.pdf)

Transitional Justice

Key Issues and Options

Some key issues that may be considered at the open debate include the following:

- how to increase the effectiveness of the Council's engagement on the issue, including lessons learned in various contexts;
- how best to support transitional justice initiatives in country-specific contexts, including local initiatives;
- how to integrate effectively transitional justice considerations into the Council's work, both in relevant country-specific contexts and across thematic areas, such as in relation to the women, peace and security agenda and the children and armed conflict agenda; and
- how to support victims and civil society as active participants.

An option for the Council is to invite civil society representatives involved in transitional justice processes to brief. Another option would be for the Council to adopt a presidential statement on the issue, subsequent to and informed by the open debate. Belgium could also choose to produce a

chair's summary that would reflect the themes of the open debate.

Council Dynamics

It seems Council members are generally supportive of Belgium's initiative and its approach, which seeks to facilitate a broad discussion of the issue. At the open debate on reconciliation on 19 November 2019, several members referred to transitional justice. Belgium highlighted the presidential statement adopted on 6 October 2004 on post-conflict national reconciliation and referred to the contribution of transitional justice to reconciliation efforts as well as the possibility of conducting "a broader review in order to identify some key principles for guiding the Security Council in its future decisions in this area". It added that "transitional justice is a tool that the Council should continue to consider as part of its mandate to maintain international peace and security".

Also, the UK noted at the November 2019 debate how "transitional justice mechanisms can support persecuted people and lay the

foundations for peace". It also emphasised the need to engage and involve women and for the Council to monitor reconciliation processes. South Africa said transitional justice processes must respond to the specific context of the country concerned. It also underscored that "the whole spectrum of transitional justice needs to be explored, including truth commissions and reparations for victims", as well as the need to take into account community-based or traditional justice mechanisms and ensure women and youth are represented. Germany also stressed women's participation, and the Dominican Republic underscored the involvement of youth. While not referring to transitional justice specifically, Russia expressed the view that the UN should focus on cooperation with governments, that "ready-made solutions from outside" should not be imposed, and that the work of international criminal justice institutions in the context of post-conflict reconciliation "should not be considered the last word".

Guinea-Bissau

Expected Council Action

In February, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), which expires on 28 February. Before this, the Council is expected to hear a briefing by Special Representative and head of UNIOGBIS Rosine Sori-Coulibaly.

Key Recent Developments

Developments in Guinea-Bissau have revolved around holding presidential elections following four years of political crisis.

On 28 October 2019, only weeks before the 24 November election, President José Mário Vaz dismissed Prime Minister Aristides Gomes and his government. The following day, Vaz appointed Faustino Fudut Imbali as the new prime minister, despite Gomes' refusal to step down. The move risked delaying the election. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) called

the action "illegal" in a ministerial communiqué on 29 October. ECOWAS recalled its decision from 29 June 2019, which said that although Vaz's term had expired on 23 June, he should remain president until the election but that the Gomes administration should handle all government affairs. Chairperson of the AU Commission Moussa Faki issued a statement also expressing full support for the government of Gomes.

Sori-Coulibaly briefed Council members in consultations on the crisis on 31 October 2019. On 4 November, the Council adopted a presidential statement expressing "full support to the communiqués of ECOWAS and the AU" and stressing the "urgent need to hold the presidential elections on 24 November as agreed".

At an ECOWAS extraordinary summit in Niamey on 8 November 2019, West African leaders demanded the immediate resignation of Imbali and his government, "failing which

individual sanctions will apply". ECOWAS also threatened sanctions against those who used the army or security forces to impose illegal actions or who undermined the electoral process and political stability. It further decided to reinforce the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB), deploying a 140-member formed police unit from Togo. Imbali resigned that same day.

The presidential election was held on 24 November 2019, contested by 12 candidates. The leader of The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), Domingos Simões Pereira, won 40.13 percent of the vote. Placing second with 27.65 percent was Umaro Sissoco Embaló of the Movement for Democratic Change (MADEM-G15), a party formed by PAIGC dissidents in 2018 that has frequently allied with Vaz and the traditional opposition Party for Social Renewal. Vaz ran as an independent, having clashed with his

UN DOCUMENTS ON GUINEA-BISSAU [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2458](#) (28 February 2019) renewed UNIOGBIS' mandate. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/13](#) (4 November 2019) supported the ECOWAS and the AU communiqués on the dismissal of Prime Minister Aristides Gomes. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13989](#) (16 October 2019) reiterated that the presidential election be held on 24 November 2019.

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party (the PAIGC) during the past four years, and received only 12 percent of the vote. As no candidate won a majority, a run-off election was scheduled for 29 December 2019 between Simões Pereira and Sissoco Embaló.

On 4 December 2019, third-place finisher Nuno Gomes Nabiam, leader of the United People's Assembly-Democratic Party of Guinea-Bissau (APU-PDGB), signed a political pact with Sissoco Embaló in Dakar, Senegal, to support the latter's candidacy. The move created an internal dispute within APU-PDGB, which is part of the PAIGC-led coalition government of Aristides Gomes.

In the run-off election held on 29 December, Sissoco Embaló won 53.55 percent of the vote, compared to Simões Pereira's 46.45 percent. International observer missions, including from ECOWAS and the AU, said the election was fair. Simões Pereira, however, alleged fraud, saying that at some polling stations, votes exceeded the number of enrolled voters. The PAIGC challenged the results in the Supreme Court of Justice. On 24 January, the court ordered a new count of voter tally documents, which the election commission agreed to do on 28 January following civil society mediation. ECOWAS and several other international partners, meanwhile, have recognised Sissoco as the incoming president.

Guinea-Bissau recorded its largest drug interdiction on 1 September 2019, seizing 1.8 tonnes of cocaine and arresting seven Bissau-Guineans, three Colombians, one Malian and one Mexican. This surpassed its previous largest interdiction of nearly 800 kilos in March 2019. Investigations into the shipment compounded tensions in the lead-up to the presidential election.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The chair of the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee for 2018–2019, Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea), visited Guinea-Bissau from 27 to 30 October 2019 to encourage the timely holding of the election, dates which coincided with Vaz's decision to dismiss Gomes. The Council's 4 November presidential statement recalled that its possible consideration of ending the sanctions regime (established following the April 2012 coup d'état) would depend on orderly conduct by the defence and security forces and political actors. It also recalled that the Council would

consider taking appropriate measures against those who undermined Guinea-Bissau's stability in accordance with its previous resolutions.

Developments in the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

The PBC's country configuration chair, Ambassador Mauro Vieira (Brazil), visited Guinea-Bissau from 22 to 24 October 2019 to encourage a timely and peaceful election. On 13 November, the configuration met to consider developments and electoral preparations. A 15 November press statement by the configuration called on stakeholders to hold elections as scheduled and reaffirmed the PBC's commitment to support political and institutional reforms, as outlined in the October 2016 Conakry Agreement and the government's strategic development plan for 2015–2025.

Key Issues and Options

The UNIOGBIS mandate renewal is a key issue, particularly assessing whether conditions on the ground and with transition planning for a follow-up UN presence are right for closure of the mission by the end of 2020. When the Council renewed UNIOGBIS' mandate last year, it endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendations in his December 2018 special report for UNIOGBIS' reconfiguration and prospective completion by December 31, 2020. Regarding transition planning, this requires close consultation with national authorities, but it is not clear if the PAIGC can maintain its governing coalition, which risks renewing gridlock over forming a government and complicating such planning.

Uncertainty remains over the outcome of the presidential election. Important upcoming national processes include the constitutional review—particularly to clarify or amend the division of powers between the president and prime minister. ECOWAS heads of state and government have charged the ECOWAS Commission with providing technical support to accelerate implementation of constitutional reforms after the election and called for a referendum on the constitutional reform during 2020. Completing the electoral cycle, constitutional review, and security sector reforms were the key components of the Conakry Agreement that ECOWAS brokered in 2016 to resolve the political crisis and address root causes of Guinea-Bissau's instability.

Transnational criminal activities,

particularly drug trafficking, remain a key issue, and there are concerns that terrorist groups in the region could also potentially exploit Guinea-Bissau's political instability.

One option for the Council is to renew UNIOGBIS' mandate until 31 December 2020 while requesting the Secretary-General to provide an update later this year on progress in handing over UNIOGBIS' tasks to the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the UN country team and other entities. The update could also identify capacity or financial gaps that may exist following UNIOGBIS' closure. Another option is holding an informal interactive dialogue with the PBC and relevant stakeholders on transition preparations and requirements.

A related issue is ending the sanctions regime, which members may consider when renewing UNIOGBIS' mandate or waiting until UNIOGBIS' new mandate concludes. The Council could encourage, in the upcoming mandate renewal, holding of the national conference for reconciliation, another pending process important for addressing past crimes and violence, and, potentially, the links between organised crime and politics.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council closely followed developments ahead of the first round of the presidential election, holding three meetings in consultations during October and November 2019, issuing one press statement, and adopting a presidential statement. On Guinea-Bissau, the Council has tended to follow ECOWAS' lead, seeking to support its decisions, often prompted by the West African Council member.

Members appear to agree on the goal of ending UNIOGBIS. The mission and its predecessor mission have been present since 1999, and members have noted the absence of violence and ECOWAS' leading role in recent years. During last year's mandate negotiations, some members stressed the importance of assessing the situation on the ground when determining to end UNIOGBIS, with a key benchmark being the presidential election.

Niger is the penholder on Guinea-Bissau. Ambassador Moncef Baati (Tunisia) is the new chair of the 2048 Committee.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In February, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution renewing Yemen financial and travel ban sanctions, which expire on 26 February, and the mandate of the Yemen Panel of Experts, which expires on 26 March. (The targeted arms embargo established by resolution 2216 from April 2015 is open-ended).

The Council is also expected to hold its monthly briefing on Yemen in consultations with Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and a representative of OCHA. General Abhijit Guha, the head of the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), is also likely to brief. Resolution 2505, adopted on 13 January, renewed UNMHA's mandate until 15 July 2020.

Key Recent Developments

Efforts continue to restart peace talks and implement the December 2018 Stockholm Agreement and November 2019 Riyadh Agreement. The de-escalation in military hostilities since September 2019 appeared to be severely tested, however, by a deadly missile attack against Yemeni government forces, likely conducted by Houthi rebels, and the outbreak of other fighting in mid-January.

Briefing the Council on 16 January, Griffiths said that Yemen had avoided being drawn into the crisis between the US and Iran earlier in the month, which had risked setting back gains since the de-escalation in fighting between the Houthis and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition that supports the government. According to news reports, the US tried unsuccessfully to kill Abdul Reza Shahlaei, a deputy commander in Iran's Quds Force in Sana'a, on the same day a US strike killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani. During his briefing, Griffiths said that despite some active front lines, "[w]e are surely witnessing one of the quietest periods of the conflict".

On 18 January, ballistic missiles struck a mosque at a military camp in Marib city, about 70 kilometres east of Sana'a, killing at least 116 government troops. Yemeni authorities blamed the Houthis for the attack. The day before, government forces reportedly launched a large-scale operation against Houthi positions in Nihm, just northeast of Sana'a city. In a statement on 19 January, the Special Envoy said he "condemns the escalation of military activities in Sana'a, Sa'dah

and Marib governorates where airstrikes, missiles and ground attacks reportedly took place", noting with particular concern the attack on the base in Marib. Intense fighting has continued, with the Houthis appearing to gain ground in Nihm. On 28 January, Council members held consultations to discuss with Griffiths (via VTC) the ongoing escalation. In a 30 January press statement, members "called for an immediate cessation of these hostilities".

Implementation of the Riyadh Agreement between the government and the separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC) has been slow, and by early January appeared in jeopardy because of fighting in Shabwa governorate. Following efforts by Saudi Arabia, which leads a committee overseeing the accord's implementation, the parties reportedly recommitted to plans to redeploy their forces. During the 16 January briefing, Griffiths said that he was "fairly confident that the implementation is moving" in the right direction.

At the Council's 16 January briefing, OCHA Director of Coordination Ramesh Rajasingham highlighted the continued impact of violence—despite the de-escalation—on civilians and on humanitarian efforts. Shelling hit the Red Sea Mills in Hodeidah on 26 December 2019, forcing the World Food Programme to temporarily suspend milling, and in late December attacks against the premises of international humanitarian organisations in Al Dhale governorate led 14 organisations to suspend operations affecting over 200,000 people. The Al-Raqw market in Sa'dah governorate came under attack on 25 December for the third time since November, resulting in 17 deaths and bringing total casualties at the market in a month to 89.

On 17 January, a Houthi ban on the use of Yemeni riyal bills printed after 2016 went into effect. The plan, announced in December 2019, had already led the Yemeni government to announce that it would stop payments to civil servants and retirees in the north and was creating discrepancies between the north and the south in the exchange rate, according to Rajasingham.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 10 January, the 2140 Sanctions Committee met to discuss the Yemen Panel of Experts' final report. The report, likely to be made public

in February, highlights the belligerents' use of economic warfare and corruption by Houthi and government officials. It raises concerns about the transfer of commercially available components to Yemen that are assembled to construct unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and water-borne improvised explosive devices, both of which the Houthis have used to carry out attacks. The panel echoed the findings of the Secretary-General's December 2019 report on the implementation of the Iran nuclear deal, saying that despite their claims to the contrary, the Houthis were unlikely to have conducted the 14 September missile and drone attacks on the Aramco oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurays, Saudi Arabia. The panel did not draw conclusions about responsibility, which European countries, Saudi Arabia and the US attributed to Iran. Violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law continue to be widely committed by all parties in Yemen with impunity, according to the report.

Among its recommendations, the panel proposed that the Council's monthly Yemen meetings include a discussion of the challenges faced by women and the extent to which they have participated in political negotiations. Its report describes a Houthi network involved in repressing women critical of the Houthis, including through sexual violence.

Key Issues and Options

How the Council can support efforts to restart negotiations for a political settlement to the conflict as well as implementation of the Stockholm Agreement—which included a deal to demilitarise Hodeidah, a prisoner exchange mechanism, and a statement of understanding on the city of Taiz—and the Riyadh Agreement are key issues. The renewed fighting is a major threat to the political process. Restarting peace talks will be contingent on consensus by the government and the STC on a joint delegation, as the Riyadh Agreement specified that the government delegation to future negotiations include the STC. Peace talks also appear dependent on ongoing Houthi-Saudi discussions and their possible conclusion of a de-escalation agreement.

The humanitarian crisis—the largest in the world, with 24 million people requiring assistance—remains severe. OCHA usually briefs on five key priorities to mitigate the situation: the protection of civilians, humanitarian access, a fully funded aid operation, support for Yemen's economy, and the need for a political solution. The UN has reported an increasingly constrained operating environment for humanitarian actors in the

Yemen

Houthi-controlled north. Another issue of concern is the Houthi authorities' failure to permit a UN inspection mission of the SAFER oil tanker anchored in the Red Sea near Hodeidah, which, because of its lack of maintenance since 2015, risks causing a major environmental disaster.

The Council is likely to extend the assets freeze and travel ban for 12 months. It could consider including in the upcoming resolution several of the Panel of Experts'

recommendations, such as establishing a list of commercial components used by Houthi forces to assemble UAVs and other weapons systems, and request that member states instruct their export control authorities about the threats from the proliferation of such components.

Council Dynamics

On Yemen, Council members appear quite united, calling for new peace talks

concurrently with efforts to implement the Stockholm Agreement. Tunisia replaced Kuwait in January as the Arab member on the Council that traditionally champions coalition positions. The issue of Iranian support to the Houthis has sometimes divided the Council, including during its consideration of the sanctions renewal. The UK is the penholder on Yemen. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines chairs the 2140 Committee.

Syria

Expected Council Action

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

By the end of February, the Council also expects to receive from the Secretary-General a report on the feasibility of using alternative modalities for the Al Yarubiyah border crossing, as requested by resolution 2504.

Key Recent Developments

During the month of December 2019, there was an upsurge in aerial bombardment and ground fighting between government and Syrian opposition forces in southern Idlib province. According to OCHA, since 1 December 2019, approximately 389,000 people- the majority of whom are women and children- have been displaced. Many of the displaced fled from Ma'arrat An-Nu'man, a city in southern Idlib that experienced aerial bombardment in the recent assault, and moved north within the governorate or to areas in the northern Aleppo governorate. The violence has continued into 2020. According to media reports, an attack on a school in the town of Sarmin in northern Idlib on 1 January killed nine civilians, five of whom were children. Local sources believed that the school had been used to shelter displaced families from southern Idlib.

On 3 January, Council members held consultations on the situation in Idlib. France and the UK requested the meeting in light of the escalation of hostilities in north-west Syria. Under-Secretary-General

for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock and Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed. Many Council members referred to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Idlib to illustrate the urgent need to find a compromise on the resolution to renew the cross-border aid mechanism in Syria before its 10 January expiration. It seems that Lowcock underlined that if the mechanism were not re-authorised by then, the UN would not be able to deliver food and life-saving aid to those in need.

On 20 December 2019, the Security Council voted on two draft resolutions that would have renewed the authorisation for cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access. Neither draft was adopted. The first, which was produced by Belgium, Germany and Kuwait, received 13 affirmative votes but was vetoed by China and Russia. It would have re-authorised use for one year of three of the four border crossings (Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa on the Turkey/Syria border and Al Yarubiyah on the Iraq/Syria border) that had been mandated by previous resolutions. The second draft, produced by Russia, failed to be adopted because of an insufficient number of affirmative votes, as only five members (China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Russia, and South Africa) supported it. (A resolution requires nine or more affirmative votes to be adopted.) The Russian draft called for a re-authorisation of two of the four existing border crossings (Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa) for six months.

Difficult negotiations aimed at renewing the mandate continued through the end

of December and into early January, with differences persisting over the number of authorised border crossings and the duration of the mandate.

On 10 January, Belgium and Germany (without Kuwait, which had been a co-penholder but finished its Council term at the end of 2019) revised their draft to allow for the re-authorisation of two of the four border crossings (Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa) for a period of six months. The draft was adopted as resolution 2504 by a vote of 11 in favour, none against, and four abstentions (China, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States). The resolution does not re-authorise use of the Al-Ramtha and the Al Yarubiyah crossings. This departed from the co-penholder draft resolution put in blue on 9 January, which included the latter crossing; the Al Yarubiyah crossing was removed on the day of the vote to secure adoption.

The resolution further requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council by the end of February 2020 on the feasibility of using alternative modalities for Al Yarubiyah. During the vote, Russia proposed an oral amendment to the co-penholder draft that referenced the "guiding principles of humanitarian emergency assistance", as contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182. (One of the guiding principles adopted by that resolution is that "humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle on the basis of an appeal by the affected country".) The oral amendment failed to be adopted because of insufficient votes, as only

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2504 (10 January 2020) renewed the authorisation of cross-border humanitarian aid through two border crossings (Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa) for six months. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8700 (10 January 2020) was the meeting at which resolution 2504 was adopted.

Syria

three Council members (China, Russia and Viet Nam) voted in favour.

In consultations on chemical weapons in Syria on 6 January, Russia announced its intention to convene an Arria-formula meeting on the final report of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the reported use of chemical weapons on 7 April 2018 in Douma, which was published on 1 March 2019. The report concluded that the evaluation and analysis of all the information gathered by the FFM “provide reasonable grounds” to conclude that a toxic chemical weapon was used and that “the toxic chemical was likely molecular chlorine”. According to media reports, at least 40 people died as a result of the use of chemical weapons in Douma. Although the FFM is not mandated to assign responsibility, the report established that it is possible that two yellow industrial cylinders “were the source of the substances containing reactive chlorine” that caused structural damage in two locations. According to the report, one of the cylinders was found on a rooftop terrace and the other passed through the ceiling of a different building and hit the floor.

Featured speakers at the Arria-formula meeting included Ambassador Alexander Shulgin, Permanent Representative of Russia to the OPCW; Maxim Grigoriev, director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy; Ian Henderson, a former OPCW official; and Bashar Jaafari, Permanent Representative of Syria to the UN. These speakers strongly questioned the accuracy of the FFM’s report, with Grigoriev maintaining that the chemical weapons attack in Douma had been falsified.

At press time, the Council was expected to receive briefings, followed by consultations, on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria on 29 January.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 16 January, the Commission of Inquiry on Syria published a report on children’s rights, covering September 2011 to October 2019 (A/HRC/43/CRP.6). The report details violations of children’s rights by the warring parties, including killing and injuring of children, the recruitment and use of children in hostilities, attacks on education, children in detention, and sexual violence against children. It states that the “unprecedented and recurrent nature of these violations has affected generations to come”. The devastating situation of education in Syria is highlighted as an area of concern, with thousands of schools having been destroyed or used for military purposes and more than 2.1 million children not regularly attending classes of any form. “Eight years of conflict has not only left an enormous trauma on the physical and mental well-being of an entire generation of Syrian girls and boys, but also destroyed the social, economic and cultural fabric required for Syrian communities to start healing”, the report says.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue is creating an environment in Syria that is conducive to advancing the political process. The Constitutional Committee has not met since its 25–29 November 2019 session, when no progress was made, as the co-chairs from the government and opposition sides were unable to agree on an agenda for the meeting. The government side wanted to discuss “national constants” such as terrorism and sanctions relief prior to engaging on constitutional matters; the opposition maintained that these issues could be addressed but not outside the context of the constitution.

Members could emphasise the importance of confidence-building measures to accompany the work of the Constitutional Committee, such as large-scale releases of detainees and abductees and information about missing persons. Other potential confidence-building measures, as proposed by the International Crisis Group, could include amnesty for deserters from the armed forces or access to prisons for

organisations such as the ICRC.

Another significant challenge is the difficult humanitarian situation amidst the ongoing fighting in Syria. In reviewing the Secretary General’s report on the feasibility of alternative modalities for the Al Yarubiya border crossing, members might consider holding an informal meeting, such as a closed Arria-formula meeting, to allow for a frank discussion with UN officials and relevant humanitarian aid organisations on these potential modalities.

Council Dynamics

The Council remains intensely divided on Syria, as reflected by the negotiations leading up to the adoption of resolution 2504 and the four abstentions registered on the vote. Russia and China have reservations about the cross-border aid delivery mechanism, maintaining the importance of cooperation with the Syrian government in the delivery of aid and believing that authorisations of the Al Yarubiya and Al-Ramtha crossings are no longer necessary. Several other members regret that these crossings are no longer authorised and that the renewal of the Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa crossings will only be for six months rather than one year. There is especially strong concern about the closing of the Al Yarubiya crossing, given that OCHA has estimated that 1.3 million people in northeast Syria receive aid such as medicine and medical equipment through this crossing.

The Council’s divisions were also clearly exhibited in the Arria-formula meeting. Several members—Belgium, Estonia, the P3 and others—supported the FFM’s conclusions on Douma, while Russia strongly contested its findings. Others called for depoliticization of the OPCW’s work and issued a broad condemnation of the use of chemical weapons.

Belgium and Germany are the penholders on the Syria humanitarian file.

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In February, the Council will meet to discuss the latest Secretary-General's report on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which is due by 15 February. The Council will be briefed by Special Representative for the Central African Republic (CAR) and Head of MINUSCA Mankeur Ndiaye. Representatives from the AU and the European External Action Service may also brief.

The mandate of MINUSCA expires on 15 November 2020. The mandate of the Central African Republic (CAR) sanctions regime expires on 31 July 2020.

Key Recent Developments

The Political Peace Agreement in the CAR was signed in Bangui by the CAR government and 14 armed groups on 6 February 2019. Since then, there has been a notable decrease, compared to the previous year, in military confrontations between armed groups, CAR security forces and MINUSCA and in human rights violations linked to the conflict. However, the final report of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, which was presented to the committee on 2 December 2019, determined that the implementation of the peace agreement "remained limited". The report said that many civilians continue to experience general insecurity as armed groups violate the agreement in large numbers, including through violence against civilians, illegal taxation, and obstruction of the deployment of state institutions and security forces.

In recent incidents, clashes that broke out on 24 December 2019 in the PK5 neighbourhood in Bangui between local traders and armed gangs resulted in at least 40 deaths, according to media reports. On 9 January, clashes between members of an armed group associated with the ex-Séléka coalition and CAR armed forces in the city of Alindao led to the death of two servicemen from the CAR armed forces and the displacement of 400 civilians. Inter-tribal clashes were reported on 20 January in the north-eastern town of Birao near the CAR-Sudan border, raising concerns that more

civilians from the CAR will seek refuge in Sudan in the coming weeks. Furthermore, clashes between armed groups in the eastern city of Bria on 25 January resulted in at least 50 deaths, according to media reports.

The humanitarian situation in the CAR remains dire, with OCHA estimating that approximately 2.6 million people—over half of the population—will need humanitarian assistance in 2020.

In December 2020 and early 2021, the CAR is set to hold presidential, legislative and local elections. Regional and international partners view these elections as a crucial juncture in the CAR's political development. The Security Council therefore decided last year in resolution 2499 renewing MINUSCA's mandate until 15 November, to authorise a role for MINUSCA in supporting the CAR authorities in preparations for the elections.

The return of former presidents François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia to the CAR on 15 December 2019 and 10 January, respectively, has raised concerns about their possible destabilising effect on the already fragile political climate in the CAR. Bozizé, who was listed under Security Council sanctions for "engaging in or providing support for acts that undermine the peace, stability or security of CAR" in 2014, stated during a press conference on 27 January that he sees no reason that would prevent him from becoming a candidate in the upcoming elections. Such a dynamic can serve to increase political tensions and undermine the authority of incumbent President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, further complicating the implementation of the peace agreement.

On 21 January, Touadéra met with Bozizé and Djotodia, along with former heads of state Catherine Samba-Panza and Alexandre-Ferdinand Nguendet. In a joint press release issued after the meeting, the AU, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the UN welcomed the exchanges between Touadéra and the four former heads of states and stated that these exchanges will contribute to the peace and reconciliation process in the CAR. They further urged the acceleration of the implementation of the peace agreement, and called for the holding of free, credible and transparent

elections in the CAR. In that regard, the statement appealed to the international community to mobilise around funding and support for the electoral process.

Sanctions-Related Developments

In resolution 2488 of 12 September 2019, the Council amended the arms embargo on the CAR government. The resolution exempts, after notifying the committee, supplies of non-lethal military equipment intended for humanitarian or protective use and supplies to the CAR security forces of weapons with a calibre of 14.5mm or less that are intended solely for the support of or use in the CAR process of security sector reform. The resolution also requested that the Secretary-General update the Security Council on the progress achieved by the CAR authorities on the key benchmarks established in its presidential statement of 9 April 2019, such as the effective implementation of the National Program for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation.

In his report of 31 December 2019, the Secretary-General determined that the government of CAR made "some progress" on the arms embargo benchmarks while emphasising the need for continued support by the Council and international and regional partners. Progress was made between June and December 2019 in the disarmament and demobilisation of 1,094 combatants in the western CAR. The Secretary-General reported that notwithstanding these developments, disarmament and demobilisation timelines are not being met since several groups have yet to demonstrate their commitment to disarm.

On 31 January, the Security Council adopted resolution 2507 which renewed the mandate of the CAR sanctions regime for a period of six months, until 31 July 2020. The resolution incorporates the provisions of resolution 2488 (2019) and provides for a further easing of the arms embargo on the CAR government. The resolution exempts, after notifying the CAR sanctions committee, supplies to the CAR security forces of unarmed ground military vehicles and ground military vehicles mounted with weapons with a calibre of 14.5 mm or less that are intended solely for the support of or use in the CAR security sector reform process.

Key Issues and Options

Monitoring the implementation of the CAR peace agreement and ensuring that credible and transparent elections are held remain vital priorities for the Council. Monitoring the process leading up to the elections will also be a priority. Members might consider adopting a statement urging the parties to fully implement the peace agreement. Such

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2499 (15 November 2019) extended the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 November 2020. S/RES/2488 (12 September 2019) amended the CAR sanctions regime for CAR security forces. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/3 (9 April 2019) established benchmarks for lifting arms embargo measures on the CAR government. Security Council Letters S/2019/1008 (31 December 2019) contained the Secretary-General's assessment of progress achieved on the benchmarks established by the Security Council on arms embargo measures in the CAR. S/2019/930 (6 December 2019) contained the final report of the Panel of Experts assisting the CAR Sanctions Committee.

Central African Republic

a product might also seek to demonstrate the Council's unified support for MINUSCA and its work to facilitate the electoral process.

Council and Wider Dynamics

All Council members share the hope that the peace agreement will improve the situation and restore peace and security in the CAR. Several Council members are of the view that the sanctions regime continues to promote security in the CAR and can also

serve to pressure the parties to implement the peace agreement. The difficult negotiation on the resolution renewing the mandate of the CAR sanctions regime ahead of its 31 January expiry demonstrated that opinions continue to diverge regarding the further lifting of the arms embargo on the CAR authorities. While Russia and China hold the view that more progress should be made towards the complete lifting of the embargo, other members feel that easing the arms embargo does not

correspond with current realities in the country, particularly given the conclusions of the latest Secretary-General's benchmark status report. Such a dynamic might make it difficult for the Security Council to maintain unity on issues relating to the CAR portfolio.

France is the penholder on the CAR, and Ambassador Abdou Abarry (Niger) chairs the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In February, the Security Council is expected to hold its first meeting on the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), a special political mission (SPM) established after the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) closed on 15 October 2019. Special Representative Helen La Lime is expected to brief, and a civil society briefer may also participate.

BINUH's mandate expires on 16 October 2020.

Key Recent Developments

On 13 January, Haitian President Jovenel Moïse began, in effect, to govern Haiti alone. Earlier that day, he announced that Parliament's mandate, which was set to expire in January 2020, had ended because of the failure to hold legislative and local elections in October 2019. In 2019, Parliament failed to pass an electoral law and approve an election budget that would have been the first steps for organising these elections, that were constitutionally mandated to be held in October 2019; nor was there political agreement on the new composition of the Provisional Electoral Council. Moïse said he sees this development as an opportunity for Haiti to undergo what he believes is much needed constitutional reform.

Moïse does not enjoy much popular support, however, and this could complicate his ability to rule by decree. He has been the subject of months of protests, some violent

and deadly. Opposition groups continue to call for Moïse's resignation and see the dissolution of Parliament as another example of his undemocratic actions. Additionally, some Haitian senators—through a different interpretation of the Haitian constitution—argue that their terms have not ended yet and say they will continue to serve.

This is not a new situation for Haiti. When the Haitian Parliament was dissolved in January 2015, also due to a lack of timely elections, then-President Michel Martelly ruled by decree until the end of his term in February 2016.

The political crisis is likely to continue to exacerbate Haiti's severe economic and humanitarian challenges. The 2019-2020 humanitarian response plan for Haiti, which called for \$126.2 million, was 32.1 percent funded on 16 December 2019. Food insecurity continues to be a grave problem. According to the World Food Programme, a third of the Haitian population of 10.9 million is facing hunger conditions and around one million Haitians suffer from severe hunger. The situation was made worse by the protests last year, which at times cut off parts of Haiti from deliveries of food and medical supplies.

The twelfth of January marked ten years since Haiti's deadly 7.0 magnitude earthquake, which, according to reports, killed 316,000 people, injured 1.5 million, and left 1.5 million homeless. Many in Haiti's civil society have reflected on the scant

reconstruction progress. According to the International Organisation for Migration, around 35,000 people remain in camps a decade after the earthquake.

BINUH was established through resolution 2476, adopted on 25 June 2019, for an initial period of 12 months. Its mandate includes advising the government on issues related to promoting and strengthening political stability and good governance, the rule of law, an inclusive inter-Haitian national dialogue, and protecting and promoting human rights. In his October 2019 report on Haiti, the Secretary-General laid out six benchmarks and 25 indicators that were to be used to measure progress towards sustainable stability after BINUH's deployment.

Council members issued a press statement on Haiti on 8 January, expressing concern at Haiti's continuing political impasse and reiterating the need for inclusive and open dialogue to form a government.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 1 November 2019, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern over the situation in Haiti and its impact on the ability of Haitians to access their basic rights to health care, food, education and other needs. The spokesperson urged all parties to avoid hampering the functioning of hospitals and to facilitate access to health care, as well as the delivery, including through humanitarian channels, of food and medicine for individuals in prisons and orphanages and other vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities.

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2476](#) (25 June 2019) established BINUH, an SPM that will continue the UN presence in Haiti following the conclusion of MINUJUSTH. [Secretary-General's Report S/2019/805](#) (9 October 2019) was the last Secretary-General's report covering the activities of MINUJUSTH, which closed its offices on 15 October 2019. This report also contained benchmarks for BINUH. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8641](#) (15 October 2019) was the last debate on MINUJUSTH, with a briefing from Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix. [S/PV.8559](#) (25 June 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2476 establishing BINUH. [Security Council Press Statement SC/14070](#) (8 January 2020) expressed concern regarding Haiti's continuing political impasse and reiterated the need for inclusive and open dialogue to form a government. Security Council members also emphasised the urgent need to address deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Haiti.

Haiti

Key Issues and Options

The establishment of BINUH in October 2019 marked the first time since 2004 without a UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti. This will be seen as a test for the UN, and the Security Council, for transitioning from a long peacekeeping presence to a smaller special political mission. The UN, Haitian institutions and the wider international community have been developing a new working relationship. Council members are likely to want to hear more about this process as well as the main challenges BINUH has faced.

The lack of a legislative government will be a topic for this meeting and a concern for Council members. They will want to hear more about how the current political impasse may be addressed, whether through elections or reforms. Council members could issue a press statement calling for inclusive and timely dialogue to bring Haitian parties together. It is likely some

Council members may also use the meeting as an opportunity to reflect on the tenth anniversary of the 2010 earthquake.

Council Dynamics

Recently, there has been some difficulty in achieving Council products on Haiti. For example, the press statement issued on 8 January was the first press statement on Haiti since July 2018. Previous attempts in late 2019 were unsuccessful because of one Council member's belief that a statement was not timely or useful. Council members were also unable to agree on the customary presidential statement that is adopted when a mission closes; in this case, MINUJUSTH.

Council members' differences seem to stem from differing views on how much outside influence there should be on the future of Haiti. Some approve of having detailed benchmarks while others would prefer BINUH's mandate to be less prescriptive

and led more by Haiti itself.

Council members are likely to be careful not to appear to take sides between President Moïse and the opposition during this uncertain period. This appears to have given some impetus to the January press statement, with some member states wanting it to be published before the expiration of Parliament's term on 13 January so as not to appear to be endorsing Moïse's governing by decree.

Additionally, the Council now has two Caribbean member states serving—Dominican Republic and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines—which could provide a unique point of view. Since joining the Council in 2019, the Dominican Republic has repeatedly expressed its concerns about the withdrawal of MINUJUSTH, believing the process was rushed and did not adequately respond to the situation on the ground.

The US is the penholder on Haiti.

EU-UN Briefing

Expected Council Action

In February, the Council will hold its annual meeting on strengthening the partnership with the EU under its agenda item on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations in maintaining international peace and security. Josep Borrell, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will brief the Council.

Background

The relationship between the UN and the EU has evolved over the years and has continued to grow in importance. Recognising this, the Council has maintained the practice, starting in 2010, of holding regular, usually annual, briefings on cooperation between the two organisations. (These briefings were not held in 2012 and 2018). The Council formally endorsed this relationship in 2014 when it adopted a presidential statement on EU-UN cooperation. Among other things, the statement welcomed the EU's cooperation with the UN and its role in the maintenance of

international peace and security and in the implementation of Council-mandated tasks. Since 2013, Council members have also met annually with members of the EU Political and Security Committee.

This will be the first time Borrell briefs the Council on EU-UN cooperation. He assumed the position of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on 1 December 2019, succeeding Federica Mogherini, who had been in office since 2014.

The briefings on EU-UN cooperation generally follow a consistent format. Borrell is likely to focus his briefing on the areas of cooperation between the two organisations, present the EU's main foreign policy priorities and objectives, and address some of the ongoing crises that overlap on the EU and the Council agendas.

The EU has been engaged heavily in efforts to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), an agreement that places limits on Iran's nuclear programme and provides sanctions relief. The EU High

Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy serves as the coordinator of the Joint Commission, a body composed of the parties to the agreement. The agreement, which the Council endorsed in 2015 in resolution 2231, has faced a precarious future since the US withdrew from it in May 2018. Iran has since gradually started to abandon its commitments under the agreement. On 5 January, it announced that it will no longer be bound by the uranium enrichment limits set out in the JCPOA, while emphasising that it would return to compliance if other parties fulfil their obligations under the agreement.

On 14 January, France, Germany and the UK formally referred Iran's non-compliance to the Joint Commission's Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM), setting in motion a process that could result in reinstating UN sanctions that were in place prior to the adoption of resolution 2231. While the agreement sets specific time limits for the resolution of the disputes, that period could be extended almost indefinitely if all parties agree.

UN DOCUMENTS ON EU-UN COOPERATION Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2491 (3 October 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 that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. S/RES/2231 (20 July 2015) endorsed the JCPOA. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2014/4 (14 February 2014) was on cooperation between the UN and the EU, highlighting the EU's comprehensive approach to maintenance of international peace and security. Security Council Meetings S/PV.8482 (12 March 2019) was a briefing on cooperation between the UN and the EU. S/PV.7935 (9 May 2017) was a briefing on cooperation between the UN and the EU.

EU-UN Briefing

Eventually, if the dispute is not settled by the Joint Commission, the Council would have to vote on a resolution that would continue the lifting of sanctions.

In the context of peacekeeping, the cooperation between the EU and the UN is most evident in Africa, where the two organisations work alongside one another in several countries. The EU provides training for security forces and assists in security sector reform in the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia. The EU also provides salaries for the UN-authorized AU Mission in Somalia. Member states of the EU are

the largest collective contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget, providing over 30 per cent of total contributions.

Borrell is also likely to discuss the Middle East peace process, the situation in Libya, the humanitarian situation in Iraq, cooperation with other regional organisations, transnational crime, climate change, and sustainable development, among other issues.

The EU members of the Council have made a concerted effort to coordinate their positions and present a unified front on some issues on the Council's agenda, such as Kosovo, Syria, Ukraine and Venezuela.

Another practice that has emerged over the past several years has been for the EU members of the Council (including incoming and recent former members) to make joint statements at the Council media stake-out, presenting the EU position on specific Security Council issues.

Currently, four Council members—Belgium, Estonia, Germany, and France—are EU members. The UK stopped being a member of this group on 31 January when it formally left the EU.

Burundi

Expected Council Action

In February, Council members will receive a briefing in informal interactive dialogue on the situation in Burundi.

Key Recent Developments

The political and security situations in Burundi have remained unsettled since April 2015 when President Pierre Nkurunziza announced that he would run for a controversial third term later that year, leading to mass demonstrations and a sharp increase in violence and repression against his opponents. Nkurunziza won the third term and, according to a subsequent amendment to the constitution, would be able to run again and remain in power up until 2034. He has said that he does not plan to run in the May 2020 election and will accept the result of the election. However, his party, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), has not yet announced a candidate for the election.

Hundreds of civilians have been killed since April 2015 in clashes with security forces, and about half a million people have fled the country as a result. While the government maintains that the security situation is stable throughout the country, the 4 September 2019 report of the Human Rights Council's (HRC) Commission of Inquiry on

Burundi found that the suppression of civil liberties is intensifying ahead of the election. The commission further found that violations of the right to life, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, sexual violence, and violations of economic and social rights, some of which may constitute crimes against humanity, are conducted in a general climate of impunity. It identified the youth league of the CNDD-FDD, the Imbonerakure, and government security forces as the main perpetrators. On 16 January, the European Parliament adopted a resolution strongly condemning "the current restrictions on freedom of expression in Burundi, including the broader sets of limitations to public freedoms, as well as the large-scale violations of human rights, intimidation and arbitrary arrests of journalists and the broadcast bans that have reinforced the climate of fear for Burundi's media, increased the constraints on reporting and prevented proper coverage, in particular in the run-up to the 2020 elections". A December 2019 report by Human Rights Watch said that the Imbonerakure continue to forcibly collect funding for the presidential election from the population.

According to UNHCR, there were 332,840 Burundian refugees, mostly in Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, on 31 December

2019. An additional 103,352 people were internally displaced by November 2019, while 20,916 refugees returned to Burundi with the assistance of UNHCR during 2019.

The Council's last resolution on Burundi, resolution 2303, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on a quarterly basis and "to provide written reports immediately to the Security Council, as necessary, on grave security incidents, violations of international humanitarian law and violations or abuses of human rights". There was one written report in 2019. The last Council briefing on Burundi took place on 30 October 2019. During that meeting, then-Special Envoy to Burundi Michel Kafando announced his intention to leave his post. He further noted that the situation in Burundi remained tense because of "an increase in the level of political intolerance and a growing threat to civil and political freedoms". The security situation had nonetheless improved, according to Kafando. He further referred to the deteriorating socioeconomic situation. Seventy percent of the population lives below the poverty line of less than \$1.90 a day. Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), the chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, also briefed the Council on 30 October. In their statements after the briefings, a majority of Council members echoed concerns over the

UN DOCUMENTS ON BURUNDI Security Council Resolution S/RES/2303 (29 July 2016), adopted with four abstentions (Angola, China, Egypt and Venezuela), requested the Secretary-General to establish a UN police component in Burundi of 228 officers for an initial period of one year. **Secretary-General's Reports S/2019/837** (24 October 2019) was on the situation in Burundi. **S/2019/783** (1 October 2019) was a report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8652** (30 October 2019) was a briefing on the situation in Burundi by then-Special Envoy Michel Kafando and Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), the chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Burundi

human rights situation. The representative of Burundi reiterated the country's regular call "for Burundi to be removed from the Council agenda", a position again supported by China and Russia.

Relations between Burundi and the East African Community (EAC) continue to be strained. The EAC-led inter-Burundian dialogue—envisioned as a mediated consultative process among the government and the opposition, civil society organisations, including women, young people and members of the media; and religious groups—has not materialised in four years. In his 30 October briefing, Kafando said that this was "undoubtedly due to a lack of political will on the part of the parties" as well as a lack of "firm commitment by States of the subregion".

By the end of 2019, the UN's 2019 humanitarian response plan for Burundi of \$106.3 million has been funded at 64.7 per cent, with \$37.5 million outstanding.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 23 October, the HRC's Commission of Inquiry on Burundi gave an oral briefing to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on their 4 September report (A/HRC/42/49). The report, which was presented to the HRC during its 42nd session on 17 September 2019, concludes that serious human rights violations have continued to be committed in Burundi since the Commission's last report, which covered 2017-2018. It identifies several risk factors in the run-up to

the 2020 presidential and legislative elections and calls for close monitoring of the situation. It recommends that the Security Council ensure the effective implementation of resolution 2303, refer to the International Criminal Court any international crime that might be committed, and impose individual sanctions against the principal alleged perpetrators of gross human rights violations and international crimes in Burundi. (The HRC renewed the mandate of the Commission for another year in resolution 42/26, adopted on 27 September 2019.)

Key Issues and Options

The intensified suppression of civil liberties ahead of the presidential election and the stalled EAC-led mediation remain serious concerns that the Council will need to monitor closely. An option would be to adopt a presidential statement ahead of the election, noting Nkurunziza's commitment not to run for president and not to contest the election results, urging the EAC to intensify efforts to revive the inter-Burundian dialogue, and calling on Burundi to take steps towards an inclusive electoral process, including respect for civil liberties.

Another major issue is the continued lack of accountability for human rights violations over the last several years, magnified by the closure in February 2019 of the UN Human Rights Office in the country at the insistence of the government after a 23-year presence. The Council may encourage Burundi to cooperate fully with all UN bodies. Council

members concerned about the human rights situation in the country ahead of the election could organise an Arrria-formula meeting with the HRC's Commission of Inquiry on Burundi to discuss its recommendations to the Council.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members agree that the continued viability of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreements—which ended the Burundian civil war in 2000—is important as a basis for stability in the country. Burundi, for its part, remains entrenched in its opposition to what it considers interference by the international community in its internal affairs. This may affect the way forward for the office of the Special Envoy.

To date, the Council has been unable to find a fresh avenue to re-engage with Burundi. The continued improvement in the security situation led some members to argue that—withstanding political, human rights and humanitarian concerns—there is no need to keep Burundi on the Council's agenda, viewing such concerns as internal issues lacking an international peace and security dimension. During the meeting in February, some Council members may question the need for the quarterly briefing on Burundi to continue. Difficulties around the quarterly briefing have arisen in the past.

Somalia

Expected Council Action

In February, the Security Council will have a briefing and consultations on the Secretary-General's most recent report on the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the situation in Somalia. It will also receive a briefing in consultations from Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), chair of the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee, on his recent visit to the

region. The mandate of UNSOM expires on 31 March and the authorisation of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) expires on 31 May. The Security Council Somalia sanctions regime expires on 15 November 2020.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Somalia is fragile. According to the 1 November 2019 final report of the Panel of Experts of the 751

Somalia Sanctions Committee, the terrorist group Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat to regional peace and security and is responsible for many attacks against civilians. The report said that Al-Shabaab has forcibly recruited and abducted hundreds of children; targeted government officials, parliamentarians and humanitarian workers during the reporting period; and employed improvised explosive devices to kill and injure civilians in internally

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2498 (15 November 2019) extended various elements of the Somalia sanctions regime until 15 November 2020. S/RES/2472 (31 May 2019) renewed the authorisation of AMISOM until 31 May 2020 and authorised reductions to achieve a maximum level of 19,626 uniformed AMISOM personnel by 28 February 2020. S/RES/2461 (27 March 2019) renewed the mandate of UNSOM until 31 March 2020. Secretary-General's Report S/2019/884 (15 November 2019) was the most recent Secretary-General's report on Somalia and UNSOM. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8671 (21 November 2019) was the briefing by Special Representative and head of UNSOM James Swan. S/PV.8665 (15 November 2019) was the meeting at which resolution 2498 was adopted. S/PV.8647 (25 October 2019) was a briefing by the Chair of the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium). Security Council Press Statements SC/14067 (29 December 2019) condemned the deadly terrorist attack of 28 December 2019 at the Ex-control Afgooye Junction in Mogadishu. SC/14034 (25 November 2019) noted the 21 November Council meeting about Somalia and called on all key actors and institutions in Somalia to set aside their differences and engage constructively in discussions about upcoming elections. Sanctions Committee Document S/2019/858 (1 November 2019) was the final report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia.

Somalia

displaced persons camps, restaurants, marketplaces, shopping centres, government offices and hotels. The Secretary-General's 15 November 2019 report on UNSOM reached similar conclusions.

The Council was last briefed on Somalia on 21 November 2019. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNSOM; Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and head of AMISOM; Halima Ismail Ibrahim, chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia; and Osman Moallim, executive director of Somalia Youth Development Network, briefed.

The meeting focused largely on the elections that may be held in late 2020 or early 2021. If successful, these would be Somalia's first free and fair elections since 1969. Swan emphasised the "critical importance of Parliament passing the electoral code and adopting amendments to the law on political parties before the end of December" and that "[a]ny delay in that timeline puts the 2020 electoral calendar at risk". Council members issued a press statement on 25 November calling on all stakeholders in Somalia to engage constructively to ensure that elections take place.

On 28 December 2019, Somalia's lower house of parliament passed the long-awaited electoral law. However, it will not go into effect until it has also been passed by the upper chamber and signed by the president. At press time, neither had occurred. Only after the law goes into effect can parties and candidates register for the elections.

In December 2019, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2500 renewing the counter-piracy measures off the coast of Somalia. On 29 December, Council members issued a press statement condemning a deadly terrorist attack on 28 December at the

Ex-control Afgooye Junction in Mogadishu.

At the February meeting, the Council will consider the Secretary-General's latest report, due by 9 February, which should include updates on UNSOM's progress towards achieving key political benchmarks and ongoing efforts to increase the capability of the Somali security forces.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The 751 Somalia Sanctions regime was renewed on 15 November 2019. It consolidated all the elements of the arms embargo and its partial lifting for Somali security forces, including exceptions and applicable humanitarian exemptions, into one text. Previously, elements had been spread across several resolutions. While 2019 was characterised by a tense relationship between Somalia and the UN – during its last mandate period, the Panel of Experts was unable to gain permission to make a formal visit to Somalia – the appointment of a new coordinator of the panel may help foster a new relationship. Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), chair of the sanctions committee, visited Somalia in that capacity at the end of January.

Key Issues and Options

Council members' immediate concern is likely to centre around the possible elections in late 2020 or early 2021 and preparatory efforts that have been made. The Council has been urging Somalia to act swiftly. Council members could decide to issue another press statement on the subject after the meeting, as was done in November 2019.

Additionally, given the ongoing difficulties with the Somalia sanctions regime, Council members could decide during the meeting to reiterate previous calls for Somalia and other member states to meet their obligations in implementing the sanctions regime, particularly with respect to the arms embargo and charcoal ban. Another ongoing development is the withdrawal, reached through a compromise in resolution 2472, of 1,000 AMISOM troops by the end of February. It is unclear

how that is proceeding, and member states are likely to ask for more information. With mandate renewals coming up in the next six months, member states will begin to assess the situation on the ground and want information on how the Council should proceed.

Council and Wider Dynamics

While the issue of Somalia has enjoyed general agreement from all Council members, there are some divisions on the best way to encourage change. In particular, differences remain about the arms embargo. Somalia maintains that the arms embargo should be amended to allow it to import heavy weapons without authorisation from the sanctions committee, and it takes issue with the composition of the Panel of Experts and some of its findings. France, Germany, the UK and the US criticised Somalia during a 25 October 2019 briefing for not allowing the panel's visit. Others have taken a more conciliatory tone in the past and emphasised the need to respect Somali sovereignty.

Council members also differ on the pace of troop withdrawal. The three African members of the Council in 2019 supported the AU position that an AMISOM drawdown was premature and that Somalia was not ready to take on greater security responsibilities. Their position was supported by China and Russia. Meanwhile, France, the UK and the US supported reductions by the end of 2019. Members are likely to reiterate their positions in this meeting, especially given the upcoming troop withdrawal deadline.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia. Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) is Chair of the Sanctions Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia.

DPRK (North Korea)

Expected Council Action

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

The mandate of the Panel of Experts expires on 24 April 2020.

Key Recent Developments

During the second half of 2019, the DPRK gradually resumed testing ballistic missiles and associated technologies. Since May 2019, the DPRK has conducted over a dozen ballistic missile tests in violation of Security Council resolutions. However, for more than two years, since it first started talks with the US, the DPRK has refrained from testing intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The DPRK indicated that it would give the US until the end of 2019 to make concessions in negotiations; otherwise, it would resume ICBM tests and ditch further diplomatic engagement with the US.

On 1 January, DPRK leader Kim Jong-un delivered his traditional New Year's address. In it, he announced that the DPRK would no longer be constrained by the self-imposed moratorium on testing ICBMs and nuclear weapons. He said the DPRK would soon unveil a new "strategic weapon". Kim did not completely abandon the diplomatic track but said that any future engagement will depend on the US approach to the DPRK. He did not provide further specifics.

Following a US request, the Council held a meeting on 11 December 2019 to address non-proliferation issues on the Korean peninsula in light of the recent series of ballistic missile tests. Council members were united in their support for the resumption of the US-DPRK diplomatic talks and the need for the DPRK to halt missile tests. China and Russia, however, expressed criticism of the Council's approach towards sanctions on the DPRK. They emphasised the need to adjust the sanctions regime in order to facilitate diplomatic efforts. Most other Council members stressed the need to preserve sanctions until the DPRK takes concrete

steps toward denuclearisation.

On 16 December, China and Russia circulated to Council members a draft resolution that called for a partial lifting of sanctions on the DPRK. Subsequently, two rounds of expert-level negotiations were held on the draft in December, but it did not advance in light of the widespread view that any easing of sanctions would be premature.

In other developments, the DPRK's foreign minister, Ri Yong Ho, was relieved of his responsibilities, according to media reports. Ri played a notable role during the latest diplomatic outreach between the US and the DPRK as well as during the inter-Korean talks in 2018.

Every December from 2014 to 2017, the Council held an annual meeting on the human rights situation in the DPRK. Each time, the proposed agenda item "the situation in the DPRK" required a procedural vote in order to be included in the programme of work. For the second year in a row, the proponents of this meeting could not gather nine members in 2019 to sign the letter requesting the meeting. (The veto does not apply to Council decisions of a procedural nature.)

Human Rights-Related Developments

The special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, Tomás Ojea Quintana, visited Japan from 2 to 4 December 2019. During the visit, he exchanged views on human rights issues in the DPRK with government officials, families of abduction victims, persons who went to the DPRK as part of a resettlement programme between the 1950s and 1984 and later returned to Japan, and members of civil society and the academic community. He will report his findings and recommendations to the Human Rights Council during its 43rd session in March.

Key Issues and Options

Over the past 14 years, the Council has maintained and gradually increased sanctions pressure on the DPRK. While there was a period of eased tensions, especially in 2018, the country has not significantly changed its behaviour: it has continued to test ballistic missiles and to violate the sanctions regime. The Council is primarily concerned about the recent proliferation of ballistic missile tests by the DPRK and the stalled diplomatic

talks on denuclearisation.

An ongoing issue for the Council is finding the right balance between applying pressure through sanctions and simultaneously encouraging the diplomatic track. An option is to explore ways to modify the sanctions on the DPRK to encourage further diplomatic engagement.

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

The ongoing dire human rights situation in the DPRK remains an issue. Given that, as noted previously, the December briefing on this subject has not been held for two years in a row, the Council could continue to explore the possibility of holding such a meeting.

Council Dynamics

The Council dynamics are shaped in large part by diverging views on the role of sanctions in addressing the nuclear threat posed by the DPRK. The US has been a strong proponent of maintaining the policy of maximum pressure until the DPRK takes concrete steps toward denuclearisation. The EU members of the Council are generally supportive of this approach. On the other hand, China and Russia have shown more interest in considering some form of sanctions relief, as was evident during the 11 December 2019 meeting on non-proliferation and when they circulated a draft resolution on partial sanctions relief for the DPRK. It appears that the proposal does not have sufficient support from other Council members.

When the DPRK resumed testing ballistic missiles in the second half of 2019 after a self-imposed moratorium that lasted over a year, Germany, France, and the UK brought the issue to the Council's attention, initiating several meetings under "any other business" to address the DPRK's missile tests. Given its focus on diplomatic efforts, the US administration has generally downplayed recent missile tests.

In December 2019, an interesting dynamic emerged over the issue of the human rights

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2464 (10 April 2019) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 24 April 2020. **S/RES/2397** (22 December 2017) tightened sanctions on the DPRK. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/16** (29 August 2017) condemned the launch of a missile over the territory of Japan and urged the DPRK to comply with previous Council resolutions and presidential statements. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8682** (11 December 2019) was an open briefing on non-proliferation focused on the DPRK. **S/PV.8507** (10 April 2019) was the meeting to adopt a resolution renewing the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 24 April 2020. **S/PV.8363** (27 September 2018) was a ministerial-level meeting on efforts to denuclearise the DPRK. **S/PV.8362** (26 September 2018) was a high-level meeting on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. **Sanctions Committee Documents S/2019/971** (20 December 2019) was the annual report of the 1718 Sanctions Committee. **S/2019/691** (30 August 2019) was a midterm report of the Panel of Experts.

DPRK (North Korea)

situation in the DPRK. The US, which held the December presidency and initially had signalled its plans to hold the human rights briefing, decided to drop the initiative. It appeared that eight members had signed a letter requesting the meeting, anticipating that the US would also lend its support to the initiative. Without US support, however, the issue would not pass the procedural

vote threshold, and the idea was abandoned. Council members are more consistent in their support for the US-DPRK and inter-Korean diplomatic efforts. There is a shared concern among members that the resumption of ballistic missile tests and heightened rhetoric has the potential to disrupt the diplomatic efforts. Some members have shown interest in a new approach to the Council's relationship with

the DPRK—including responding to positive developments through Council outcomes and other means of showing support for a serious dialogue about the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula—but there has been little movement in this direction.

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

Lead Roles within the Council in 2020: Penholders and Chairs of Subsidiary Bodies

The tables below reflect the Security Council penholders and chairs of subsidiary bodies as of January 2020. The tables do not cover all the agenda items of which the Council is currently seized but focus on items with regular outcomes or those for which a subsidiary body has been established. For the full names of agenda items, please refer to the summary statement by the Secretary-General of matters of which the Security Council is seized (S/2020/10) issued on 2 January. The list of chairs of subsidiary bodies is contained in a note by the Council president (S/2020/2), also of 2 January.

The penholder system and the process of appointing chairs of subsidiary bodies are frequent topics of discussion among Council members. The penholder role refers to the member of the Council that leads the negotiation and drafting of resolutions on a particular Council agenda item. While leadership within the Council in drafting resolutions has been regular practice since its inception, the penholder system itself is a fairly recent development. It was not until 2006—with France, the UK and the US (known as the P3) leading in the drafting and negotiating of outcomes regarding nuclear threats by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran—that the penholder “system” began to emerge as a distinct practice. While any member of the Council can be a penholder—it is an informal system, with nothing preventing other Council members from “grabbing the pen” and drafting outcomes on any issue—the P3 continue to dominate the penholder list, as is clear from the tables below. At times, elected members have demonstrated that

they are willing to take up the pen.

In contrast to the penholder system, the many subsidiary bodies established by the Council have, in recent years, been chaired exclusively by non-permanent members. The process by which chairs are appointed was until recently controlled by the permanent members, and opaque. This, and the unequal distribution of penholder roles among elected members, helped make the issue of burden-sharing a frequent point of discussion when addressing working methods. In 2016, a change in the date of electing new Council members—from October to June—created an opportunity for addressing the chairs' selection process as part of discussions within the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (IWG), led at the time by Japan. Several changes in the selection process were instituted that fall. They included a more transparent and collaborative appointment process, facilitated by a permanent and an elected member.

In August 2017, under Japan's leadership, the IWG reached agreement on a new version of the compendium of its working methods, commonly referred to as “Note 507”. In this update, attention was specifically paid to the penholder system and the appointment of chairs of subsidiary bodies. The updated Note 507 provided guidelines regarding the processes leading to the adoption of Council outcomes under the current penholder system, including an emphasis on at least one round of discussions with all members of the Council on all drafts. It underscored the need to provide sufficient time for consideration, referring to the “silence procedure”, a

common practice that had never before been articulated in writing in which a draft is circulated with a deadline for raising objections. Should there be none, the draft becomes final, recognising “that any Council member may request extension of and/or break silence if further consideration is required”. The 2017 Note 507 also restated the 2016 agreements concerning subsidiary bodies.

In 2019, there were developments concerning both the penholdership and chairing of subsidiary bodies. In an effort to achieve better burden-sharing, Germany, which took on the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, joined the UK as co-penholder on issues concerning Libya sanctions in early 2019. In addition, Germany decided to appoint its deputy permanent representative, rather than its permanent representative, as chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee. Historically, permanent representatives have held the position of chairs of subsidiary bodies; however, this has been Council practice rather than the result of Council decisions. Early in 2019, Germany furthermore joined the UK as co-penholder on Sudan. In mid-2019, Belgium joined Côte d'Ivoire as co-penholder on West Africa and the Sahel.

The process of appointing chairs of the Council subsidiary bodies in 2019 was smoother than in previous years. The incoming five members discussed their “wish lists” for chairmanships among themselves before submitting a list as a group to China and Kuwait, who were the facilitators in 2019. The list passed silence on 11 October and became formal in January 2020.

Some of the new Council

Lead Roles within the Council in 2020: Penholders and Chairs of Subsidiary Bodies

members—Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam—have assumed the role of penholders or co-penholders for 2020. Niger joined Belgium as co-penholder for West Africa and the Sahel; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines became penholder on working methods; and Viet Nam, penholder on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Estonia chairs the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee and the 1591 Sudan Sanctions

Committee; Niger, the 2127 Central African Republic (CAR) Sanctions Committee, the 1533 Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Sanctions Committee, and the 1566 Working Group; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee and the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions; Tunisia, the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Committee, the 1373 Counterterrorism Committee, and the Working Group on Peacekeeping

Operations; and Viet Nam, the 1636 Lebanon Sanctions Committee, the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee, and the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals. The Dominican Republic has replaced Peru as the co-chair with Germany of the 2242 Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security as well as continuing to chair the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee.

COUNTRY-SITUATION	CURRENT PENHOLDER IN THE COUNCIL
Afghanistan	Germany and Indonesia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Rotating on a monthly basis among members of the Contact and Drafting Group
Burundi	France
Central Africa (UNOCA/LRA)	UK
Central African Republic	France
Central Asia (UNRCCA)	Russia
Colombia	UK
Côte d'Ivoire	France
Cyprus	UK
Democratic Republic of the Congo	France
DPRK (Non-proliferation)	US
Golan Heights (UNDOF)	Russia and the US
Guinea-Bissau	Niger
Haiti	US in consultation with the Group of Friends of Haiti
Iran (Non-proliferation)	US
Iraq	US on Iraq; UK on Iraq/Kuwait
Lake Chad Basin	UK
Lebanon	France
Liberia	US
Libya	UK; UK and Germany on Libya sanctions
Mali	France
Middle East (Israel/Palestine)	The US is often seen as the lead, but various other Council members have drafted recent proposals on the issue.
Somalia	UK; US on piracy
Sudan/South Sudan	US
Sudan (Darfur)	Germany and the UK
Syria	Belgium and Germany lead on humanitarian issues
Ukraine	There is no clear penholder for Ukraine. Both Russia and the US have drafted texts, and other members have been active in calling for meetings on the issue.
Yemen	UK
West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)	Belgium and Niger
Western Sahara	US

Lead Roles within the Council in 2020: Penholders and Chairs of Subsidiary Bodies

COUNTY-SITUATION	CHAIR OF THE RELEVANT COUNCIL SUBSIDIARY BODY
Afghanistan	Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia) 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee
Bosnia and Herzegovina	N/A
Burundi	N/A
Central Africa (UNOCA/LRA)	N/A
Central African Republic	Abdou Abarry (Niger) 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee
Central Asia (UNRCCA)	N/A
Colombia	N/A
Côte d'Ivoire	N/A (The 1572 Côte d'Ivoire Sanctions Committee was dissolved on 28 April 2016.)
Cyprus	N/A
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Abdou Abarry (Niger) 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee
DPRK (Non-proliferation)	Christoph Heusgen (Germany) 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee
Golan Heights (UNDOF)	N/A
Guinea-Bissau	Moncef Baati (Tunisia) 2048 Guinea-Bissau Committee
Haiti	N/A
Iran (Non-proliferation)	N/A
Iraq	Sven Jürgenson (Estonia) 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee
Lebanon	Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam) 1636 Lebanon Sanctions Committee
Liberia	N/A (The 1521 Liberia Sanctions Committee was dissolved on 25 May 2016.)
Libya	Jürgen Schulz (Germany) 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee
Mali	José Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee
Middle East (Israel/Palestine)	N/A
Somalia	Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee
South Sudan	Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam) 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee
Sudan	Sven Jürgenson (Estonia) 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee
Syria	N/A
Ukraine	N/A
Yemen	Inga Rhonda King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee
West Africa, including the Sahel	N/A
Western Sahara	N/A

Lead Roles within the Council in 2020: Penholders and Chairs of Subsidiary Bodies

THEMATIC ISSUE	CURRENT PENHOLDER IN THE COUNCIL
Children and Armed Conflict	Belgium
Counterterrorism (1276/1989/2253)	US
Counterterrorism (1373)	US
Counterterrorism (1566)	US
International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	Viet Nam
Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (1540)	Indonesia
Peace and Security in Africa	N/A
Peacekeeping	UK
Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict	UK
Women, Peace and Security	UK on women's participation and protection (1325); US on sexual violence in conflict (1820)
Working Methods	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

THEMATIC ISSUES	CHAIR OF THE RELEVANT COUNCIL SUBSIDIARY BODY
Children and Armed Conflict	Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve (Belgium) Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict
Counterterrorism (1267/1989/2253)	Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia) 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh)/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee
Counterterrorism (1373)	Moncef Baati (Tunisia) 1373 Counterterrorism Committee
Counterterrorism (1566)	Abdou A Barry (Niger) 1566 Working Group
International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam) Informal Working Group on International Tribunals
Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destructions (1540)	Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia) 1540 Committee
Peace and Security in Africa	Jerry Matthews Matjila (South Africa) Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa
Peacekeeping	Moncef Baati (Tunisia) Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations
Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict	UK Protection of Civilians Informal Expert Group
Women, Peace and Security	Germany and the Dominican Republic 2242 Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security
Working Methods	Inga Rhonda King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions

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Security Council Report is a non-profit organisation supported by the Governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Arab Emirates, and Carnegie Corporation.

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