

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

In July, Brazil will hold the presidency of the Security Council.

Brazil plans to organise two signature events. The first signature event is a ministerial-level open debate on [strategic communications in peacekeeping](#). Brazilian Foreign Minister Carlos Alberto Franco França is expected to chair the meeting. Secretary-General António Guterres will deliver remarks. The anticipated briefers are Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; Force Commander for the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) General Marcos De Sá Affonso Da Costa; and Jenna Russo, Director of Research and Head of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations at the International Peace Institute (IPI). A presidential statement is a possible outcome.

The second signature event is the annual open debate on [children and armed conflict](#). The Brazilian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Fernando Simas Magalhães is expected to chair the meeting. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba, Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell, and a civil society representative are the anticipated briefers.

In July, the Security Council will also receive a briefing on the annual report of the [Peacebuilding Commission \(PBC\)](#).

African issues on the programme of work in July are:

- [West Africa](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS);
- [Central African Republic](#), renewal of the 2127 CAR sanctions regime and of the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the CAR Sanctions Committee;
- [Libya](#), briefing and consultations on the UN

Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), extension of the mandate of the mission, and renewal of measures related to the illicit export of petroleum from Libya and of the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee; and

- [Sudan](#), the semi-annual briefing by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on its Darfur-related activities.

Middle East issues on the programme include:

- [Syria](#), possible reauthorisation of the cross-border aid mechanism and meetings on the political, humanitarian and chemical weapons tracks;
- [Yemen](#), monthly meeting on developments and renewal of the mandate of the UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA);
- [Lebanon](#), consultations on the Secretary-General's 1701 report; and
- [Middle East, including the Palestinian question](#), the quarterly open debate.

The Council is expected to meet on two European issues in July. A private meeting on [Ukraine](#) is expected to take place early in the month. The Council will also hold consultations on [Cyprus](#) and renew the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

On the Americas, there will be a briefing and consultations on [Colombia](#). The Council is also expected to renew the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in [Haiti](#) (BINUH).

There will also be consultations on the work of the [UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia](#) (UNRCCA) late in the month.

Other issues could be raised in July depending on developments.

1 July 2022

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In Hindsight: The Security Council and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa

There has been a string of military takeovers in Africa in the last two years. Since August 2020, power has changed hands unconstitutionally six times in five countries: Burkina Faso (January 2022), Sudan (October 2021), Guinea (September 2021), Chad (April 2021), and Mali (August 2020 and May 2021). Two other African countries saw thwarted coup attempts in this period, Niger in March 2021 and Guinea-Bissau in January 2022, the latter of which led to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) deploying a force to the country.

The African Union held an extraordinary summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 28 May, which focused on unconstitutional changes of power and the ongoing threat of terrorism in Africa. At the summit, African leaders discussed possible measures to address the significant increase in military takeovers on the continent based on the outcome of an AU Reflection Forum held in Accra, Ghana, from 15-17 March, which recommended an in-depth analysis of gaps in the AU normative frameworks on unconstitutional changes of government. The forum recognised the deeper structural problems faced by some African countries, including governance and socioeconomic difficulties and challenges related to terrorism.

Speaking to the media on 26 October 2021, following the military takeover in Sudan, UN Secretary-General António Guterres spoke of “an epidemic” of coups d’état and pointed out the lack of “effective deterrence” from the Security Council, noting that the Council has “lots of difficulties in taking strong measures”.

Several patterns have developed over time in the Council’s efforts to address unconstitutional changes of power. One is that it appears easier for the Security Council to discuss a coup d’état when the country concerned is already on its agenda, such as in Mali, which hosts a UN peacekeeping operation, or Guinea-Bissau, which had a UN special political mission when the military carried out a coup in April 2012. Some members tend to be wary of discussing issues not already on the agenda, justifying this by citing the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. For example, the Council did not discuss the coup d’état in Guinea—which is not on its agenda—even though the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) expressly called on the Security Council to support the ECOWAS decision for the restoration of constitutional order in that country. In the case of Guinea, it appears that a Security Council member from the region was sensitive about such a discussion, even though the position of the African members (A3) is generally in line with AU decisions.

When an African country that has experienced a coup d’état is not on the agenda and the Council does decide to engage, it has tended to use one of its broader agenda items such as “Peace and security in Africa” or “Peace consolidation in West Africa” to consider the situation. This appears to be a useful way of discussing abrupt unconstitutional changes of power without the perceived stigma associated with naming a country as an agenda item. For example, Council members held consultations on 8 February to discuss the coup d’état in Burkina Faso under “Peace consolidation in West Africa”.

In addition, the Council has at times discussed coups d’état under “any other business” in closed consultations, which bypasses the use of an agenda item altogether and avoids any mention of the issue on

the Council’s monthly programme of work. After the military takeover that followed President Blaise Compaore’s resignation in 2014 and the subsequent coup attempts against the transitional authorities, the Council held several meetings on Burkina Faso under “any other business”.

There is no general practice discernable in the type of outcome the Council adopts following coups d’état. Products have ranged from press statements, a relatively weak instrument in the Council’s toolkit, to stronger outcomes such as presidential statements and, in one case, a resolution imposing sanctions. The resolution adopted after the April 2012 coup in Guinea-Bissau remains among the Council’s most robust such responses in Africa, and established a travel ban that would be applied against leading officers involved in the coup. According to Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, who spoke at the 7 February Security Council debate on general issues related to sanctions, these punitive measures are believed to have contributed to facilitating the eventual restoration of constitutional order (elections were organised in the spring of 2014) and to have had a deterrent effect on military intervention during subsequent political crises in the country. Renewed concerns about the military’s role in Guinea-Bissau surfaced in the aftermath of the disputed outcome of the 2019 presidential election, in addition to this year’s attack on the presidential palace.

The Council is often supportive of regional and sub-regional organisations’ responses to military takeovers. This has been notable in West Africa. ECOWAS has often led international responses to unconstitutional seizures of power in the region in ways that the Security Council has largely supported, also coordinating its messaging with the subregional body and the AU. Following the August 2020 coup d’état in Mali, after issuing an initial press statement expressing strong support for ECOWAS and AU initiatives and mediation, the Council adopted a presidential statement in October 2020 backing ECOWAS-brokered arrangements for an 18-month national Malian transition. Renewing the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in June 2021 and the Mali sanctions regime in August 2021, the Council reiterated its support for ECOWAS’ role and an 18-month transition period.

The Council’s broad support for ECOWAS and the AU in response to military takeovers can vary, however, depending on the strategic interests of influential Council members and their interpretation of these changes in power. For example, since the end of last year, the Council’s support for ECOWAS with regard to the political situation in Mali has shifted, as Russia has become closer to Mali’s transitional authorities. The result has been less clear messaging from the Council. After ECOWAS imposed new sanctions on the country in January over delays in organising elections, Council members were unable to agree even to press elements, which simply provide a verbal account of a Council meeting, following their quarterly meeting on Mali. Russia and China reportedly blocked the press elements, unwilling to back some of ECOWAS’ positions, including with regard to sanctions on Mali.

Reflecting shifting dynamics in the Council, its statement in February did not condemn the coup in Burkina Faso but, “expresse[d]

In Hindsight: The Security Council and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa

serious concern about the unconstitutional change of government” and only took note of the decisions of ECOWAS and the AU. This struck a notably different tone from the Council’s past endorsements of ECOWAS efforts in Burkina Faso in 2014 and 2015 (when Council members issued five press statements) and its initial response to the August 2020 and May 2021 coups d’état in Mali.

The Council’s reaction to last year’s military takeover in Sudan was also less assertive than that of the AU, reflecting differing interpretations of the crisis among Council members. Following the events of 25 October 2021—when the military suspended the transitional institutions, declared a state of emergency and detained Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and other civilian members of the transitional government—the AUPSC suspended Sudan until the civilian-led transitional authority would be restored. When the Security Council met to discuss the situation on 26 October 2021, a legal debate ensued during which some permanent members questioned whether the developments in Sudan could be characterised as a coup d’état. Council members issued a press statement on 28 October 2021, which expressed serious concern about the military takeover but did not condemn it, even as they also called upon Sudan’s military authorities to restore the civilian-led transitional government.

Security Council members are broadly united in their concern over the threat of terrorism, which can affect the Council’s response

to military takeovers. In the case of Chad, both the Security Council and the AU were aligned in their recognition of the country’s important counter-terrorism role. Following the AUPSC’s lead, the Council did not respond to the unconstitutional takeover of power by a Transitional Military Council after the death of President Idriss Déby on 20 April 2021 during fighting with rebels. Instead of suspending the country from the AU, the AUPSC stated in its communiqué of 14 May 2021 that it was mindful of Chad’s pivotal role in fighting terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel regions. While this approach apparently reflected the views of countries of the central Africa region, some analysts criticised the AUPSC’s selective criteria and the Security Council’s subsequent inaction for sending the wrong signal to militaries across the continent.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council went for two years without a visiting mission, taking away one tool that it can use to understand the political dynamics in countries going through delicate political transitions. In October 2021, the Security Council visited Mali. Members conveyed messages on the need for the country to return to constitutional order, though this was also when early signs of fissure in Council support for the ECOWAS position began to surface. As the Council struggles with consistent messaging around coups and coup attempts, first-hand information about developments on the ground will remain important—if not necessarily decisive.

Status Update since our June Forecast

Strengthening Accountability and Justice for Serious Violations of International Law

On 2 June, the Security Council convened for a high-level open debate on “strengthening accountability and justice for serious violations of international law” (S/PV.9052). The meeting was a signature event of Albania’s presidency and was chaired by Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama. The briefers were President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Judge Joan Donoghue, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, and Oxford University Professor of Public International Law Dapo Akande. Forty-eight member states participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure. Chargé d’affaires ad interim of the Delegation of the European Union to the UN Silvio Gonzato and the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations also took part in the meeting.

Sudan

On 3 June, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2636, renewing the mandate of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) for one year, until 3 June 2023. In its explanation of vote, the UK said that it would have preferred the adoption of a substantive resolution that would have updated UNITAMS’ priorities to reflect Sudan’s own request for traditional support on issues such as disarmament, demobilization

and reintegration; transitional justice; and civilian protection (S/PV.9054).

Syria

On 3 June, an Arria-formula meeting was held on “Syrian Women’s Voices on Detainees and the Disappeared in Syria”. The meeting was organised by the US, together with Albania, France and the UK, with additional co-sponsorship by several non-Council members (Belgium, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Qatar and Türkiye). The meeting was held with the support of the Syrian Negotiations Commission (SNC), which represents the Syrian opposition, and in partnership with the EU. The briefers included: Mariam Alhallak, founder of the Caesar Families Association; Najah Malak, co-founder of the Kurdish Women’s Union in Syria – Rhodes; Alise Mofrej, head of the Detainee Committee of the SNC and co-founder of the Syria Political Women’s Movement; Joumana Seif, Syrian lawyer and human rights activist; Badr Jamous, head of the International Affairs Committee of the SNC; and Haytham Al Hamwi, chairman of the Syrian British Council.

UNOCA (Central Africa)

On 8 June, the Security Council received a briefing (S/PV.9058) on the Secretary-General’s semi-annual report on the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the implementation of the

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UN's regional strategy to combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (S/2022/436). The Council was briefed by: Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee; President of the Commission of the Economic Community of Central African States Gilberto Da Piedade Veríssimo; and Ms. Jeanne-Danielle Nicole Nlate, Vice-President of the *Coalition des organisations de la société civile d'Afrique centrale pour la préservation de la paix, la prévention des conflits, la résolution et la transformation des crises*.

Iraq

On 8 June, the Security Council convened for a briefing on the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) (S/PV.9059). Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD Christian Ritscher briefed. Iraq participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Mali

On 13 June, the Security Council held its quarterly briefing on Mali, followed by closed consultations. Special Representative and head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) El-Ghassim Wane briefed, as did civil society representative Sadya Touré, Director of Mali Muso (S/PV.9061). Wane presented the Secretary-General's latest report on Mali (S/2022/446), which recommended a one-year extension of MINUSMA's mandate. He also referred to the Secretary-General's decision to undertake a review of the situation in Mali and present recommendations to the Council within six months on how the mission can best continue to fulfil its priorities, as outlined in his recent report on Mali. During the session, members also considered the Secretary-General's bi-annual letter (S/2022/448) on the mission's challenges, performance and transition planning. On 7 June, Council members held a meeting with troop-contributing countries to MINUSMA.

On 29 June, the Council adopted resolution 2640 extending the mandate of MINUSMA until 30 June 2023. Thirteen Council members voted in favour, while China and Russia abstained. Earlier in the month, Council members issued a press statement on 1 June condemning an attack that day that killed one Jordanian peacekeeper and wounded three others in Kidal. On 3 June, Council members issued another press statement condemning an attack that day that killed two Egyptian peacekeepers and injured one near Douentza. Council members also issued a press statement on 20 June, condemning a 19 June attack on MINUSMA that killed one Guinean peacekeeper near Kidal.

International Criminal Tribunals

On 14 June, the Security Council held its semi-annual debate on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) (S/PV.9062), with briefings by the IRMCT's president, Judge Carmel Agius, and its prosecutor, Serge Brammertz. At the meeting, Agius updated the Council on the status of the IRMCT's remaining three cases. Prior to the debate, on 13 June, the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals met with Agius and

Brammertz. On 22 June, the Security Council adopted resolution 2637, extending Brammertz's term for another two years, until 30 June 2024, by a vote of 14 in favour and one abstention (Russia).

Women, Peace and Security

On 15 June, the Security Council held an open debate on women, peace and security (WPS) entitled "Keeping the promises: the role of regional organizations in implementing the women, peace and security agenda in the face of political turmoil and seizures of power by force" (S/PV.9064). Albanian Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Olta Xhaçka chaired the meeting and Secretary-General António Guterres provided opening remarks. The briefers were: UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous, EU Ambassador for Gender and Diversity Stella Ronner-Grubačić, Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Helga Maria Schmid, Special Envoy on WPS of the Chairperson of the AU Commission Bineta Diop, and Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (LAS) Haifa Abu Ghazaleh.

EU-UN Cooperation

On 16 June, the Security Council held its annual meeting on EU-UN cooperation under the agenda item "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security" (S/PV.9065). At the meeting, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell briefed Council members on strengthening the EU-UN partnership during what he described as "a rise in power political competition" that is placing the multilateral system "under pressure as never before".

South Sudan

On 20 June, the Security Council was briefed on South Sudan (S/PV.9067). Special Representative and head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Nicholas Haysom briefed on the Secretary-General's latest 90-day report on South Sudan (S/2022/468). OCHA's Acting Director of the Operations and Advocacy Division Ghada Eltahir Mudawi and Lorna Merekaje, a South Sudanese human rights defender, also briefed. Closed consultations followed the briefing.

Somalia

On 21 June, the Security Council received a briefing (S/PV.9071) from the Chair of the 751 Sanctions Committee (Somalia), Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland), on the Committee's work from 25 February to 21 June. Nason informed the Council that the Committee met twice during the reporting period to receive a briefing from Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, on the trends and patterns of grave violations against children in Somalia and to hear the midterm updates from the Panel of Experts on Somalia.

UNDOF (Golan)

On 21 June, Council members held consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). Assistant Secretary-General

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for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Mohamed Khaled Khiari provided the briefing. On 27 June, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2639, renewing the UNDOF mandate for six months.

Afghanistan

On 23 June, the Security Council convened for an open briefing, followed by closed consultations, on Afghanistan (S/PV.9075). The briefers were: Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths; Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan Ramiz Alakbarov; Afghan women's rights activist Yalda Royan; and BBC journalist Yalda Hakim. Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

The Relationship between the ICC and the Security Council

On 24 June, an Arria-formula meeting entitled "20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Rome Statute: reflections on the relationship between the International Criminal Court and the Security Council" took place. The meeting was organised by Ireland and co-sponsored by Council members Albania, Gabon, Ghana, France, Mexico, Norway, and the UK, as well as incoming Council members Ecuador, Japan, Malta, and Switzerland. ICC Prosecutor Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, Director of the Coalition for the ICC Secretariat Liz Evenson, and President of the International Peace Institute Zeid Raad Al Hussein briefed.

Working Methods Open Debate

On 28 June, the Security Council held its annual open debate on its working methods (S/PV.9079). Albania, the chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Procedural Questions, produced a concept note ahead of the meeting. The briefers were Karin Landgren, Executive Director of Security Council Report and Loraine Sievers, co-author of "The Procedure of the UN Security Council (4th edition). Thirty-five members states, other than Council members, took the floor.

Democratic Republic of Congo

On 29 June, the Security Council held a briefing (S/PV.9081), followed by closed consultations, on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The briefing was based on the Secretary-General's latest report, covering the period from 17 March to 16 June (S/2022/503). Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) Bintou Keita and Président of the Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et le Développement Intégral (SOFEPADI) Julienne Lusenge briefed the Council. The deteriorating security situation in eastern DRC was the focus of the meeting. Council members supported ongoing regional initiatives to address this security challenge and promote lasting peace in the region. On 30 June, the Council met (S/PV.9084) to adopt resolution 2641 extending the 1531 DRC Sanctions regime until 1 July 2023 and renewing the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 1 August 2023.

Morocco-Spain

On 29 June, Council members discussed during consultations under "any other business" the violent treatment of African migrants who tried to cross the Moroccan border into Melilla, Spain on 24 June, which resulted in the killing of at least 23 people. Kenya requested the meeting. Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ilze Brands Kehris briefed.

Non-proliferation

On 30 June, the Council convened for its biannual briefing on resolution 2231 of 20 July 2015, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme (JCPOA) (S/PV.9085). Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed on the Secretary-General's latest report on the implementation of resolution 2231, which was issued on 10 June (S/2022/482). The Council's facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231, Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland), reported on the Council's work in relation to resolution 2231. The head of the EU delegation to the UN, Olof Skoog, briefed on the work of the JCPOA's Joint Commission. Germany and Iran participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

UN Peacekeeping

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council will hold a high-level debate on strategic communications in peacekeeping. Brazilian Foreign Minister Carlos Alberto Franco França is expected to chair the meeting. Secretary-General António Guterres will deliver remarks. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; Force Commander for the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) General Marcos

De Sá Affonso Da Costa; and Jenna Russo, Director of Research and Head of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations at the International Peace Institute (IPI), are the anticipated briefers.

A presidential statement is a possible outcome.

Key Recent Developments

Several UN peace operations are deployed in increasingly volatile security environments, and the changing technological landscape

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEKEEPING Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/17 (18 August 2021) was on the use of technology in peacekeeping. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8838** (18 August 2021) was a Security Council meeting on the use of technology in peacekeeping. **Useful Additional Resources** (17 September 2021) Strategy for the Digital Transformation of Peacekeeping. (2021) Background Paper for Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) priorities for 2021-2023. **S/2015/446** (17 June 2015) is the Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations

UN Peacekeeping

can further complicate their task. As much as digital technologies offer new capabilities to enhance the effectiveness of UN peace operations, they are also creating difficulties by shaping the conflict environment and influencing public opinion against UN peace operations. In his remarks at the Security Council open debate on technology and peacekeeping on 18 August 2021, Guterres noted that “new technologies are changing the scale and speed of attack, as well as the character and nature of violence and destruction in war, with an indelible impact on civilian populations”.

These changes have added challenges to several UN peace operations. In the case of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), there has been “a significant increase in disinformation activity”, which is “increasingly systematic and orchestrated, and synchronized on an industrial scale to utilize local and pan-African networks as well as social media”, according to the Secretary-General’s 31 May report. In the Central African Republic, disinformation campaigns by platforms and individuals close to the ruling party have continued to target the UN and other domestic and international actors in the country, as indicated in the Secretary-General’s 15 February report on the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). In his latest report on MINUSCA released on 16 June, while the Secretary-General noted a downward trend in the targeted disinformation campaign against the mission, he expressed his continued concern about persistent disinformation campaigns “that seek to incite hatred and violence, particularly those on local and social media targeting minorities and political opposition”. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN has recently documented several instances of alleged hate speech and disinformation, stoking tensions and exacerbating conflict in the volatile eastern provinces. These and similar challenges not only pose serious risks to the safety and security of peacekeepers but also further complicate their responsibility to protect civilians.

The UN has recognised the significance of strategic communications to effectively engage with local populations, conflict parties, regional and other international actors, and partners on the ground. The 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations (HIPPO) stressed the need to “prioritize the development of tailored and dynamic communications strategies that support mandate implementation” and “maximize relevant communication tools for particular audiences”, including radio, social media and other platforms.

The UN Secretariat has identified strategic communications as one of the key priorities under the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative, citing it as an important enabler and multiplier across all mandated areas to help accelerate progress in the reform of UN peace operations. In this context, the UN aims “to promote successes, manage expectations, and help address disinformation, misinformation and hate speech” by engaging with all key stakeholders at the local, regional and international level. In this regard, it developed a Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping, dated 17 September 2021, which seeks to help missions in implementing their mandates effectively by harnessing the potential of digital technologies and mitigating their risks.

In May, Brazil organised a side event on the “Protection of Civilians

in UN Peacekeeping Missions: Strategic Communications as a key enabler” during the annual Protection of Civilians (PoC) week. The meeting facilitated a discussion about how peacekeeping missions can communicate effectively at all levels for the successful implementation of PoC mandates and exchanged lessons and best practices from the field in promoting community engagement by using new communication technologies. The high-level open debate in July will have a broader focus, as set out in the concept note Brazil has prepared to help guide the discussion, which underscores the key role of strategic communications in peacekeeping mandate implementation and specifically its contribution to protecting civilians; promoting the safety and security of peacekeepers; and advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for Council members is how to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping by using strategic communications as an important tool for mandate implementation. In relation to this, Brazil would like Council members and the wider UN membership to address the following issues:

- the effectiveness of the UN Secretariat and peacekeeping missions in communicating with key audiences;
- the internal and external challenges faced by UN peacekeeping operations in terms of strategic communications and how these challenges can be addressed;
- the potential for the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping to contribute to improving the communications capabilities of missions;
- the role of the UN Secretariat and peacekeeping missions to better monitor and evaluate the impact of strategic communications on mandate implementation and the safety and security of peacekeepers;
- the ways in which the Security Council, the UN Secretariat, peacekeeping missions and troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs) can increase the impact of strategic communications on the protection of civilians and the advancement of the Women, Peace and Security agenda;
- the role of strategic communications in the context of peacekeeping transitions;
- concrete measures the Security Council could take to improve strategic communications within peacekeeping operations; and
- the contributions of T/PCCs to improving missions’ communications with relevant stakeholders, notably local communities.

A possible option for Council members is to adopt a presidential statement on the significance of strategic communications in peacekeeping.

Council and Wider Dynamics

This is the first time the Security Council will be discussing strategic communications in peacekeeping. Council members are likely to be broadly supportive of a discussion about this issue, given the challenges that peace operations are facing on the ground. It remains to be seen, however, whether Council members will be keen to agree on a related product.

UN Peacekeeping

The issue of strategic communications has resonated with the wider UN membership. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations—a subsidiary body of the General Assembly that consists of more than 150 UN member states and is mandated to deal with the question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects—recommended in its 2021 report that “the Secretary-General, in

consultation with United Nations country teams and other relevant stakeholders, establish a framework for strategic communication in peacekeeping, including how to address the issue of anti-United Nations propaganda, which encourages attacks against peacekeepers and United Nations personnel in the field”.

Ukraine

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council is expected to hold a private meeting on the situation in Ukraine. The meeting will focus on the ongoing efforts to negotiate an agreement to allow the safe and secure export of Ukrainian food through the Black Sea and unimpeded access of Russian food and fertilisers to global markets.

Additional meetings on Ukraine are possible, depending on developments on the ground.

Key Recent Developments

The Security Council remains actively engaged on the situation in Ukraine. However, the frequency with which the Council has convened meetings on Ukraine has steadily declined since the start of the war on 24 February. In March, the Council held six formal and informal meetings on Ukraine. This dropped to four in April, with meetings more narrowly focused on the war’s detrimental effects on specific vulnerable groups—including women, children and refugees. The number of meetings continued to fall in subsequent months, reaching four in May and three in June.

On 6 June, the Council held an open briefing on conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking in the war in Ukraine. There was also a briefing on Ukraine on 21 June, which focused on “incitement to violence leading to atrocity crimes”. On 28 June, at Ukraine’s request, the Council convened for an open meeting to discuss the recent shelling of areas in Ukraine’s centre, including a 26 June missile launch on Kyiv. The assault, which was the first such attack on Kyiv in weeks, hit a residential building, killing one person. Council members also discussed a 27 June attack on a crowded shopping mall in the central Poltava region, which resulted in at least 20 deaths. The UN condemned the attack on 27 June as “utterly deplorable”. (For more information, see our 3 June and 20 June *What’s in Blue* stories.)

In addition to these briefings, the war in Ukraine has been referenced during several other Council meetings. Notable in this regard was the high-level open debate on “strengthening accountability and justice for serious violations of international law” on 2 June and the annual meeting on strengthening EU-UN cooperation on 16 June.

Hostilities in Ukraine remain concentrated in Donetsk and Luhansk as Russian forces pursue control of the entire Donbas region in eastern Ukraine. In Luhansk, Russian troops made slow but considerable advances in June, and now control over 90 per cent of the region. Russian forces most recently captured the city of

Sievierodonetsk, where hundreds of civilians had reportedly taken shelter from Russian shelling at the Azot chemical plant. In Donetsk, Russian forces continue to advance south towards Sloviansk from Izium. In the northern Kharkiv region and the southern Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, Russian troops appear to be seeking to maintain defensive positions against Ukrainian counterattacks.

The intense fighting in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine continues to prevent vital aid from reaching those in need. On 13 June, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General Stéphane Dujarric said that the UN and humanitarian partners have been unable to reach critical areas affected by the war, including Mariupol, Kherson and Sievierodonetsk because of “insecurity and bureaucratic obstacles”, despite continued engagement to negotiate access. He noted that the last time a UN convoy with supplies reached Sievierodonetsk was on 5 April. In the south, a critical shortage of medicines persists in Kherson, and Mariupol is said to be at risk of a major cholera outbreak.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 16 June, during its 50th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on the oral update provided by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet regarding the grave human rights and humanitarian situation in Mariupol, as requested in HRC resolution A/HRC/S-34/L.1 of 12 May. On 5 July, the HRC is expected to hold an interactive dialogue at which Bachelet will present orally the findings of the periodic report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the situation of human rights in Ukraine. Also on 5 July, the HRC will consider the Secretary-General’s report on the situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine (A/HRC/50/65).

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Security Council is determining what role it can play in facilitating an end to the conflict. Agreement on Council products on Ukraine is difficult because of the direct involvement of a permanent member and members’ sharply diverging positions. Members can continue to hold regular open briefings on the situation in Ukraine with the aim of keeping the international community abreast of developments on the ground. Brazil’s choice to convene a private meeting on Ukraine perhaps indicates that members are also considering formats with restricted attendance and no meeting records, which could also include an informal interactive dialogue or a closed Arria-formula meeting, to allow for a frank exchange of ideas between Council members on more politically sensitive issues.

UN DOCUMENTS ON UKRAINE [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9080](#) (28 June 2022) was a briefing on Ukraine, which focused on the shelling of areas in Ukraine’s centre, including a 26 June missile launch on Kyiv and a 27 June attack on a shopping mall in the central Poltava region. [S/PV.9069](#) (21 June 2022) was a briefing on Ukraine, which focused on “Incitement to violence leading to atrocity crimes”. [S/PV.9056](#) (6 June 2022) was a briefing on Ukraine, focused on conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking.

Ukraine

Another key issue for the Council is determining how it can support ongoing efforts to negotiate an agreement on Ukrainian and Russian food exports to global markets. The war in Ukraine has led to a cost of living crisis marked by escalating price shocks in the global food, energy and fertiliser markets. According to an 8 June report of the UN Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG), a continued reduction in Russian and Ukrainian exports will result in an additional 19 million people experiencing chronic undernourishment in 2023. (The GCRG was established in March to develop strategies and recommendations in response to the Ukrainian war's impact on food, energy and financial systems.) Efforts involving Türkiye and the UN to negotiate an agreement between Russia and Ukraine to allow their food to reach global markets have been underway for several weeks. During next month's scheduled private meeting on Ukraine, Council members will be apprised of the status of negotiations. Should an agreement between the parties be reached, an option for Council action would be a vote on a resolution or the drafting of a presidential statement endorsing the agreement and establishing the parameters of a potential UN monitoring role.

Council members remain concerned about the detrimental effects of the war on women, children and other vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. Members have expressed growing concern about reports of forced deportations of children. While UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet noted on 15 June that "OHCHR cannot yet confirm these allegations", the Commission of Inquiry established by the HRC confirmed on the same day that "there is a significant number of children disappeared in temporarily occupied territories". According to media reports, as at 18 June, over 307,000 children have been evacuated to Russia since 24 February. An option for Council action could be to organise a briefing on this issue, during which Council members may recall HRC resolution A/HRC/S-34/L.1, which requested Russia to provide UN staff with safe access to persons who have been transferred from conflict-affected areas and are held on Russian territory or areas occupied by Russian troops in Ukraine.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Security Council remains starkly divided on the situation in Ukraine, with Russia justifying its invasion and several Council members—including Albania, France, Ireland, Norway, the UK, and the US—firmly intent on condemning Russia for what they consider an "unprovoked" war. Members of the latter group have consistently called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine.

As Council discussions increasingly examine the war's ripple effects on global commodity and financial markets, major divisions have surfaced over the primary causes of rising global food insecurity. The US and European Council members have accused Moscow of weaponising food supplies by leveraging its blockade of Black Sea

ports and the withholding of its own food and fertiliser exports to persuade Western countries to lift sanctions levelled against the Russian economy. These members have also accused Russia of targeting grain silos and agricultural infrastructure and stealing Ukrainian grain supplies; however, the UN has not been able to verify these allegations.

For its part, Russia denies that it has hindered the export of grain from Ukrainian ports, maintaining that it has created the conditions for the safe operation of maritime humanitarian corridors in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Russia argues that navigation in Ukrainian territorial waters and the use of its ports have been made impossible by Kyiv's mining of the Black Sea. Ukraine has reportedly been unwilling to demine without security guarantees that Russia will not pursue a military offensive to capture the southern port city of Odesa.

Russia also argues that Western sanctions are contributing to the crisis by causing supply chain disruptions. The US and Council members from Europe have justified the use of sanctions, emphasising that Russia's agricultural sector has remained exempt. Nonetheless, some elected Council members have expressed concerns over sanctions. For example, during the 19 May open debate on conflict and food security, Brazil said that unilateral economic measures have had a secondary impact on markets, leading to increasing costs and hampering the availability of foodstuffs and fertilisers. At that meeting, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) stressed that countries must ensure that sanctions "do not impact the flow of essential commodities in any way".

Many African countries also worry about the harmful humanitarian effects of sanctions. During an EU summit on 31 May, the current AU Chairperson and President of the Republic of Senegal Macky Sall said that "our countries are very worried about the collateral impact of the disruptions caused by blocking the Swift payment system as a result of sanctions". After meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on 3 June, Sall issued a Tweet calling "on all partners to lift sanctions on wheat and fertiliser". Ukraine and its allies have sought to convey to African member states that Russia is solely to blame for the rising levels of food insecurity. Following weeks of requests to address the AU, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reportedly told African leaders during a private meeting on 20 June that Russia is trying to use "the suffering of the people" to pressure Western countries to lift sanctions on its economy.

Despite Western sanctions and efforts to isolate Moscow, Russia's earnings from fossil fuel exports are expected to increase this year as a result of record-high prices and increased trade with India and other Asian countries. According to a 13 June report of the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, several Council members—including China, France, India, and the UAE—increased imports of discounted Russian fuels in the first 100 days of the war.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council is expected to hold meetings on the political, humanitarian and chemical weapons tracks in Syria. The Council is also expected to vote on renewing resolution 2585, which expires on 10 July, and provides the authorisation for cross-border humanitarian deliveries through the Bab al-Hawa crossing on the Syrian-Turkish border. The resolution also encourages efforts to improve cross-line deliveries of humanitarian assistance (that is, across domestic frontlines from Syrian government-held areas into areas outside government control) and welcomes early recovery projects in Syria.

Key Recent Developments

The Syria Constitutional Committee's eighth round was held in Geneva from 30 May to 3 June. The following issues were discussed: "Unilateral coercive measures from a constitutional standpoint"; "Preserving and strengthening state's institutions"; "The supremacy of the constitution and the hierarchy of international agreements"; and "Transitional justice". During the first four days of the session, the committee spent one day on each issue, discussing a draft constitutional text. On the final day, the parties submitted and discussed their revisions to these texts. In a statement at the end of the session, Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen said that while "there were areas of potential common ground" on some matters, on others "the differences remained significant". He added that the "slow pace of work and the continuing inability to identify and conclude concrete areas of provisional agreement" are issues which require further improvement. Pedersen indicated that the ninth round of the Constitutional Committee would be convened in Geneva from 25-29 July.

On 16 June, Griffiths and the other UN humanitarian principals—Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Natalia Kanem, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) António Vitorino, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) David Beasley, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, and Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus—issued a statement in which they urged the Council to renew resolution 2585 and re-authorise cross-border assistance for an additional year.

The Council held a briefing, followed by consultations, on the humanitarian situation in Syria on 20 June. Secretary-General António Guterres delivered introductory remarks and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths and Iyad Agha, the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Forum Coordinator for Northwest Syria, provided the briefings. Guterres and Griffiths urged the Council to renew resolution 2585 for another 12 months, while Agha called for a renewal of at least 12 months. Griffiths noted that five crossline convoys had reached northwest Syria since the adoption of resolution 2585, with these convoys delivering food to more than 43,000 people; however, he added that the difficulties of receiving security guarantees and approvals for such cross-line deliveries made it imperative for cross-border access to continue. According to Griffiths, 90% of the 4.4 million people in

Syria's northwest are in need of humanitarian assistance, and in the past year, 2.4 million of these people have received aid each month as a result of cross-border aid.

Syria accused Israel of airstrikes that damaged two runways and a terminal at Damascus International Airport on 10 June, leading to the airport's closure until 23 June. Media reports have suggested that Israel initiated the attack due to concerns that Iran was using civilian flights to the airport to ship arms to Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based militant group. In a 13 June statement, Imran Riza, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria, said that the closure "has severe humanitarian implications and could result in additional negative consequences for vulnerable Syrians", as it had led to the suspension of UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights in the country. In his 20 June briefing to the Council, Griffiths echoed Riza's concern, maintaining that the suspension of UNHAS operations in Syria "has direct implications on the delivery of essential aid and movement of essential staff". Russia reportedly circulated a draft press statement to other Council members condemning the airstrikes as a violation of international law, but the text did not gain traction.

On 29 June, the Security Council received a briefing, followed by consultations, on the political situation in Syria. The briefers were Special Envoy Pedersen and Omar Alshogre, the Director for Detainee Affairs at the Syrian Emergency Task Force. Pedersen appealed to the Council for the renewal of the cross-border aid mechanism and said that the Constitutional Committee was scheduled to reconvene in Geneva on 25 July. Alshogre criticised Russia and Iran for their support of the Syrian government and the US for inaction with regard to the crisis in Syria.

Human Rights-related Developments

On 29 June, during its 50th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria. On 30 June, the HRC received a presentation of the report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on civilian casualties in Syria (A/HRC/50/68).

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council this month on Syria is a decision on the renewal of the cross-border humanitarian aid mechanism. If the Council reauthorises this mechanism, the resolution could emphasise the following elements:

- the life-saving effects of the cross-border mechanism;
- the need to step up cross-line aid deliveries; and
- the importance of enhanced support for early recovery projects in Syria.

Council members could also consider holding a closed Arria-formula meeting with civil society representatives who can speak to the importance of early recovery projects in Syria and provide their input on the types of projects that would be most beneficial to the welfare of Syrians.

Another key issue is the ongoing stalemate in the work of the Constitutional Committee. Given that little progress was made in the eighth round of meetings of the committee, the Council could consider adopting a presidential statement that supports the Special

Syria

Envoy's efforts to reinvigorate the political track in advance of the next session of the Committee.

Council Dynamics

There are significant differences on Syria among Council members on all three areas of Council engagement: the political, humanitarian and chemical weapons tracks. On the political front, while there is general support for the Constitutional Committee's work, several Council members have expressed frustration with the lack of progress since its launch two and a half years ago. Some members—such as Albania, Ireland and the P3 (France, the UK and the US)—tend to accuse the Syrian government of not engaging in the process in good faith. On the other hand, Russia, a close ally of the Syrian government, has cautioned against imposing artificial deadlines on the committee's work.

Negotiations on the cross-border aid mechanism have traditionally been difficult. When the Council initially authorised the cross-border mechanism in resolution 2165 in July 2014, it approved four border crossings; in January 2020, only two crossings were renewed through resolution 2504, and since resolution 2533 of July 2020, a

single crossing point has been authorised for humanitarian deliveries. The negotiations early this month to renew the cross-border aid mechanism are once again expected to be challenging. Most Council members support the cross-border aid mechanism in Syria as an essential humanitarian tool; however, China and Russia have expressed concern about cross-border aid being hijacked by terrorist groups and believe that this form of aid was an extraordinary measure that should give way to stepped up cross-line assistance. In the 24 June Council meeting, Russia also argued that it is possible to organise the delivery of aid in coordination with Damascus to all parts of Syria.

Furthermore, Council members continue to hold starkly different views on the chemical weapons track in Syria, disputing the evidence regarding responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in the country and the credibility of the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). While several members have consistently expressed support for the OPCW's work, maintaining that it is credible and essential, other members, such as China and Russia, claim that its work is biased and politicised.

West Africa and the Sahel

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council will hold its biannual briefing on West Africa and the Sahel. The Special Representative and head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mahamat Saleh Annadif, is expected to brief. Also expected to brief is the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Ambassador Rabab Fatima (Bangladesh), who will be leaving this role later in the month to be UN High Representative for Least Developed, Landlocked Countries, and Small Island Developing States.

Key Recent Developments

In January, Burkina Faso became the region's most recent country to experience a coup d'état. Amid rising public anger over insecurity caused by Al-Qaida and Islamic State-affiliated groups, soldiers from the previously unknown Patriotic Movement for Preservation and Restoration (MPSR) deposed Burkinabe President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré on 24 January. On 8 February, Security Council members held closed consultations on the situation with Annadif. In a 9 February press statement, Council members expressed serious concern about the unconstitutional change of government in Burkina Faso and their support for regional mediation efforts.

The coup leader, Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, was sworn in as transition president on 16 February. On 1 March, Damiba signed a charter outlining a 36-month transition. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) rejected a three-year transition period, demanding that Burkina Faso develop an acceptable transition timetable, and on 25 March threatened to impose sanctions. At an ECOWAS summit in Accra on 4

June, ECOWAS appointed the former president of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, as ECOWAS mediator for Burkina Faso.

Violence has intensified in Burkina Faso, despite the military's ouster of Kaboré. On 11 June, Burkina Faso suffered one of its worst massacres during the seven-year jihadist insurgency when militants killed at least 79 people in the northern town of Seytenga. Previously, on 25 May, about 50 people were killed in Madjoari, eastern Burkina Faso, reportedly by extremist groups.

ECOWAS also continues to lead international efforts to promote the restoration of constitutional order in Mali since the coups d'état in August 2020 and May 2021 and in Guinea after a coup d'état in September 2021. ECOWAS has maintained the economic and financial sanctions it imposed on Mali on 9 January after the transitional authorities failed to comply with the initial 18-month calendar for organising elections that they had agreed with ECOWAS. On 25 March, ECOWAS rejected Mali's proposal for a two-year extension of the transition, but transitional president Assimi Goita signed a decree on 6 June extending the transition by this period, with effect from 26 March. While expressing regret over this decision, ECOWAS said its mediator would engage with the Malian authorities to "find a mutually agreed timeline".

Tensions between Mali's transitional authorities and France, partly over the authorities' alleged partnership with the Wagner Group, the Russian private security company, came to a head in February when France and other European countries decided that over the following six months they would withdraw their counter-terrorism operations in Mali, Operation Barkhane and Takuba Task Force. In a 17 February joint statement on the planned departure, France,

UN DOCUMENTS ON WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/16 (17 August 2021) addressed security trends in the region and expressed concern about deteriorating situations in some countries. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8944 (10 January 2022) was a briefing on West Africa and the Sahel. Security Council Press Statement SC/14790 (9 February 2022) expressed serious concern about the unconstitutional change of government in Burkina Faso.

West Africa and the Sahel

Canada and 23 other European and African countries said that they would “continue their joint action against terrorism in the Sahel region”, focusing on Niger and West African coastal countries, and that they had begun consultations to determine the form of this cooperation.

On 15 May, Mali announced it was ending its participation in the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S) that Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger (G5 Sahel) formed in 2017 to combat terrorist groups in the region. According to transition authorities, Mali was withdrawing from the FC-G5S because, since February, some G5 countries had blocked its assumption of the rotating presidency of the G5 Sahel. At the time of writing, Council members were negotiating the mandate renewal of the UN Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

The military junta in Guinea, whose members have been subject to ECOWAS financial and travel ban sanctions since last year, said it would not enforce the new ECOWAS sanctions on Mali. Guinea’s National Transitional Council, established on 22 January as an interim legislative body, approved a 36-month transition period on 11 May. At its 4 June summit, ECOWAS expressed “serious concern” about tensions between the military junta on the one hand and civil society and the political opposition on the other over the management of the transition. It also said it was concerned about the three-year transition period and demanded the finalisation of an acceptable timetable.

Nigeria is facing multiple security crises. Around 2.2 million Nigerians are internally displaced because of the protracted conflict in the Lake Chad basin with the terrorist group Boko Haram and a splinter group, the Islamic State, in the West Africa Province. Banditry and intercommunal violence have driven an emerging food crisis in northwest Nigeria. There has also been heightened concern about terrorist groups increasing their presence and recruitment in northwest Nigeria amid this insecurity.

Concerns continue to grow about the increasing threat that Sahel-based terrorist groups pose to coastal West African states. In an 11 May attack, the Al-Qaida-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims killed eight Togolese soldiers and wounded 13 in an attack on an army post in the town of Kpekankandi in Togo near the border with Burkina Faso. It was the first deadly attack by jihadist groups in Togo.

Overall, violence and rising global food prices are driving a deteriorating humanitarian situation in much of the region. As at 20 May, up to 18 million people in the Sahel are expected to face severe food insecurity over the next three months, according to OCHA, which warned of alarming levels of food insecurity in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, and Niger, during the lean season between June and August.

The UN, the AU, ECOWAS, and the G5 Sahel have launched a joint strategic assessment of security and governance in the Sahel. Former President Issoufou of Niger is leading the assessment team, which held its inaugural meeting in Niamey on 21 June. On 31 May, the Council adopted resolution 2634 on piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, which Council members had been negotiating since January.

The resolution requests a Secretary-General’s report on Gulf of Guinea piracy within five months, including analysis on any possible and potential linkages with terrorism in West and Central Africa and the Sahel.

Key Issues and Options

Political developments and trends in West Africa and the Sahel region, including concerns about democratic backsliding, are key issues during Council meetings on UNOWAS. ECOWAS is expected to hold its regular ordinary summit on 3 July, during which it will further consider the situations in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali.

The threat of terrorism facing the region is another key issue. Intercommunal and herder-farmer conflicts, often aggravated by terrorist groups, and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea are other security concerns. There are several regional initiatives to counter terrorism, which include the FC-G5S; the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) fighting the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin; the Accra Initiative, launched in 2017 by Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo to prevent the spillover of terrorism from the Sahel; and the still-developing plans to reconfigure Operation Barkhane and increase cooperation between France, other European countries, Niger and littoral states.

In addition to security responses, a key issue is addressing the structural causes of instability, such as underdevelopment, poor governance, and climate change, through the implementation of the UN’s Sahel Strategy, the G5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme, and the Lake Chad Basin regional stabilisation strategy.

The Security Council may adopt a presidential statement—usually proposed by the UNOWAS penholders following these biannual meetings—that addresses recent developments in the region and reiterates calls for a comprehensive approach to tackle the security, peacebuilding and development challenges of the region.

Council Dynamics

Council members support UNOWAS’ good offices role. They also recognise the importance of a holistic approach to addressing insecurity in the region, often stressing the need for greater coherence in the activities of the UN system and other regional stakeholders. Despite this, members were not able to agree earlier this year on the traditional presidential statement that the Council usually adopts following its biannual briefings because of disagreement over language related to climate change.

Ghana, as the West African Council member, often champions ECOWAS positions. In the past, the Council has tended to follow ECOWAS’ lead and endorse its positions on political crises in the region, but Council discussion on Mali and the Sahel has become more polarised since the end of last year. Russia and China have not been willing to back some of ECOWAS’ positions on the transition timeline and sanctions on Mali. Russia also apparently softened language in the initial press statement drafted by the A3 (Gabon, Ghana and Kenya) on the coup d’état in Burkina Faso, which kept it from more closely echoing ECOWAS and AU positions on the crisis.

Ghana and Ireland are co-penholders on UNOWAS.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council expects to hold its quarterly open debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland is expected to brief.

Key Recent Developments

In a major development, on 20 June, Naftali Bennett and coalition partner Yair Lapid, who then served as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, respectively, announced their decision to hold a vote on dissolving the Knesset (parliament). The eight-party coalition co-headed by Bennett and Lapid was formed in June 2021 in opposition to former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Coalition members included the United Arab List (the first Arab party in Israeli history to be part of a governing coalition), the left-wing party Meretz, and several right-wing parties.

Following the 30 June vote in favour of dissolution, Lapid assumed the function of caretaker prime minister. Parliamentary elections—which will be the fifth in Israel in less than four years—are expected to take place in early November.

The decision to dissolve parliament was taken once it became apparent that the government would not be able to secure a majority to extend the expiring emergency regulations, which, following the 1967 Six-Day War and the beginning of the occupation, apply significant portions of Israeli domestic law (instead of military law) to Israelis in the West Bank. Once the Israeli parliament is dissolved, however, these emergency regulations are automatically extended. Earlier in June, a vote on this issue failed to gain a majority. According to media reports, while some parliamentarians belonging to the governing coalition oppose the regulations out of principle, Netanyahu rallied his party, Likud, and other opposition parliamentarians to oppose the measures—which they would otherwise support—with the objective of destabilising the government.

The Security Council last held a meeting on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” on 27 June. Wennesland briefed on the latest Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of resolution 2334, which was issued on 22 June, as well as developments after the reporting period. Adopted in 2016, resolution 2334 stated that Israel’s establishment of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), including East Jerusalem, “constitutes a flagrant violation under international law” and called for immediate steps to prevent violence against civilians, including acts of terror. The report says that the period from 19 March to 16 June has seen the highest number of settlement units advance since October 2020. The report also states that daily violence throughout Israel and the oPt has increased during the reporting period. (See also our 24 June *What’s in Blue* story.)

In response to a wave of deadly terror attacks in Israel, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have intensified security operations in various locations across the West Bank, resulting in the death and injury of several Palestinians. On 11 May, Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh was shot dead while reporting on one such operation in the Jenin refugee camp (see our 25 May *What’s in Blue* story). In a 13 May press statement, Security Council members strongly

condemned Abu Akleh’s killing, calling for accountability and for an immediate, thorough, transparent, fair, and impartial investigation. On 24 June, the spokesperson for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Ravina Shamdasani, said that an OHCHR probe into the killing found that the shots that killed Abu Akleh “came from Israeli Security Forces and not from indiscriminate firing by armed Palestinians”.

Although the security situation in the Gaza Strip has remained relatively calm, on 18 June, a rocket was fired from Gaza into southern Israel and was intercepted by Israel’s “Iron Dome” air defence system. In response, the IDF said it had targeted Hamas sites in the Gaza Strip. However, Al Jazeera reported that, according to Palestinian media, the strikes fell on agricultural land in Gaza.

The 21 of June marked 15 years since the start of the Israeli blockade of Gaza. According to OCHA, almost 80 percent of the population in Gaza relies on humanitarian assistance, “[l]argely due to the blockade, poverty, high unemployment rates and other factors”. During a press briefing on 21 June, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General Stéphane Dujarric said: “More needs to be done to alleviate the humanitarian situation, with the eventual goal of a full lifting of the Israeli closures, in line with Security Council resolution 1860 of 2009.” Wennesland regularly stresses the need to fully lift the Gaza blockade in his monthly briefings to the Security Council.

Resolution 2334 also called upon states to distinguish in their dealings between the territory of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. The Secretary-General’s report includes updates on food labelling decisions by Norway and Canada in fulfilment of this aspect of resolution 2334. For instance, it notes that Norway announced that foodstuffs originating from the oPt sold in Norway must bear an indication of their territory of origin, including whether they are from the settlements.

The Ad Hoc Committee for the purpose of announcing voluntary commitments to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) met on 23 June. Secretary-General António Guterres and UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini addressed the meeting. Guterres encouraged states to reflect on how “investing in UNRWA means investing in stability in the region”, including against terrorism. Lazzarini said that the agency is chronically underfunded at a time when it faces increasing costs and demands. Lazzarini highlighted the discrepancy between UNRWA’s current financing model, which obliges the agency to rely on unpredictable voluntary contributions, and its mandate, which assigns it government-like functions, such as the provision of education and health services.

From 13 to 16 July, US President Joe Biden is expected to travel to Israel, the West Bank and Saudi Arabia, where he will attend a summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council plus Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan (GCC+3). According to media reports, the visit to Israel will go ahead notwithstanding the collapse of the coalition government and Biden is likely to meet with caretaker Prime Minister Lapid and other Israeli leaders.

A key issue that the Palestinian Authority may discuss with Biden is the status of the US diplomatic mission to the Palestinians in Jerusalem. During the Trump administration, the US Consulate in

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2334](#) (23 December 2016) condemned Israeli settlements and called for immediate steps to prevent violence against civilians, including acts of terror; it was adopted with 14 votes in favour and a US abstention. [Secretary-General’s Report S/2022/504](#) (22 June 2022) was the twenty-second Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of resolution 2334.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

East Jerusalem was closed and downgraded to the “Palestinian Affairs Unit” within the US Embassy in Israel. (In a highly controversial move, former US President Donald Trump moved the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in 2018.) In June, the US announced that the “Palestinian Affairs Unit” was being renamed the “US Office of Palestinian Affairs” and that it will report to Washington on substantive issues while continuing to operate under the US Embassy in Jerusalem. The Israeli news outlet Haaretz has reported that senior Palestinian officials are not satisfied with the change as it falls short of reopening the consulate in East Jerusalem, a move Israel strongly opposes.

Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz announced on 20 June that Israel had been working with the US on a regional partnership named the Middle East Air Defense Alliance which, he said, had “already enabled the successful interception of Iranian attempts to attack Israel and other countries”. On 31 May, Israel and Council member the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a major free trade agreement which will remove tariffs on many products, including food, cosmetics and medicines.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 50th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue with, and considered the first report of, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the oPt, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (A/HRC/50/21). The Commission reviewed the findings and status of the implementation of recommendations of previous UN fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry on the situation, and those of other UN human rights bodies. The Commission “found that the key findings and recommendations linked to the underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict have not been implemented, and that this lack of implementation is at the heart of the systematic recurrence of violations in both the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel”. (The Commission was established by HRC resolution S-30/1 adopted on 27 May 2021.)

Women, Peace and Security

On 24 June, the Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security (IEG) held a meeting on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. Wennesland briefed. This was the first time the IEG met on the situation in Israel and the oPt.

Key Issues and Options

The overarching issue for the Council remains determining how it can better support the resumption of political negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians to move towards a resolution of the conflict and achieve a two-state solution. In the absence of progress towards this, ongoing issues include preventing new escalations of violence, the expansion of settlements in the oPt, and other developments that undermine the viability of a two-state solution. Current Council dynamics and recent developments—such as the uncertainty about the outcome of the upcoming Israeli elections—make it unlikely that the Council will adopt a product to, for instance, condemn recent plans for settlement expansion and stress the importance of further relaxing and ultimately lifting the Gaza blockade.

In March, the HRC appointed Francesca P. Albanese to the role of Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, taking over from Michael Lynk. In a 16 May statement, Albanese—together with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, and Balakrishnan Rajagopal, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context—called for stopping “the forced evictions, arbitrary displacement and forcible transfer” of Palestinian communities from a cluster of villages in the West Bank known as Masafer Yatta.

An option would be for the Council to meet in a closed meeting format with Albanese, Jimenez-Damary and Rajagopal to engage in a frank discussion on the international humanitarian law prohibition of forcible transfers as it applies to the oPt and the consequences of this practice for both the communities at risk of being forcibly displaced and the wider resolution of the conflict.

Council Dynamics

The press statement on the killing of Abu Akleh represented a rare show of consensus in the Council’s work on the situation in Israel and the oPt. It is unlikely, however, that this consensus will carry over into the Council’s engagement on the political aspects underpinning the divide. In the context of the April clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount site in Jerusalem’s Old City, some Council members held preliminary discussions on issuing press elements calling for a de-escalation. However, divisions among members on whether and how to mention the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount site—which reflect divisions between Israelis and Palestinians regarding this site—prevented agreement on the proposed text.

In addition, it appears that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is further complicating Council dynamics on this file. During May’s monthly meeting on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”, the US referred to “how Russia’s unprovoked war of aggression in Ukraine is affecting food insecurity in the region”, adding that Russia is blocking food exports and “actively impeding Ukrainian farmers”. Ambassador Vasily Nebenzia (Russia) countered that these accusations were misleading and lamented the decision of the organisers of the 9-10 May meeting of the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) not to invite Russia. Nebenzia said: “Any attempt to exclude Russia from the process of resolving the Palestinian question, the situation in Syria or any other Middle East crisis would be counterproductive.” (The AHLC is a 15-member committee that coordinates development assistance to the Palestinian people at policy level and is chaired by Council member Norway.) During the April monthly meeting, Russia expressed disappointment at the fact that its “Quartet colleagues again and again refuse[d] to cooperate on resuming the Middle East peace process”.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council will hold its monthly briefing and consultations on Yemen. UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg, the head of the UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), General Michael Beary and a representative of OCHA are expected to brief. The Council is expected to renew the mandate of UNMHA, which expires on 15 July.

Key Recent Developments

On 2 June, the parties to Yemen's conflict agreed to a two-month extension of the truce agreement, which had been in effect since 2 April and was set to expire later that day. Security Council members issued a press statement welcoming the extension and expressing the hope that the truce could be translated into a durable ceasefire.

Ahead of the truce extension, Grundberg organised a meeting of representatives of the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebel group in Amman, Jordan, from 26 to 28 May to discuss options for opening key roads in Taiz and other governorates. Improving movement in and out of Taiz city, which has been under a Houthi siege, is an important element of the truce agreement. At a second meeting, held from 5 to 6 June, Grundberg shared an updated proposal with the parties for the phased opening of roads, including the main route from Taiz city to the Hawban area east of the city. The proposal also contained plans for an implementation mechanism and commitments to the safety of civilian travellers.

On 28 May and 6 June, the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen also convened the first two meetings of the military coordination committee in Amman. These meetings brought together military representatives of the Yemeni government, the Saudi Arabia-led coalition, which supports the government and the Houthis. The committee agreed to meet monthly and set up a joint coordination room to address issues of concern in a timely manner, according to Grundberg's briefing at the Council's 14 June meeting on Yemen.

On 13 June, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen David Gressly launched a crowdfunding campaign to help raise the \$80 million required to start the first phase of a UN-facilitated plan to transfer the oil on the decrepit FSO Safer oil tanker, which is moored off Houthi-held Ras Isa port in the Red Sea, to a temporary vessel. Recent pledges from the US and Saudi Arabia of \$10 million each brought total donor commitments to about \$60 million. The crowdsourcing campaign seeks to raise an additional \$5 million in individual donations for the operation to prevent a catastrophic oil spill if the vessel breaks up.

During the 14 June briefing, Grundberg highlighted positive effects of the truce. Civilian casualties have declined significantly, though there has been a rise in victims of landmines and unexploded ordnance as more people have begun to move around. Eight commercial round-trip flights have transported 2,795 passengers from Sana'a to Amman and Cairo since the truce agreement, and more fuel entered Hodeidah ports in April and May than during all of last year, alleviating Yemen's fuel crisis. Grundberg reported that the Yemeni government had responded positively to his proposal for the phased opening of roads in Taiz and other governorates, but that he was still waiting for the Houthis' response. Grundberg said that

over the following six weeks his focus would be on promoting the implementation and consolidation of all the elements of the truce. He also planned to initiate negotiations on the economic and security tracks of the multitrack framework that he has been developing for an inclusive political process to end the conflict.

OCHA Acting Operations Director Ghada Eltahir Mudawi also briefed during the meeting. Despite the truce, Yemen's humanitarian crisis could worsen because of the rise in global food prices, to which Yemen is particularly vulnerable since it imports nearly all its food. Mudawi flagged an increase in restrictions on the movement of aid agencies in recent months and misinformation campaigns, both of which make relief work more difficult. She also noted that the 2022 Yemen humanitarian response plan is only funded at 26 percent.

Beary delivered his first in-person briefing to members in closed consultations. In a letter dated 14 June, the Secretary-General submitted his annual review of UNMHA to the Council. It highlighted that the mission is operating in a significantly changed military and political landscape since the withdrawal in November 2021 of the Yemeni government-affiliated Joint Forces from Hodeidah city and the establishment of new frontlines about 100 kilometres further south. The letter noted several future critical functions for the mission. These include maintaining the civilian nature of Hodeidah's ports and for UNMHA to continue increasing its monitoring of the ports. Given the new frontlines, UNMHA should expand its footprint to the south, according to the review, and the mission has an agreement with the Yemeni government on establishing a permanent presence in the Joint Forces-held city of Mokha. Another key role, according to the review, will be to enhance its coordination of mine-action activities.

In press elements after the meeting, Council members welcomed the parties' discussions about the truce's implementation and reiterated their call for urgent progress in negotiations on Taiz.

During June, news reports said that the Houthis and Saudi Arabia had resumed virtual talks, facilitated by Oman, on future relations under any peace deal and security along the Yemen-Saudi Arabia border.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 3 June press briefing, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that "for the past two months, a truce has meant the people of Yemen have seen violence and hostilities decrease". Between 2 April and 1 June, the UN Human Rights Office in Yemen gathered preliminary information indicating that at least 19 civilians had been killed and 32 injured in some 20 incidents of conflict-related violence, with the majority of casualties being caused by landmines, the spokesperson said. The spokesperson also urged the parties "to make serious efforts to ensure that roads into the city of [Taiz] are reopened".

Women, Peace and Security

Ahead of the 14 June meeting on Yemen, Ambassador Ferit Hoxha (Albania) delivered a press statement on behalf of a group of Council members that have committed to implementing a set of pledges on women, peace and security during their respective Council presidencies. (The group comprises Albania, Brazil, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, the United Arab Emirates, and the UK.) The statement expressed support for Grundberg's efforts to consult with a diverse group of actors, including Yemeni women, and called on all parties to ensure the "full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the peace process in Yemen". Among other issues, Hoxha expressed concern

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2624 (28 February 2022) renewed the Yemen sanctions regime for one year. S/RES/2586 (14 July 2021) renewed the mandate of UNMHA until 15 July 2022. Security Council Letter S/2022/484 (13 June 2022) was the Secretary-General's annual review of UNMHA. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9063 (14 June 2022) was a briefing on Yemen. Security Council Press Statement SC/14923 (3 June 2022) welcomed the 2 June extension of the truce in Yemen.

Yemen

at the impact of the war in Ukraine on the global food market, which, through growing shortages of basic foods and rising prices, affects the economic situation of women, especially in rural areas. He also expressed deep concern at the evidence of a Houthis policy to target politically active women and urged all conflict parties “to adopt commitments to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence”.

Azal Al-Salafi, protection and advocacy officer at The Peace Track Initiative, briefed the Council during the 14 June meeting on Yemen, providing additional perspective on gender issues. Among other recommendations, Al-Salafi urged the Council to continue to call for inclusive peace talks and to support the creation of a permanent Gender Advisor post in the Special Envoy’s office, appointing an expert with strong feminist values.

Sanctions-Related Developments

In a 17 May letter, the Secretary-General informed the Council that he had appointed three members to the Yemen Panel of Experts, nationals from Germany, India and Liberia as the arms, finance and international humanitarian law experts, respectively. The two other experts, on armed groups and on regional matters, would be appointed as soon as possible, according to the letter.

On 10 June, the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee held consultations with Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba.

Key Issues and Options

The implementation and consolidation of the truce, including reaching agreement on the reopening of roads in Taiz and other governorates, is a key issue. A further key issue is making progress on restarting a political process based on Grundberg’s multitrack framework, as the truce will be unsustainable without a process in place for a comprehensive political settlement. Council members could encourage the parties’ continued engagement with the UN Special Envoy to strengthen the truce and urge Yemeni stakeholders to hold continued consultations and negotiations on his framework, which covers political, security and economic tracks.

Notwithstanding the truce’s positive impact on the humanitarian situation, key issues remain, such as preventing famine, improving humanitarian access, supporting the economy, and raising funds for relief operations. Rising global food and energy prices since the start of the war in Ukraine present significant threats to efforts to ease Yemen’s humanitarian crisis. Members could encourage donors to contribute to the UN’s 2022 Yemen humanitarian response plan and fill the remaining funding requirements to begin implementing the UN-facilitated plan for the FSO Safer.

Another issue for July is the mandate renewal of UNMHA and whether the mandate requires changes, considering its new operating landscape. The Council may renew UNMHA for another year while largely maintaining its mandate, including its role in monitoring the 2018 Hodeidah governorate ceasefire agreement. The Council could reiterate the importance of UNMHA’s freedom of movement and of preserving the civilian nature of the Hodeidah ports while endorsing the Secretary-General’s recommendation to expand UNMHA’s footprint.

Council Dynamics

Council members have remained generally united over Yemen despite the increased polarisation in the Security Council since the start of the war in Ukraine. The P5 ambassadors to Yemen (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US) have maintained coordination in support of the UN envoy’s efforts. In the Council, members have encouraged the parties to uphold and extend the truce. They also want the parties to make progress towards starting a political process for a comprehensive settlement to end the war. The United Arab Emirates, an elected Council member, is a member of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition and will strongly push for its views to be reflected in Council products.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen. Ambassador Ferit Hoxha (Albania) chairs the Yemen 2140 Sanctions Committee.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) ahead of its 15 July expiry.

Key Recent Developments

The Council last discussed Haiti in a 16 June meeting, during which it was briefed by Special Representative and head of BINUH Helen La Lime and Arnoux Descardes, Executive Director of the NGO Volontariat pour le Développement d’Haïti. La Lime outlined the key findings of the Secretary-General’s latest report on Haiti, dated 13 June, which describes in stark terms the multidimensional crises facing the country.

The briefers and Council members lamented the ongoing political stalemate and emphasised the importance of a broad and

inclusive inter-Haitian dialogue to pave the way toward elections and constitutional reform. Two main political factions are competing for power and have charted opposing plans to lead Haiti out of its political crisis: a group supporting Prime Minister Ariel Henry and his plan to hold a constitutional referendum followed by elections by the end of 2022, with Henry leading the country until then; and the so-called “Montana Group”, for whom the constitutional referendum is not a priority and who seek a two-year transitional government under different interim leadership, with elections to be held in 2023.

Many speakers took note of the formation on 31 March of a tripartite committee—composed of representatives of academia, faith-based organisations and the private sector—that aims to broaden consensus towards national elections. By May, the committee had begun a process of nationwide consultations focused on

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2600](#) (15 October 2021) renewed the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH). [Security Council Letter S/2022/369](#) (29 April 2022) was a letter from the Secretary-General to the Security Council conveying the findings of a strategic assessment of BINUH. [Secretary-General’s Report S/2022/481](#) (13 June 2022) was the latest 120-day report on Haiti and the special political mission. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9066](#) (16 June 2022) was on the situation in Haiti.

Haiti

five main themes: security, elections, constitutional reform, governance arrangements, and humanitarian issues. Speakers also noted that Henry recently held a series of direct talks with leaders of the “Montana Group”, who proposed new modalities for the relaunching of formal negotiations. Descardes underlined that “[o]nly an inter-Haitian dialogue can build a broader consensus” and therefore urged political actors to “go beyond statements of good intentions”.

The escalation of gang violence in recent months remains a major concern. On 24 April, fighting erupted between the two rival gangs “Chen Mechan” and “400 Mawazo” in several communes of Haiti’s capital Port-au-Prince (Croix-des Bouquets, Tabarre and Cité Soleil) and has since spread to additional communes in the capital. Between 1 January and 31 May, the Haitian National Police recorded 540 kidnappings and 782 intentional homicides—which represent an increase of 36.4 percent and 17 percent, respectively, compared with the final five months of 2021. The Secretary-General’s report notes that 198 kidnappings and 201 homicides were recorded in May alone.

At the 16 June meeting, many Council members emphasised the detrimental effects of the surging violence on civilians, particularly women and children. Most Council members referenced the high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence. Partial data collected by BINUH paints an alarming picture, indicating an average of 98 victims of sexual violence per month between January and March in Port-au-Prince, mainly in gang-controlled areas. The Secretary-General’s report says that women, girls and LGBTI persons are particularly exposed to sexual violence, including rape and sexual slavery, while men and boys are also affected by such violence.

In a 23 June statement, UNICEF outlined the effects of the recent spike in violence on children’s education in Haiti. An assessment conducted by the Haitian Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training and UNICEF in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area in April and May revealed that more than 500 out of 976 schools were dysfunctional or inaccessible due to clashes between armed groups, among other things. In addition, eight percent of the assessed schools are occupied by armed gangs or by displaced families.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 30 June, during its 50th session, the Human Rights Council considered and adopted the final outcomes of the Universal Period Review of Haiti (A/HRC/50/15). The report contains 221 recommendations to be examined by Haiti.

Key Issues and Options

The key priority for the Council in July is to renew BINUH’s mandate. Members are expected to reflect on how the mission’s mandate can best support Haitian authorities in addressing the governance and security issues in the country. They are likely to consider if and how to incorporate the recommendations put forward in the strategic assessment of BINUH’s mandate, which Council members received on 29 April. The Council requested the assessment in resolution 2600 of 15 October 2021 to determine whether and how the mission’s mandate could be adjusted to address Haiti’s challenges and to increase the effectiveness of the mission. The assessment determined that BINUH is well placed to create space for political

dialogue and called for the continuation of the mandate.

Among other things, the assessment warned that gangs could “develop an almost insurgent capability” if left unchecked, while outlining the many challenges that the Haitian National Police (HNP) faces in addressing the security situation, including difficulties in recruiting and vetting police officers, and endemic corruption. In this regard, it advised that BINUH should “receive adequate resources to scale up its advisory support to strengthen the capacity of the national police to fight gangs, reopen police commissariats in areas affected by gang violence and stem illicit financial flows”. Subsequently, the Secretary-General recommended in his 13 June report on Haiti to increase BINUH’s ceiling of authorised police advisers from 30 to 42. He further called for a 12-month renewal of BINUH’s mandate.

To inform deliberations ahead of the mandate renewal, it seems that Brazil had sought to schedule a Council visiting mission to Haiti during its July presidency. At the 16 June meeting, Brazil noted that it had decided to postpone the visit because of the precarious security conditions in Haiti and BINUH’s insufficient resources to guarantee the safety of the visiting mission. Until conditions permit an in-person visit, members may consider holding informal virtual meetings with Haitian actors to hear their views about various aspects relating to BINUH’s mandate and the UN’s work in the country. Such an informal practice has developed in the Council’s work on Colombia.

The dire effects of the insecurity on children are a matter of concern. Haiti is not on the Security Council’s agenda on children and armed conflict, and as such, the Secretary-General’s annual report on children and armed conflict does not contain information on the situation of children in the country. In light of the alarming incidence of grave violations committed against children in Haiti—including cases of sexual violence and abductions—members may consider inviting a UNICEF representative to brief the Council in its next meeting on Haiti.

Council Dynamics

BINUH’s mandate has been contentious since the mission’s inception in October 2019. Although united in the view that Haiti faces grave political, economic, security, and humanitarian challenges, Council members hold different opinions on how these should be addressed. China has argued that the UN system has provided large amounts of funding without the desired effect and that synergies with the UN agencies’ funds and programmes or regional organisations should be explored. Other members are of the view that BINUH’s mandate should be strengthened to better position the mission to address the many challenges facing the country.

During the most recent negotiations on BINUH’s mandate, which took place in October 2021, China advocated a six-month mandate renewal and requested the strategic review with a view to identifying a strategy for the mission’s drawdown, placing emphasis on the government’s primary responsibility for addressing the country’s difficulties. However, other members opposed China’s suggestions, preferring instead the customary one-year mandate renewal. As a result of the contentious negotiations, which included the tabling of a competing draft by China, resolution 2600 renewed BINUH’s mandate for nine months, shorter than the usual period.

Haiti

During the 16 June meeting, many members indicated their positions regarding BINUH's upcoming mandate renewal. Albania, Brazil, Mexico, Ireland, and the A3 members (Gabon, Ghana and Kenya) called for the strengthening of BINUH's mandate to ensure that the mission is fit to address the multi-dimensional challenges plaguing Haiti. Among other things, these members advocated the strengthening of the mission's human rights component, including by deploying additional personnel specialising in sexual and gender-based violence. France, Mexico and the US called for a 12-month renewal of the mandate, with France also expressing its support for raising the ceiling of the mission's authorised police advisers to 42.

Brazil addressed other issues not mentioned by other Council members, arguing, for example, that BINUH should be given a mandate to support the Haitian authorities in controlling illicit financial flows. It further noted that there is a lack of trust in BINUH among the local population, which is partly attributable to misconceptions about the mission's role in the country, and advocated a focus by the mission on strategic communications—the topic of one of Brazil's

signature events during its presidency.

China did not spell out its position on the mandate renewal but noted that the Council should use the opportunity to “explore more effective ways for BINUH to provide Haiti with support”. It added that the mission should “use a regular review mechanism to assess the implementation of all mandated tasks and make timely adjustments in order to optimize such implementation”.

Some speakers highlighted the nexus between security and development at the 16 June meeting, arguing that efforts to stabilise the security situation should go hand in hand with initiatives aimed at addressing the dire socioeconomic conditions in the country. The A3 called on the UN country team in Haiti to support economic development through a focus on employment and women's empowerment to offer young people opportunities that will prevent them from joining gangs. The United Arab Emirates noted that efforts to improve the security sector will be more effective if they are accompanied by community violence-reduction programmes.

The US and Mexico are co-penholders on Haiti.

Colombia

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council is expected to receive a briefing from Special Representative and head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia Carlos Ruiz Massieu on recent developments and the Secretary-General's latest 90-day report on the mission, dated 27 June. Francisco de Roux, the head of Colombia's Truth Commission, and a civil society representative are also expected to brief at the meeting, which will have a transitional justice-related focus.

The verification mission's mandate expires on 31 October.

Key Recent Developments

Several major developments have occurred in recent months in Colombia, including a significant shift in the political landscape and crucial progress on transitional justice processes. On 19 June, Gustavo Petro of the left-wing “Pacto Histórico” coalition was elected president with over 50.4 per cent of the vote, marking the first time that the country has elected a leftist president. Petro served as Bogotá's mayor from 2014 to 2015 and was formerly a member of the guerrilla organisation “19th of April Movement” (M-19), which demobilised and became a political party in the late 1980s. Environmental activist Francia Márquez was his running mate. She will become the first Afro-Colombian woman to serve as Vice President in Colombian history. Petro and Márquez will assume office on 7 August.

The Secretary-General noted in his latest report on Colombia that the elections were held in a generally peaceful manner. He also welcomed commitments expressed by the President-elect to further the implementation of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the government of Colombia and the former rebel group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP).

Petro and Márquez's campaign platform addressed several matters relating to the implementation of the peace agreement—which they pledged to “make...come true in its entirety”, with the help of Colombian society and the international community. The overall focus of their campaign was on socioeconomic issues such as the eradication of poverty and food insecurity, and their platform indicates a certain focus on the implementation of provisions of the agreement that can contribute to these goals, including the comprehensive rural reform and the National Crop Substitution Plan. With regard to transitional justice and security, Petro and Márquez have pledged to support the components of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition—comprised of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), the Truth Commission, and the Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing—and reactivate the work of the National Commission on Security Guarantees, which is charged under the peace agreement with developing a public policy for dismantling criminal organisations and their support networks.

During the campaign period, some civil society actors called on the candidates to include in their political agenda the holding of peace talks with the armed group Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). Petro has expressed a willingness to negotiate with the ELN, with the aim of reaching a peace agreement that will draw lessons from the 2016 peace agreement with the former FARC-EP. In a 20 June statement, the ELN noted that while it “maintains its system of political and military struggle and resistance”, the group is also willing to engage with the incoming administration in peace negotiations, continuing the peace process that began with former President Juan Manuel Santos in Quito, Ecuador, in 2017. The process concluded without agreement in August 2018, when President Iván Duque assumed office. Throughout his term, Duque refused to conduct

UN DOCUMENTS ON COLOMBIA Secretary-General's Report S/2022/513 (27 June 2022) was the most recent 90-day report. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9015** (12 April 2022) was the Security Council's latest quarterly meeting on Colombia.

Colombia

dialogue with the ELN, setting as preconditions for engagement with the group the release of all hostages and the end of ELN kidnappings and attacks.

A milestone in the peace process was reached on 28 June, when the Truth Commission issued its final report, which aims to set out the truth about the armed conflict in Colombia between 1958 and 2016. The report identifies human rights violations committed by both parties during the conflict, provides a narrative of the conflict's lasting effects on various groups in society—including ethnic groups, children, women, and LGBTI persons—and outlines recommendations on next steps relating to national reconciliation. The commission will work on familiarising the public with the report until its mandate expires on 27 August. Following the end of the Truth Commission's mandate, a committee is set to be established to follow up on the report's recommendations.

In another crucial development during the reporting period, the SJP for the first time held public hearings on acknowledgement of truth and responsibility within Case 01 (on crimes committed by the FARC-EP such as hostage-taking and other serious deprivations of liberty) and Case 03 (on killings and forced disappearances presented by state agents as combat casualties, also known as “false positives”). During the hearing on Case 03, which took place in April, ten former members of the military—who had already recognised their responsibility in writing last year—listened to the accounts of 35 victims. While recognising the contribution of the indicted former members of the security forces to the truth, the victims asked for further information on the responsibility of higher-ranking officials. Over the course of three days (31 May, 2 June and 6 June), former top FARC-EP commanders listened to the accounts of 29 victims and their families, acknowledged their responsibility and asked for forgiveness. Following these hearings, the SJP is expected to determine whether the acknowledgement of responsibility and contributions to the truth by the indicted make them eligible for restorative sentences. (In accordance with the 2016 peace agreement, those who are not eligible will be subject to the Colombian penal code and may face imprisonment of up to 20 years.)

Key Issues and Options

Colombia stands at an inflection point where the shift in government and the progress on transitional justice can create both opportunities and challenges to the implementation of the 2016 agreement. An issue for the Council is to determine how it can play a constructive role in helping Colombians overcome such challenges and promoting the comprehensive implementation of the agreement.

Members can consider issuing a press statement encouraging the incoming administration to fulfil its stated commitments regarding the implementation of the peace agreement and referencing specific steps that the incoming administration could take during and after the transition period. One such recommendation—put forward by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, which tracks progress in the implementation of the 2016 peace accord—is for the incoming government to create a task force to establish dialogue with the Truth Commission and jointly outline an action plan for the report's socialisation period (that is, until 27 August) and for the committee that will follow up on the report's recommendations. This task force could include representatives

from the education, cultural and human rights sectors.

Another option for the Council is to consider a visiting mission to Colombia, where it can interact with local actors, including civil society, to hear their views about ways to overcome potential challenges to the peace agreement. Previous Council visiting missions to Colombia, which took place in May 2017 and July 2019, signalled the Council's political support for the implementation of the agreement.

Concurrent with recent developments on transitional justice processes in the country, Council members have explored opportunities to interact informally with actors on the ground. On 27 April, Ireland, Norway and the UK organised a virtual meeting between Council experts in New York and representatives of the Truth Commission. It seems that the discussion explored ways for the Truth Commission to present its findings to the Council, among other things. Following next month's quarterly meeting on Colombia, Ireland will convene an Arria-formula meeting on transitional justice in Colombia; this can also allow interaction between Council members, victims and civil society organisations. Members may use this opportunity to derive good practices from the case of Colombia and identify their relevance to other situations on the Council's agenda which are undergoing transitional justice processes.

Council Dynamics

Council members are united in their support of the peace process in Colombia. However, members' attitudes towards the governing administration in the country have at times affected Council dynamics on the file. Russia, for example, has often rebuked the Duque government for insufficient implementation of the peace agreement and its refusal to conduct dialogue with the ELN. More recently, Duque's public condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to Russia adopting a particularly critical tone at the Council's 12 April meeting on Colombia, in which Duque represented his country. Following the meeting, members were not able to agree on a press statement, apparently due to objections raised by Russia. (The issuance of a press statement following the Council's quarterly Colombia meetings has become standard practice for Council members.) It remains to be seen how the inauguration of a new administration in Colombia may influence this dynamic.

To date, Russia has been the most vocal in calling on the government to conduct dialogue with the ELN, while other Council members have rarely raised the issue in the open chamber. In light of the incoming administration's expressed willingness to engage with the group, other members may consider referencing the issue in their public statements.

Unusually, the 12 April Council meeting did not include a civil society briefer, a choice by the UK (penholder on Colombia and the Council president in April) criticised by many Colombian actors, including civil society and members of the Comunes party (which is comprised of former FARC-EP members). At the meeting, Russia lamented the fact that civil society was not able to present its views on the implementation of the peace agreement. Mexico noted that civil society briefers had given important perspectives on the situation in Colombia at previous Council meetings. It added that “[t]he participation of civil society in all UN platforms, including the Security Council, establishes a favourable balance that cannot and should not be ignored.”

Cyprus

Expected Council Action

In July, Security Council members are expected to receive a briefing in consultations on the situation in Cyprus. Special Representative and head of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) Colin Stewart is expected to brief. The Council is expected to renew UNFICYP's mandate ahead of its 31 July expiry.

Background and Key Recent Developments

The UNFICYP mandate renewal in July will take place against the backdrop of a lack of meaningful developments on the political front. The unification talks have remained at an impasse in the five years since the collapse of negotiations at Crans-Montana in July 2017. Efforts to reinvigorate the political process and find common ground for the resumption of talks have failed to establish agreement between the two delegations to proceed with formal negotiations. Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades remains firmly committed to a settlement based on a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation (BBF) with political equality, as stipulated in previous Security Council resolutions, while Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar insists on a two-state solution based on sovereign equality.

Negotiations on the appointment of a UN envoy on Cyprus to succeed Jane Holl Lute, who resigned in September 2021, also remain at a deadlock. Following an informal meeting between Anastasiades and Tatar, hosted by Secretary-General António Guterres on 27 September 2021, the two leaders expressed divergent positions on the specific role and mandate of the envoy. According to media reports, Tatar objected to the appointment of a UN special envoy, preferring a personal envoy. (Special envoys are usually assigned to undertake special missions related to matters of which the Security Council or the General Assembly are seized, while personal envoys undertake missions at the Secretary-General's initiative.) Tatar reportedly argued that while a special envoy would be constrained by having to operate strictly within the framework of the BBF with political equality, a personal envoy would have greater autonomy to explore new ideas, including his proposed two-state solution. Anastasiades reportedly reiterated the need to appoint an envoy during a meeting with Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča on 12 April.

The issue of irregular crossings of asylum seekers, the majority of whom arrive at the Turkish Cypriot side of the island before crossing the UN-administered buffer zone, continues to be a source of tension between the sides. In 2021, over 80 percent of asylum seekers entered the Greek Cypriot Republic of Cyprus through the buffer zone. The Republic of Cyprus has the highest number of asylum applications per capita among EU nations, with asylees making up roughly five percent of its population. According to Greek Cypriot Interior Minister Nicos Nouris, the number of asylum applications doubled to roughly 10,000 from January through May compared to the same period in 2021. After visiting the Pournara migrant reception centre on 18 June, European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas reportedly said that the Turkish Cypriot authorities “must also assume their share of responsibility” and that the EU will “find a way to remind them”.

In addition, the war in Ukraine has led to concerns that the global food insecurity exacerbated by the war could lead to new waves of migrants from Africa and the Middle East arriving in southern Europe. On 4 June, the interior ministers of Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Spain called for a more robust EU policy on migration. Criticising the EU's voluntary policy on burden-sharing, which does not legally oblige EU members to assist each other in the area of asylum and immigration, Nouris said that “solidarity in our minds cannot be voluntary”.

Between 29 May and 2 June, the Greek Cypriot national guard and the Israeli armed forces conducted joint military drills in Cyprus as part of the countries' bilateral defence cooperation programme. Spokesperson of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye, Tanju Bilgiç reportedly issued a statement on 4 June criticising the military exercise as “destabilizing the region”. The Republic of Cyprus and Türkiye remain locked in a dispute over the exploration of hydrocarbon resources off the coast of Cyprus. Greece, Israel and Cyprus signed a deal in January 2020 to build a pipeline delivering natural gas from the eastern Mediterranean to Europe. On 14 June, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi reportedly expressed hope during a visit to Israel that natural gas supplies from the eastern Mediterranean, possibly liquified by Egyptian processing plants, could help alleviate the effects of European dependence on Russian energy given the ongoing war in Ukraine. Russia significantly reduced natural gas supplies to Europe on 17 June.

Women, Peace and Security

Despite stalled progress on the political front, effective cooperation between the sides through the Technical Committee on Gender Equality resulted in agreement on an action plan to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace talks. To this end, the action plan proposes that all delegations in meetings leading up to and taking part in the settlement process include no more than two-thirds of any gender. This principle also applies to the appointment of co-chairs and members of working groups and technical committees supporting the peace talks. The plan also recommends that delegations include a gender expert to guarantee that a gender perspective is fully integrated at all levels.

The action plan also seeks to enhance engagement with civil society, including women and youth organisations, to solicit their views on the peace talks. In this regard, the Technical Committee on Gender Equality is responsible under the plan for regularly engaging with civil society in advance of and throughout the settlement process. In addition, the action plan encourages public outreach and information-sharing to inform the public of the benefits of a settlement and to improve the public atmosphere for negotiations to secure a settlement. The action plan recommends that the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot delegations develop a joint communication strategy to that end.

On 13 April, Anastasiades and Tatar attended the official launch of the action plan at a UN compound inside the buffer zone. The plan was embraced at the inauguration ceremony as an important step forward in helping revive the stalled peace talks.

Key Issues and Options

Since the collapse of the 2017 unification talks, the key issue for the Security Council has been the lack of meaningful progress on the political front and the diminishing prospects for reaching a political

UN DOCUMENTS ON CYPRUS [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2618](#) (27 January 2022) renewed UNFICYP's mandate for another six months, until 31 July 2022. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/13** (23 July 2021) condemned Tatar's announcement on 20 July 2021 regarding the reopening of a section of the fenced-off area of Varosha. **Secretary-General's Reports S/2021/1110** (31 December 2021) was a report on UNFICYP. **S/2021/1109** (31 December 2021) was the report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus. **Security Council Letter S/2022/317** (13 April 2022) was a letter from the Republic of Cyprus to the UN containing, inter alia, allegations of the illegal use of closed ports and airports by Turkish naval and air forces.

Cyprus

settlement of the Cyprus problem. Given the current deadlock, the Council could take several actions to revive the peace process.

In renewing UNFICYP's mandate in July, the Council may wish to urge the parties to reach an agreement regarding the Secretary-General's proposal to appoint a UN envoy on Cyprus. While the Council may reiterate its firm commitment to a peaceful settlement based on a framework of BBF with political equality, it could also reassure the parties that the envoy will not be constrained in their search for common ground for the resumption of talks.

To improve the public atmosphere for negotiating a peaceful settlement, the Council may call on the leaders to develop a joint communication strategy and urge the implementation of the action plan to promote women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the peace process. In this regard, they may also encourage robust engagement with women and youth organisations, led by the Technical Committee on Gender Equality, to broaden the inclusivity of the peace talks and advance reconciliation and peacebuilding objectives.

Another key issue for the Council is establishing a direct military contact mechanism between the parties, facilitated by UNFICYP. In his latest report on the mission, the Secretary-General said that such a mechanism would "allow the parties to effectively alleviate day-to-day tensions in and around the buffer zone". Positions on the mechanism's composition, however, "remained far apart and hardly bridgeable", as the Greek Cypriot authorities believe that the mechanism should only involve the Turkish military as opposed to Turkish Cypriot forces. In renewing UNFICYP's mandate in

July, the Council may decide to encourage the parties to approach negotiations on the basis of "engagement without recognition" and undertake significant confidence-building measures, which could help facilitate the resumption of negotiations.

Council Dynamics

Cyprus remains a low-intensity issue on the Council's agenda. Council members with a vested interest in Cyprus include France, Russia and the UK. In addition to being a guarantor power, the UK also serves as the penholder on this issue.

While the Council is united in its support for the political process, members diverge on the conditions and timeframe for the unification talks. Some members have previously supported a comprehensive strategic review of the mission and timed benchmarks for an exit strategy tied to the political process. Russia remains adamant that there be no external interference or attempts to enforce solutions and schedules to influence the peace talks. While relations between the Republic of Cyprus and Russia have soured since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russia's ministry of foreign affairs posted on Twitter on 18 May that it continues to advocate for a settlement based on the BBF-with-political-equality model.

The Council is unlikely to initiate drastic changes to the mission's mandate and size. Council members will encourage the Secretary-General to continue working with the parties to find common ground for formal negotiations to commence.

Children and Armed Conflict

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on children and armed conflict. Brazilian Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Fernando Simas Magalhães is expected to chair the meeting. Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba is expected to present the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict, which is due in early July. Other speakers are likely to include Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell and a civil society briefer.

Brazil, as Council president in July, has outlined three themes for this year's annual open debate: children who are refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and stateless; abduction of children, including the different effects on girls and boys; and reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups, with a focus on the possible contribution of reintegration to peacebuilding efforts.

Background and Key Recent Developments

In 2022, as the children and armed conflict mandate marked its 25th anniversary, worrying trends of grave violations committed against children globally demonstrated the mandate's continued relevance. On 18 January, the Office of the Special Representative for Children

and Armed Conflict issued a study to mark the 25th anniversary of this mandate. The study notes that since the mandate's inception, over 170,000 children have been released from armed forces and armed groups and reintegrated into society and hundreds of thousands of children have benefited from improved protection. It further says that the signing of joint action plans between the UN and parties to conflict has "critically, although not quantifiably, prevented violence against children in situations of armed conflict in multiple contexts". To date, 39 such action plans have been signed, the most recent of which was signed on 18 April with the Houthi rebel group in Yemen.

The situation of children in Afghanistan and Ukraine, among other places, has gripped international attention since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban announced on 23 March that girls' high schools would be closed, thereby preventing girls above the sixth grade from attending school. The announcement was an abrupt reversal of the Taliban's 21 March decision to reopen all schools at the beginning of the spring semester. On 27 March, Council members issued a press statement that expressed deep concern regarding this decision and called on the Taliban to "respect the right to

Children and Armed Conflict

education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students without further delay”, among other matters. The Taliban has not reversed its decision.

With regard to Ukraine, as at 27 June, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) confirmed that at least 330 children have been killed and 489 injured since Russia invaded the country. In a 1 June statement, UNICEF said that almost two out of every three children had been displaced by fighting in Ukraine. Three million children inside Ukraine and 2.2 million children who have fled to neighbouring countries are in need of humanitarian assistance.

While Ukraine is not on the children and armed conflict agenda and information about the situation is not included in the Secretary-General’s annual report, some Council members have sought to remain abreast of the effects of the war on children by calling for dedicated Council meetings on the issue on 11 April and 12 May. (For background, see our 10 April and 11 May *What’s in Blue* stories.) An issue underlined in these meetings has been the vulnerability of children in the context of the war, including the increased risks of sexual violence and human trafficking faced by children fleeing the war. Speakers also warned about the effects of attacks on civilian infrastructure on which children depend, such as schools and hospitals.

The briefers and some Council members in these meetings underscored the applicability of the recently adopted resolution 2601 of 29 October 2021 on the protection of education in conflict, which urges all parties to cease attacks and threats of attacks against schools. This resolution, which is the first to focus on the link between education and peace and security, also calls on member states to facilitate the access to education of refugee and displaced children and emphasises the need to facilitate the continuation of education in situations of armed conflict, including through distance learning and use of digital technology.

At the 12 May meeting, several Council members (Albania, France, Ireland, Mexico, and the US) called on the Secretary-General to include Ukraine as a situation of concern in his 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict. If the Secretary-General chooses to do so, his future reports will include information on the situation in Ukraine in the narrative of the report under “other situations of concern”. Further investigation can then be undertaken by the Secretary-General and his special representative to determine which parties are responsible for committing grave violations and whether they should be listed in the annexes of his reports. The annexes list parties that have committed grave violations against children (their recruitment and use, killing and maiming, abductions, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals).

Even prior to the invasion in February, civil society organisations had called on the Secretary-General to include Ukraine as a situation of concern in his annual report. Since 2014, the fighting between the Ukrainian government and pro-Russian separatists in the two break-away provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine has led to violations being committed against children, including killing and maiming and attacks against schools. In a report published in April, the organisation Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict called

on the Secretary-General to add Ukraine as a situation of concern in his upcoming report, along with Ethiopia, Mozambique and Niger.

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict has held four formal meetings and 11 informal meetings in 2022. On 5 May, the working group adopted conclusions on the Secretary-General’s report on Yemen. Negotiations on conclusions on several other country situations—including Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Syria—are ongoing and have been difficult. In the case of Myanmar, it appears that some Council members have suggested that the conclusions on Myanmar should reflect the situation of children since the 1 February 2021 takeover of the government by the Myanmar Armed Forces (also known as the Tatmadaw), although they are beyond the scope of the 30 June 2020 cut-off date of the Secretary-General’s Myanmar report.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is having the Secretary-General’s annual reports serve as an effective tool in supporting the implementation of the children and armed conflict agenda.

Concerns have been raised that if parties that do not appear to have stopped committing violations against children are nonetheless taken off the annexes, the credibility of the Secretary-General’s report may be called into question.

This became an issue of serious concern for some Council members and civil society organisations following the Secretary-General’s decision in his 2020 annual report to de-list the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen for the violation of killing and maiming—despite the fact that the annual report showed that it had committed 222 such violations in 2019—and to de-list the Tatmadaw for the violation of recruitment and use, although they were responsible for eight cases of new recruitment and 197 cases of use in 2019. In the 2021 annual report, the Tatmadaw were re-listed for the recruitment and use of children. The Saudi-led coalition was not re-listed, even though the report showed it was responsible for killing and maiming at least 194 children in 2020.

Council members could call for the consistent and transparent application of the criteria for listing and de-listing parties, which were set out in the Secretary-General’s 2010 annual report. That report said that a party would be de-listed if the UN had verified that it “has ceased commission of all the said grave violations” for which it was listed.

Another issue is how to sustain continued attention by the Council and the wider UN membership to the children and armed conflict agenda. While the situation of children in country-specific situations and cross-cutting trends in the agenda are consistently discussed by the working group on children and armed conflict throughout the year, the Council as a whole and the wider UN membership usually address the issue only once a year, during the annual open debate. Members may consider ways to incorporate systematically opportunities to discuss the issue throughout the year.

An option is to adopt working methods commitments, such as those adopted by several Council members on women, peace and security. Such commitments can include:

- holding at least one additional meeting a year, besides the annual open debate, which addresses a cross-cutting issue relating to

Children and Armed Conflict

the children and armed conflict agenda (such as prevention of grave violations, reintegration of children, trends in specific grave violations);

- identifying Council meetings on country-specific or cross-cutting issues that can benefit from a perspective on the situation of children and inviting relevant briefers (such as the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict or a UNICEF representative);
- incorporating a focus on children and armed conflict in Council statements at meetings on country-specific situations; and
- committing to systematically seek first-hand accounts from children regarding the situation in their countries.

On this last point, Council members have on several occasions benefitted from interventions by child briefers, such as during the annual open debate held in 2020 during France's June presidency. Inviting children to brief the Council, whether in person or virtually, is a challenging issue in light of security concerns. As such, other ways to receive these inputs can be explored, such as playing a recorded video message at Council meetings.

Council Dynamics

There is strong support overall for the children and armed conflict agenda among Council members. However, political sensitivities in the Council over issues such as Myanmar and Syria have filtered down to the subsidiary body level, resulting in protracted negotiations before consensus can be reached on some conclusions in the working group.

The direct involvement of some members in conflict situations has also complicated the working group's activities. For example, since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, several members have expressed a wish to receive a briefing from the Special Representative for Children and Armed on the situation of children in Ukraine during formal and informal meetings of the working group. However, Russia has opposed the request on several occasions, before eventually agreeing to such a briefing during a 5 May meeting. In addition, it seems that dynamics around the working group's conclusions on Yemen were difficult, in part due to objections raised by the United Arab Emirates regarding references to the Saudi Arabia-led coalition.

Ambassador Mona Juul (Norway) chairs the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In July, the Council is expected to hold a briefing, followed by consultations, on the situation in Libya. The Council is expected to vote on a resolution renewing the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), which expires on 31 July, in accordance with resolution 2629. The Council may also vote to renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee by 15 July, and measures related to the illicit export of petroleum from Libya, in accordance with resolution 2571.

Key Recent Developments

Following the postponement of the national elections planned for 24 December 2021, a stand-off has persisted between two rival political factions in Libya. One faction is led by incumbent prime minister Abdoul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah, elected in February 2021 to head the interim Government of National Unity (GNU) by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF)—an assembly consisting of 75 participants representing the main Libyan geographical, social and political constituencies, which was responsible for charting the way towards elections—and the other by former Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha, who was elected interim prime minister by the House of Representatives (the Libyan legislature based in Tobruk) on 10 February.

The impasse between the factions led by Bashagha and Dbeibah, who is insisting on handing over power only after elections take place, led to violent clashes in Tripoli on 17 May, when Bashagha attempted to move his parallel government to the capital. Tripoli

returned to relative calm after Bashagha abandoned his attempt, but the security situation remained unstable. A 10 June UNSMIL statement said that the mission “received reports of clashes in Tripoli last night between armed groups, which endangered the lives of civilians, and separately of mobilization of armed groups, along with heavy weapons, from areas surrounding Tripoli”.

UN Special Advisor on Libya Stephanie Turco Williams, who at the time of writing was expected to leave the post at the end of June, initiated a dialogue forum—hosted in Cairo—to accelerate holding Libya's long-delayed elections and promote dialogue between the rival political factions, which have put forward competing electoral roadmaps. Participating were members of the House of Representatives and of the High Council of State (the executive institution and constitutional authority established by the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement that is mandated to propose policies and recommendations on various political issues).

In relation to the dialogue forum in Cairo, two rounds of negotiations were held in April and May to discuss the constitutional basis for holding elections; the participants agreed on several provisions of the draft constitution. The third and final round of negotiations took place from 12 to 19 June to address outstanding issues. In a 20 June press statement, Williams said that “the Joint Committee achieved a great deal of consensus on the contentious articles in the Libyan Draft Constitution” but that “differences persist on the measures governing the transitional period leading to elections”. She called on “the Presidencies of the two Chambers to meet within ten days at an agreed upon location to bridge outstanding issues”. On 23

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2629](#) (29 April 2022) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 31 July 2022 and maintained UNSMIL's core mandated tasks while authorising a restructuring of the mission. [Secretary-General's Report S/2022/409](#) (20 May 2022) covered developments in Libya between 18 January and 20 May. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9078](#) (27 June 2022) was a briefing on UNSMIL. [Sanctions Committee Document S/2022/427](#) (24 May 2022) was the final report of the Panel of Experts.

Libya

June, Williams announced on Twitter that “Speaker of the House of Representatives Aguila Saleh and President of the High Council of State Khaled Al-Mishri have accepted my invitation to meet at the UN Office at Geneva 28-29 June to discuss the draft constitutional framework for elections”.

Since September 2021, the Council has renewed UNSMIL’s mandate four times through short-term extensions because of disagreements among Council members concerning the length of the mandate, the restructuring of the mission, and language regarding the appointment of UNSMIL’s leadership. (For background, see our 13 September 2021, 1 October 2021, 31 January and 29 April *What’s in Blue* stories.) Most recently, on 29 April, the Council adopted resolution 2629, renewing the mandate of UNSMIL until 31 July. The resolution maintained UNSMIL’s core mandated tasks, as set out in resolution 2542 of 15 September 2020 and paragraph 16 of resolution 2570 of 16 April 2021. It authorised the mission’s restructuring, replacing the Geneva-based Special Envoy with a Tripoli-based Special Representative, supported by two Deputy Special Representatives. It also shortened the reporting cycle from 60 to 30 days. (At the time of writing, the search continues for a Special Representative.)

On 20 June, Council members discussed Libya under “any other business”, at the request of Russia. The meeting focused on the LPDF road map with a briefing by Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Mohamed Khaled Khiari. The LPDF roadmap set 22 June as the expiration date of the transitional period. In a 22 June press briefing, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General Farhan Haq noted that the roadmap set 22 June as the deadline “provided that presidential and parliamentary elections are held by then, which has not been the case”. Ahead of the 20 June meeting, Russia circulated a draft presidential statement that, among other issues, noted the end of the timeline set out by the LPDF roadmap on 22 June and called on the Secretary-General to appoint his Special Representative before the expiration of UNSMIL’s mandate on 31 July. At the time of writing, it seemed unlikely that the presidential statement would be adopted.

The Council last met on the situation in Libya on 27 June to receive an updated account of developments and UN activity. Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed. She emphasised that “the UN’s priority in Libya remains to facilitate a return to the electoral process, based on a sound and consensual constitutional basis for elections”. Bushra Alhodiri, Operation Manager of the Fezzan Libya Organisation, briefed as a member of civil society via video teleconference from Libya. (For more, see our *What’s in Blue* story of 24 June.)

Human Rights-Related Developments

A 28 March press statement on the release of a report of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) on Libya (A/HRC/49/4) noted that “continuing serious human rights violations and a culture of impunity prevailing in different parts of Libya are impeding the transition to peace, democracy and the rule of law”.

During its 50th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) is expected to hold an interactive dialogue on 6 July with the FFM on Libya and consider its report (not yet available at the time of writing) on the situation of human rights in Libya (A/HRC/50/63). The HRC is expected to consider adopting a resolution on the extension of the mandate of the FFM on Libya before the end of the session on 8 July.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 24 May, the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanction Committee transmitted its final report to the Council. Among other things, it noted that most of Libya is controlled by armed groups; designated terrorist groups continue to be active in the country; and while there was a decrease in military hostilities, serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law persisted on a large scale with impunity. The report found that the arms embargo continued to be violated with impunity, the assets freeze was not uniformly implemented and there was “one alleged attempt to illicitly export crude oil” during the reporting period. On 26 May, Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti (India) briefed the Council on the committee’s activities.

On 3 June, the Council adopted resolution 2635, renewing for one year the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya by a vote of 14 in favour, with Russia abstaining. (For more, see our *What’s in Blue* story of 2 June.)

Key Issues and Options

A key issue remains the precarious security situation linked to Libya’s uncertain electoral path. A related concern for the Council will be how to foster common political ground between the two rival governments so that they can agree on a constitutional framework to pave the way for the holding of Libya’s long-delayed elections. Council members could consider holding a closed Arria-formula meeting with Libyan civil society representatives to help generate ideas on how to promote dialogue between the rival political factions in Libya and support an inclusive political process leading to elections. When renewing the mission’s mandate, options Council members might consider could include increasing UNSMIL’s advisory capacity with additional experts on constitutional and electoral matters. Another option would be to increase the mission’s capacity in relation to economic issues and human rights.

Another issue for the Council remains the mission’s leadership. The departure of Williams, who led mediation efforts on the ground, is coming at a politically sensitive time in the country. No successor has yet been identified to succeed former Special Envoy Jan Kubiš, who resigned in November 2021, or for the position of Special Representative that is expected to replace the Special Envoy, as decided in resolution 2629.

Council Dynamics

Council dynamics on Libya are difficult, leading to challenging negotiations on the UNSMIL mandate renewal resolutions in recent months. During negotiations on resolution 2629 in April, disagreements apparently centred on the length of the mission’s mandate and the duration of the Secretary-General’s reporting cycle. The UK (as penholder) initially circulated a short draft text that would have renewed the mission’s mandate for one year and maintained the regular 60-day reporting period. Russia, however, expressed a preference for a shorter text and insisted on a three-month renewal and a shortening of the reporting period, which the penholder eventually reflected in the draft.

On 29 April, following the unanimous adoption of resolution 2629, 14 Council members (all except India) delivered explanations of vote. Many Council members, including the US and European Council members, expressed regret over the Council’s inability to agree on a substantive resolution and a longer mandate renewal.

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Russia, on the other hand, noted the need for a short-term mandate renewal to maintain pressure on reforming UNSMIL's leadership structure and called for the prompt appointment of a Special Representative.

At the briefing on 27 June, members such as the UK and US expressed their preference for a longer extension of the mandate, and Mexico and France called for a substantive mandate renewal.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

On 21 July, Security 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 the Shi'a group Hezbollah and Israel. Briefings are expected from Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wronecka and Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix.

Key recent developments

On 15 May, parliamentary elections were held in Lebanon with nearly half of the registered voters participating. A significant development was that Hezbollah and its block lost the parliamentary majority they had held since the 2018 elections. No group won a majority of seats. Another development was the election of a notable number of candidates considered to be in opposition to the establishment (13, according to Lebanese news outlet L'Orient-Le Jour). Overall, eight women were elected to the 128-seat body, the highest number to date in Lebanon.

Several electoral observation bodies reported instances of violations, including disputes and altercations in electoral centres, intimidation and vote buying practices, as well as a lack of accessibility for elderly voters and people with disabilities. According to a preliminary statement of the EU Election Observation Mission, although the electoral campaign was "vibrant" and the atmosphere was mostly calm, vote buying and clientelism "distorted the level playing field and seriously affected the voters' choice".

On 25 May, Council members issued a press statement welcoming the holding of the elections and calling for the rapid formation of an inclusive government and the urgent implementation of reforms. In what appears to be language resulting from compromise between differing positions, Council members "took note of the findings and recommendations made by observer missions". The statement also encourages "measures to enhance women's full, equal and meaningful political participation and representation, including in the new government".

During its first session on 31 May, the new parliament elected Speaker Nabih Berri to occupy this position for the seventh time, although with fewer votes than in the past. On 23 June, the parliament designated caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati as the new head of government tasked with forming a cabinet; however, any newly formed government will automatically enter caretaker status once the term of President of the Republic Michel Aoun expires in October, leaving only a short window for the Lebanese political leaders to form a government and undertake reforms.

On 7 April, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that a preliminary agreement had been reached with the Lebanese authorities to potentially support Lebanon for 46 months with around \$3 billion, on the condition that Lebanon implements a series of reforms. In a 26 June statement calling on political actors to form a government, the International Support Group (ISG) for Lebanon said that the Lebanese authorities "must deliver" on the commitments made to the IMF, "including budget laws, capital control, banking secrecy, banking resolution, government and central bank decisions on banking resolution and exchange rate unification". (The ISG is composed of the UN, China, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UK, and the US, as well as the EU and the Arab League.)

The Lebanese population continues to face the consequences of a severe socioeconomic crisis, with added concerns deriving from the effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in particular the availability of wheat.

On 21 June, Lebanon and Egypt signed an agreement for the provision of Egyptian gas to Lebanon through a pipeline running through Jordan and Syria to alleviate Lebanon's energy crisis.

Indirect talks between Israel and Lebanon on the demarcation of the maritime border restarted in June, facilitated by US Senior Advisor for Global Energy Security Amos Hochstein. The resumption of the talks was prompted by tensions between the two countries following the arrival of a floating production storage and offloading vessel to extract gas for Israel at the Karish natural gas field. Israel says that the Karish field is located in its exclusive economic zone, while Lebanon maintains that the gas field is partly located in a disputed area.

The situation of refugees and displaced people in Lebanon also remains a source of concern. On 20 June, the UN and Lebanese authorities launched the 2022-2023 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan. The plan aims to provide assistance to 1.5 million displaced Syrians, more than 209,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria, and 1.5 million people from host communities in Lebanon.

The situation in UNIFIL's area of operations remains volatile. In late April, a rocket was launched from southern Lebanon towards Israel, resulting in retaliatory fire from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). On 17 May, the IDF said it had shot down a drone belonging to Hezbollah, which had crossed into Israel's territory.

More recently, Israeli media have reported that, according to the IDF, Hezbollah—acting under the guise of an environmental protection organisation—set up around a dozen new intelligence-gathering posts along the Blue Line, a border demarcation between Israel and Lebanon. According to these reports, Israel presented documentation about these new posts to UN staff and representatives of France

Lebanon

and the US during a recent meeting at the UN headquarters in New York. The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701, due on 13 July, is likely to provide an update on these and other developments in southern Lebanon, including ongoing issues with the restriction of UNIFIL's freedom of access and movement.

On 16 June, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) unanimously sentenced Hezbollah-linked Hassan Habib Merhi and Hussein Hassan Oneissi to life imprisonment for being accomplices to intentional homicide, among other crimes. Merhi and Oneissi, both tried in absentia, were convicted in March, when the STL reversed on appeal its earlier acquittal of the two men, who remain at large. (The STL, a tribunal composed of Lebanese and international judges, began operating in 2009 to try those accused of carrying out the February 2005 bombing in which former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 21 others were killed.)

Human Rights-Related Developments

A delegation of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) visited Lebanon from 4 to 10 May. In a 12 May statement, the SPT expressed serious concern at the "persistent problems in the administration of justice, prolonged pre-trial detention, overcrowding and deplorable living conditions in many places of deprivation of liberty". On 26 June, a group of international and national civil society organisations issued a joint statement saying that while Lebanon has "strengthened its anti-torture protections on paper, in practice, torture remains prevalent". The statement calls on the Lebanese authorities to promptly and impartially investigate all allegations of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

Women, Peace and Security

At the time of writing, a visit to Lebanon by members of the Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security (IEG) was expected to take place from 28 to 30 June. This will be the first time that members of the IEG undertake a country visit.

Key Issues and Options

The lack of implementation of resolution 1701, including through a permanent ceasefire, and the substantial amount of weaponry held by Hezbollah and other non-state actors in Lebanon remain key issues for the Council. In August, Council members will discuss the renewal of UNIFIL's mandate ahead of its expiry on 31 August.

Another key issue for the Council is to provide UNIFIL with the means to carry out its tasks. At the July meeting, Council members may be interested to hear an update from the briefers on the security situation in southern Lebanon.

The potential extension of the temporary and special measures

outlined in resolution 2591 in August 2021 is likely to be one of the issues that Council members will consider during the negotiations of UNIFIL's mandate. Resolution 2591 requested UNIFIL to support the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) through temporary and special measures consisting of "non-lethal material (fuel, food and medicine) and logistical support" for a period of six months. This provision was driven by concerns about the impact of the socioeconomic crisis on the LAF's capacity to adequately carry out its functions in UNIFIL's area of operations.

In this regard, Council members may be interested in receiving an update from the briefers on the impact of the temporary and special measures on the LAF's operational capacity. The March Secretary-General's report on resolution 1701 said that, in light of the LAF's need for "additional urgent support to increase their capacity to undertake joint operations with UNIFIL", the extension of these measures could help to address challenges such as the continued impact of the economic crisis on Lebanese security institutions and the risk that "non-State armed groups could exploit any security vacuum".

Ongoing socioeconomic instability is a further issue. An 11 May report by the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier De Schutter, found that: "The Lebanese State, including its Central Bank, is responsible for human rights violations, including the unnecessary immiseration of the population, that have resulted from this man-made crisis". An option could be for Council members to invite De Schutter for a briefing.

An important additional issue for some Council members remains how best to support women's participation in political and peacebuilding processes in Lebanon. The members of the IEG who participated in the visit to Lebanon may consider sharing their findings from the trip during the 1701 meeting in July and through a publicly available summary letter.

Council Dynamics

There is broad consensus among members in support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. Despite this general unity, differences remain. While some members distinguish between Hezbollah's political and military wings and have designated only its military wing as a terrorist organisation, other members, including the UK and the US, have listed the Shi'a group in its entirety as a terrorist organisation. In sharp contrast to the US and the UK, Russia sees Hezbollah as a legitimate sociopolitical force.

France is the penholder on Lebanon

Sudan

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council will receive the semi-annual briefing of the ICC Prosecutor, Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, on the ICC's Darfur-related activities.

Key Recent Developments

Sudan is not a state party to the Rome Statute of the ICC. The Security Council referred the situation in Darfur, Sudan, to the ICC through the adoption of resolution 1593 of 31 March 2005. (Algeria, Brazil, China, and the US abstained on the resolution.) The Council

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1593 (31 March 2005) referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC. **Secretary-General's Report S/2022/400** (17 May 2022) was the 90-day report on UNITAMS. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9070** (21 June 2022) was the quarterly briefing on the work of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee. **S/PV.8948** (17 January 2022) was the semi-annual briefing on the ICC's work in Darfur.

Sudan

invited the ICC Prosecutor to update it every six months on actions taken pursuant to resolution 1593. The investigations regarding Darfur focus on allegations of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur since 1 July 2002.

Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman (also known as Ali Kushayb) was transferred to the ICC's custody on 9 June 2020 after he surrendered voluntarily in the Central African Republic. On 9 July 2021, Pre-Trial Chamber II confirmed all 31 charges against him, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, murder, rape, torture, and attacks against the civilian population in Wadi Salih and Mukjar, Darfur.

More than 15 years after the Security Council referred the situation to the ICC, the first trial opened on 5 April with the case of Ali Kushayb. In a 6 April statement, Khan said that this was “precisely the kind of case for which [the] ICC was created”, adding that with this case, he was confident that “the first few drops of justice will land on what has hitherto been a desert of impunity in Darfur”.

Four ICC arrest warrants remain outstanding against former President Omar Al Bashir, Ahmad Muhammad Harun, Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein and Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain. Since July 2020, Al Bashir has been on trial in Sudan for charges relating to the 1989 military coup that brought him to power, including charges of undermining the constitutional order and the use of military force to commit crimes. Harun and Hussein have been under arrest in Khartoum since April 2019. Banda remains a fugitive from the Court, and his whereabouts are unknown. The Office of the Prosecutor is in an ongoing dialogue with the government of Sudan aimed at ensuring accountability for the ICC suspects and justice for the victims in Darfur. Sudan remains under an obligation to surrender the four remaining suspects in the Darfur situation to the Court, pursuant to resolution 1593 and the subsequent orders of ICC judges.

Regarding the current situation in Darfur, the Secretary-General's most recent report on Sudan dated 17 May said that “levels of insecurity, including intercommunal clashes, armed conflict and criminality continued to pose a significant challenge for the authorities” and that escalating violence in Darfur had “resulted in a growing number of fatalities and significant new forced displacements”. It noted some progress on the start-up of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee as well as progress in relation to the joint security-keeping force in Darfur, which was agreed to in the Juba Peace Agreement and is planned to number 12,000 troops. During the reporting period, approximately 2,000 signatory armed movement personnel assembled to be trained by the Sudanese Armed Forces, according to the report.

Khan last briefed the Council on 17 January. He referred to the memorandum of understanding signed with the Sudanese government in August 2021 in relation to the Ali Kushayb case and the four cases for which ICC judges have issued warrants. He noted that since the October 2021 military coup, “the landscape changed, and that has not been particularly helpful”. He informed the Council that in December 2021, Sudanese military leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan had reassured members of his Office that the memorandum of understanding remained valid, “that he was looking at cooperation”, and that it was essential to have justice for the victims in

Darfur. Khan noted that the challenge now was to make sure those assurances were translated into “concrete, tangible partnerships and accountability”. In this regard, he called for safe and secure access to all parts of Sudan, including to archives and mass graves, as required by the memorandum of understanding, resolution 1593, and the Juba Peace Agreement.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 50th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an enhanced interactive dialogue on 15 June on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Sudan (A/HRC/50/22). The report, which covers 25 October 2021 to 10 April, concluded that the coup had undermined many of Sudan's achievements under the transitional government in improving respect for and protection of human rights, including in the areas of legal and institutional reform, transitional justice, civic space, equality and non-discrimination, and women's rights. It called the pattern of human rights violations since the coup “extremely worrying”. In relation to Darfur, it said that increased intercommunal violence and a lack of state capacity to fill the gap left by the departure of the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) “continue[d] to expose serious gaps in the protection of civilians”. On 30 June, the HRC adopted the final outcomes of the Universal Period Review of Sudan (A/HRC/50/16).

Women, Peace and Security

On 23 May, the Informal Experts Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security met to discuss the situation in Sudan. IEG members were briefed by Deputy Special Representative for Sudan Khadija Lo N'Diaye. One of the issues discussed during the meeting was women's participation in the meetings of the trilateral cooperation mechanism with political parties and armed groups. (In May, the mechanism – which consists of the UN, the AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development [IGAD] – launched indirect intra-Sudanese talks to end the political crisis.)

The three organisations have called on all stakeholders to ensure that women constitute at least 40 percent of the delegations to the meetings with the trilateral cooperation mechanism. The 23 May meeting was the third time the IEG discussed the situation in Sudan. Previous meetings were held on 14 December 2020 and 16 December 2019.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 21 June, the chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Harold Adlai Agyeman (Ghana), provided the quarterly briefing on the committee's work.

Key Issues and Options

An underlying key issue for the Council is how to promote justice and accountability for past atrocities committed in Sudan. A related issue for the Council is how to support enhanced cooperation between the ICC prosecutor and the government of Sudan.

In addition to receiving Khan's briefing, Council members supportive of the ICC's work could consider holding an informal meeting with the prosecutor to facilitate a dialogue on ways in which his Office could strengthen its cooperation with the Sudanese government.

Council members could also hold a joint press stakeout encouraging improved relations between the Sudanese government and the ICC.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council is divided on the work of the ICC. Albania, Brazil, France, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, and the UK are states parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC, while China,

Sudan

India, Russia, the UAE, and the US are not. These distinctions, however, do not necessarily reflect how members view the Court's work on Sudan. For example, the US, which is not a party to the Rome Statute, has long supported the ICC's efforts with regard to Sudan. Among the wider membership of the UN, African countries have long expressed concerns about the Court's disproportionate focus on Africa.

At the last semi-annual briefing on 17 January, a range of views were expressed on the ICC's work in relation to Darfur. Gabon emphasised its full support for the efforts of the Prosecutor and his Office. In its statement, Ghana expressed hope "for a balanced and global approach to the investigation of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court, devoid of the perceived region-centric approach". Ireland, noting that it remains a strong advocate for the work of the Court and the Prosecutor's Office in the Sudan, said that the violence in Darfur today was a reminder of the need to break the cycle of impunity". Mexico expressed its support for the work of the Office

of the Prosecutor and the ICC and said that the impact of last October's coup on cooperation with the Court was "of great concern". Russia expressed the view that "against the backdrop of ongoing political instability, the main objective is national reconciliation", adding that the Sudanese "will be able to deal with [the provision of justice] on their own." The UAE emphasised its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Sudan. The UK (the penholder on Sudan) expressed regret about the setback due to the military coup and urged the Sudanese authorities to cooperate fully with the Court. The US expressed its support for the ICC's efforts to advance accountability and welcomed "the Prosecutor's position that situations referred by the Council must be given greater prioritization in his Office's work".

The UK is the penholder on Sudan, and the US is the penholder on Sudan sanctions. Ambassador Harold Adlai Agyeman (Ghana) chairs the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council will hold a briefing on the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalik (Egypt), who served as PBC chair last year, is expected to present the PBC's annual report on its fifteenth session from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021. The incoming ambassador of Bangladesh, who is replacing Ambassador Rabab Fatima (Bangladesh) as the current PBC chair, will also brief, focusing on the Commission's work programme for 2022. (Ambassador Fatima is expected to end her tenure as PBC chair soon, following her appointment in June as UN High Representative for Least Developed, Landlocked Countries, and Small Island Developing States.)

Key Recent Developments

On 27 and 29 April, the General Assembly convened a high-level meeting on financing for peacebuilding, organised pursuant to the twin resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, A/RES/75/201 and S/RES/2558, respectively, at the conclusion of the 2020 UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review. These resolutions noted that peacebuilding financing remained a "critical challenge", and they called for the high-level meeting during the General Assembly's seventy-sixth session to advance, explore and consider options for ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding. The resolutions affirmed a commitment to pursuing "action-oriented" outcomes.

Ahead of the meeting, the Secretary-General submitted a report to the General Assembly and Security Council, dated 28 January, on financing for peacebuilding. According to the report, "there has been too little progress on adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding". The report underscored that current financing for prevention and peacebuilding remains inadequate despite the

ability of such investments to reduce what have become unsustainable costs of responding to crises.

In a separate 1 March report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General requested the General Assembly to appropriate a total of \$100 million to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) for the 12-month period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. Providing the PBF with access to assessed contributions, which was originally proposed by an independent Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, "has emerged as the only viable means for providing the [PBF] with a consistent baseline level of funding to complement the voluntary contributions provided by donors", according to the Secretary-General's 1 March report. Donor contributions to the PBF in 2020 and 2021 totalled around \$180 million and \$178 million, respectively, far short of the Secretary-General's call since 2017 to increase the capacity of the PBF—recognised as a useful 'catalytic' source of peacebuilding financing—to \$500 million annually.

UN member states, however, are still not in agreement on using assessed contributions. The high-level meeting on peacebuilding financing concluded with a decision to set up a process of intergovernmental negotiations, which Kenya and Sweden will co-facilitate.

Regarding the PBC, its annual report to the General Assembly and the Security Council, released in February, outlines its activities and trends. In 2021, the PBC held 29 meetings, reflecting the body's increased activity in recent years (though this was a decline from the PBC's 2020 peak of 40 meetings amid the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic). Meetings last year included discussion of 13 different countries and regional issues. These ranged from situations that the PBC has traditionally considered, such as Liberia and Burundi, to new issues, such as the political transition in Chad and Gulf of Guinea piracy. Cross-cutting and thematic discussions made

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEBUILDING [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2558](#) (21 December 2020) was on the 2020 review of UN peacebuilding, welcoming progress and encouraging continued actions to implement the resolutions on the 2015 review of UN peacebuilding. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/20](#) (18 December 2018) was on the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory role to the Council. [Secretary-General's Reports A/76/732](#) (1 March 2022) was a report to the General Assembly, requesting it to appropriate assessed contributions to the PBF. [A/76/668-S/2022/66](#) (28 January 2022) was a report on financing for peacebuilding. [Selected Peacebuilding Commission Documents A/76/678-S/2022/89](#) (3 February 2022) was the annual report of the PBC on its fifteenth session.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

up 40 percent of its meetings, compared to about 15 percent of its meetings in 2018.

Reflecting the PBC's comparative advantage as a convening body that can bring together diverse stakeholders, non-UN representatives comprised 67% of all PBC briefers, including national and local governments, regional and subregional organisations, international financial institutions, civil society, and the private sector. The Secretary-General envisions an expanded role for the PBC, which is mandated to address the multidimensional threats to development, peace and security, as he said when briefing the Commission last year on his vision for future global cooperation and multilateralism in his September 2021 report "Our Common Agenda".

During 2021, the PBC advised the Council a total of nine times, according to the annual report. It did so through PBC chair briefings at Council meetings on the Great Lakes region and the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force, and as a participant at Council open debates on UN transitions and post-COVID-19 recovery in Africa. In the lead-up to this last meeting, the PBC convened an "informal-informal interactive dialogue" with the president of the Security Council on promoting post-COVID recovery in Africa. The PBC chair participated in an Arria-formula meeting on Haiti, sharing perspectives on the role and contributions of the PBC in other countries that benefitted from inclusive approaches to national reconciliation and sustaining peace. The chair also briefed at a meeting of the Security Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. Following the open debate on UN transitions, the Council adopted resolution 2594, which strongly encouraged the PBC to facilitate the development of joint objectives and priorities prior to transitions and, in that connection, requested the Secretary-General to liaise with the PBC in advance of relevant reporting to the Council, with a view to facilitating the provision of complementary and timely advice from the Commission to the Council. It also sent two letters of advice to the Council, on the Central African Republic (CAR) and on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

A notable trend so far in 2022 has been an intensification of the PBC practice of submitting letters or notes of advice ahead of Security Council meetings. This practice began in 2018 when the chair of the PBC's CAR configuration wrote to the Council with recommendations ahead of the mandate renewal of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). This year the PBC has provided its advice to inform a press statement on Burkina Faso, and ahead of Council meetings on WPS, COVID-19, the Great Lakes region, and Central Africa.

Key Issues and Options

The practice of briefing on the PBC annual report had stopped in recent years, after taking place annually from 2012 to 2018. A key issue is to update the Council on the PBC's activities.

Another issue is assessing the impact of the PBC's work, both for the countries it engages with and its advice to the Council. The PBC must negotiate and achieve consensus among its 31 members on its letters of advice before sending them to the Council. Preparing and agreeing earlier on these letters of advice could be helpful, as they are often approved only on the same day as the relevant Council meeting. Council members could highlight that to be more impactful, the PBC should submit the advice several days ahead of the relevant Council meeting, so that they have more time to consider the advice as they prepare their statements and positions. A new practice agreed in March to improve the PBC's advisory role has been to provide PBC members with advance copies of relevant Secretary-General's reports.

The underfunding of peacebuilding remains a key issue. Since the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture, which ushered in various reforms of UN peacebuilding, this has been the most difficult issue for the UN and member states to make progress on.

Council Dynamics

Brazil is organising this session as part of its Council presidency during July. It has long been a proponent of the PBC, and since 2008, Brazil has chaired the PBC's country configuration for Guinea-Bissau—which is one of four remaining country configurations, as the PBC has sought to have its primary, 31-member state body, called the Organizational Committee, be the main forum to discuss its new country, regional and thematic issues.

Kenya is the Council's informal coordinator with the PBC, convening meetings of Council members that serve on the PBC every six months to review the PBC's advisory role. In this capacity, Kenya also identifies upcoming opportunities for PBC engagement with the Council and has shepherded new initiatives such as sharing advanced copies of relevant Secretary-General's reports with the PBC.

Currently, nine Council members serve on the PBC. Seven PBC seats are allocated to the Security Council, which always include the P5 (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US). Kenya and Mexico hold the other two Council-allocated seats. Brazil serves on the PBC as one of the seven member states that the General Assembly elects. India is one of five PBC members selected for being a major troop and police contributor to UN peace operations. The issue of authorising assessed contributions for the PBF is being considered in the General Assembly. Two of the UN's large financial contributors continue to oppose considering the use of assessed contributions for the PBF.

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In July, the Council is expected to extend the sanctions measures imposed on the Central African Republic (CAR), which expire at the end of the month, and renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, which expires on 31 August.

The mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) expires on 15 November 2022.

Key Recent Developments

On 22 June, the Security Council met to discuss the Secretary-General's latest report on MINUSCA. Valentine Rugwabiza, the Special Representative for the CAR and head of MINUSCA, briefed the Council, highlighting the steps that she took upon assuming her responsibilities in April to rebuild trust with the CAR government, remobilise regional and international partners in support of the revitalisation of the political process, and reposition the mission in effectively implementing its mandate.

Rugwabiza noted the strategic review meeting that took place in Bangui on 4 June, which promoted national ownership through the participation of all the relevant national stakeholders under the leadership of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra. The meeting also helped in remobilising regional partners, she said, through the participation of the Angolan and Rwandan foreign ministers and representatives of the AU, the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Rugwabiza requested the Council to support the follow-up of the review meeting, which has contributed to reinvigorating the political process.

In their interventions, Council members appreciated Rugwabiza's leadership in improving relations between MINUSCA and the CAR government and her efforts in trying to inject renewed momentum into the political process. They also welcomed the remobilisation of regional partners and backed the regional approach to assist progress in the implementation of the roadmap adopted by the ICGLR in support of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The Council adopted resolution 2588 on 29 July 2021 to extend the CAR sanctions regime and renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts. There were 14 votes in favour and one abstention by China. In its explanation of vote, China said that "the text failed to fully respect the wish of the Government of the Central African Republic for the lifting of the embargo". Following the adoption of the resolution, five individuals with expertise in armed groups, arms, finance/natural resources, humanitarian issues, and regional issues were nominated to serve on the Panel of Experts. Russia placed a hold on the appointments for several months, however, calling for increased geographical diversity.

On 18 April, the Secretary-General appointed three of the panel members from Costa Rica, the Republic of the Congo and Kenya with expertise on humanitarian affairs, regional issues and arms, respectively. The Secretariat has been in the process of recruiting two additional members. A natural resources/finance expert from the Netherlands was appointed on 1 June, and an armed groups expert is expected to be appointed soon. The panel was supposed to present a mid-term report in January pursuant to resolution 2588, but could not, as three of the experts only started work in April.

They were able to travel to Bangui and talk to the CAR authorities, however. Their final report, circulated to Council members last week, is expected to be discussed by the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee on 24 June.

According to the Secretary-General's latest report on MINUSCA, released on 16 June, armed groups continue to pose serious security threats in the CAR. MINUSCA recorded 374 violations of the political agreement during the reporting period, most of which were committed by an armed group known as the *Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique* (UPC); the national defence forces and "other security personnel" have also committed several violations. On 21 December 2021, the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee added Ali Darassa to the sanctions list; Darassa is the founder and leader of the UPC, which is accused of committing serious abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law in the CAR.

CAR's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sylvie Baïpo-Temon, has apparently written a letter to the Council reiterating her country's request for the arms embargo to be lifted to allow the CAR to enhance the effectiveness of its defence and security forces. CAR's representative reflected the same position at the last Council meeting on the CAR on 22 June.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 50th session, the Human Rights Council is expected to hold an interactive dialogue on 6 July on the oral update of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the CAR, Yao Aqbetse.

Key Issues and Options

The discussion of the arms embargo is likely to continue to be a key issue during the upcoming negotiations on renewing the 2127 CAR sanction regime. CAR will try to solicit the support of some Council members, including the three African members, China and Russia, in pushing for lifting the arms embargo. However, other members oppose this move in the face of increasing violence and the spread of arms.

One possible option is for the Sanctions Committee to facilitate a discussion with the CAR government on the implementation of the National Program for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation (PNDDRR) and putting in place an effective weapons and ammunition management system based on the Secretary-General's recommendations in his letter of 15 June 2021.

The operation of the Panel of Experts, whose members' appointment was delayed for several months, is another important issue. Several Council members had expressed concerns over the delay and underscored the need to allow the panel to do its work.

Council Dynamics

The arms embargo imposed on CAR in 2013 continues to be a controversial issue. In their joint statement during the Council meeting on 22 June, the African members supported CAR's request for lifting the arms embargo. Russia called for easing the arms embargo until it is finally lifted, while China supported lifting the embargo at an early date.

On the other hand, France and the UK argued against lifting the embargo, maintaining that it does not prevent the CAR government from acquiring military equipment. The decision should, in their view, be based on progress towards achieving the benchmarks set out by the Council, such as the implementation of the PNDDRR and the management of weapons and ammunitions. Furthermore, they indicated that it is difficult to think of introducing any changes to the sanctions regime in the face of continued human rights abuses in the country. Ireland and Norway stressed the importance of addressing delays in the appointment of the Panel of Experts assisting the work

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2605 (12 November 2021) extended the mandate of MINUSCA for one year until 15 November 2022. Thirteen Council members voted in favour, with China and Russia abstaining. S/RES/2588 (29 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. **Secretary-General's Report S/2022/491** (16 June 2022) was the most recent Secretary-General's report on the situation in the CAR. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9074** (22 June 2022) was a Council meeting on the situation in CAR.

Central African Republic

of the sanctions committee. Some of these views could be reflected during the upcoming negotiations in July.

France is the penholder on the CAR, and Harold Adlai Agyeman (Ghana) chairs the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee.

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

In July, the Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), Natalia Gherman, is expected to brief the Security Council on UNRCCA's work in closed consultations.

Key Recent Developments

Gherman last briefed Council members in closed consultations on 27 January. Among other matters, she provided an update on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout Central Asia, and UNRCCA's activities pertaining to counter-terrorism, transboundary water management, border demarcation, and the empowerment of women and youth. Gherman also discussed the situation in Afghanistan, including its impact on Central Asia; her interactions with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA); the anti-government protests that took place in Kazakhstan in January; and the ongoing border dispute between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Since Gherman's last briefing, there has been significant unrest in the Gorno-Badakhshan region of Tajikistan, an autonomous region in the country's east that borders Afghanistan, China and Kyrgyzstan. Gorno-Badakhshan is ethnically and linguistically distinct from the rest of Tajikistan and accounts for approximately 45 percent of its territory and about three percent of its population.

Tensions have run high in Gorno-Badakhshan since November 2021, when a protest was sparked by the alleged torture and killing by Tajik security forces of Gulbiddin Ziyobekov, a local resident accused of killing a deputy prosecutor. Government troops reportedly opened fire on the demonstration, killing three people and wounding 17 more. Dozens of protesters were arrested following this incident, and many received substantial prison sentences.

The most recent bout of unrest began on 16 May with a series of protests that started in the region's capital, Khorugh, before spreading to other areas. According to media reports, the protests were sparked by anger over the killing of Ziyobekov and the subsequent arrests of activists and others who participated in the November 2021 protests. Protesters also reportedly demanded the resignation of both the regional governor and the mayor of Khorugh. The protests quickly turned violent after police killed a 29-year-old protester on 16 May. Tajik authorities subsequently announced that they had commenced an "anti-terror operation" in the region. During the ensuing violence, Tajik security forces reportedly used rubber bullets, stun grenades and tear gas against the protesters. In a 20 May statement, the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues said that "as many as 40 people" were allegedly killed in the Rushon district of Gorno-Badakhshan during this operation. Tajik authorities continued to target demonstrators and leaders in the Gorno-Badakhshan region in the following weeks.

On 19 May, Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, said that the Secretary-General was "concerned at the reports of increased tension and violence in the [Gorno-Badakhshan region], including the reported loss of life". Dujarric also said that the Secretary-General "calls for restraint and for all efforts to be made to resolve the current situation by peaceful means". On the same day, the diplomatic missions of the EU, France, Germany, the UK, and the US to Tajikistan issued a statement that called on "all parties to spare no effort to de-escalate, exercise restraint, and refrain from excessive use of force and incitement to violence", among other matters.

Several skirmishes between Kyrgyz and Tajik troops have taken place along the Kyrgyz/Tajik border in recent months. In late January, a dispute over a blocked road erupted into fighting between the two sides. Tajik authorities claimed that two people were killed and a further ten wounded during the clash, while Kyrgyz authorities said that 12 were wounded and more than 24,000 civilians were evacuated from the area. According to media reports, on 12 April, the Kyrgyz Border Guard Service said that Kyrgyz and Tajik forces exchanged fire near Maksat village in Leilek district after Tajik border guards entered Kyrgyz territory. A Tajik border guard was killed and two Kyrgyz border guards were wounded during the shootout. On 3 June, Kyrgyz authorities announced that Tajik and Kyrgyz forces had exchanged fire in the Bulak-Bashy district of the southern Batken region and that troops had been wounded on both sides.

On 5 June, Kazakhstan held a referendum on proposed changes to its constitution. Among other matters, the amendments decentralised decision-making in the country and stripped former Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev of special privileges that gave him influence over the political process after leaving office. The Kazakh electoral commission said that 77.18 percent of voters supported the amendments, and that turnout was 68.06 percent.

The conflict in Ukraine has had a ripple effect throughout Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan's banking regulator, for example, has reportedly predicted that remittance payments from migrant workers in Russia will decline by 20 percent in 2022, while the World Bank has recently projected that Kyrgyzstan's economy will contract by five percent in 2022, primarily due to "an anticipated 33 percent decline in remittance inflows". The price of food and other goods has also risen in the region. According to media reports, the price of palov, Uzbekistan's national dish, has increased by approximately 70 percent since December 2019. In mid-April, Kazakhstan announced a limit on wheat and flour exports following Russia's decision to suspend the export of wheat, rye, barley, and maize until 30 June. On 26 June, Russian state television reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin will travel to Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to attend high-level

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNRCCA [Security Council Letter S/2007/279](#) (7 May 2007) was from the Secretary-General on the establishment of a United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Ashgabat. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13179](#) (25 January 2018) welcomed further cooperation and coordination between UNRCCA, the Central Asian States, and relevant regional organisations, including those organisations of which the Central Asian States are members.

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

meetings during the last week of June. The visit is believed to be Putin's first foreign trip since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Relations between Tajikistan and the Taliban have deteriorated in recent months. On 10 May, the Taliban closed the Afghan border with Tajikistan and reportedly seized the vehicles of Tajik truck drivers stranded by the closure. The move followed the 8 May announcement by the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) that it had fired rockets into Tajikistan the previous day, a claim denied by Tajik authorities, who said that ISKP fired bullets and not rockets into its territory.

On 6 June, UNRCCA, UNESCO and Tajikistan convened a conference on "water and mountains towards sustainable development". The conference was held within the framework of the second high-level international conference on the international decade for action "water for sustainable development 2018-2028" and UNRCCA's "strategy in support of cooperation between the states of Central Asia in the field of water, energy, environment and climate for 2022-2025". Gherman underlined the importance of undertaking practical, scientific, and educational work at the regional level to support joint efforts to address glacier melt.

Gherman also continued to focus on increasing the participation of women in public life in Central Asia. On 21 April, she participated in a round table on "Topical issues of women, peace and security in Central Asia" with members of the Kazakh parliament and representatives of international organisations and the diplomatic community. In her remarks, Gherman emphasised the importance of implementing resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and highlighted important UN practices for promoting gender equality. She also discussed the role of the Central Asian Women Leaders' Caucus in promoting gender-oriented policies and programmes in the region.

Key Issues and Options

One of the main issues for the Council is how to make the best use of UNRCCA's expertise and whether there is anything else the Council could do to support UNRCCA's efforts to facilitate preventive

diplomacy and regional cooperation.

Council members will also be following recent events in Gorno-Badakhshan and the disputes on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Members are likely to be interested in learning more about the effect that these incidents might have on stability in the region.

The situation in Afghanistan and its impact on Central Asia is another issue for the Council. The Council could consider inviting a representative of UNAMA to participate in the consultations and provide information regarding developments in the country that may affect the wider region.

Council Dynamics

Council members are generally supportive of UNRCCA and view it as an important tool in promoting cooperation in Central Asia. Until 2015, Council members issued a press statement following the consultations, encouraging increased cooperation and coordination among the Central Asian countries, UNRCCA, and "relevant regional organisations". In September 2015, however, Russia, the penholder on UNRCCA, sought to add specific references to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), as well as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the EU. The P3 (France, the UK and the US) opposed these additions, seeing the CIS, the CSTO and the SCO as vehicles for enhancing Russian influence in the region. As a result, a press statement could not be agreed upon for more than two years.

Kazakhstan was able to overcome these difficulties during its 2017-2018 term as an elected member by proposing compromise language. Press elements were issued in February 2017, and a press statement was agreed upon in January 2018. Since then, however, Council members have again been unable to reach agreement on a UNRCCA press statement owing to disagreements about referring to regional organisations. The conflict in Ukraine is likely to exacerbate these differences.

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