

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

In November, Mexico will hold the presidency of the Security Council.

Mexico will organise three signature events during its presidency. It will convene a high-level open debate on “[Exclusion, inequality and conflicts](#)” under the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security”. Secretary-General António Guterres and a civil society representative are expected to brief. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico is expected to chair the meeting. A presidential statement is a possible outcome.

Mexico will also convene another high-level open debate on the theme “[Peace and security through preventive diplomacy: A common agenda to all UN principal organs](#)” under the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security”. Briefings are anticipated from Abdulla Shahid, President of the General Assembly; Colleen Vixen Kelapile, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); Joan E. Donoghue, President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ); and Secretary-General António Guterres. A presidential statement is a possible outcome.

The third signature event Mexico plans to convene is an open debate on [Small Arms](#). Director of the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) Robin Geiss and a civil society representative are the anticipated briefers.

The annual briefing of [UN police commissioners](#) will also take place in November. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) Police Commissioner Violet Lusala, and UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) Police Commissioner Patricia Boughani are expected to brief.

The semi-annual debate on [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and the reauthorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA) are planned this month.

African issues on the programme of work in November are:

- [Libya](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the semi-annual briefing by the ICC Prosecutor concerning cases in Libya;
- [Somalia](#), briefing and consultations on recent

developments in the country and on the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM); and

- the [Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel \(FC-G5S\)](#), briefing and consultations on the activities of the force.

Furthermore, the Council is expected to renew the mandates of the:

- UN Interim Security Force for Abyei ([UNISFA](#));
- UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)); and
- [751 sanctions regime on Somalia](#) and the Panel of Experts.

The Council will hold its monthly meetings on the political and humanitarian situations and on the use of chemical weapons in [Syria](#). Other Middle East issues on the programme of work this month include:

- [Yemen](#), the monthly meeting on developments;
- “[The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question](#)”, the monthly meeting;
- [Iraq](#), a briefing and consultations on the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI); and
- [Lebanon](#), consultations on the implementation of resolution 1701.

Two Asian issues will be discussed in November:

- [Afghanistan](#), a briefing and consultations on the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA); and
- [DRPK](#), consultations on the report of the 1718 committee.

The annual briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), postponed from October, is expected to be held in a private meeting format. The Council and the General Assembly are expected to vote to fill a vacancy on the ICJ.

The 15 current Council members and the incoming five (Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, and the UAE) are expected to participate in the annual “Hitting the Ground Running” workshop organised by Finland.

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In Hindsight: When Does the Security Council use “Technical Rollovers”?

The practice of extending a peace operation’s mandate—usually for a brief period—through a “technical rollover” has become fairly common. The term has not been used in Security Council decisions, however, and is rarely found in UN documents. Frequently, a technical rollover refers to an unaltered mandate that is extended by a concise resolution for a shorter period than is customary. These elements recurred in three mandate renewals in September 2021: the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) (twice) and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

With the term “technical rollover” remaining undefined, some diplomats have used it more broadly simply to describe the regular extension of an essentially unchanged mandate, regardless of the length of the resolution.

The Council has found technical rollovers useful. **One common use of the technical rollover is to buy additional time when negotiations have reached an impasse and a mandate is about to expire.** In such cases—that is, where mandate termination is not the Council’s intention—the Council renews the mandate for a short period. Such situations generally reflect difficult Council dynamics on the file in question, especially among the veto-wielding permanent members, and the rollover may be used to avoid a potential veto. The Council rolled over the mandate of UNSMIL twice for this reason in September. Resolution 2595 of 15 September extended the mandate for two weeks until 30 September and resolution 2599 extended it for four months until 31 January 2022. Members disagreed over how the draft text should address the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya and the implementation of the recommendations of an independent strategic review of UNSMIL. Russia, in particular, had difficulties with how these issues were approached in the initial texts proposed by the UK, the penholder on Libya.

The Council may also use a technical rollover to give it more time to make a decision when significant developments on the ground necessitate a reevaluation of the mandate. The fallout from the August 2008 war between Georgia and Russia led the Council to extend the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) for several short periods while it considered the future UN peacekeeping presence in the country. The 9 October 2008 resolution (1839) extending the UNOMIG mandate until 15 February 2009 “took note” of the 3 October report of the Secretary-General, in which he recommended that the Council “extend the mandate of the Mission on a technical basis for a period of four months”. Resolution 1839 was the first of three UNOMIG technical rollovers aimed at giving members more time to negotiate the mandate of a future mission. UNOMIG expired on 15 June 2009, when Russia vetoed a draft resolution that would have rolled over the mission’s mandate for two more weeks.

The current situation in Afghanistan is a recent example of momentous events on the ground compelling the reevaluation of a peace operation and leading to a technical rollover. On 17 September, one month after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan, the Council adopted resolution 2596, renewing UNAMA’s mandate for six months (until 17 March 2022), rather than the customary 12 months. The resolution appears to have been designed to allow the Council more time to give careful consideration to the evolving situation before determining the future configuration or responsibilities of the mission.

This objective was reflected in the extensive reporting requirements the Council placed on the Secretary-General. The resolution

asked the Secretary-General to brief the Council on the situation in Afghanistan and UNAMA’s work every other month until the end of the mandate. It further requested that the Secretary-General submit a written report on strategic and operational recommendations for the mission’s mandate in light of recent political, security and social developments by 31 January 2022.

The circumstances of the recent UNAMA rollover also reflected a third reason for technical rollovers: namely, that **the Council may pursue a technical rollover because it wishes to evaluate the findings of a strategic assessment before taking key decisions.** On 15 May 2018, the Council adopted resolution 2415, which reauthorised the mandate of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for two and one-half months rather than the traditional one-year period. This was done because the completion of a joint UN-AU comprehensive assessment of AMISOM’s concept of operations, which was expected to feed into AMISOM’s May 2018 reauthorisation, was delayed until June 2018. As a result, Council members agreed that it would be prudent to adopt a “technical rollover” reauthorising AMISOM for a brief period in order to allow for the reconsideration of the assessment report before a longer reauthorisation. Accordingly, the preamble of resolution 2415 recognised the importance of adequate time to consider the report’s recommendations.

The Council has rolled over a mission mandate at the request of a group of members. In this regard, the Council adopted resolution 2563 on 25 February 2021, rolling over the AMISOM mandate until 14 March because the A3 plus one (Kenya, Niger, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) requested the postponement of the negotiations on the draft text, citing the need for more time to consult with their capitals. They also wanted to wait for an AU assessment of AMISOM, scheduled to be completed in May, before reauthorising the mission’s mandate for a longer period. They felt this would allow for recommendations from the assessment to be taken into consideration; however, the Council ultimately only rolled over the mandate until mid-March.

Technical rollovers have been used as a way of applying political pressure. This was the case with Côte d’Ivoire until 2011. Having established the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) through resolution 1528 (2004), the Council extended it by just one month through resolution 1594 of 4 April 2005, in order to put pressure on the parties to finalise a peace agreement. In addition, the Council, having established the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), for a period of 12 months by resolution 1740 (2007), subsequently extended UNMIN in six-month increments through 23 January 2010, and then in four-month increments until the mission ceased operations on 15 January 2011, having emphasised its intention that this special political mission be of limited scope and duration.

The Council has also briefly rolled over a mandate when extraordinary conditions prevented it from carrying out its normal activities. In late October 2012, New York City shut down for several days because of Hurricane Sandy. Unable to properly consider the reauthorisation of the AMISOM mandate due to the suspension of activities at UN headquarters, the Council met on 30 October (one day before the expiration of the mandate) to adopt resolution 2072, which rolled over the reauthorisation until 11 November. In the resolution, the Council recognised the need for a short mandate extension due to “the exceptional circumstances in New York City arising from Hurricane Sandy”.

In Hindsight: When Does the Security Council use “Technical Rollovers”?

A technical rollover has been used to delay the downsizing of a mission during a crisis. At the height of West Africa Ebola epidemic, the Secretary-General wrote in his 28 August 2014 letter to the president of the Security Council regarding the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL): “Given the exceptional circumstances described above, I am recommending a technical rollover of the mandate of UNMIL for a period of three months” (S/2014/644). Just prior to UNMIL’s mandate expiry, on 15 September, the Council adopted resolution 2176 endorsing the Secretary-General’s recommendations and renewing the mandate until 31 December while also deferring consideration of previously planned mandate adjustments.

When some diplomats use “technical rollover” to describe the extension of a mandate, essentially unchanged and for the customary period, the implication is usually that there is widespread agreement on the mandate and that the negotiations are straightforward. The most recent compendium of working methods, the 2017 presidential note (S/2017/507), where the “technical rollover” is mentioned in the context of negotiating outcomes, reflects this view. In its paragraph 81 the note says: “[F]or each draft resolution which is not a technical rollover... the members of the Security Council encourage the penholder or co-penholders to present and discuss the draft with all members of the Security Council in at least one round of informal consultations or informal-informals”. This language addressed the concerns of elected members, in particular, at being bypassed until a very late stage in the negotiation of some resolutions. The suggestion

is also that technical rollovers, as understood here, generally do not require significant negotiation because the mandate remains the same and is uncontroversial.

Straightforward mandate renewals—which fit the most liberal interpretation of a technical rollover—can take different forms in terms of the content of the text. The text can be short, and state that the mandate (which is unaltered) will be carried out in accordance with a previous resolution or previous resolutions in which the mandate is elaborated in more detail. This was the case, for example, with the one-year mandate renewals of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia in 2018 (S/RES/2435) and in 2019 (S/RES/2487), which were both less than one page in length and consisted of only two operative paragraphs. Or the text can be longer, both referring to one or more previous resolutions and also mapping out the unchanged mandate in greater detail. Several of the annual resolutions renewing the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) fit this description prior to 2016, when the Council requested the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of the mission.

Evading a single definition, the technical rollover is nonetheless a commonly used working method of the Security Council. The imprecision of the term is one reason why it can be applied to many different scenarios. Nonetheless, in all cases, boiled down to its essence, the technical rollover is an extension of a mandate where the core functions of the mission are unaltered.

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Haiti

On 4 October, the Security Council met to discuss the situation in Haiti (S/PV.8871). Special Representative and head of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) Helen La Lime briefed the Council, stating that the country was “undergoing one of the most fraught periods of its recent history”. Civil society briefer Emmanuela Douyon, the Executive Director of Pòlité, called for the long-delayed presidential and legislative elections to be held and for the Haitian police to be strengthened. Haiti’s Foreign Minister, Claude Joseph, expressed the need for BINUH’s mandate to support further capacity building of the country’s police force. On 15 October, the Security Council, following difficult negotiations, unanimously renewed BINUH’s mandate for nine months and requested an assessment with a view to strengthening the mission’s mandate (S/RES/2600). On the same day, the A3 plus one (Kenya, Niger, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) convened an Arria-formula meeting on Haiti. Participants, among them Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry, explored ways to adjust BINUH’s mandate for the mission better to address Haiti’s numerous challenges.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 5 October, the Security Council held a briefing and consultations on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (S/PV.8873). Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) Bintou Keita briefed the Council on the latest

report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the DRC and the activities of MONUSCO. She further discussed the Secretary-General’s transition plan for MONUSCO submitted pursuant to resolution 2556 of 18 December 2020. Nelly Godelieve Madiaka Mbangi, Coordinator of Sauti Ya Mama Mukongomani/Voice of Congolese Women, also briefed the Council. During the same meeting, the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), Ambassador Abdou Abarry (Niger), presented an oral report on the work of the sanctions committee.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

On 5 October, Council members were briefed in consultations by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix on the latest 90-day report by the Secretary-General on UNDOF and the most recent developments (S/2021/833).

Ethiopia (Tigray)

On 1 October, Security Council members discussed the situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia under “any other business”. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths briefed. The meeting followed the 30 September announcement by the government of Ethiopia that seven UN officials working in the country had been declared “persona non grata” and given 72 hours to leave Ethiopian territory.

On 6 October, the Security Council held an open briefing under the agenda item “Peace and Security in Africa” to discuss

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the situation in Ethiopia (S/PV.8875). Secretary-General António Guterres briefed. Regarding the humanitarian situation in northern Ethiopia, Guterres said that while up to seven million people in Amhara, Afar and Tigray were “in need of food assistance and other emergency support”, fuel supplies, essential medicines, and equipment “continue[d] to be blocked”. Guterres underscored that the expulsion of the seven UN officials should be a matter of “deep concern” and reiterated the UN position that the doctrine of *persona non grata* is not the appropriate procedure to deal with member states’ concerns about the conduct of UN personnel. Ambassador Taye Atske Selassie (Ethiopia), who participated in the meeting in accordance with rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, rejected the notion that Ethiopia was “under any legal obligation to provide justifications or explanation for its decisions”. He alleged that the expelled officials had fabricated data on the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia “to create a Darfur-like situation”, including through allegedly making up hunger-related deaths. After Atske Selassie’s remarks, Guterres took the floor again; he said that he had not received any written documents from the Ethiopian government concerning the conduct of the expelled officials, although he had twice invited the Ethiopian prime minister to inform him directly of any concerns regarding the impartiality of UN staff. Guterres asked to be provided with said documentation.

Arria-formula meeting on Belarus

On 8 October, Council members held an Arria-formula meeting on the situation in Belarus. The meeting was organised by Estonia, France, Ireland, Norway, the UK, and the US and co-sponsored by 26 non-Council member states. Estonia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eva-Maria Liimets, chaired the meeting. Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and head of the UN Human Rights Office in New York, Ilze Brands Kehris, delivered a speech during the session. The briefers were Artyom Shraibman, a Political Analyst specialising in Belarusian politics, international relations and human rights; Jens Modvig, head of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus; Victoria Fedorova, Co-Founder of the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus; and Anna Maria Dyer, Political Analyst at the Polish Institute of International Affairs. The meeting focused on the deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus and the tensions surrounding the passage of migrants and asylum seekers across the border of Belarus into its neighbouring countries.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

On 12 October, the Security Council held a high-level open debate (S/PV.8877) titled “Diversity, State-building and the search for peace”, based on a concept note that Kenya had prepared (S/2021/854). Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta chaired the meeting, which included briefings by Secretary-General António Guterres; Rwandan President Paul Kagame, former South African President Thabo Mbeki; and a civil society representative, Fawzia Koofi, a women’s rights activist and former deputy speaker of the parliament of Afghanistan.

Colombia

On 14 October, the Security Council convened for its quarterly meeting on Colombia (S/PV.8879). Special Representative and head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia Carlos Ruiz Massieu briefed on recent developments and the Secretary-General’s latest

90-day report on the mission (S/2021/824). The Council was also briefed by Bibiana Peñaranda, the Coordinator of “Butterflies with New Wings” (a civil society organisation which helps displaced women in Buenaventura) and a representative of Afro-Colombian women in the Special Forum on Gender; and Daniela Soto, Youth Leader at the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca. On 29 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2603, renewing the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia for another year, until 31 October 2022.

Kosovo

On 15 October, the Council held its second regular briefing this year on the situation in Kosovo (S/PV.8880). Special Representative and head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Zahir Tanin briefed on the latest Secretary-General’s report (S/2021/861) and recent developments. Nikola Selaković, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu, the President of Kosovo, also addressed the Council. The discussion mainly focused on the EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, relations between Belgrade and Pristina, and tensions in northern Kosovo and along the Kosovo-Serbia border.

Arria-formula meeting on Sea-Level Rise

On 18 October, Viet Nam, Ireland, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Tunisia organised an Arria-formula meeting on “Sea-Level Rise and Implications for International Peace and Security”. The meeting was co-sponsored by several non-Council members, including the Dominican Republic, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Saint Lucia, and Tuvalu. Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Khaled Khiari; Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of Working Group I of the UN International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); and Coral Pasisi, Senior Adviser to the Director General of the Sustainable Pacific Consultancy, briefed.

Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

On 19 October, the Security Council convened for its quarterly open debate on: “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (S/PV.8883). Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland briefed the Council. Daniel Levy, President of the US/Middle East Project, and Hanan Ashrawi, Palestinian political and civil society leader, also briefed. The representatives of Israel and the Observer State of Palestine participated in the open debate.

Great Lakes Region

On 20 October, the Security Council held a ministerial-level debate on the Great Lakes region (S/PV.8884). Raychelle Omamo, Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, chaired the meeting. Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region Huang Xia briefed the Council on the Secretary-General’s latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2021/836). Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) João Samuel Caholo and Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee also briefed the Council.

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The outcome of the meeting was the adoption of a presidential statement proposed by the Kenyan presidency, which, among other things, recognises the progress in the implementation of national and regional commitments under the PSC Framework and urges the signatory states to remain committed to its full implementation (S/PRST/2021/19).

Women, Peace and Security

On 21 October, the Security Council convened for its annual open debate on women, peace and security (S/PV.8886). Secretary-General António Guterres provided opening remarks. The Executive Director of UN Women, Sima Sami Bahous, and the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop, briefed the Council. Celia Umenza Velasco, Legal Coordinator for the Indigenous Reservation of Tacueyó and a member of the Association of Indigenous Councils of the North of Cauca, briefed the Council on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. This was the first Security Council open debate to include the in-person participation of non-Council members since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in the US in March 2020. The theme of the debate was “Investing in Women in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding”.

Mali and the Sahel

From 23 to 25 October, the Security Council conducted a visiting mission to Mali and Niger. In Mali, the Council focused on assessing the country’s political transition and the preparations for next year’s elections. It also discussed with interlocutors the implementation of Mali’s 2015 peace and reconciliation agreement and efforts to stabilise central Mali. Much of the focus of the Niger visit was on the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S), including options that the Secretary-General outlined in a 4 October letter to strengthen support to the joint force (S/2021/850).

On 29 October, the Council held its quarterly briefing and consultations on Mali. The Special Representative and head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), El-Ghassim Wane briefed. France, Kenya and Niger, which co-led the visiting mission, briefed on the Council’s recent visit. Following the briefing, Council members were expected to issue a press statement on the visiting mission.

Western Sahara

On 29 October, Security Council members adopted resolution 2606, renewing the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 October 2022, with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (Russia and Tunisia). The resolution welcomes the appointment of Staffan de Mistura as Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, emphasises the need for a “realistic, practicable, enduring and mutually acceptable political solution to the question of Western Sahara”, and urges the constructive resumption of the political process.

Children and Armed Conflict

On 29 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2601 on the protection of education in conflict, which was co-drafted by Niger and Norway. The resolution was co-sponsored by 99 member states. The resolution condemns attacks against schools, attacks against civilians connected with schools, and the military use of schools. It further calls on member states to facilitate the continuation of education in armed conflict, including through distance learning and digital technology.

UN-AU Cooperation

On 28 October, the Security Council held a virtual high-level debate on AU-UN cooperation. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta chaired the meeting. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed briefed the Council on the Secretary-General’s latest report “Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union” (S/2021/763). AU High Representative for financing of the Union and the Peace Fund Donald Kaberuka also briefed the Council.

At the time of writing, the Council had finalised a presidential statement proposed by Kenya as an outcome of the high-level debate, although the exact timing of the adoption was unclear. It appears that the statement commends the UN-AU partnership and stresses that it should further develop into a systematic, operational, and strategic partnership rooted in shared values and a strong commitment to multilateralism.

Sudan/South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council expects to renew the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). The Council is also expected to extend the mission’s support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), established in 2011 to conduct monitoring and verification activities along the Sudan-South Sudan border.

The mandate of UNISFA and the mission’s support for the JBVMM both expire on 15 November.

Key Recent Developments

On 25 October, the Chairperson of the Transitional Sovereign Council in Sudan, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, announced a military coup d’état. At the time of writing, the coup

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2575](#) (11 May 2021) renewed the mandate of UNISFA until 15 November 2021. [S/RES/2550](#) (12 November 2020) renewed the mandate of UNISFA until 15 May 2021. [Secretary-General’s Report S/2021/881](#) (15 October 2021) was on UNISFA. [Security Council Letters S/2021/805](#) (17 September 2021) was from the Secretary-General, transmitting the strategic review of UNISFA. [S/2021/322](#) (1 April 2021) was from the Secretary-General on options for the responsible drawdown and exit of UNISFA. Security Council Meeting Record [S/PV.8887](#) (27 October 2021) was a briefing on UNISFA and Sudan/South Sudan. [Security Council Press Statement SC/14666](#) (15 October 2021) was on the deterioration of the situation regarding the presence of UNISFA in Gok Machar, South Sudan.

Sudan/South Sudan

was ongoing with the effects on the situation in Abyei not yet known. Prior to this, improved relations between Sudan and South Sudan created an enabling environment for progress in resolving the final status of Abyei, the disputed area along the Sudan-South Sudan border. Both countries established national committees on the issue, and “there is renewed interest in seeking a political settlement for the area among various stakeholders”, according to the most recent Secretary-General’s report, covering 16 April to 15 October. The Joint Political and Security Mechanism met in Juba in September, but, as the Secretary-General’s report said, “the implementation of previous decisions of that body remains pending”, and the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee has not met since November 2017. The security situation in Abyei was generally calm, but the continued presence of armed elements and the proliferation of arms remain threats, the report said.

UNISFA faced numerous obstacles in the implementation of its mandate, as outlined in the Secretary-General’s report, including the denial of freedom of movement on 20 occasions. Long-standing challenges persist, including the lack of progress regarding the operationalisation of the Athony airstrip, the delayed issuance of visas for the three formed police units and an additional 98 individual police officers, and the appointment of a civilian deputy head of mission (as requested by the Council in May 2019). The Secretary-General’s report also urged both countries to allow the deployment of human rights experts to the mission in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

On 13 October, Security Council members were briefed under “any other business” by Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee on the deterioration of the situation in Gok Machar, South Sudan, including threats to the safety and security of peacekeepers. An Ethiopian peacekeeper died in Gok Machar on 14 September, after being denied medical evacuation. (For more, see our What’s In Blue story of 12 October.) Council members issued a press statement on 15 October that reiterated their full support for UNISFA and expressed concern that the full implementation of the mission’s mandate was being obstructed. Council members further demanded that the government of South Sudan facilitate the unimpeded implementation of UNISFA’s mandate.

The Council last renewed UNISFA’s mandate on 11 May, unanimously adopting resolution 2575. The resolution maintained the authorised troop and police ceilings at 3,550 and 640 personnel, respectively. It requested the Secretary-General to provide the Council with a strategic review of UNISFA, which Council members received on 17 September. The review recommended two options for the reconfiguration of UNISFA: reconfiguration with a slightly reduced troop ceiling; and similar deployment or reconfiguration of capabilities and footprint with a more significantly reduced ceiling. In light of the regional dynamics, both options include the replacement of the current contingents (who are from Ethiopia, which is embroiled in its own civil war) to a force with enhanced enabling units and a revised concept of operations. The report said that the replacement of personnel could commence in October and estimated that it would take between 100 days and six months. Both options retain the JBVMM at the same level.

Resolution 2550, adopted on 12 November 2020, requested the Secretary-General to develop options for the responsible drawdown and exit of the mission and to submit a report on these by 31 March.

In a letter to the Council on 1 April, the Secretary-General reported that consultations conducted with the governments of Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia, as well as other relevant stakeholders, were “inconclusive” and, given the different positions on the future of the mission, “no options that would be minimally acceptable to the parties could be formulated”. In light of these factors, the strategic review team was not able to propose a clear exit strategy for the mission at this stage, the Secretary-General’s report said.

On 26 October, Security Council members met for closed consultations to discuss the situation in Sudan. (For more details, see our What’s In Blue story of 26 October.) The Council was last briefed on Abyei on 27 October by Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, and the Chairperson of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel Thabo Mbeki.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council to consider is the reconfiguration of the mission and what modifications to make to the mandate and force structure ahead of the mandate renewal in November. Council members are expected to take into account recent developments in Sudan, following the coup d’état. They will also consider the findings and recommendations of the strategic review and the Secretary-General’s report on progress in implementing UNISFA’s mandate, which recommended an extension of the mission’s mandate by six months. It is likely that visa-issuance problems and the protracted difficulties with appointing a civilian deputy head of mission, among other issues, will be part of the discussion during negotiations ahead of UNISFA’s mandate renewal.

Another key issue is what steps to take in relation to the need “to develop a viable exit strategy”, as mentioned in resolutions 2550 and 2575. A related issue is how to bridge the differences expressed by Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia, as outlined in the Secretary-General’s 1 April letter, so that the Secretary-General can offer options that would be acceptable to all parties. One option for the Council would be to consider holding an informal interactive dialogue with all the parties (Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, the UN, the AU, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development) to find common ground. A related option may be for the Council to suggest that the Secretariat consult further with the AU and the AU High-Level Implementation Panel on a way forward. The Secretary-General’s most recent report encouraged “the AU to enhance its efforts to promote political mediation”.

A further issue that Council members are likely to follow relates to the operational difficulties faced by UNISFA and the JBVMM. The ongoing process of replacing the mission’s Ethiopian troops, including vetting mechanisms and engagement with potential troop-contributing countries, is another issue.

Council Dynamics

Council members strongly condemn the coup in Sudan and are concerned that it jeopardises the country’s security, stability, political transition, and development. Members agree on the important roles that UNISFA and the JBVMM play in support of achieving peace, security and stability in Abyei and the broader region, as noted in the press statement of 15 October. They also share concern over the obstruction of UNISFA’s mandate.

Sudan/South Sudan

Council members remain concerned over tensions in the region that continue to affect the mission. The US (the penholder on the issue) said in its explanation of vote on the adoption of resolution 2575 on 11 May that “with shifting dynamics in the region, it is essential that we continue to assess how UNISFA contributes to the regional political and security architecture” and that the mission’s “configuration and its exit strategy must take into account the current circumstances”. The US also urged the AU “to develop longer-term solutions that can be sustained after the departure of United Nations peacekeepers”.

In the past, the three African members, supported by China

and to a lesser extent by some other members, have called for a renewal of the mandate without any changes, given the evolving internal political situations in Sudan and South Sudan. At the 26 April meeting, the three African members and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made a joint statement emphasising that the mission constituted “an anchor of stability” and that any future decision on drawdown options for UNISFA should be informed by the views of the parties and be conditions-based, including the determination of the final status of Abyei.

The US is the penholder on Abyei.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold its semi-annual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The new High Representative for BiH, Christian Schmidt, is expected to brief on the latest report of the Office of the High Representative (OHR).

The Council also expects to vote on the reauthorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA) prior to its 5 November expiration.

Background

The 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace, also known as the Dayton Agreement, created two entities within BiH: the predominantly Bosniak and Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the predominantly Serb Republika Srpska (RS). The two entities are linked by a rotating tripartite inter-ethnic presidency and a two-chamber legislative branch with even representation by the three major ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs). Both entities also have their own executive and legislative branches. However, in contrast to RS’s parliament, known as the National Assembly of Republika Srpska (NARS), the FBiH government is decentralised, consisting of ten highly autonomous cantons.

The Dayton Agreement also established the OHR and the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) to oversee implementation of the agreement’s civilian and military aspects, respectively. In 1996, IFOR was replaced by the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) and, in 2004, SFOR was replaced by the EU-led multidimensional stabilisation force (EUFOR).

In December 1995, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) was established to garner international support for the Dayton Agreement. The PIC Steering Board, which serves as the executive arm of the PIC and provides the High Representative with political guidance, consists of representatives from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK, the US, the Presidency of the EU, the European Commission, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which is represented by Turkey. In 1997, the PIC agreed to grant significant legislative powers to the High Representative. Known collectively as the “Bonn Powers”, these include the ability to adopt binding decisions and unseat elected officials who are found to

be in violation of legal commitments made under the Dayton Agreement or the terms of its implementation.

Key Recent Developments

On 27 May, after the then-High Representative for BiH, Valentin Inzko, announced that he was resigning from his post effective 1 August, the PIC issued a statement appointing Schmidt as the next High Representative for BiH. Russia, a member of the PIC Steering Board, objected to the appointment, arguing that it lacked consensus among PIC members and that the Bosnian Serbs were not consulted on the matter. Additionally, Russia argued that the decision lacked the endorsement of the Security Council.

On 22 July, the Council held a vote on a draft resolution tabled by China and Russia that articulated the Council’s support for “the appointment of the High Representative until 31 July 2022 with the closure of the OHR”. The draft resolution failed to be adopted, receiving two votes in favour (China and Russia) and a record 13 abstentions. Following the vote, China and Russia asserted that the outcome confirmed that the Council did not endorse Schmidt as High Representative and, as such, the post remained vacant.

On 23 July, while still in his post, Inzko decreed amendments to BiH’s criminal code, setting prison terms of up to five years for anyone who “publicly condones, denies, grossly trivialises or tries to justify a crime of genocide, crimes against humanity or a war crime”. Inzko claimed that he issued the decree in reaction to a rise in genocide denial and “an escalation of glorification of war criminals . . . that it is also sowing the seeds for potential new conflicts”.

Bosnian Serb politicians condemned the decree. At a press conference following the decision, Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik declared that “RS will have no other option but to start the...dissolution” of BiH. On 27 July, Bosnian Serb politicians began boycotting central government institutions, including the presidency and the parliament. The leader of the RS opposition party, Branislav Borenović, said, “Serb political representatives will no longer participate in the work of the common institutions of Bosnia...and will not make any decisions until this issue is resolved”. The move effectively blocked the functioning of BiH’s parliament, which relies on the approval of representatives from all three major ethnic groups.

UN DOCUMENTS ON BIH Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2549 (5 November 2020) renewed the authorisation of EUFOR ALTHEA. S/RES/1575 (22 November 2004) established EUFOR. **Security Council Letter** S/2021/436 (6 May 2021) was the briefing by the High Representative for BiH. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.8823 (22 July 2021) was a meeting on BiH.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

NARS also chose not to cooperate with central authorities in the implementation of Inzko's decree. On 30 July, it adopted amendments to its own criminal law, imposing prison sentences of up to five years for those who "disparage or label the Serb Republic or its people as genocidal or aggressor[s]" and 15 years for violations of its "constitution, integrity and independence". This was the first time that a law explicitly challenging the High Representative's prerogative was adopted by the NARS.

The political crisis deepened in recent weeks. On 8 October, Dodik announced that the RS would withdraw from key joint institutions—including the judiciary system, the taxation authority and the armed forces, among others—and that about 130 laws enacted by the OHR would be annulled. US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Gabriel Escobar had previously warned Dodik that "threats of secession and rolling back reforms" would result in "nothing but isolation and economic despair". On 15 October, NARS Speaker Nedeljko Čubrilović said that "no one in the RS is calling for war or seeking secession" and confirmed that the NARS would vote on the proposed changes by the end of October.

In a 14 October statement, the PIC Steering Board said it expected all leaders "to reject destabilising and divisive rhetoric... and to cease any actions in this regard, including threats of secession and calling into question the existence of BiH as a single, sovereign state comprising two entities". Russia did not agree with the text of the statement. Incumbent Chairman of the BiH presidency Željko Komšić argued that Dodik's announcement amounted to a "criminal act of rebellion". BiH prosecutors subsequently launched an investigation into Dodik on 18 October for "undermining the constitutional order".

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how to address possible objections to a briefing by the High Representative and the legitimacy of the OHR, given recent concerns raised by China and Russia. A compromise could be for the Council to include in the EUFOR ALTHEA mandate an option to review the role of the High Representative and the OHR in the future.

Another key issue is the refusal of NARS to accept Inzko's decree and its retaliatory blocking of BiH institutions. The Security Council may consider reaffirming, in its EUFOR authorisation resolution, the final authority of the High Representative. It could also express deep concern over the tactics employed to inhibit the effective functioning of the BiH government.

An additional key issue is Dodik's provocative rhetoric and threats of secession. The Security Council may continue to note with concern, as it has in previous resolutions, the continued polarising rhetoric and actions in BiH. It could also choose to condemn them as a threat to BiH's territorial integrity.

If the Council is unable to reauthorise the EUFOR ALTHEA mandate prior to its 5 November expiration because of difficult dynamics, a potential option would be to adopt a "technical roll-over" of the mandate for a short period to give members more time to negotiate the text.

Council Dynamics

Overall, Council members have similar concerns about BiH's divisive ethnic politics. Most members are also critical of Dodik's rhetoric and his recent threats of dissolution, which they view as challenging BiH's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia, however, tends to be supportive of Dodik's positions.

China and Russia do not recognise Schmidt's authority as High Representative and may once again call for the early closure of the OHR, noting that the role of the international community in BiH has changed significantly in recent years. Their views are likely to make discussions on the role of the High Representative contentious in the negotiations on the EUFOR ALTHEA mandate renewal.

Several members—including EU member states, the UK and the US, among others—remain convinced that EUFOR continues to play a critical role in the stability and security of BiH.

The BiH Coordination and Drafting Group prepares the first draft of Council products on BiH. For 2021, it comprises Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Russia, the UK and the US. France is the penholder on this year's EUFOR ALTHEA draft resolution.

Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Exclusion, Inequality and Conflict

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold a high-level open debate on "Maintaining international peace and security: exclusion, inequality and conflict". One of the signature events of Mexico's presidency, the meeting will be chaired by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico. Secretary-General António Guterres and a civil society representative are expected to brief.

A presidential statement is a possible outcome.

Background and Key Recent Developments

Social scientists have argued that a state's legitimacy and effectiveness are the foundations of its stability. But this legitimacy suffers when certain groups are excluded from processes related to political, social or economic development. This can lead to societal divisions along gender,

UN DOCUMENTS ON EXCLUSION, INEQUALITY AND CONFLICT [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2282](#) (27 April 2016) was on the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture. [S/RES/2565](#) (26 February 2015) reiterated the Council's demand from resolution 2532 for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/10](#) (19 May 2021) reiterated the need to enable equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8877](#) (12 October 2021) was the open debate held by Kenya on "Diversity, State Building and the Search for Peace". [S/2021/24](#) (8 January 2021) transmitted the statements from an open debate convened by Tunisia on "Challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts" on 6 January. [S/2020/1090](#) (5 November 2020) transmitted the statements from a virtual, high-level open debate on "contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity" under the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace agenda on 3 November.

Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Exclusion, Inequality and Conflict

ethnic, religious, geographic or other lines—resulting in disenfranchisement and resentment and providing fertile ground for conflict.

Over the years, various forms of political, economic and social exclusion and inequality have been among the factors that have been discussed in the Council as an underlying source of tension that can lead to, exacerbate or prolong conflict. In a Council debate in February 2011 on the “interdependence between security and development” under the Brazilian presidency, then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: “Countries facing stark inequalities and weak institutions are at increased risk of conflict. Poorly distributed wealth and lack of sufficient jobs, opportunities and freedoms... can increase the risk of instability”. Ban’s words are relevant to many of the situations the Council has addressed in the post-Cold War era. Discrimination against and marginalisation of ethnic groups in the Darfur region of Sudan was a contributing factor to the war that broke out there in 2003, and which occupied considerable Council attention. The lack of economic opportunities for youth in Haiti continues to contribute to the gang violence in Port-au-Prince that the Council grapples with to this day. And, while women’s protection and participation have been a major focus of the Council’s work since the adoption of resolution 1325 in 2000, the importance of upholding the security and rights of women was recently underscored when the Taliban took power in Kabul in August.

In its peacebuilding work, the Council has also sought to tackle the insecurity generated by inequality and marginalisation. In resolution 2282 of 27 April 2016 on the ten-year review of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture, the Council emphasised that “inclusivity is key to advancing national peacebuilding processes and objectives in order to ensure that the needs of all segments of society are taken into account”.

Over the course of the coronavirus pandemic, the Council has regularly considered how the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated socioeconomic inequalities and heightened risks to international peace and security. In resolution 2565, adopted in February, the Council recognised that COVID-19 can exacerbate inequalities and called for “strengthen[ed] national and multilateral approaches and international cooperation... in order to facilitate equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines in armed conflict situations, post-conflict situations and complex humanitarian emergencies”. In May, the Council adopted a presidential statement on addressing the virus in Africa in which it reiterated “the need to enable equitable access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines to all, including the most vulnerable”.

Mexico’s focus in the November debate on promoting inclusivity and equality is consistent with the views of the wider UN membership and the Secretary-General. In 2015, member states adopted the “2030 Sustainable Development Goals”, a global roadmap for developing more peaceful and prosperous societies. Sustainable Development Goal 16 indicates the important role that state institutions can play in peacefully managing diversity. The goal aspires to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

In September, the Secretary-General issued a report titled “Our Common Agenda”. In it, he called for a more inclusive multilateral system with the UN at its centre. He espoused the development of a

“social contract” between governments and their people and within societies following national consultations “so all citizens have a say in envisioning their countries’ future”. The contract, in his view, should “usher in a new era of universal social protection, health coverage, education, skills, decent work and housing, as well as universal access to the Internet by 2030 as a basic human right”. The Secretary-General also pledged in the report to establish a High-Level Advisory Board, consisting of former heads of state, “to identify global public good and other areas of common interest where governance improvements are most needed, and to propose options for how this could be achieved”.

Key Issues and Options

An ongoing key issue for the Council is how to promote the protection of historically marginalised groups—for example, women, youth and ethnic or religious minorities—and support their meaningful participation in preventing and resolving conflict. One option is for the Council to take into account the needs and efforts of such groups in the context of specific country situations; in this respect, Ireland convened a meeting on 28 September on Somalia that focused on women’s political participation.

Another key issue is how the Council can strengthen its cooperation and work coherently with other UN entities that strive to mitigate the instability caused by exclusion and inequality. In this regard, Council members might consider how to make better use of the advisory role of the UN Peacebuilding Commission when drafting mandates for peace operations. More frequent briefings to the Security Council by the Presidents of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) could also be considered.

Council Dynamics

The theme of the open debate builds upon many similar discussions held in the Council in recent times. The linkages between peace and security, on the one hand, and inequality and exclusion, on the other, resonate with many Council members, as reflected by their statements in public meetings, including in signature events planned by Council presidents.

In November 2020, during an open videoconference (VTC) debate on “Contemporary drivers of conflict and instability” organised by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, then-Council member the Dominican Republic noted, “Pandemics, such as COVID-19, bring to the surface the underlying factors that result in violence, such as systemic inequality, discrimination and marginalization”. In the open VTC debate initiated by Tunisia in January on “Challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts”, Tunisian President Kaïs Saïed said that “drivers [of instability leading to violence] extend from poverty, unemployment, marginalization, exclusion, a decline in human development indicators, [and] the ineffectiveness of State institutions”, among other factors. And in the 12 October open debate on “Diversity, statebuilding and the search for peace” under Kenya’s presidency, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield (US) noted that the Secretary General’s “Our Common Agenda” “rightfully includes aspects of addressing racism, discrimination and inequality”.

UN Peacekeeping

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold its annual briefing with the heads of police components of UN peace operations. The Mexican presidency intends to focus this annual briefing on women, peace and security (WPS) issues as part of the WPS presidency trio of Ireland, Kenya and Mexico in September, October and November, respectively. Under Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) Police Commissioner Violet Lusala, and UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) Police Commissioner Patricia Boughani are expected to brief. Lacroix is expected to speak about the strategic priorities for UN police components. Lusala is expected to brief on the meaningful participation of women in peace processes and the protection of civilians in Abyei, and Boughani will focus on gender mainstreaming in MINUSMA and the provision of operational support to the mission.

Key Recent Developments

Since 2014, the Council has held annual briefings with the heads of police components of UN peace operations. Last year, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions Alexandre Zouev briefed the Council in a virtual meeting on 6 November 2020. Also briefing were the heads of police components of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and MINUSMA.

Zouev explained the work that was done to implement the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) priorities to strengthen the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, including the implementation of standards to improve the performance and accountability of deployed police officers. One of the major commitments under A4P is the implementation of the WPS agenda and its priorities, which include taking measures aimed at the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of the peace process; integrating a gender perspective into all stages of analysis, planning, implementation and reporting; and increasing the number of civilian and uniformed women in peacekeeping at all levels and in key positions. In this regard, Zouev spoke about the implementation of gender-responsive policing and the achievement of intermediate gender parity targets for 2020, including at the command levels. According to DPO data, seven women are currently serving as heads or deputy heads of UN police components in UN peacekeeping and special political missions deployed in Abyei, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, South Sudan and with UNOCA, and the standing police capacity in Brindisi. Some of the important initiatives taken by the UN to encourage the participation of women police officers in UN peace operations include requesting member states to nominate a minimum of 20 percent women for individual police officer positions and 30 percent for justice and corrections government-provided personnel and giving priority to those formed police units (FPUs) that include women.

At last year's briefing, the four police commissioners also highlighted the WPS agenda in their interventions. They spoke, among other things, about their efforts in the field to achieve gender

equality and enhance the capacity to prevent and investigate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, increase the number of female police officers in positions of responsibility and enhance community engagement.

The November briefing by the heads of UN police components follows the annual debate on WPS that took place on 21 October, which focused on investing in women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The meeting was based on the Secretary-General's annual report on WPS, which highlighted the progress made in gender-responsive peacekeeping and peace operations, particularly the increase in the number of women in police components, including in leadership positions. In his remarks at the annual debate, the Secretary-General noted that "the percentage of women staff officers and military experts has risen from eight percent to nearly 18 percent today—and from 20 to 30 percent among individual police officers" since January 2018.

On 12 October, the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations convened a meeting on maximising the positive impact of UN police on global policing ahead of the 2021 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial, which will take place in Seoul in December, and the third UN chiefs of police summit to be held in 2022. The meeting discussed, among other things, the role of UN police in implementing A4P priorities and resolution 2594 of 9 September 2021 on peace operations' transitions. That resolution requested the Secretary-General "to further strengthen coordination between UN police, justice, and corrections activities, as well as between UN uniformed components and as appropriate, the relevant host State authorities".

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for Council members is how to build on the progress made by continuing to increase the representation of women at senior leadership levels of peacekeeping and special political missions. The Secretary-General's annual report made important recommendations in this regard, including calling for the creation of networks such as the UN Women Correction Officers Network launched in May 2021, financial and technical support to police contributing countries to encourage the deployment of women police officers, and the implementation of gender-responsive security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes.

Another issue is how to seize the opportunity of the 2021 peacekeeping ministerial in Seoul to encourage member states to make pledges of FPUs and individual police officers—with particular emphasis on female police officers—as well as training and technology.

One possible option for the Council is to assess progress since the adoption of resolution 2538 of 28 August 2020 on the role of women in peacekeeping operations, particularly female police officers. The Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations could organise a session dedicated to this issue.

Council Dynamics

There is general agreement among Council members about the importance of UN police in helping to maintain public order, protect civilians, and assist host states in building their law enforcement capacities.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council will hold its monthly briefing and consultations on Yemen. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg and a representative from OCHA are likely to brief.

Key Recent Developments

Marib and neighbouring Shabwa remain the epicentres of fighting, as the Houthi rebel group made further territorial gains in the two energy-rich governorates. Their fall would be a major blow to the Yemeni government and further strengthen the Houthis in any future political process.

Grundberg described this fighting as having taken “an alarming turn” at the Council’s 14 October briefing on Yemen. September was the second-deadliest month for civilians in the last two years, with 235 killed or injured, according to OCHA. Fighting also displaced 10,000 people in Marib—the highest number recorded in the governorate in a single month this year. Grundberg and Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Ramesh Rajasingham, who also briefed at the 14 October meeting, raised particular concern about al-Abdiyah district in southwestern Marib. Houthi forces have encircled the district since 23 September, making it difficult for humanitarian aid to reach its 35,000 inhabitants. With fighting drawing closer to the district’s centre, the main hospital was hit by a missile on 14 October, according to Doctors Without Borders. In a statement that same day, Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen David Gressly called for a cessation of hostilities in al-Abdiyah to allow for the safe passage of civilians and aid workers and evacuate the wounded.

By 18 October, Houthi forces had reportedly seized al-Abdiyah and Harib districts in Marib and three districts in Shabwa—Assilan, Bayhan and Ain. Reported losses of Jubah and Jabal Murab districts in Marib by late October left the government in control of just Marib City and one other district in Marib.

During the 14 October briefing, Grundberg, who is trying to restart a political process, provided an update on diplomatic efforts. “My aim is to forge agreement on a way forward”, he said, noting that he will continue consultations with Yemeni parties and other relevant actors. Addressing the Council’s role, Grundberg said, “I will also count on your support in reinforcing to the warring parties that it is their responsibility to meet with, and engage seriously with, each other under UN auspices”. The envoy further stressed the importance of listening to the views of southern Yemenis and the need for the government and the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a separatist group that has been backed by the United Arab Emirates, to implement the Saudi Arabia-brokered Riyadh Agreement to regain stability in the south.

Maysaa Shuja al-Deen of the Sana’a Center for Strategic Studies also addressed the Council during the meeting. Regarding the impact of the Houthi offensive in Marib, she warned: “The continuation of this battle is not only dangerous due to its catastrophic humanitarian implications, but also due to the potential military and political consequences, which include expanding the scope of war into other areas of Yemen and undermining the already limited chances of peace.” Shuja al-Deen set out a series of recommendations, including measures to address Yemen’s economic collapse, which has been driving much of

the humanitarian crisis. She called for the Council to adopt a resolution that makes “economic de-escalation” a priority and assigns the UN envoy responsibility for resuming negotiations for unifying Yemen’s central bank. She additionally called on the Council to pressure Saudi Arabia and its allies to stop expelling and “tightening their grip” on Yemeni workers, highlighting the critical role of remittances as Yemen’s main source of hard currency.

Council members expressed their “unwavering support” for UN Special Envoy Grundberg in a 20 October press statement, which also stressed “the need for de-escalation by all, including an immediate end to the Houthi escalation in Marib” and demanded a nation-wide ceasefire.

On 18 October, Grundberg concluded his second visit to Muscat since becoming UN envoy in September. According to his office, he met with Omani officials, Houthi representatives, and representatives of the international community on developments in Yemen and the way forward towards a comprehensive political solution.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 7 October during its 48th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) rejected a resolution to renew the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen (GEE) for two years (A/HRC/48/L.11), by a vote of 18 in favour, 21 against and seven abstentions. Security Council members China, India and Russia—as well as Gabon, an incoming Council member for 2022-2023—voted against the resolution. Security Council members France, Mexico, the UK, and incoming member Brazil voted in favour. On 8 October, the GEE released a statement calling the result “a major setback for all victims who have suffered serious violations during the armed conflict that has been raging for over six years in Yemen...[which] underlines the Group’s assessment that there is a lack of political will to address the situation in Yemen”.

On 11 October, the HRC adopted resolution 48/21 without a vote on technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen. The resolution requests the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide substantive capacity-building and technical assistance to the government of Yemen and all requisite technical and logistical support to the National Commission of Inquiry to enable it to continue to investigate allegations of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen.

At the 14 October briefing, Grundberg, Rajasingham, Shuja al-Deen, and several Council members expressed disappointment about the failure to renew the GEE’s mandate. The Special Envoy said: “[I]t is unfortunate that the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts was not renewed. Nevertheless, the UN will continue to press for accountability in Yemen.”

Key Issues and Options

Reassessing the approach of the UN and the Security Council to resuming a peace process is a key issue at the beginning of the new Special Envoy’s tenure. Bringing more of the anti-Houthi opposition—such as Yemen’s different political parties, armed groups and other local actors—into the political process to make peace talks more inclusive and representative of realities on the ground is a related issue. At the same time, a critical issue is the Houthi multi-front offensive to take Marib governorate, the fall of which would be a major blow to the government, complicating future peace negotiations and potentially leading to the expansion of fighting into southern Yemen.

Council members and other countries, especially those with influence on the Houthis, could seek to support UN mediation by pressing the Houthis to engage in negotiations to cease their Marib

Yemen

campaign. Members could further encourage Grundberg’s consultations with Yemeni parties and relevant regional countries to develop a new approach to reviving a political process, which the Council could then support.

Key issues related to Yemen’s humanitarian crisis include preventing famine, protecting civilians, addressing challenges to humanitarian access, and supporting the economy. The UN has repeatedly warned about the potential for the Houthis’ Marib offensive to worsen the humanitarian situation if it triggers a new wave of mass displacement.

A recurring key issue is the threat posed by the FSO Safer oil tanker, which holds an estimated 1.15 million barrels of oil and is moored in the Red Sea off the Houthi-held Ras Isa oil terminal. The Houthis have still not allowed a UN technical team to conduct an assessment mission to the decrepit ship, which risks causing an environmental catastrophe in the event of an oil spill or fire.

In their public interventions, Council members could reiterate calls for:

- a ceasefire;
- measures to address the humanitarian crisis, such as lifting Yemeni government restrictions on fuel imports through the ports of

Hodeidah and the injection of foreign exchange into the Central Bank by Yemen’s partners to stabilise the currency;

- continued implementation of the Riyadh Agreement; and
- Houthi cooperation with the UN to avert a crisis with the Safer oil tanker.

Council Dynamics

Council members support UN-led mediation efforts for a ceasefire and share concerns about the humanitarian situation and the environmental threat posed by the Safer oil tanker. The US Special Envoy for Yemen, Timothy Lenderking, has liaised closely with the UN on efforts to restart a political process. Despite the general unity among members, differences exist. For example, European members and the US tend to be more critical of perceived Houthi obstructionism, while Russia is more cautious about singling out the Houthis—a dynamic that sometimes plays out during negotiations on Council products.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen. Ambassador I. Rhonda King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) chairs the 2140 Sanctions Committee.

Somalia

Expected Council Action

The Security Council will hold a briefing on the situation in the country, followed by closed consultations. James Swan, the Special Representative for Somalia and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSO), and Francisco Madeira, head of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), are the likely briefers.

Several reports will form the basis of this meeting. The Secretary-General is expected to submit reports to the Council this month on the situation in Somalia and the implementation of AMISOM’s mandate, and on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off Somalia’s coast. He is also scheduled to submit a report that includes a proposal on the strategic objectives, size and composition of a reconfigured AMISOM, and options for continued UN logistical support from 2022 onwards to UNSOM and the Somali security forces alongside the AU mission.

The Council will also negotiate the renewal of the 751 sanctions regime on Somalia as some of its measures—the partial lifting of the arms embargo and the maritime interdiction of charcoal and weapons or military equipment—expire on 15 November. The same resolution is likely to renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, which expires on 15 December.

Key Recent Developments

Council members met in consultations on Somalia on 16 September to discuss tensions within the Somali government over the handling of the investigation into the disappearance of a National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) officer. Since then, the persisting political impasse may have come to an end. On 22 October, Mohamed Moalimu, the spokesperson of the federal government, announced that President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed “Farmajo” and Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble had held talks that led to an agreement over future NISA appointments. Roble had earlier suspended NISA’s chief Fahad Yasin because of the failure to deliver a satisfactory investigative report on the disappearance of NISA agent Ikran Tahlil Farah in June and appointed Bashir Mohamed Jama as NISA’s interim chief. Farmajo called the move unconstitutional and appointed Yasin as his national security advisor. He also named Yasin Abdullahi Mohamud as head of NISA. On 16 September, Farmajo suspended Roble’s authority to appoint and dismiss government officials. Under the new agreement, Yasin Abdullahi Mohamud will reportedly remain head of NISA in an acting capacity, while Bashir Mohamed Jama will be considered for a ministerial post.

The dispute delayed the presidential election scheduled for 10 October. In a joint statement released on 22 October, the leaders reportedly agreed “to accelerate the election process by calling on

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2592](#) (30 August 2021) extended UNSOM’s mandate until 31 May 2022. [S/RES/2568](#) (12 March 2021) renewed the AMISOM authorisation until 31 December 2021. [S/RES/2551](#) (12 November 2020) renewed the partial lifting of the arms embargo on Somali security forces, the authorisation for maritime interdiction to enforce the embargo on illicit arms imports and charcoal exports, and humanitarian exemptions to the regime until 15 November. The resolution also renewed the mandate of the Somalia Panel of Experts until 15 December 2021. China and Russia abstained. [Secretary-General’s Report S/2021/485](#) (19 May 2021) was the Secretary-General’s report on the situation in Somalia covering developments from 10 February to 7 May 2021. [Security Council Letter S/2021/858](#) (29 September 2021) was from the Secretary-General to the Security Council president requesting an extension of the deadlines to submit a proposal on a reconfigured AMISOM and options for continued UN logistical support to the AU mission, UNSOM, and the Somali security forces. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8775](#) (12 November 2020) covered the adoption of resolution 2551, including several explanations after the vote. [Sanctions Committee Document S/2021/849](#) (5 October 2021) was the final report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, attesting that Al-Shabaab remained the most immediate threat to the peace, security and stability of Somalia.

Somalia

the federal member states to start the election of the (lower house of) parliament in the next couple of weeks”. Upper and lower house elections are underway and need to be completed before delegates elect the president through an indirect vote.

Recent months have been marked by tensions between the federal government and the AU on the future of AMISOM post-2021. An AU Peace and Security Council communiqué, adopted on 7 October, endorsed the findings of a 30 May AU independent assessment report on the future of AMISOM that had been requested by the AU Peace and Security Council in February. The 7 October communiqué recommended an AU-UN multidimensional stabilisation mission and mandated the AU Commission to consult with the Somali federal government, the UN and other key stakeholders on the modalities for transitioning to an AU-UN hybrid mission. The communiqué further appealed to the Council to consider a “technical rollover” of AMISOM—whose Council authorisation is set to expire on 31 December—to allow AMISOM to continue its mandate without disruption while the consultations are underway. In a 21 October press release, the federal government criticised the AU decision as not aligned with the Somali Transition Plan—which outlines the gradual transfer of security responsibilities from international to Somali forces by 2023—nor with Somalia’s national security strategy. (Somalia prefers a reconfiguration of AMISOM as the future security set-up. This preference corresponds with the findings of a UN strategic assessment conducted in March, which recommended a reconfigured AMISOM as the future security set-up).

Meanwhile, Somalia continues to face a challenging security situation. The report of the Somalia Sanctions Committee’s Panel of Experts, issued on 5 October and covering investigations conducted since September 2020, stated that the militant group Al-Shabaab remains the primary security threat in Somalia, with control over large areas within the country. The report further said that the implementation of the Transition Plan remains at a standstill while Al-Shabaab continues to generate sufficient revenue to sustain its insurgency for the foreseeable future. The panel also found that exports of charcoal had remained on hold during the reporting period because of effective national and international pressure and comprehensive monitoring and surveillance measures.

Women, Peace and Security

On 28 September, the Security Council convened a briefing on Somalia with a specific focus on women, peace and security. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed briefed on her 12 September visit to Somalia to promote increased women’s participation in political life, including through the implementation of a 30 percent quota for female parliamentarians. Shukria Dini, co-Founder and Executive Director of the Somali Women’s Studies Centre, also briefed the Council. Ireland called the meeting in the context of the “presidency trio” initiative with a focus on women, peace and security during their own (September), Kenya’s (October) and Mexico’s (November) presidencies. The briefing followed the 30 June meeting of the Informal Experts Group (IEG) on Women and Peace and Security on Somalia. Special Representative for Somalia and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSAM) James Swan and Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission (SRCC) for Somalia and head of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) Francisco Madeira briefed at the meeting. This was the IEG’s first meeting on Somalia, and Madeira was the first non-UN briefer to address a meeting of the IEG. Among the key issues discussed were the 30 percent quota for female parliamentarians, the targeting of politically active women, and sexual and gender-based violence.

Key Issues and Options

How to ensure the holding of timely and credible elections in Somalia has been a key issue for Council members. They may consider issuing a product that calls for maintaining the political accord between Farmajo and Roble in order to promote political stability and create conditions propitious for the holding of elections.

Improving Somalia’s security situation continues to be a challenge. As the Council’s mandate for AMISOM expires on 31 December and the Secretary-General’s proposal for the mission’s future is forthcoming, Council members will have to start considering the best configuration for a future security arrangement, including its sources of funding.

Regarding the upcoming renewal of resolution 2551 of 12 November 2020, the Council may consider extending the sanctions measures for another year to ensure their continuation through the completion of the elections and the political transition period. This would be in line with some of the recommendations in the Panel of Experts’ final report, which suggests, among other things, that the Council uphold the charcoal ban and maritime interdiction measures.

Council and wider Dynamics

The Council is united in its call for the timely conduct of elections. However, with the proposal on the future of AMISOM imminent, divisions persist regarding funding for the future security configuration in Somalia. EU Council members would like to increase financial burden-sharing. The “A3 plus one” (Kenya, Niger, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) seek more predictable and comprehensive funding for any future security set-up in Somalia; in their view, this would be best achieved through UN assessed contributions. An AU-UN hybrid mission would address their funding concerns, and the 7 October AU communiqué instructs the African Council members to advocate for this option.

The sanctions on Somalia have also been divisive in the past. China and Russia abstained during the adoption of resolution 2551. China’s explanation of vote said that the renewal of resolution 2551 should have been used to “update the relevant sanctions measures in the light of the developments on the ground to help Somalia build greater security capacity in the service of the reconstruction process”. Russia regretted the inclusion of human rights language and “the singling out in the text of certain partners for providing assistance to Somalia in the fight against organized crime and illegal trafficking in coastal waters at the expense of other stakeholders in the region”.

On 12 October, Somalia and Council member Kenya received the verdict of the International Court of Justice in a maritime border dispute. The verdict outlined a maritime border, which is close to Somalia’s understanding of its maritime delineations with Kenya. Kenya withdrew from the legal process days before the verdict and rejected the court’s findings.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia, and Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland) chairs the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee.

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which expires on 15 November.

Key Recent Developments

Addressing the nation in a 15 October television broadcast, Central African Republic (CAR) President Faustin-Archange Touadéra announced that his government would begin implementing a unilateral ceasefire and cessation of all military operations against armed groups across the country effective 16 October.

The announcement came after a flurry of diplomatic activities aimed at ending the ongoing violence in the country. On 16 September, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) adopted a “Joint Road Map for Peace for the CAR”, which, amongst other key elements, called for the CAR government to declare a ceasefire in its security forces’ operations to combat armed groups in the country. From 5 to 7 October, Special Representative for the CAR and head of MINUSCA Mankeur Ndiaye, who was joined by Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) François Louncény Fall, visited Luanda, Angola, where they met with Angolan President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, who is also currently chairperson of the ICGLR. During the meeting, they discussed the overall situation in the CAR and the wider region. On 8 October, Ndiaye and Fall met with Touadéra in Bangui to discuss regional initiatives, including the ICGLR’s, to bring about the ceasefire and advance the peace process.

On 16 October, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on all parties in the CAR to immediately respect the ceasefire and to take the necessary steps to revitalise efforts to make progress on the 2019 peace agreement. On 18 October, after the Council’s regularly scheduled briefing on the situation in the CAR, Council members issued press elements welcoming the ceasefire announcement.

That announcement comes against a backdrop of persistent violence in the country. In his recent quarterly report on MINUSCA (published on 12 October), the Secretary-General said that the security situation remains precarious as the Central African armed forces (FACA) and “bilaterally deployed and other security personnel”—which some Council members allege includes Russian military instructors and mercenaries—had engaged in a military offensive before the ceasefire announcement against armed groups that harmed civilians and caused widespread displacement in central and western CAR. At the time of writing, it was not possible to assess whether the ceasefire was holding throughout the country or whether FACA and “bilaterally deployed and other security personnel” had ended their military operations in accordance with the announcement.

The CAR’s human rights situation also remains dire as a result of the violence. Since 1 June, MINUSCA has documented 409 alleged and confirmed incidents of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, affecting 938 victims and causing 228 civilian deaths. According to the Secretary-General’s report, fighting between the FACA and “bilaterally deployed forces” on the one hand and armed groups on the other has also resulted in 176 civilian deaths, more than double the 82 civilian

deaths reported during the previous four-month reporting period. On 1 October, a CAR government-established special investigation commission on human rights violations submitted its findings to the CAR government. Media reports indicated that the inquiry, which covered human rights abuses from December 2020 to April 2021, determined that both the FACA and Russian military instructors had been responsible for 104 human rights violations, including the killing of civilians. Council members’ 18 October press elements also broadly touched on the human rights situation, encouraging the government to hold accountable those responsible for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

According to data from OCHA’s most recent situation report, dated 12 October, CAR’s humanitarian situation has also worsened in recent months. The report notes that the number of people who are considered food insecure continues to rise, with over 2.6 million people—approximately 57 percent of the population—affected. In addition, 691,000 people were internally displaced as at 31 July. There have also been some 344 incidents affecting humanitarian workers between January and September 2021 (compared to 267 such incidents during the same period in 2020). Just over two-thirds of the incidents included theft, robbery, looting, and threats and assaults against humanitarians.

Finally, on 14 September, the government announced that a new electoral calendar had been adopted for municipal, regional and senatorial elections. Local elections, the first since 1988, are now scheduled to take place on 11 September 2022. According to the Secretary-General’s recent report, voter registration will take place from 2 January to 30 April 2022.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 48th session, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 48/19 on 11 October without a vote, extending the mandate of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the CAR for one year (A/HRC/48/L.1). It requested the independent expert to pay particular attention to alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict. It also decided to convene a high-level dialogue at its 49th session to assess human rights developments on the ground, with particular emphasis on the reconciliation process and the establishment of guarantees of non-repetition.

Key Issues and Options

The primary issue for the Council in November will be the renewal of MINUSCA’s mandate. The Council may underscore the importance of the mission’s role in assisting the government to prepare for and conduct local elections and in working with the parties to promote the implementation of the peace agreement. During the 18 October Council meeting on the CAR, Special Representative Ndiaye maintained that conducting local elections without delay could help to sustain momentum in the peace process. In the same meeting, CAR President Touadéra expressed support for the mission, calling on the Council to unanimously renew the mandate, as it did in 2020.

The announcement of a unilateral ceasefire and its potential positive impact on the implementation of the 2019 political agreement is another key issue for Council members. In renewing MINUSCA’s mandate, and building on the press elements adopted on 18 October,

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2536 (28 July 2021) renewed the CAR sanctions regime until 31 July 2022 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the CAR Sanctions Committee until 31 August 2022. S/RES/2566 (12 March 2021) raised the MINUSCA troop ceiling. S/RES/2552 (12 November 2020) extended the mandate of MINUSCA for one year until 15 November 2021. [Secretary-General’s Report S/2021/867](#) (12 October 2021) was the most recent Secretary-General’s report on the situation in the CAR

Central African Republic

the Council may wish to express its support for the ceasefire declaration and call on the government and the opposition to take advantage of the cessation in violence to reinvigorate the peace process.

Council and Wider Dynamics

There is consensus amongst Council members that the unilateral ceasefire is a welcome step and that the country must now build on this momentum to make progress on the political process.

However, differences among Council members on the situation in the country have emerged in recent months, creating tension between some Council members. Key amongst these is the role of the Russian instructors and reports of Russian mercenaries in the CAR.

Though it does not relate specifically to the renewal of the MINUSCA mandate, Council members also continue to express widely divergent views on the need for an arms embargo on the government. Touadéra used his Council statement in October to request the Council to reassess the “burden” that the arms embargo placed on the CAR’s security forces.

Council members will need to overcome these rifts to successfully negotiate the renewal of MINUSCA’s mandate. Touadéra’s request that the Council unanimously renew the mandate may help improve the Council’s dynamics on the CAR, thereby potentially relieving some existing tensions prior to upcoming negotiations.

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

Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to hold its biannual briefing, followed by consultations, on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S), which Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger (G5 Sahel) established in 2017 to fight terrorist groups in the region and transnational organised crime.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in the Sahel remains dire. Terrorist groups continue deadly attacks against security forces and civilians and increasingly threaten West African coastal states. The insecurity has also fuelled intercommunal violence. Against this backdrop, Mali and Chad are conducting political transitions to restore constitutional order following two coups d’état in Mali in August 2020 and May, and the seizure of power by Chad’s military after President Idriss Déby died in April while fighting rebels who had invaded from Libya.

The epicentre of terrorist violence is the Liptako-Gourma region—the border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Chad and Niger also continue to deal with the threat of terrorist group Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. Burkina Faso experienced its deadliest attack during its five-year jihadist insurgency when gunmen, many of whom were child soldiers, killed at least 138 civilians on the night of 4 to 5 June in Solhan village in Yagha province. Between April and the end of August, the insecurity created 275,000 newly displaced persons, raising the number in Burkina Faso to more than 1.42 million. Meanwhile, in Niger, Islamist armed groups have killed over 420 civilians and displaced tens of thousands in western Niger since January, according to an 11 August Human Rights Watch report.

Following Mali’s 24 May coup d’état, France announced that it would draw down its 5,100-member regional counter-terrorism force, Operation Barkhane, to about 2,500 to 3,000 troops, while seeking to expand the role of the Takuba Task Force (Takuba, which is composed of European special forces based in Mali under the command of Barkhane, became operational last year.) On 21 August, Chad announced that it was recalling 600 soldiers from the 1,200-member contingent that it deployed earlier this

year as part of the FC-G5S to the border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. G5 Sahel defence ministers met in Niamey from 31 August to 1 September in light of Barkhane’s planned draw-down, agreeing to better pool resources and reassess the strategic concept of operations of the FC-G5S.

Media reports in September said that Mali’s transitional authorities were close to reaching a deal to allow the Wagner Group, a Russian private military contractor, to deploy to Mali. Speaking at the General Assembly on 25 September, transitional Prime Minister Choguel Maiga described France’s decision to draw down Barkhane, which includes closing three bases in northern Mali, as “abandoning us, mid-flight to a certain extent,” adding that it “leads us to explore pathways and means to better ensure our security autonomously, or with other partners”. The remarks reflected the rising tensions between Mali’s authorities and France since the coup in May, in which Colonel Assimi Goïta became transitional president. In addition to France, the US, Germany, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), among others, have publicly warned Mali against making a deal with the security company.

A Secretary-General’s letter to the Security Council, dated 4 October, set out options to increase support for the FC-G5S and provided an update on implementation of the human rights due diligence policy (HRDDP) required of non-UN entities that receive UN support. The UN submitted the letter in accordance with resolution 2584, which renewed the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in June. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to provide “detailed and operational options” for supporting the FC-G5S, “including through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms and organisations, other than MINUSMA”.

The Secretary-General proposed two options. One is a dedicated UN office to provide logistical support to joint force operations; the Secretary-General said in his letter that he preferred this option, which he has recommended since 2017, as the most effective approach to providing sustainable and predictable support to the FC-G5S. According to his letter, this option would entail expanding support currently provided by MINUSMA (life consumables and

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE G5 SAHEL Security Council Letter S/2021/850 (4 October 2021) was a letter from the Secretary-General containing “detailed and operational” options to support the FC-G5S, other than through MINUSMA.

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medical evacuation within the borders of Mali) to cover engineering, maintenance, communications and information technology services, transportation of cargo, medical supplies, and medical and casualty evacuation in all areas of FC-G5S operations. The office could be funded through UN assessed contributions or voluntary funding. It could either be designed with a heavier reliance on UN-provided service delivery that entails a greater UN staff footprint, or it could maximise the use of outsourcing, with a lighter UN footprint. Its headquarters would be in Niamey, with other offices in Nouakchott, Bamako, Ouagadougou and N'Djamena.

The other option is to establish an “Advisory Office to the G5 Sahel Executive Secretariat”. This would supply technical and expert assistance to enhance the FC-G5S’s self-sufficiency by providing advice in the areas of political affairs, human rights, and operational and administrative planning, including on modalities for adequate pooling and sharing of resources. Such an office would exclude logistical and material support and would be modelled on a Department of Peacekeeping Operations-led AU peacekeeping support team, which advised the AU on the planning and management of AU peace operations and was eventually subsumed by the UN Office to the AU. The Secretary-General’s letter suggests that an advisory office could include a joint UN/AU planning team.

From 23 to 25 October, the Council undertook a visiting mission to the Sahel. It travelled first to Mali to assess how the Council can best support the completion of Mali’s political transition, according to press elements that Council members issued at the start of their visit. Members further stressed the need to implement Mali’s 2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and to stabilise central Mali. In Niamey, the Council met with Nigerien authorities to discuss security, development and humanitarian trends in the Sahel. The Secretary-General’s proposal for a UN support office figured prominently in these discussions, which the Council also addressed with the force commander and other representatives of the FC-G5S.

Key Issues and Options

Taking stock of progress in making the FC-G5S fully operational has been a key issue during these biannual briefings. For this upcoming session, a particular focus for the Council will be considering how to increase support for the FC-G5S, based on the Secretary-General’s proposed options. Council members could start negotiating a resolution to establish a UN support office providing logistical support to the FC-G5S or an advisory office to the G5 Sahel.

The FC-G5S’s compliance with international humanitarian law and the HRDDP, which is necessary for MINUSMA or other UN support, is another key issue. As described in the Secretary-General’s 4 October letter, difficulties in implementing the HRDDP include scarce information on the impact of FC-G5S operations and a lack of communication, necessary to enable the UN to differentiate operations conducted in a national capacity and those conducted under the command of the FC-G5S.

The need to complement security initiatives with stronger approaches to addressing structural causes of instability, such as underdevelopment, poor governance, and climate change, such as the UN’s Sahel strategy and the G5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme, is an additional key issue.

Council Dynamics

The Council is divided over how to support the FC-G5S. Niger and France are strong advocates for establishing a UN office that provides logistical support, citing it as the best way to facilitate more predictable and sustainable funding for the joint force’s operations. The UK and US have opposed the idea. They have objected to using UN assessed contributions for non-UN missions and are not convinced that such a support office can be more effective than bilateral military support. They have also raised concerns, that some other members appear to share, about establishing a UN operation to support counter-terrorism operations which would compromise UN peacekeeping principles and put the UN in the position of providing support to the FC-G5S despite its reported human rights violations.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council expects to hold its monthly meetings on the political and humanitarian situations and the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Key Recent Developments

After a nearly nine-month hiatus and following nearly eight months of facilitation by Syrian Special Envoy Geir O. Pedersen to build consensus around an agreed methodology on the Constitutional Committee’s future work, the committee commenced a sixth round of meetings on 18 October. The meetings were held in person in Geneva over five days; participants included a 45-member drafting committee. On 17 October, in anticipation of the sixth round of talks, Pedersen met with both the government and opposition co-chairs

together for the first time since the committee’s inception. He subsequently announced that “serious and frank” discussions had been held on how to move ahead on constitutional reform and that the two sides had agreed they would begin the drafting phase of the constitution after five previous rounds had failed to do so.

At the conclusion of the committee’s sixth round of talks on 22 October, Pedersen told the media that while there had been both positive and negative developments throughout the week, the final day had been a “big disappointment”. No date was set for a further round of meetings. He noted that though “there are possibilities” for the delegations to reach understandings, the committee lacked both “a proper understanding on how to move [the] process forward” and a vision for how to develop a “substantial drafting process”.

With an uptick in violence in recent weeks in several parts of Syria,

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2585 (9 July 2021) renewed the authorisation for cross-border humanitarian aid into Syria through the Bab al-Hawa border crossing. Secretary-General’s Report S/2021/890 (21 October 2021) was the latest report on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

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the country's security situation remains precarious. According to the Secretary-General's 21 October report on the humanitarian situation in Syria, violence has intensified in Syria's north-west, with mutual shelling and airstrikes causing particular harm to civilians and affecting certain parts of the north-west for the first time since March 2020, when Russia and Turkey reached a ceasefire agreement in the area. On 20 October, several violent incidents took place, including the bombing in Damascus of a bus that was reportedly carrying Syrian military personnel; at least 14 people were killed. Later that day, Syrian government forces shelled a residential district in the north-west town of Ariha, outside Idlib, killing 11 civilians, including four children. In confirming the children's deaths, UNICEF noted that the attack was a reminder that "the war in Syria has not come to an end" and that "civilians, among them many children, keep bearing the brunt of a brutal decade-long conflict". From 1 August to 26 September, some 126 civilians (including 44 children) were killed in Syria, according to OHCHR.

There has also been a spate of violence in October involving Turkish forces and Kurdish-led forces in northern Syria, mainly near the town of Tal Rifaat. This comes amidst international media reports that Turkey might be preparing a large-scale incursion into the area and concern amongst some Syria analysts that a significant military confrontation between Turkey on one side and Syrian and Russian forces on the other may be imminent in north-west Syria.

In response to the 20 October violence, Council members apparently worked on a draft press statement that had initially been circulated by Russia. However, the draft was not adopted as some Council members could not agree to include references to the attack on the military bus in Damascus without also mentioning the Syrian military attacks in the north-west.

The humanitarian situation in Syria also remains dire. In observance of World Food Day on 16 October, the Food and Agricultural Organization, World Food Programme, and OCHA released a joint statement on Syria, highlighting the plight of millions of Syrians who do not have regular access to "safe, nutritious and adequate food". According to the statement, the decade-long conflict and more recent crises caused by severe economic decline have caused 12 million Syrians to face food insecurity, with another 1.8 million people at risk of "sliding into hunger".

The rapid spread of COVID-19 has also had a severe effect on the humanitarian situation and on health care facilities' ability to provide adequate services. According to the Secretary-General's 21 October report, COVID-19 transmission rates "remained high and likely far beyond official records", with inadequate testing capacity and protective and medical equipment. The virus has surged in some parts of the country; local and international media reports noted that as of early October, there were some 77,000 confirmed coronavirus cases in the country's north-west, which has a population of approximately four million people. Only 1.6 percent of the population in the north-west have been vaccinated.

Finally, climate-related factors also appear to be having a negative impact on the humanitarian situation. Syria is now considered at "very high risk" of extreme climate events and ranks third-highest in the world for drought risk. Climate events, such as poor rainfall and unusually high temperatures, have had a drastic effect on many aspects of Syrians' lives, particularly in the country's

north-east. The Secretary-General's 21 October report outlines a number of increasing impacts of the drought: unprecedentedly diminished water levels in the Euphrates River—which provides electricity to some three million people and drinking water to more than five million people in north-east Syria—have contributed to power outages, reduced access to clean drinking water, loss of crops, and an increase in water-borne diseases.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 48th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) received an oral update on 24 September from High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, who said that her office had compiled a list of 350,209 identified individuals killed in the conflict in Syria between March 2011 and March 2021. "It indicates a minimum verifiable number, and is certainly an under-count of the actual number of killings", she said. On 8 October, the HRC adopted resolution 48/15 on the human rights situation in Syria, with 23 in favour, seven against and 17 abstentions (A/HRC/48/L.10).

Women, Peace and Security

During the 28 September political meeting on Syria, Rouba Mhaissen, Founder and Director of Sawa for Development and Aid, briefed the Security Council (S/PV.8866). Mhaissen stressed that "the demands for which the people of Syria, especially the courageous women of Syria, went to the streets in 2011 remain unmet" and emphasised the importance of keeping Syria on the international agenda. In her remarks, Mhaissen was critical of what she believed was the confinement of issues such as housing, livelihoods and education to meetings on humanitarian matters in Syria, given that in her view these everyday concerns are "what is most political". Mhaissen also highlighted the issue of the forced return of refugees to Syria. She pointed out that, despite evidence of returnees leaving Syria again and of "big waves of forced internal migration", forced returns are only rarely raised during political discussions on Syria. In concluding, Mhaissen said that "peace in Syria will require the Council to move from its fixation on great-power politics" to engagement with conflict-affected communities, and urged Council members to "[p]ut Syrians at the forefront of any strategy".

Key Issues and Options

The Council has been closely following developments around the Constitutional Committee since its inaugural meeting in November 2019. Given that the committee did not make meaningful progress during its most recent round of talks and failed to identify dates for a future meeting, Council members may wish to adopt a press statement, calling on all parties to work in good faith towards a new constitution in line with resolution 2254 and offering concrete benchmarks for the committee to achieve as the Special Envoy endeavours to get the committee's work back on track.

Another key issue for the Council is the ongoing volatility around Syria's security situation, including the escalating violence in Syria's north, concern for the status of the March 2020 ceasefire in the north-west, and the recent attacks on Syrian military personnel in Damascus. Despite Council members' inability to agree on press elements in response to the 20 October attacks in the north-west and Damascus, they may wish to issue a press statement that broadly condemns violence on all sides of the conflict and calls for a nationwide ceasefire.

Council Dynamics

Building on the unanimous adoption of resolution 2585, most members have expressed their preference in the Council for shifting the dynamics on Syria towards more constructive engagement. Despite these views and Council members' ability to bridge differences and

Syria

find compromise language in resolution 2585, several issues continue to divide the Council on Syria. Primary amongst these divisions on the humanitarian file are the efficacy of cross-line deliveries and the length of the cross-border mechanism mandate. On the political file, there have been long-standing divisions on the work of the

Constitutional Committee. Given the mostly positive atmosphere and heightened expectations that preceded the last round of talks, however, Council members will largely share Pedersen's less-than-positive assessment of the last round of talks.

Preventive Diplomacy

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council is expected to hold an open debate on "Peace and security through preventive diplomacy: a common objective to all UN principal organs". This is one of the signature events of Mexico's November presidency. Briefings are expected from Abdulla Shahid, President of the General Assembly; Colleen Vixen Kelapile, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); Joan E. Donoghue, President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ); and Secretary-General António Guterres. A presidential statement is a possible outcome.

Background

Preventive diplomacy is an integral part of broader conflict prevention efforts. First articulated by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, the concept of preventive diplomacy was formulated in the Secretary-General's 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, which defined it as actions "to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur". While preventive diplomacy takes many forms, its most prevalent expression is found in the work of envoys assigned to crisis regions to promote dialogue, compromise and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The UN Charter is clear that conflict prevention is a fundamental responsibility of the Security Council and the UN system more broadly. Article 1(1) stipulates that "to maintain international peace and security" the UN may "take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace". In this regard, Chapter VI envisions preventive action by the Security Council. Article 33(2) says that the Council shall "call upon the parties to settle their dispute by [peaceful] means" and Article 34(1) calls on the Council to "investigate any dispute, or any situation which...is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace".

While the Security Council has generally focused on operational prevention (measures, such as the use of diplomacy, to prevent the proximate outbreak of conflict or limit its escalation), several of the UN's other principal organs have taken a broader view of preventing conflict focused on long-term, structural prevention (building resilience by taking actions that address the underlying causes of conflict such as socioeconomic inequality, ethnic discrimination and lack of participatory politics). Member states have increasingly recognised that operational and structural prevention are interdependent, complementary and non-sequential.

As a result, they have sought to strengthen cooperation among the UN's principal organs to improve conflict prevention efforts.

One of the earliest collaborations between ECOSOC and the Security Council took place in 1998. Following an invitation by the Security Council in its resolution 1212, ECOSOC established an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, which led to enhanced interaction between the two organs. On 31 January 2002, the Council adopted a presidential statement reaffirming "the importance of strengthening its cooperation, through greater interaction, with ECOSOC...in the area of prevention of armed conflicts" and committed itself to considering the establishment of an ad hoc working group to "enhance coordination with ECOSOC". From this, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa was established in 2002 and has been active ever since.

In November 1999, the Council adopted a presidential statement recognising "the importance of building a culture of prevention...and the need for a contribution from all principal organs of the United Nations in that regard". It recognised the need for "the development of effective long-term strategies" and emphasised "the need for all [UN] organs and agencies to pursue preventive strategies and to take action within their respective areas of competence".

Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 2001 report on the prevention of armed conflict was the first to explore the specific contributions that the principal UN organs can make towards conflict prevention. Acknowledging that conflict prevention could be made a focus for meaningful strategic interaction between the Security Council and the other principal organs of the UN, the report made three recommendations. First, it advised the General Assembly to "consider ways of enhancing its interaction with the Security Council on conflict prevention", particularly in developing long-term prevention strategies. It also suggested that ECOSOC be more involved "in the prevention of armed conflict", given its role in addressing the root causes of conflicts. Lastly, it urged the Council to resort to the ICJ "earlier and more often to settle their disputes in a peaceful manner".

In 2011, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's *"Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results"* was the first report to focus specifically on preventive diplomacy. It underscored the importance of preventive diplomacy throughout the conflict spectrum and highlighted several factors that contribute to successful preventive diplomacy. Regarding the UN's principal organs, the report noted that "through its norm-setting capacity and deliberative functions, the General Assembly has a central role in contributing to a conducive environment for

UN DOCUMENTS ON PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2282 (27 April 2016) was a concurrent resolution with the General Assembly on the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture. S/RES/1212 (25 November 1998) was a resolution on Haiti that invited ECOSOC's contributions. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/1999/34** (30 November 1999) recognised the importance of building a culture of armed conflict prevention and the need for a contribution from all principal UN organs to achieve this goal. **Secretary-General's Reports S/2011/552** (26 August 2011) was the first Secretary-General's report on the use of preventive diplomacy. S/2001/574 (7 June 2001) was the Secretary-General's report on prevention of armed conflict. S/24111 (17 June 1992) was the Secretary-General's report titled *An Agenda for Peace*.

Preventive Diplomacy

conflict prevention”. Furthermore, given the General Assembly’s budgetary authority, it is also well placed to allot effective resources for the UN’s conflict prevention activities, the report maintained.

The need to strengthen cooperation among the UN’s principal organs was also raised during the review of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture. In April 2016, the General Assembly and Security Council adopted twin resolutions (70/262 and 2282, respectively) emphasising that “sustaining peace requires coherence, sustained engagement, and coordination between the General Assembly, the Security Council, and [ECOSOC], consistent with their mandates as set out in the [UN] Charter”. The resolution also took note of the General Assembly’s decision to invite the Secretary-General to submit a report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The resulting report, distributed on 18 January 2018, stressed that “coherence and complementarity among the principal organs of the United Nations, including the governing bodies of United Nations entities, are critical” for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

More recently, the Secretary-General’s “Our Common Agenda” report, disseminated in September, stresses the importance of system-wide cooperation and the need for greater focus on prevention. The report articulates the need for the UN to be able to address the cross-cutting issues of security, climate change, health, development, gender equality, and human rights from a prevention perspective, citing the expanding role of the Peacebuilding Commission in this regard. The agenda’s commitment to boosting partnerships envisions stronger engagement within the UN system and calls for reforms of the UN’s three principal organs: making the Security Council more representative, revitalising the work of the General Assembly, and strengthening ECOSOC.

Interaction among the UN’s principal organs was formalised in Note 507 on the Council’s working methods when it was updated in August 2017. The note by the Security Council president underscored the importance of “increased coordination, cooperation and interaction among the [UN’s] principal organs” and articulated the Council’s commitment to maintaining “regular communication with the General Assembly and ECOSOC”, including through the holding of meetings with all respective presidents on “a regular basis”. Interaction has also taken place during specific Council meetings, with the presidents of the General Assembly or the ICJ invited to

participate pursuant to rule 39 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure. Since 2000, Council members have also held annual meetings with the ICJ president for a more general discussion, usually timed to occur after the ICJ president addressed the regular session of the General Assembly.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue is how the Security Council can enhance its engagement in and support of preventive diplomacy initiatives through collaboration and coordination with the UN’s other principal organs.

The Council may consider issuing a presidential statement reaffirming its commitment to strengthening cooperation between the main organs on preventive diplomacy and laying out concrete steps to achieve that goal. Potential elements of such a statement could include:

- taking note of the recommendations of the Secretary-General’s “Our Common Agenda” report regarding the need to strengthen system-wide cooperation within the UN system;
- encouraging briefings to the Security Council by the Presidents of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on emerging country crises;
- making use of the advisory role of the UN Peacebuilding Commission when drafting mandates for peace operations; and
- requesting a report from the Secretary-General on how the Council can work with different UN organs to most effectively prevent conflict.

In the future, Council members could also consider holding closed consultations with officials from other UN organs to strategise on how synergies can be created among the various parts of the UN system on preventive diplomacy.

Council Dynamics

Despite the seemingly strong rhetorical support for prevention, the Council struggles to translate its words into concrete action. Concerns that conflict prevention in practice could be used as a pretext to impinge on the sovereignty of independent states has been a key impediment to broader preventive actions by the Council.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will receive a briefing on the situation in Afghanistan and the work of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) from Deborah Lyons, the Special Representative and head of UNAMA. A civil society representative is also expected to brief the Council regarding the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan. The briefing will be followed by closed consultations.

Key Recent Developments

Hopes that the Taliban might form an inclusive government have faded, particularly following its announcements regarding the composition of its caretaker cabinet, which includes no women and few appointees who are not Pashtun. On 11 September, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said that “[the Taliban talked] of an inclusive and representative government, but they are lying...

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2596 (17 September 2021) renewed UNAMA’s mandate until 17 March 2022. S/RES/2593 (30 August 2021) addressed recent developments in Afghanistan, including the Taliban’s seizure of power and the 26 August attack at Kabul airport. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8853 (9 September 2021) was a quarterly meeting on Afghanistan. S/PV.8834 (16 August 2021) was a meeting following the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Security Council Press Statements SC/14665 (15 October 2021) was a press statement regarding a terrorist attack at a mosque in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in which Council members condemned the attack in the strongest terms and underlined the need to hold perpetrators accountable and bring them to justice. SC/14658 (9 October 2021) was a press statement regarding a terrorist attack at a mosque in Kunduz, Afghanistan, in which Council members condemned the attack in the strongest terms and underlined the need to hold perpetrators accountable and bring them to justice.

Afghanistan

France refuses to recognise or have any type of relationship with this government”.

Despite this rhetoric, many in the international community have acknowledged the need to cooperate with the Taliban in order to prevent a catastrophic economic and humanitarian crisis. In a 14 September speech, Josep Borrell, the EU’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said that the EU had “no other option but to engage with the Taliban” and noted that the EU will maintain a diplomatic presence in Kabul. On 12 October, following a G20 leaders’ meeting regarding Afghanistan hosted by Italy, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi said that “addressing the humanitarian crisis will require contacts with the Taliban, but this does not mean their recognition...it is very hard to see how you can help people in Afghanistan without involving the Taliban”.

On 20 October, members of the Taliban attended a conference in Moscow with representatives of China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. This was the third meeting held in the “Moscow format”, which was established in 2017 to discuss Afghanistan. A joint statement issued following the conference, which was organised by Russia, said that practical engagement with Afghanistan needs to take account of the Taliban’s seizure of power, irrespective of whether the international community recognises “the new Afghan government”. Among other matters, the statement also called on the Taliban to form an inclusive government and proposed an international donor conference under the auspices of the UN.

Future efforts to engage with the Taliban may be complicated by a lack of unity among its leadership. In September, supporters of the Taliban’s Deputy Prime Minister, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, brawled with supporters of Khalil ur-Rahman Haqqani, the Taliban’s Minister for Refugees and a prominent figure in the Haqqani network, a militant group with ties to Al-Qaida and other terrorist organisations. The brawl reportedly took place in Kabul while Baradar and Haqqani argued with one another regarding the division of power in the interim government and who deserved more credit for the Taliban’s seizure of power. Baradar, who signed the February 2020 peace agreement with the US, is aligned with the Taliban’s political wing, while Haqqani is closely connected to its military faction. Following the dispute, the Taliban denied rumours that Baradar had been killed by Haqqani’s supporters. The Taliban is also divided along ethnic lines and split into factions that represent the northern, eastern, and southern parts of the country.

The human rights situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate. In a statement delivered to the Human Rights Council on 13 September, Michele Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted that the OHCHR has received credible reports of reprisal killings of former members of the Afghan security forces, as well as reports which indicate that the Taliban has arbitrarily detained former government officials and conducted house-to-house searches in an effort to locate people connected with the former government. She added that women have been progressively excluded from the public sphere and that the Taliban has limited Afghan girls’ access to education, and referred to several instances of Taliban fighters using violence against protesters and journalists. In a 23 September report, Human Rights Watch found that the Taliban are committing widespread and serious human rights violations against women and girls in Herat, including by denying women freedom of movement, imposing compulsory dress codes, curtailing access

to employment and education, and restricting the right to peaceful assembly.

The humanitarian and economic crises in Afghanistan remain a grave concern. At a high-level humanitarian conference organised by the UN in Geneva on 13 September, Secretary-General António Guterres noted that one in three Afghans do not know where their next meal is coming from and indicated that public services in the country have nearly collapsed. More than \$1 billion in pledges were made at the conference. Speaking at the 12 October G20 leaders’ conference on Afghanistan, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that the EU would provide an additional \$1.15 billion in aid “to avert a major humanitarian and socio-economic collapse”. The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report on Afghanistan, which was issued on 25 October, found that 22.8 million Afghans will face crisis or emergency levels of acute hunger between November and March. As these crises worsen, pressure is mounting on the international community to unfreeze Afghan assets and resume development aid. According to a World Bank report, foreign aid accounted for nearly 75 percent of Afghanistan’s public expenditure prior to the Taliban’s takeover.

Numerous terrorist attacks have taken place in Afghanistan since mid-September. On 9 October, a suicide bomber struck a Shiite mosque in Kunduz, killing at least 43 people and wounding more than 140 others. In a similar attack at another Shiite mosque in Kandahar on 15 October, at least 47 people were killed and more than 70 others injured. Council members issued press statements condemning these attacks. During the negotiation of these press statements, China apparently sought to remove language that indicated the mosques were Shiite. Other Council members, particularly India, argued that the text should describe the denomination of the mosques. As a compromise, the specific mosques that were attacked were named in the final text without mentioning their denomination.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 7 October, the Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted resolution 48/1, which appointed a special rapporteur to monitor the human rights situation in Afghanistan and encouraged Bachelet to update the HRC before the end of the year. The resolution was adopted with 28 votes in favour, five against, and 14 abstentions (A/HRC/48/L.24/Rev.1).

Women, Peace and Security

Fawzia Koofi, the now-exiled first woman deputy speaker of the Afghan parliament, briefed the Security Council during the 12 October high-level open debate on diversity, state-building and the search for peace. Koofi stressed that the “playbook for running today’s world was written primarily by men with men’s interests in mind”. She also noted that although women in Afghanistan have long pushed for meaningful participation in the peace process for themselves and others, their calls have gone unheeded. Underlining the importance of putting in place “a pluralistic social and political structure” for peace in Afghanistan, Koofi called on the international community to work with the Taliban only if they “map out a clear path that guarantees the fundamental rights of all segments of society, in particular women and girls”. Koofi also emphasised that the UN must demand “the protection and inclusion of Afghan female aid workers and peacebuilders and other civic professionals and community organizations”, not only as recipients of aid but also as decision-makers, particularly because the Taliban’s ideology discriminates on the basis of gender.

Afghanistan

Key Issues and Options

A key priority for the Council is determining the role that UNAMA will be able to play in Afghanistan following the Taliban's takeover. Resolution 2596, which was adopted on 17 September, extended UNAMA's mandate until 17 March 2022 and requested that the Secretary-General submit a written report by 31 January 2022 outlining strategic and operational recommendations for the mandate in light of recent political, security and social developments. With these deadlines in mind, Council members will be following the situation in Afghanistan closely, focusing particularly on the security environment and the extent to which the Taliban is willing to allow UNAMA to carry out its work.

The structure of the 1988 sanctions regime is another important issue for the Council. At present, several members of the Taliban's interim government are on the sanctions list maintained by the 1988 Sanctions Committee, which has the potential to impede the work of UN agencies and non-governmental organisations in Afghanistan. Council members may therefore wish to consider whether there is a need to amend the 1988 sanctions regime to deal with this issue, including by formulating exemptions that allow agencies and organisations working in Afghanistan to transact with those on the 1988 sanctions list who are part of the Taliban's interim government under certain circumstances.

The rising incidence of terrorism in Afghanistan is also a major concern for the Council. Since the Taliban came to power, several terrorist attacks have taken place in the country, many of which have targeted the Shiite community. The Council could request a briefing from Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninx, the Executive

Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), which would provide an opportunity for Council members to better understand how the Council can contribute to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council dynamics are continuing to evolve in the aftermath of the Taliban's takeover. China and Russia, which have kept their embassies in Kabul open, have both made public statements demonstrating a willingness to work with the Taliban and have also urged the international community to unfreeze Afghan assets. While the US and the UK are apparently resisting calls to release Afghan funds, there are also signs that they may be willing to engage with the Taliban to a certain extent. The US has met with the Taliban to discuss the provision of humanitarian assistance, while the UK has also met Taliban officials and is reportedly considering reopening its embassy in Kabul.

For certain Council members, including Ireland, Mexico, Norway and other like-minded states, the issues facing women and girls in Afghanistan are a particular concern. These members are likely to prioritise keeping the situation of women and girls at the forefront of the Council's work in relation to Afghanistan.

Council members are generally united regarding the importance of preventing Afghanistan from becoming a haven for terrorism. Differences have emerged, however, over whether and how to name specific terrorist organisations in Council products, particularly among China, India, Russia, and the US.

Small Arms and Light Weapons

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold a ministerial-level open debate on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). This is one of the signature events of Mexico's November presidency, and Mexican Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard will chair the meeting. Director of the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) Robin Geiss and a civil society representative are the anticipated briefers. Mexico is expected to circulate a concept note to help guide the debate.

Background and Recent Developments

The issue of SALW has garnered significant international attention in recent months. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA)—a universal framework for countering the illicit flow of SALW agreed by the more than 150 countries participating in the UN Small Arms Conference in 2001. The seventh biennial meeting of states on the UNPoA was held in New York from 26 to 30

July and considered key challenges and opportunities related to the full and effective implementation of the UNPoA. Subsequently, the seventh conference of states parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which regulates international trade in conventional arms, took place in Geneva from 30 August to 3 September.

The Security Council has been active in recent months in discussing SALW. On 16 September, Mexico convened a virtual Arria-formula meeting on the threat to international peace and security posed by the illicit trade in SALW. It did so to build momentum on the issue following the international UNPoA and ATT conferences. Mexico also considered the Arria-formula meeting to be an opportunity to listen to the views and perspectives of Council members, as it planned its ministerial-level debate during its presidency.

On 6 October, Kenya convened a briefing on the threat posed by the illicit flow of SALW in peace operations as one of the signature events of its October Council presidency. UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's seventh biennial report on SALW, submitted

UN DOCUMENTS ON SMALL ARMS Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2220 (22 May 2015) contained provisions aimed at strengthening UN coordination and action on SALW, promoting effective implementation of UN arms embargoes, and supporting the ATT. S/RES/2117 (26 September 2013) was the first thematic resolution on SALW adopted by the Council, focusing on their illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation, and misuse. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2020/5 (11 March 2020) recognised the impact and challenges posed by illicit trade in and diversion of SALW in Africa, enabling terrorist groups to considerably increase their armed capabilities. Secretary-General's Report S/2021/839 (30 September 2021) was the Secretary-General's seventh biennial report on SALW. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8874 (6 October 2021) was a briefing by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu on the spread of SALW and their ammunition.

Small Arms and Light Weapons

pursuant to resolution 2220 of 22 May 2015, the last time the Council addressed the issue in a resolution. She said, “In contexts where UN peace operations have been mandated, illicit flows and the easy availability of arms can exacerbate and sustain conflict dynamics, render arms embargoes ineffective, endanger peacekeepers, humanitarian workers and local populations and complicate the implementation of peace agreements.” Nakamitsu further indicated that arms-related provisions are included in the mandates of several UN peace operations, including those deployed in Abyei, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Libya, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Yemen.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for members to consider at the ministerial-level debate is how to address the trafficking and diversion of SALW and their impact on conflicts, peacekeeping and the implementation of arms embargoes. In this regard, the Secretary-General’s latest biennial report provides relevant recommendations for the consideration of Council members. These include:

- enhancing efforts to detect and seize parts and components of weapons and ammunition, including when shipped via fast parcel deliveries, to support the fight against various types of illicit manufacture, including conversion and craft production;
- addressing the arms-crime-terrorism nexus as interrelated and multifaceted security threats that require complementary approaches and responses;
- developing and implementing border security and management strategies that are comprehensive and effectively engage all relevant national agencies;
- promoting the sustained and systematic integration of weapons and ammunition management into the UN’s work on peace and security, including when mandating peace operations;
- systematically including references to relevant normative frameworks and international guidance; and
- redoubling efforts to enforce embargoes by applying the preventive and criminal justice measures that are provided for by the relevant international instruments.

An option for the Council would be to adopt a resolution following through on the Secretary-General’s recommendations. It has been six years since the adoption of resolution 2220 on SALW.

Council Dynamics

Several members are supportive of the Council’s deliberations on SALW, in recognition of the Council’s responsibility to address

the issue as a driver of conflict. They also support integrating SALW issues into the Council’s consideration of country-specific situations and other thematic issues, including children and armed conflict; women, peace and security; climate change; and sustainable development.

SALW is one of Mexico’s important foreign policy priorities. Since the country joined the Security Council as an elected member, it has been highlighting the issue in its various interventions on country-specific and thematic considerations. Mexico has been working to build momentum on the SALW discussion. At the ministerial-level open debate in November, Mexico will likely focus more broadly on how to control the trafficking and diversion of SALW and their multifaceted, adverse effects on conflicts, peacekeeping, and the implementation of armed embargoes.

Kenya also attaches particular importance to the issue of SALW, although it is not a party to the ATT. In addition to convening the 5 October Security Council briefing, it chaired the seventh biennial meeting of states on UNPoA. On the other hand, other members tend to underscore the primary role and responsibility of national governments in handling the issue. Russia, in particular, maintains that the General Assembly is the most appropriate place for discussion of SALW issues, and opposes attempts to link them to other thematic topics, such as climate change; women, peace and security; and sustainable development. It does, however, appear to be amenable to discussing SALW in relation to peacekeeping, arms embargoes, security sector reform, and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

The ATT and the repeated call for all states to ratify and accede to the treaty is a contentious issue. In addition to Kenya, other Council members—including Tunisia, Russia, Viet Nam, and the US—are not parties to the treaty and tend to oppose references to the ATT in Council products. Kenya, however, participated in the recent conference of states parties as an observer. In 2020, China became the latest country to join the treaty. Mexico appears to be more cautious in handling this issue but has sought to link relevant regional and international instruments—including the ATT, the AU initiative on “Silencing the Guns in Africa” and others—to the discussion on the trafficking and diversion of SALW.

Some Council members may try again to advance a resolution on SALW, building on the momentum generated by the recent international attention to the issue, but past negotiations on SALW were controversial. Six council members abstained on the adoption of resolution 2220 because the text did not include language critical of the transfer of SALW to non-state actors.

Iraq

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council is expected to receive a briefing from the Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, on the most

recent developments in Iraq and the Secretary-General’s upcoming reports on UNAMI and the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-party nationals and missing Kuwaiti property. Both reports are due in November. A third report of the Secretary-General, on Iraq’s

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAQ Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2597 (17 September 2021) renewed the mandate of UNITAD until 17 September 2022. S/RES/2576 (27 May 2021) renewed the mandate of UNAMI until 27 May 2022. **Security Council Press Statement SC/14673** was a press statement in which Council members commended Iraq’s Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) for conducting a technically sound election and deplored threats of violence against UNAMI, IHEC personnel and others.

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electoral process and UNAMI's assistance to that process, is also due in November, and is likely to be discussed during the briefing. In addition, a representative of civil society may brief the Council. The briefing will be followed by closed consultations. The seventh report of the Special Adviser and Head of the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) is also expected to be released in November.

Key Recent Developments

On 10 October, Iraq held its parliamentary election. The election was originally scheduled to take place in 2022, but was held early in response to the Tishreen protests, which affected several cities and led to the passage of a new electoral law. The protests, which began in October 2019 and continued into 2020, demanded an end to corruption, improved employment opportunities and living conditions, better public services, and political reform.

The election results, which must be ratified by Iraq's Supreme Court before becoming official, were released by Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) on 16 October. Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's movement, which controlled the largest bloc in Iraq's parliament prior to the election, won an additional 19 seats, bringing its total to 73. The Taqaddum party, which is led by the Sunni speaker of parliament, Mohamed al-Halbousi, won 37 seats, followed by the State of Law bloc headed by former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki with 34 seats; the Kurdistan Democratic Party with 33 seats; and the Iran-aligned Fatah Alliance, which secured 17 seats after winning 48 in the 2018 election. Emtidad, a political party with ties to the Tishreen movement, won nine seats. The remaining seats in the 329-member parliament were divided among the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which won 16; the Azm Alliance of Sunni businessman Khamis al-Khanjar, which won 12; the New Generation Movement, a Kurdish party, which won 9; independent candidates; and smaller political parties.

Voter turnout reached 43 percent, a slight decrease from the 2018 election, when voter turnout was 44.5 percent. The low turnout was partly a result of dissatisfaction and apathy among Iraqi voters. Although al-Sadr renounced his 15 July decision to boycott the election in late August, other political groups subsequently announced that they would not participate in the polls. On 4 September, 40 groups affiliated with the Tishreen movement announced their intention to boycott the election after holding a conference in Baghdad. According to media reports, a spokesperson for the groups said they were boycotting the election because it "lack[s] integrity, fairness and equal opportunities". This followed a similar announcement in May, when other parties connected to the Tishreen movement announced that they would boycott the election in response to a series of attacks on activists and protesters, including the assassination of prominent activist Ihab al-Wazni in Karbala that month.

Despite the low turnout, the election appeared to run smoothly. In a 12 October statement, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, the Chief Observer of the EU Election Observation Mission to Iraq (EU EOM), said that "voting on election day was largely peaceful and orderly. Voters were able to express their will, but turnout was low. Some 100 EU observers assessed the process positively in the vast majority of polling stations observed". The EU EOM will publish a comprehensive report in approximately two months that will include recommendations for improving the quality of future elections.

Having won an additional 19 seats, al-Sadr and the bloc that he controls appear to have emerged from the election with substantial gains. Pro-Iranian Shiite parties such as the Fatah Alliance, on the other hand, are widely considered to have lost significant ground. The election also appears to be the first time since 2005 that a Sunni-led party has finished second in an Iraqi election, with al-Halbousi's Taqaddum party securing the second-highest number of seats. Together with the 12 seats won by the Azm Alliance, this represents a stronger performance for Sunni-led parties when compared to previous elections. Under Iraqi law, the party that wins the most seats in a parliamentary election selects the country's next prime minister, who, in turn, is responsible for nominating a cabinet that is then approved by parliament. Since no party has secured a clear majority, this process is likely to involve lengthy negotiations among Iraq's various political parties. Following the previous election in 2018, these negotiations ran for several months before a government could be formed.

This year's negotiations are likely to be complicated by formal challenges to the election results. In a 12 October statement, the Shiite Coordination Framework (SCF), a group that comprises several Shiite parties, including the Fatah Alliance, questioned the results and raised allegations of fraud against both Iraqi authorities and the UN. The SCF subsequently lodged a series of complaints with the IHEC, which the IHEC must resolve before sending the results to the Supreme Court for certification. Protests in support of the SCF have since taken place in Basra, Wasit, and Baghdad after leaders of the SCF urged their supporters to take to the streets.

On 22 October, Council members issued a press statement regarding the elections in Iraq. Among other matters, the statement commended the IHEC for conducting a technically sound election and stressed that any electoral disputes that may arise should be resolved peacefully through established legal channels. The statement also deplored threats of violence that have been made against UNAMI, the IHEC, and others.

Low-level attacks on US-led coalition forces and Iranian-backed militias active in Iraq continued in the lead-up to the election. On 12 September, Erbil International Airport, which serves as a base for the coalition, was targeted by a drone attack that caused no casualties. On 27 September, airstrikes targeted a base operated by Iranian-backed militias in the Syrian province of Deir-ez-Zor, near the Iraqi border. Neither Israel nor the US took responsibility for the airstrikes, and there were no immediate reports of casualties.

On 28 August, Iraq hosted the Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership, a regional summit aimed at easing tensions among states in the Middle East. The conference was attended by representatives of Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the UAE, as well as French President Emmanuel Macron. Macron's participation in the conference reflects increased French involvement in Iraq. Several French companies have recently signed lucrative deals in the country, including a \$27 billion transaction between French energy company Total and the Iraqi government for the development of oil, gas and solar energy projects. On 30 August, shortly before this deal was announced, Macron visited Erbil and Mosul and pledged to assist Iraq with its fight against terrorism.

Drought, food insecurity and uncertain energy supply are ongoing concerns in Iraq. In a 23 August statement, 13 aid groups, including Action Against Hunger and the Norwegian Refugee Council, warned that more than 12 million people in Syria and Iraq were losing access

Iraq

to water, food, and electricity. Carsten Hansen, the Regional Director of the Norwegian Refugee Council, noted in the statement that “the total collapse of water and food production for millions of Syrians and Iraqis is imminent...with hundreds of thousands of Iraqis still displaced...the unfolding water crisis will soon become an unprecedented catastrophe pushing more into displacement”.

Key Issues and Options

Council members are following recent developments in Iraq closely, particularly in the aftermath of the 10 October election. A key issue for the Council is how it can help Iraq to maintain stability and security following the election. Depending on how the situation evolves before the briefing and consultations take place, Council members may consider issuing a further press statement addressing issues of concern to them, such as the importance of

resolving electoral disputes within the applicable legal framework without resorting to violence.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are generally unanimous in their support for UNAMI and remain encouraged by positive developments in Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations.

Regional dynamics continue to affect Iraq. Attacks on US-led coalition forces and Iranian-backed militias routinely take place on Iraqi soil, while Turkey continues to conduct military operations against Kurdish positions in northern Iraq, despite Iraq’s objections.

The US is the penholder on Iraq issues in general, and the UK is the penholder on Iraqi-Kuwaiti issues and UNITAD. Ambassador Sven Jürgenson (Estonia) is the chair of the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council is expected to discuss Libya on two occasions. The Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Libya and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Ján Kubiš, is expected to brief the Council on recent developments regarding the country, and the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti, the Permanent Representative of India, will brief on the activities of the sanctions committee. The Council will also receive the semi-annual briefing by ICC prosecutor Karim Khan concerning cases in Libya. This will be Khan’s first Council briefing on Libya after having succeeded Fatou Bensouda as ICC prosecutor on 16 June.

Key Recent Developments

Since the Council last met to discuss Libya on 10 September, there have been two key developments. First, on 8 October, the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC)—which comprises five representatives each from the former Government of National Accord (GNA) and from the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF, also known as the Libyan National Army, or LNA)—agreed on an Action Plan for the withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters from the country. Second, the Government of National Unity (GNU) closed the legislative gaps to pave the way for presidential and legislative elections.

The 5+5 JMC Action Plan, which was agreed in Geneva following discussions from 6 to 8 October, foresees “the withdrawal of all mercenaries, foreign fighters and foreign forces from the Libyan territory in a phased, balanced and synchronized manner”, according to an 8 October 5+5 JMC statement. The 5+5 JMC also stressed the need for the Libyan ceasefire monitoring mechanism to be fully operational, including through the deployment of UN monitors,

prior to the commencement of the plan. This development follows a statement by Libyan Foreign Affairs Minister Najla al-Mangoush during a 3 October news conference in Kuwait, confirming reports that some fighters have left the country, which she called “a very modest start”. On 21 October, al-Mangoush convened a ministerial-level Libya Stabilization Conference in Tripoli, with the participation of representatives from, inter alia, Algeria, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Qatar, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, the UAE, the US, the Arab League, and the UN. This initiative focused on economic and security developments, and aimed to support the work of the 5+5 JMC. In a press statement concluding the conference, al-Mangoush emphasised Libya’s commitment to Libya-related Security Council resolutions, the political roadmap issued by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF)—an assembly consisting of 75 participants representing the main Libyan geographical, social and political constituencies responsible for charting the way towards elections—and to the conclusions of both Berlin conferences on Libya, to the need to create an environment conducive to the holding of elections in December, and to the government’s support for the 5+5 JMC and its efforts to fully implement the ceasefire agreement. She also welcomed the role of the UN and regional organisations in supporting Libya and the return of several embassies to the country.

Regarding elections, the speaker of the House of Representatives, Aguila Saleh, signed a presidential elections law on 9 September. The move followed months of inconclusive consultations on a legislative and constitutional basis for elections by the LPDF. Saleh was criticised for reportedly bypassing due process and consultations while creating favourable conditions for LAAF General Khalifa Haftar to run in the upcoming elections. The law allows for military officials to stand in presidential elections if they resign from the armed forces at

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2599 (30 September 2021) extended UNSMIL’s mandate until 31 January 2022. The text, which was unanimously adopted, renewed UNSMIL’s mandate as set out in resolution 2542 of 15 September 2020 and paragraph 16 of resolution 2570 of 16 April. S/RES/2598 (29 September 2021) renewed for another year the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to believe are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/12 (15 July 2021) welcomed the second Berlin Conference on Libya held on 23 June 2021. The Council stressed the importance of free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections and called on the LPDF to take steps to facilitate the electoral process. The statement also called for full respect for the 23 October 2020 ceasefire agreement, including through the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries, and expressed concern regarding the impact of the conflict on neighbouring countries. Security Council Letter S/2021/716 (6 August 2021) was from the Secretary-General, transmitting the strategic review of UNSMIL.

Libya

least three months before election day. (According to news reports, Haftar stepped down from his military duties on 22 September.)

The signing of the law triggered the eastern-based House of Representatives to pass a vote of no confidence in the GNU, but the vote was rejected by the western-based High Council of State, illustrating tensions between the two government entities. The GNU, however, remains in office, albeit in a caretaker capacity.

On 4 October, Libya's parliament passed a law on legislative elections that will allow parliamentary polls to go ahead. The following day, parliament postponed the legislative elections from 24 December to January 2022, while maintaining the 24 December date for presidential elections. The official candidate registration period is scheduled to open mid-November, but several Libyan political actors in addition to Haftar have reportedly already indicated their interest in the presidential race, including Saif al-Islam Qaddafi, the son of deposed Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi.

Saif al-Islam Qaddafi has been on a UN sanctions list since 2011 and is subject to investigation by the ICC. Resolution 1970 of 26 February 2011 referred the situation in Libya to the ICC, and the court updates the Council regularly on its investigations into crimes committed in Libya since 15 February 2011, when violence erupted in Benghazi, triggering protests across the country. The court has outstanding arrest warrants for three individuals:

- Saif al-Islam Qaddafi, sought for two counts of alleged crimes against humanity;
- Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al-Werfalli, a brigade commander allied with Haftar and sought for allegedly ordering and committing war crimes (pending verification of his reported death on 24 March); and
- Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled, sought for allegedly perpetrating serious crimes, including torture (pending verification of his recently reported death in Egypt).

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 48th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) considered the report of the independent fact-finding mission on Libya during an interactive dialogue on 7 October (A/HRC/48/83). The report found reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes had been committed in Libya, while the reported violence perpetrated in prisons and against migrants may amount to crimes against humanity. On 11 October, the HRC adopted resolution 48/25 without a vote, extending the mandate of the fact-finding mission for nine months (A/HRC/48/L.25). It requested the fact-finding mission to present a follow-up report to the HRC at its 49th session, with the participation of the Special Representative for Libya, and to present a comprehensive report at the HRC's 50th session. In a press briefing on 12 October, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed extreme worry over the continued suffering of migrants and asylum seekers in Libya, including a recent "increase in heavy-handed security operations and raids targeting migrants and asylum seekers", resulting in killings, serious injuries and "a rise in detentions in appalling conditions".

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how to support the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya. One possible option for the Council would be to issue a statement referencing the 5+5 JMC Action Plan to show its support for the initiative while also calling for immediate action in this regard. The Council has, in the past, endorsed several outcome documents on Libya, such as the 23 October 2020 ceasefire agreement or the conclusions of both Berlin conferences on Libya. In an 8 October statement, UNSMIL welcomed the 5+5 JMC Action Plan for the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries and called on all member states to support its implementation.

Maintaining the electoral calendar and ensuring elections are held in a free, fair, inclusive, and credible manner is another key issue for the Council. With the 24 December election day approaching, the Council may use the upcoming briefing to reinforce the importance of maintaining electoral timelines, and members may consider a press statement urging all Libyan stakeholders to advance electoral preparations. The same statement could reinforce the points made in the Council's 15 July presidential statement, including the call for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries and full respect for the arms embargo on Libya.

Council Dynamics

Libya has been a controversial file in the Council. In September, the Council adopted two technical rollovers of UNSMIL's mandate—resolution 2595 of 15 September, extending the mandate for two weeks until 30 September and resolution 2599 of 30 September, extending the mandate for four months until 31 January 2022. Disagreements in the negotiations on these texts focused on language relating to the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries and provisions on the implementation of the recommendations of the independent strategic review of UNSMIL, which the Council requested in resolution 2542. Russia, in particular, had difficulties with language proposed in the initial drafts on the resolutions proposed by the UK, the penholder on Libya.

International attention to Libya remains high. France intends to host an international conference on Libya on 12 November to discuss the upcoming elections and the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries. The US has also continued to be vocal about the importance of the elections. In a press conference, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price explained that the US has increased its diplomatic focus on Libya—including through the work of US Special Envoy to Libya Richard Norland—for Libya to become "sovereign, stable, unified and secure" and led by a democratically elected government.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In November, Council members expect to receive a briefing in consultations on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701. Adopted in 2006, resolution 1701 called for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and the Shi'a group Hezbollah. Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wronecka and Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix are expected to brief.

Key Recent Developments

Seven people died and more than 30 were wounded following armed clashes in Beirut on 14 October. The violence occurred in connection with a demonstration organised by the Shi'a groups Hezbollah and Amal, protesting against Judge Tarek Bitar, who is leading the investigation into the 4 August 2020 Beirut port explosion. The blast led to at least 200 deaths and 6,500 casualties and devastated significant parts of Beirut. The immediate cause of the explosion was a large quantity of inadequately stored ammonium nitrate, a chemical compound commonly used as fertiliser. More than a year after the explosion, no official has been convicted in connection with the incident.

Since February, Bitar has been looking into the potential responsibility of several senior officials—including former Prime Minister Hassan Diab—and had recently summoned two former Amal ministers, Ali Hassan Khalil and Ghazi Zaiter. The inquiry has been delayed by legal complaints against Bitar filed by some of the officials he intended to question. On 12 October, the probe was temporarily suspended following a complaint filed by Khalil and Zaiter. A court dismissed their complaint early on 14 October.

At the time of writing, the exact sequence of the violent events on 14 October and the identity and affiliation of the shooters remain contested. Clashes took place in the Tayyouneh area of Beirut when the Shi'a groups' demonstration developed into a gun battle, which reportedly involved unidentified snipers and armed fighters associated with the two Shi'a groups and the Christian group Lebanese Forces. In reporting on the incident, national and international media outlets often pointed out that the 14 October street violence was reminiscent of images typical of the Lebanese civil war (1975–1990). The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) launched an investigation and have arrested several people in connection with the clashes. In a 14 October statement, the Secretary-General's spokesperson expressed concern over the violence in Lebanon and reiterated “the need for an impartial, thorough and transparent investigation into the explosion at the port of Beirut”.

Ministers affiliated with Hezbollah have reportedly threatened to bring the new Lebanese government—which was formed on 10 September following more than a year of political deadlock—to a standstill unless Bitar is removed, raising concerns that tensions over the investigation might affect the ability of the government to agree on the reforms needed to end the socioeconomic crisis in the country. On 18 October, Prime Minister Najib Mikati announced that he would not convene a cabinet session before finding a solution to the controversy over Bitar's investigation. On 26 October, Maronite Patriarch Beshara al-Rahi proposed an initiative to resolve

the impasse during consultations with Mikati, Lebanese President Michel Aoun, and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri. At the time of writing, the proposal was seemingly gaining traction, leading Mikati to announce on 27 October that he was hoping that the cabinet would be able to meet again soon. The details of this proposal have not been clarified yet, but it has been reported that it may consist of the parliament referring higher-level officials to a constitutional body dedicated to trying presidents and ministers, while limiting Bitar's inquiry to lower-level officials. In a 27 September press statement, Security Council members welcomed the formation of the government, urged it to implement necessary reforms and called for “a swift, independent, impartial, thorough, and transparent investigation” into the port explosion.

The extended socioeconomic crisis in Lebanon has continued to negatively affect the lives of Lebanese people, with growing levels of poverty and severe shortages of fuel and medicine. According to an estimate provided on 1 October by UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon Najat Rochdi, “more than one million Lebanese need relief assistance to cover their basic needs, including food”. On 9 October, Lebanon's power grid shut down after the nation's two main power stations ran out of fuel. Power was restored to pre-shutdown levels the following day, but according to media reports, that has usually consisted of one to two hours of electricity a day, obliging people to rely on private generators that require increasingly unaffordable or unavailable fuel. On 27 October, it was announced that Olivier De Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, will undertake a fact-finding mission in Lebanon from 1 to 12 November. De Schutter is expected to share his preliminary conclusions on the mission on 12 November.

As a result of an arrangement between Hezbollah and Iran, fuel from Iran was delivered to Lebanon on 16 September, apparently without the approval of the Lebanese government and in violation of existing US sanctions. On 29 September, in coordination with Qatar, the US announced the imposition of new sanctions targeting seven individuals and a firm accused of financially supporting Hezbollah.

While several international initiatives in support of Lebanon have been announced in recent months, their effect on everyday life in Lebanon are yet to be felt. (For more details, see our brief on Lebanon in the October Forecast). On 22 October, Minister of Economy Amin Salam told Reuters that while a resumption of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is expected in the coming months, funds are unlikely to be disbursed before the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Since incidents in early August involving exchanges of fire across the Blue Line (a border demarcation between Israel and Lebanon), the situation in the area has seemingly reverted to a tense calm. During the exchanges, the Israel Defense Forces conducted airstrikes on Lebanese territory for the first time since 2014. (For more details, see our brief on Lebanon in the October Forecast).

Women, Peace and Security

From 1 to 3 October, eight women leaders from Tripoli and Baalbek participated in a workshop in Batroun, north Lebanon, organised by International Alert in partnership with Action Research Associates and supported by UN Women. The workshop focused on enhancing skills in dialogue facilitation

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, the disarmament of all militias, and the extension of the Lebanese government's control over the territory of Lebanon. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) expanded UNIFIL by 15,000 troops and expanded its mandate. Secretary-General's Report S/2021/873 (14 October 2021) was the most recent Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1559.

Lebanon

in local peacebuilding processes and was the first of a series of capacity-development training workshops aimed at strengthening women's roles in leading local dialogue, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes in their communities. The training workshops are expected to culminate in intergenerational and cross-community dialogue sessions on conflict issues that are disproportionately affecting women and that have roots in unresolved issues from the Lebanese civil war.

Key Issues and Options

The events of 14 October demonstrate that weaponry held by Hezbollah and other groups in Lebanon remains an ongoing issue for peace and stability in the country. However, the most recent Secretary-General's report on resolution 1559—on which Council members were briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo on 20 October—said that “no specific steps” have been undertaken towards disbanding and disarming Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias since the adoption of the resolution. At the time of writing, it does not appear that a Council product—for instance, condemning the recent violence—is being considered.

The continuing socioeconomic crisis, including its effects on the ability of the LAF to maintain security in Lebanon, is also an area of concern. Council members may consider calling on international donors to fulfil their pledges to support the LAF's continued operations.

Looking ahead, the timely holding of parliamentary elections is an issue of relevance to the Council. In their latest press statement on Lebanon, Council members stressed the importance of holding

“free, fair and inclusive” elections. On 19 October, the Lebanese parliament voted to hold legislative elections on 27 March 2022, but Lebanese President Michel Aoun sent the draft electoral law back to parliament on 22 October, asking for the date to be reconsidered.

An important issue for some Council members remains how best to support women's participation in the elections. On 19 October, the Lebanese parliament failed to support the adoption of a women's quota for the upcoming elections. In a statement on the same day, Wronecka encouraged the discussion in the parliament of a gender quota for the elections. Council members may be interested in holding a closed Arria-formula meeting with women from Lebanese civil society and key political figures in the country to discuss strategies to support women's participation in the political process.

Council Dynamics

Council dynamics appear to be unchanged on this file. Council members remain united in their support for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, and security. As shown by the recent press statement, there seems to be agreement among members on the need for the Lebanese government to undertake reforms and to hold timely elections. Despite this general unity among members, differences remain. While Russia has generally taken the view that Hezbollah should be seen as an important political force in Lebanon and a legitimate partner for dialogue, other members—notably the US—do not share this view.

France is the penholder on Lebanon.

DPRK (North Korea)

Expected Council Action

In November, the Chair of the 1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Mona Juul (Norway), is expected to brief Council members in consultations on the 90-day report regarding the Committee's work.

Key Recent Developments

Following a six-month pause, the DPRK resumed missile tests. On 13 September, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the DPRK's state news agency, announced that the DPRK had successfully launched long-range cruise missiles. According to media reports, the missiles struck targets 1,500 kilometres away after travelling for two hours. After the tests, the DPRK said that the cruise missiles are a “strategic weapon of great importance” and that their development was part of an arms build-up announced at the January congress of the Workers' Party of Korea. Cruise missile launches are not prohibited by the 1718 sanctions regime. The test followed moves by the DPRK to resume the operation of a reactor at its primary nuclear complex, Yongbyon, a development documented in the annual report on the DPRK by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

On 15 September, the KCNA announced that the DPRK had launched two ballistic missiles off its east coast. The missiles landed outside Japan's exclusive economic zone in the Sea of Japan. Ballistic missile tests are prohibited by the 1718 sanctions regime. This test prompted Council members to discuss the DPRK under “any other business” on 16 September following a request from France and Estonia. There was no briefer during the discussion, and several Council members requested the 1718 Panel of Experts to analyse evidence concerning the tests and provide a report to the 1718 Sanctions Committee.

In a 21 September statement delivered to the General Assembly during high-level week, Republic of Korea (ROK) President Moon Jae-in repeated his call for a formal declaration ending the Korean War. Moon proposed “that three parties of the two Koreas and the US, or four parties of the two Koreas, the US and China come together and declare that the war on the Korean Peninsula is over”. In response, Kim Yo-jong, the sister of DPRK leader Kim Jong-un, issued a statement in which she appeared to suggest that the DPRK might be open to formally ending the war if certain conditions were met. Kim said “the declaration of the termination of the war is an interesting and admirable idea. ...But it is necessary to look into

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2569 (26 March 2021) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 30 April 2022. S/RES/2397 (22 December 2017) tightened sanctions on the DPRK. Sanctions Committee Document S/2021/777 (8 September 2021) was the midterm report of the Panel of Experts.

DPRK (North Korea)

whether it is the right time now and whether there are conditions ripe for discussing this issue”. Kim reportedly suggested that the DPRK would be willing to attend an inter-Korean summit but reiterated an earlier call for the ROK to end its “hostile policy” toward the DPRK. The ROK subsequently welcomed the prospect of a summit and urged the DPRK to restore the hotline between the two states.

On 28 September, the DPRK launched a missile while its ambassador to the UN, Kim Song, was delivering a speech to the General Assembly. During the speech, Kim said that the US should give up its “hostile policy” toward the DPRK if it wants the Korean War to end. Kim also indicated that the DPRK intended to continue its nuclear program. In the aftermath of the launch, the KCNA claimed that the DPRK had successfully tested a hypersonic ballistic missile. On 30 September, the KCNA announced that the DPRK had also tested an anti-aircraft missile and said that this missile had improved range, speed and accuracy. The same day, Kim Jong-un ordered the hotline between the DPRK and the ROK to be reopened and condemned US offers to begin dialogue as “nothing more than a façade to mask their deception and hostile acts and an extension of hostile policy from past administrations”, while ROK Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong called on the US to give specific details of the incentives it could offer the DPRK if it enters negotiations.

The hypersonic missile test led Council members to discuss the DPRK under “any other business” on 1 October. France, the UK, and the US requested the discussion, which included a briefing from Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Mohamed Khaled Khiari. Several Council members asked the 1718 Panel of Experts to analyse the tests and submit a report to the 1718 Sanctions Committee. It appears that France also circulated draft press elements regarding the hypersonic missile launch; however, China and Russia indicated that they did not support the French proposal. The draft elements apparently noted that the Council had discussed the test and emphasised the importance of the DPRK abiding by its obligations under Council resolutions and engaging in dialogue. In a 3 October statement, the DPRK warned that the Security Council “had better think what consequences it will bring in the future in case it tries to encroach upon the sovereignty” of the DPRK.

On 19 October, the DPRK conducted a test of a submarine-launched ballistic missile for the first time in two years. The KCNA claimed that this missile had “lots of advanced control guidance technology”. Following the launch, Council members discussed the DPRK under “any other business” on 20 October at the request of Estonia, France, Ireland, the UK, and the US. Khiari briefed and several Council members again asked the Panel of Experts to review evidence regarding the test and submit a report to the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee. In a statement before the meeting, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield (US) urged all countries to fully implement UN sanctions and reiterated that the US remained willing to engage in dialogue with the DPRK. Estonia, France, and Ireland also issued a joint press statement in which they called on the international community to comply with UN sanctions and for the DPRK to engage in dialogue as proposed by the ROK and the US.

Sanctions evasion remains a concern. In a 26 September statement, UK Defence Minister Ben Wallace announced that the UK had collected evidence of breaches of UN sanctions by multiple vessels from different states. In its midterm report, which was issued on 8 September, the 1718 Sanctions Committee’s Panel of Experts

noted that maritime exports of sanctioned commodities from the DPRK have continued this year, albeit at a reduced level. The report also indicated that the DPRK’s importation of oil products fell substantially in the first half of 2021.

Sanctions against the DPRK continue to have an impact on the humanitarian situation in the country. In a report presented to the General Assembly on 22 October, Tomás Ojea Quintana, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the DPRK, called for the easing of UN sanctions. Quintana argued that “sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council should be reviewed and eased when necessary to both facilitate humanitarian and lifesaving assistance and enable the promotion of the right to an adequate standard of living of ordinary citizens”.

On 24 October, Sung Kim, the US Special Representative for the DPRK, met with the ROK’s Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs, Noh Kyu-duk. At a press conference following the meeting, Kim called on the DPRK to “cease [their] provocations and other destabilising activities and instead engage in dialogue” and said that the US remains “ready to meet with the DPRK without preconditions”. He added, “we have made clear that the US harbours no hostile intent toward [the] DPRK”. At the same press conference, Kyu-duk noted that the meeting included “serious” discussion of the ROK’s proposal to formally end the Korean War.

Key Issues and Options

The flurry of missile tests conducted by the DPRK in recent weeks is a major issue for the Council. Sanctions evasion and the overall effectiveness of the sanctions regime are also important issues, particularly given that the DPRK is widely believed to have increased the number of nuclear weapons in its arsenal since the sanctions regime was introduced. The DPRK’s refusal to entertain offers made by the US and the ROK to engage in dialogue is another area of concern, as is the humanitarian impact of UN sanctions.

In light of these issues, the Council could consider adopting a formal outcome that condemns the missile tests, urges member states to comply with the sanctions and calls for the resumption of diplomatic talks. The Council may wish to consider implementing temporary and targeted sanctions relief that mitigates the humanitarian impact of UN sanctions. Council members could also convene an informal interactive dialogue with key regional stakeholders to discuss new ways of addressing the security threat posed by the DPRK. Another option is to receive a briefing from the High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the human rights situation in the DPRK. The Council received such a briefing every December from 2014 to 2017, but it has not taken place in recent years.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain divided regarding the DPRK. The P3 and other like-minded states, such as Estonia and Ireland, regularly condemn its missile tests, arguing that they are in contravention of Council resolutions and suggesting that they risk destabilising the Korean Peninsula. These states also emphasise the importance of dialogue, maintaining the sanctions regime, and addressing sanctions evasion. Other Council members, including the “A3 plus one” (Kenya, Niger, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), express concern that the DPRK is contravening Council resolutions

DPRK (North Korea)

and tend to emphasise the need for constructive dialogue. China and Russia, on the other hand, often argue that more information is needed to determine whether particular missile tests violate Council resolutions and also contend that sanctions should be eased because of their humanitarian impact. China and Russia have also suggested that easing sanctions may entice the DPRK to engage in dialogue with the US and the ROK.

The US is the penholder on the DPRK, and Ambassador Mona Juul (Norway) chairs the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee.

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