

# Monthly Forecast

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## Overview

In August, China is president of the Security Council.

China plans to organise two signature events. The first will be an open debate on “[Peace and security in Africa: Capacity-building for sustaining peace](#)”. The objective of the meeting is to identify challenges to sustaining peace in Africa and to generate ideas to support capacity-building on the continent to address these challenges. Bankole Adeoye, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the AU Commission, and Ambassador Muhammad Abdul Muhith of Bangladesh, the chair of the PBC, are expected to brief. China might pursue an outcome in connection with the meeting.

The second signature event will be a briefing on “[Maintenance of international peace and security: Promoting common security through dialogue and cooperation](#)”. Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief.

The Council is also planning to hold a briefing this month on the Secretary-General’s 15th strategic level report on the [threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant \(ISIL or Da’esh\)](#). Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and Weixiong Chen, the Acting Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), will brief.

African issues on the programme of work in August are:

- [Sudan](#), the semi-annual briefing by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on its Darfur-related activities;
- [Libya](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee; and
- [Mali](#), renewal of asset freeze and travel ban sanctions.

Middle Eastern issues on the programme are:

- [Lebanon](#), meeting with troop contributors to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), consultations on the mission, and renewal of the UNIFIL mandate;
- [Yemen](#), monthly briefing and consultations;
- [Syria](#), monthly meetings on the political, humanitarian and chemical weapons tracks; and
- [Middle East, including the Palestinian question](#), monthly meeting.

There will also be consultations on the 90-day report of the 1718 [Democratic People’s Republic of Korea \(DPRK\)](#) Sanctions Committee.

The Council will most likely meet to discuss [Ukraine](#) during the month.

Council members may also discuss [Georgia](#) in August. This month marks the 14th anniversary of the 2008 conflict between Russia and Georgia.

Other issues could be raised in August depending on developments.

**1 August 2022**

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## In Hindsight: The Evolving Informal Interactive Dialogue

With the Security Council the master of its own procedures, and periodic challenges to its use of formal discussions, the Council has turned to a range of informal formats to conduct exchanges which members regard as useful or necessary. 2021 saw Council members' highest-ever use of informal Arria-formula meetings; the waning of COVID-19 brought a return of 2018's offsite "sofa talks"; and in 2022, a Security Council resolution encourages the use of a bimonthly Informal Interactive Dialogue.

On 12 July, the Security Council adopted resolution 2642, renewing the Syria cross-border aid mechanism for six months, with a further six-month extension subject to a fresh resolution. Coming after difficult negotiations and two draft resolutions which failed due to a Russian veto and insufficient supporting votes respectively, this resolution encourages the Security Council to convene a "Security Council Informal Interactive Dialogue (IID) every two months with participation of donors, interested regional parties and representatives of the international humanitarian agencies operating in Syria." This provision was included as a compromise, and mirrors language in the failed Russian draft resolution that would have set up a Council working group. Speaking after the vote, Russian Deputy Permanent Representative Dmitry Polyanskiy stated that the Russian Federation would, "through informal interactive dialogue", "continue to monitor progress" in the resolution's implementation "so as to decide on the ultimate fate of the mechanism". The IIDs, which will include consideration of progress in early-recovery projects, are expected to begin in September.

The formal call—apparently for the first time—in a resolution, for the use of an informal format, marks an interesting evolution in Council approaches. Using informal meeting formats for private discussion with senior officials dates back many decades: these are mentioned in the assessments of Council presidents and the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly as "informal meeting", "special meeting", "informal event", "informal private meeting", "informal private discussion", "informal dialogue", "informal interactive discussion", and its most recent iteration "informal interactive dialogue", which started in 2009. These informal meetings have even taken place in the most formal of settings, the Council chamber, such as in 2000, when the Chair of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Jesse Helms, met with Council members to discuss the relationship between the UN and the United States.

While the Informal Interactive Dialogue has no official definition, Note 507, which is a compendium of the Council's working methods, refers to the Council utilising informal dialogues, when appropriate, in order to "seek the views of Member States that are parties to a conflict and/or other interested and affected parties". Key characteristics of an IID, which also distinguish it from Arria-formula meetings, are that they are presided over by the Council President, are considered proceedings of the Council and are attended by all members. They generally take place in a meeting room other than the Council Chamber or Consultations Room, are not announced in the UN Journal or included in the Council's monthly programme of work and are reflected in the Council's annual report or monthly assessments of former Council presidents in an ad hoc manner. Although they are informal meetings, Council members have occasionally issued press statements or press elements after IID meetings.

At the end of June 2022, the Council had met using some version of this informal format almost 100 times between 1996 and December 2021.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most common uses of the IID format is to come to a better understanding of a situation through an exchange of views in a private setting with [high-level officials of affected member states](#). The private meeting format, a closed meeting of the Council, could also serve this purpose, but it is formal: the informal IID format is less politically sensitive and hence a better fit for a discreet discussion or for a situation that is not on the Council's agenda. (Discussion of a country-specific situation in a formal meeting can place the issue on the Council's agenda.)

In the case of Sri Lanka, a situation which was not on the Council's agenda, Council members held four informal dialogue sessions between March and June 2009, when the war between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was winding down. While there was strong political pressure to discuss the humanitarian crisis caused by the military offensive that had trapped thousands of civilians in a remote area of Sri Lanka, some members were strongly opposed to creating the appearance of Sri Lanka becoming a formal item on the Council's agenda. This led to the four meetings with UN officials and a representative from the Sri Lankan government, two of which were labelled "informal interactive discussion" and two as "informal interactive dialogue", marking the first traceable use of this term.

To this day, this format continues to be viewed as a low-key way to discuss politically charged matters. A recent example is the 15 June 2021 IID on the humanitarian situation in Tigray, Ethiopia. At that point, the Council had discussed Tigray five times under "any other business" (AOB), a standing agenda item in closed consultations, and some members were pushing for a public briefing. Member states can attend a public briefing, it is broadcast live on the UN website and has an official record. This was opposed by other members, including the three African members of the Council (the A3).

The IID format was finally accepted as a compromise by all members. This allowed for a frank, closed-door discussion of the situation in Tigray, with the benefit of a wider range of actors than would have been the case in consultations, where participation is strictly limited to UN officials and Council members. Thus, Ambassador Teye Atske Selassie, the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the UN, and Ato Mitiku Kassa, the Commissioner for the National Disaster Risk Management Commission of Ethiopia, were able to participate in the 15 June 2021 meeting.

This format has also been used frequently for informal, private discussions with heads of [regional and sub-regional organisations](#), a practice that may have sprung from uncertainty about the appropriate format for Council members' interaction with such organisations. An early example of this was the 12 February 2009 informal interactive discussion with a joint delegation from the AU and the League of Arab States (LAS) on the International Criminal Court (ICC) efforts against the President of the Sudan, Omar Al-Bashir, less than one month before the ICC issued its first warrant for his arrest.

<sup>1</sup> The details of these IIDs can be found in the [Repertoire](#) of the Practice Supplements and the [Highlights of Security Council Practice](#) published by the Security Council Affairs Division. For a list of IIDs since 2009, please see SCR's [IID chart](#).

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## In Hindsight: The Evolving Informal Interactive Dialogue

The Council highlighted its practice in a presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/1) in 2010, where it expressed its intention to hold “in the future informal interactive dialogues with regional and sub-regional organizations”. Since then, Council members have met regularly in this format with senior officials from the AU and LAS as well as with IGAD and the EU. This informal format was also popular between 2012 and 2014 for dialogue with the Chair of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel and UN officials on Sudan-South Sudan.

An interesting subset of IIDs with regional organisations may be emerging with regard to the Arab Summit Troika (Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia) of the LAS, with whom the Council held its first high-level IID on 22 September 2021. This followed the adoption of a presidential statement on 29 January 2021 (S/PRST/2022/1) in which the Council encouraged “whenever possible, an informal meeting between its members and Representatives of the Arab Summit Troika and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, on the margins of the General Assembly high level segment”. IIDs have also facilitated interaction with [specialised organisations](#) such as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). While public briefings by OPCW officials on the use of chemical weapons in Syria are common, it has been more difficult to hold a closed meeting on this issue, as OPCW officials cannot be admitted to consultations. The IID format was used for this purpose in May 2020 when Director-General Fernando Arias and Coordinator of the OPCW’s Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) Ambassador Santiago Oñate met with Council members to discuss the first report of the OPCW IIT. The closed informal format allowed the briefers to explain the report’s conclusions and how the IIT assessed information from the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria and from States Parties. Similarly, this meeting has allowed for more confidential discussion with the ICC prosecutor over the years.

There has also been an evolution in the use of IIDs for [peacebuilding](#) discussions. It has provided a private setting for briefings from chairs of PBC country-specific configurations, been a forum for discussion on the work of the PBC in conjunction with the presentation of the PBC’s annual report to the Council and more recently been used to discuss the peacebuilding needs of specific regions. An example of this more strategic use of IIDs was the meeting Germany organised in March 2019 between the PBC and Council members

to consider peacebuilding needs and challenges in the Sahel ahead of a Council visiting mission to Mali and Burkina Faso. In 2018, the Council issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/20) noting the importance of IIDs between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission “as a useful venue for exercising the advisory role of the Commission, including the dialogues with the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa”.

IIDs have also come to be used in connection with reauthorisations of [EU military operations in the Mediterranean](#) that are designed to deter violations of the arms embargo on Libya. (These include EUNAVFOR MED SOPHIA and its successor, EUNAVFOR IRINI). It seems that these meetings were initiated because Russia wanted more information about the effectiveness of these missions prior to Council decisions about their reauthorisation. The IIDs have allowed members to have a dialogue with the commander of the operations and a senior official from the European External Action Service. According to some members, they appear to have helped show that the actions undertaken have had a deterrent effect regarding potential violations of the arms embargo on Libya.

The most significant innovation during the 2016 [selection process for the UN Secretary-General](#) was the informal dialogues with the candidates in the General Assembly, which were followed by informal dialogues with the candidates held at one of the Council members’ missions. In 2021, when António Guterres ran unopposed for a second term, he held an informal dialogue with Council members, in keeping with the practice instituted in 2016 (albeit convened in the ECOSOC chamber due to COVID-19 space restrictions).

The IID called for in resolution 2642 on Syria appears to introduce a new subset of this type of meeting: formally “encouraged”, and with a two-monthly schedule. It is still unclear who will be invited to participate in these meetings and how this will be agreed. As Council members work out these details, it may be useful to recall that this format has been effective over the years because it has allowed a genuine exchange of views with the appropriate stakeholders in a private setting. In an issue as divisive as the humanitarian situation in Syria, the hope is that these discussions will help members find common ground ahead of the next renewal rather than engendering greater animosity.

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## Status Update since our July Forecast

### West Africa and the Sahel

On 7 July, the Council held a briefing and consultations on West Africa and the Sahel (S/PV.9086). Special Representative and head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) Mahamat Saleh Annadif briefed on the Secretary-General’s latest report on the region (S/2022/521). The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Rabab Fatima (Bangladesh), and civil society representative Rabia Djibo Magagi, Coordinator of the Association Alliance for Peace and Security, also briefed. Ghana and Ireland, the

co-penholders on UNOWAS, proposed a presidential statement in connection with the meeting, which was still under negotiation at the time of writing.

### UN Peacekeeping

On 12 July, the Security Council held a high-level open debate on strategic communications in UN peacekeeping operations (S/PV.9090). Brazilian Foreign Minister Carlos Alberto Franco França chaired the meeting. The briefers were UN Secretary-General

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António Guterres; Lieutenant General Marcos De Sá Affonso Da Costa, the Force Commander of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); and Dr. Jenna Russo, Director of Research and Head of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations at the International Peace Institute (IPI).

The Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2022/5), proposed by Brazil, which underscores the importance of strategic communications to the implementation of the mandates of UN peacekeeping operations and to the safety and security of peacekeepers. The presidential statement requests the Secretary-General to present a strategic review of strategic communications across UN peacekeeping operations, including at the headquarters level, by no later than 15 April 2023. It also requested the Secretary-General, as part of regular reports on individual peacekeeping operations, to include, as applicable, “information on the actions and impact of strategic communications for mandated activities”.

### Haiti

On 15 July, the Security Council adopted resolution 2645, unanimously extending the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) for another year, until 15 July 2023. The resolution raises the ceiling of BINUH’s authorised police advisers from 30 to 42 and decides that the mission’s human rights unit will include dedicated capacity to address sexual and gender-based violence. Among other new elements, the resolution calls on member states to prohibit the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-state actors engaged in or supporting gang violence, criminal activities, or human rights abuses in Haiti. It also demands an immediate cessation of gang violence and criminal activities and expresses the Council’s readiness to take appropriate measures (such as imposing a travel ban or assets freeze), as necessary, against those engaged in such activities and human rights abuses within 90 days from the adoption of the resolution.

### Colombia

On 14 July, the Security Council held an open briefing on Colombia (S/PV.9094). Special Representative and head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia Carlos Ruiz Massieu briefed on recent developments and the Secretary-General’s latest 90-day report on the mission (S/2022/513). The Council was also briefed by Francisco de Roux, the head of Colombia’s Truth Commission, and Jineth Casso Piamba, an indigenous community leader and human rights defender.

On the same day, Council members convened for an Arria-formula meeting titled “A Milestone Year for a Peaceful Future: Transitional Justice in Colombia”. The meeting was initiated by Ireland, in cooperation with Norway and Colombia. The briefers at the meeting were de Roux; Eamon Gilmore, the Special Envoy of the EU for the Peace Process in Colombia; Juana Inés Acosta-López, an academic expert in international law, human rights and transitional justice; and Yanet Mosquera Rivera, a social leader, human rights defender and director of the non-governmental organisation *Fundacion Mujer Con Valor*.

On 22 July, Council members issued a press statement on Colombia (SC/14978). In it, they welcomed the largely peaceful conduct of

elections in the country and the increase in elected women representatives in Congress. Members underscored the importance of ensuring the comprehensive implementation of the 2016 peace agreement and accelerating the implementation of its ethnic and gender provisions. They welcomed the commitment expressed by President-elect Gustavo Petro to deepen the peace agreement’s implementation and seek broader peace with other illegal armed groups. Council members also expressed their support for the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repitition. In this regard, they welcomed the recent release of the Truth Commission’s final report as “an unprecedented opportunity for Colombians to come to terms with their past and as a stepping stone for long-term reconciliation and lasting peace”.

### Cyprus

On 18 July, the Council held consultations on the situation in Cyprus. Special Representative and head of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) Colin Stewart briefed the Council on the recent developments and key findings from the Secretary-General’s reports on UNFICYP (S/2022/533) and on his mission of good offices in Cyprus (S/2022/534). On 28 July, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2646, renewing the mandate of UNFICYP for another six months until 31 January 2023.

### Children and Armed Conflict

On 19 July, the Security Council held its annual open debate on children and armed conflict (S/PV.9096). Brazilian Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Fernando Simas Magalhães chaired the meeting. Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba presented the Secretary-General’s annual report on children and armed conflict (S/2022/493). The Council was also briefed by Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell and Patrick Kumi, Founder and Executive Director of the non-governmental organisation “Similar Ground”, a youth-led refugee peacebuilding organisation.

### The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

On 26 July, the Security Council held its quarterly open debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (S/PV.9099). Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory Lynn Hastings briefed. She said that although “the specific developments of the conflict fluctuate, the structural reality has not changed”. Hastings provided an update on developments between 27 June and 21 July. This included the 13-16 July visit by US President Joe Biden to the region, violent incidents in the West Bank and in Israel, evictions of Palestinians and demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures, high-level contacts between Israeli and Palestinian officials, and the fragile situation in Gaza. Hastings also provided an update on recent developments in Lebanon and violations to the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria.

### Iraq

On 26 July, the Council convened for an open briefing on the 20 July

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## Status Update since our July Forecast

attack in the Duhok governorate of the Kurdistan region of Iraq (S/PV.9100). The meeting was requested by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after Iraq sent a letter to the Council on 22 July that called for the Council to meet and discuss the attack. Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert briefed. Iraq and Türkiye participated in the briefing under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein represented Iraq during the briefing, which was followed by closed consultations.

Council members issued a press statement on the Duhok attack on 25 July. Among other matters, the statement condemned the attack and urged all member states to cooperate with the Iraqi government's investigation into the attack.

### Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

On 27 July, the Council held a briefing (S/PV.9101) on the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which covers the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 (A/76/678-S/2022/89). Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalek (Egypt), who served as PBC chair last year, presented the report. Deputy Permanent Representative and Chargé d'affaires Monwar Hossain of Bangladesh, which is the current chair of the PBC, briefed on the Commission's work programme for 2022.

### UNRCCA (Central Asia)

On 28 July, Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) Natalia Gherman briefed Council members regarding the UNRCCA's activities in closed consultations. Gherman apparently updated Council members on the activities of the UNRCCA, including those pertaining to counter-terrorism; the women, peace and security agenda; transboundary water management; and the UNRCCA's contact with regional organisations. The situation in Afghanistan, the recent bouts of unrest in Uzbekistan and the Gorno-Badakhshan region of Tajikistan, and the anti-government protests that took place in Kazakhstan in January were also discussed.

### Central African Republic

On 29 July, the Council adopted resolution 2648, extending the Central African Republic (CAR) sanctions measures and the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee for an additional year. The resolution significantly eased the arms embargo on the CAR. Ten members voted in favour of the resolution, while five (China, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, and Russia) abstained. In their explanations of vote, China, Gabon, Kenya and Russia expressed their preference for a full lifting of the embargo (S/PV.9105).

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## Counter-Terrorism

### Expected Council Action

In August, the Security Council is expected to receive briefings from Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and Weixiong Chen, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), on the Secretary-General's 15th strategic level report on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or Da'esh).

### Key Recent Developments

The 30th report of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (Monitoring Team) was issued on 11 July. The report says that the threat from ISIL "remains relatively low in non-conflict zones, but is much higher in areas directly affected by conflict or neighbouring it". The report provides an overview of the threat profile in different regions, noting that the most concerning areas are Africa, Central and South Asia, and the Levant. It also describes ISIL's general directorate of provinces and the network that it manages.

In Africa, groups with links to ISIL have continued to attack local populations. In Mozambique, for example, Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) fighters conducted attacks in the Macomia district in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. More than 800,000 people in the area have been internally displaced because of frequent attacks.

According to the Monitoring Team's report, ISIL has recently referred to ASWJ as an affiliate and described it as "ISIL-Mozambique". Member states in the region, however, have said that there is no clear evidence that ISIL issues command and control orders to ASWJ. The Allied Democratic Forces, a group active in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda that has pledged allegiance to ISIL, has also continued to attack civilians despite a joint military operation by DRC and Ugandan forces against it.

The Monitoring Team's report also notes that several member states have concluded that ISIL's Al-Karrar office acts as a financial hub and transmits substantial funds to ISIL's Afghan affiliate, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan (ISIL-K). The Al-Karrar office is based in Somalia and led by Abdul Qadir Mumin, the emir of ISIL in Somalia.

According to the Monitoring Team's latest report on the Taliban, which was published on 26 May, ISIL-K is reported to be ISIL's most prominent affiliate as a result of the 26 August 2021 attack on Kabul airport. ISIL-K's recruitment has also increased, driven by prison releases, internal tensions within the Taliban and the financial resources of ISIL-K. In April, ISIL-K carried out a spate of attacks in different parts of Afghanistan, including three attacks on 21 April that targeted a Shiite mosque in Mazar-e Sharif, a minibus transporting employees of the Taliban's civil aviation authority in Kunduz, and a Taliban security vehicle in Kabul. The group also

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## Counter-Terrorism

claimed responsibility for firing rockets into Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in April, however, both states have denied that rockets reached their territory.

In Iraq and Syria, ISIL remains a resilient and persistent threat with the ability to orchestrate complex attacks, such as the 20 January attack on Ghwaryan prison in Al-Hasakeh in Syria's northeast. It is estimated to control 6,000 to 10,000 fighters between the two countries and conducted sporadic attacks in Iraq and Syria during the period covered by the Monitoring Team's 15 July report, including attacks that targeted farmers in Kirkuk and Diyala governorates on 23 May, killing 12 civilians.

ISIL has also sustained significant leadership losses in Iraq and Syria during the last 12 months. In October 2021, Iraqi authorities announced that they had arrested Sami Jasim al-Jaburi, a senior figure among ISIL's leadership responsible for managing the group's finances. On 3 February, ISIL's leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi was killed during a pre-dawn raid by the US military in northwest Syria. On 12 July, US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that the US had conducted an unmanned aircraft system strike in northwest Syria that targeted two senior ISIL officials. Maher al-Agal, a senior ISIL leader, was killed during the operation. CENTCOM described al-Agal as "one of the top five [ISIL] leaders and the leader of [ISIL] in Syria" and said he was "responsible for aggressively pursuing the development of [ISIL] networks outside of Iraq and Syria".

According to the Monitoring Team's 15 July report, although the overall threat level in Europe remains moderate, ISIL has limited resources for attacks on European soil. Recent attacks in Europe claimed by ISIL largely involved people with mental health problems inspired by ISIL who did not receive material support from the group. The report also notes that radicalisation of inmates and prison-based recruitment continue to motivate the threat posed by ISIL in Europe.

Repatriation of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) linked to ISIL and the women and children associated with them remains an important issue for the international community. The 11 July report notes that one member state has estimated that 120,000 people remain in 11 camps and 20 prison facilities in northeast Syria, including 30,000 children under the age of 12 who are at risk of radicalisation

by ISIL, and also says that holding people in these circumstances has negative consequences for the global threat landscape over the long term.

### Key Issues and Options

Maintaining the flexibility and adaptability required to address the threat posed by ISIL and the overall implementation of the 1267/1989/2253 Al-Qaida/ISIL sanctions regime are both important issues for the Council. In this regard, the interaction between the implementation of the regime and the provision of humanitarian aid is an important consideration. Humanitarian organisations have reported that sanctions regimes can hinder their work, particularly where banks and other financial institutions practice overcompliance or engage in excessive de-risking. Council members could convene an informal interactive dialogue with relevant experts to discuss ideas for overcoming this problem.

### Council Dynamics

In general, counter-terrorism enjoys the support of all Council members. Some differences exist, however, regarding the four pillars of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which were reaffirmed by the General Assembly on 30 June 2021. The pillars are, first, addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; second, measures to prevent and combat terrorism; third, measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the UN system in that regard; and fourth, measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism. The fourth pillar does not enjoy equal support among all Council members. Some members favour a counter-terrorism approach that is founded on human rights, prevention, and the involvement of civil society, while other members focus more closely on security and law enforcement.

The US is the penholder on counter-terrorism. Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti (India) chairs the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). Ambassador Trine Heimerback (Norway) chairs the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. The 1540 Non-Proliferation Committee is chaired by Ambassador Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico).

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## Ukraine

### Expected Council Action

In August, the Security Council may hold one or more meetings on the situation in Ukraine, depending on developments on the ground.

### Key Recent Developments

In July, the Security Council held one open briefing on Ukraine and there were two Arria-formula meetings on the matter—one convened by Russia on 11 July and the other by Albania and Poland, in cooperation with Ukraine, on 15 July. (For more information, please see our 8 July, 14 July and 28 July *What's in Blue* stories.)

In addition to these meetings, the war in Ukraine was referenced during several other Council meetings. Notable in this regard was the annual open debate on children and armed conflict, held on 19 July. At that meeting, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba presented the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict, in which Ukraine was added as a situation of concern with immediate effect. Information about violations committed against children in Ukraine will be included in the Secretary-General's future annual reports on children and armed conflict. (For background, see our 18 July *What's in Blue* story and

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON UKRAINE** Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9104 (29 July 2022) was an open meeting on Ukraine, requested by Albania and the US, which focused on the implications of the war in Ukraine on the UN Charter and the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

# Ukraine

our July *Forecast* brief on children and armed conflict.)

Following months of backdoor diplomacy led by Türkiye and the UN, Russia and Ukraine reached an agreement on 22 July to facilitate the export of grain and related foodstuffs and fertilisers from Ukrainian ports. The agreement, signed separately by Russia and Ukraine, assumes that the two countries will provide maximum assurances for the safe and secure navigation of vessels transporting grain from ports in the cities of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Yuzhne. In this regard, Russia and Ukraine agreed not to undertake any attacks against relevant commercial ships, civilian vessels and port facilities.

In addition to this agreement, Russia and the UN signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the UN's scope of engagement to facilitate unimpeded exports of Russian food products and fertilisers to global markets. In this regard, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), headed by Rebeca Grynspan, in coordination with the Permanent Mission of Russia to the UN, will endeavour to engage with relevant authorities and the private sector to remove impediments that may arise in the sectors of finance, insurance and logistics.

One day after the signing of the agreement and the MoU, on 23 July, Russia launched a cruise missile attack on Odesa. The attack struck port facilities and no casualties were reported. Although Moscow initially denied it carried out the attack, Russian officials later claimed that it targeted military infrastructure. The attack sparked widespread condemnation and concerns about the future of the grain export agreement. In a 23 July statement, Secretary-General António Guterres condemned the attack, noting that the agreement's "full implementation by [Russia], Ukraine and Türkiye is imperative".

The Odesa attack also complicated negotiations among Council members on a Council product seeking to welcome the agreement and the MoU. On 22 July, after the agreement and MoU were finalised, France apparently circulated a draft presidential statement welcoming the agreement and calling for its swift and full implementation, including avoiding actions that could undermine the agreement. Norway and Mexico also had a draft presidential statement, to which additional input from the E10 (elected members) were included and eventually circulated as an E10 draft presidential statement on the same day by Kenya, this month's E10 coordinator. The E10 draft welcomed the agreement and the MoU, recognised the importance of ensuring full global access to food and fertiliser products, and requested the Secretary-General to brief the Council on its implementation. Brazil, as Council president, attempted to merge the two drafts but agreement had not been reached by Friday evening (29 July).

The Odesa attack added a new element to the negotiations and, although efforts continued to be made to arrive at a mutually agreeable text, divisions over language on the attack made reaching consensus on the text unattainable. On 24 July, France withdrew their draft presidential statement and circulated a draft press statement endorsing the agreement and condemning the recent attack on Odesa. (Press statements are not formal Council products and although they also require consensus, agreement can sometimes be more easily obtained.) It seems that Russia objected to the draft text. On 25 July, the E10 worked on incorporating language on the Odesa attack into their text. Unable to obtain agreement on how to address the

attack, the E10 withdrew their text on 26 July. Norway and Mexico then circulated a new draft presidential statement based on the E10 draft but referencing the Secretary-General's 23 July statement on the attack. Following comments from members, Norway and Mexico withdrew the draft text on 27 July. It appears that some Council members were unwilling to accept a text without explicit reference to the Odesa attack.

Despite concerns about the future of the grain export deal following the 23 July attack, it seems that steps are being taken to implement the agreement. On 27 July, a Joint Coordination Centre (JCC)—consisting of senior representatives from Russia, Türkiye and Ukraine—was established in Istanbul under the UN's auspices to conduct general oversight of the agreement. Under the terms of the agreement, Ukraine's Black Sea ports will not be demined. Instead, Ukrainian pilot vessels will guide merchant ships through a maritime humanitarian corridor established in the Black Sea from the ports to the Bosphorus Strait. At a Turkish port, inspection teams comprised of representatives from Russia, Türkiye and Ukraine will check for unauthorised cargoes and personnel on board all commercial vessels bound for Ukraine. To prevent provocations and potential incidents, the agreement precludes military ships, aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles from approaching the maritime humanitarian corridor without JCC authorisation. The movement of merchant ships will be monitored remotely.

As the war in Ukraine enters its sixth month, hostilities remain concentrated in the eastern Donetsk region. Following a brief operational pause in mid-July, Russian forces continued ground attacks northwest of Sloviansk and east of Siversk and Bakhmut. In July, missile attacks continued to be reported on a daily basis, often striking residential and commercial areas and, in some cases, leading to dozens of civilian casualties. For example, the shelling of a residential building and a recreation centre in Serhiivka in the Odesa region on 1 July resulted in 21 civilian deaths. On 9 July, a missile strike on the city of Chasiv Yar in Donetsk destroyed a residential building, killing 48 civilians and injuring nine others. More recently, a 14 July missile strike on the city of Vinnytsia in west-central Ukraine reportedly resulted in 25 civilian deaths and over 200 injuries.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 5 July, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on Ukraine at which High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet presented orally the findings of the periodic report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). She noted that the findings of the report are based on information gathered by the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine during 11 field visits, to three places of detention, and 517 interviews with victims and witnesses of human rights violations, as well as other sources of information. Bachelet said that as at 3 July, OHCHR documented over 10,000 civilian deaths or injuries across Ukraine, including 335 children among the 4,889 civilians documented as killed, with the actual figures likely to be much higher. Among other things, OHCHR has documented damage or destruction to over 400 medical and educational facilities; 270 cases of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance; 28 cases of conflict-related sexual violence; and 17 deaths of journalists. She further noted that "appalling reports of torture and ill-treatment by both parties continue, including of prisoners of war, with little progress in holding those responsible to account".

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# Ukraine

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Security Council is how to facilitate an end to the conflict. Agreement on Council products on Ukraine is difficult because of the direct involvement of a permanent member in the conflict, and members' sharply diverging positions on the issue. 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. Members may also wish to consider formats with restrictive attendance and no meeting record, such as private or closed Arria-formula meetings, to allow for a frank exchange of ideas between Council members and key actors on the situation on the ground.

Another key issue for the Council is determining how it can support the implementation of the Black Sea grain agreement and the MoU on ensuring unimpeded access of Russian food and fertiliser to global markets. In this regard, members may wish to ask the Secretary-General to brief on the implementation of the agreement and the MoU. In this context, they may also be interested in hearing how the Council can promote adherence by the parties to their commitments.

## Council Dynamics

The Security Council remains starkly divided on the situation in Ukraine, with Russia justifying its invasion, which it refers to as a “special military operation”, 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.

While seemingly united in condemning Russia in the days following its intervention in Ukraine, divisions between the US and the European members, on the one hand, and other members, on the other hand, have become more pronounced in recent months, particularly on matters related to the use of sanctions, perceptions of neutrality in addressing the humanitarian situation, and the approach to allegations of criminal accountability for atrocities committed in Ukraine. For example, several elected members have contended that the Council should avoid what they term “political” language condemning Russia in humanitarian texts. Additionally, the A3 (Gabon, Ghana and Kenya) and Brazil have been reluctant to accuse Russian forces of having committed atrocities in Ukraine before the conclusion of an independent and transparent UN investigation. (Gabon abstained from voting on HRC resolution 49/1, adopted on 4 March, which established the independent international Commission of Inquiry. Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates voted against General Assembly resolution ES-11/3, adopted on 7 April, which suspended Russia from the HRC, while Brazil, India, Kenya, and Mexico abstained.) Moreover, Brazil and Kenya have frequently joined China and Russia in expressing concern over the secondary effects of sanctions on global markets. The fact that members were unable to welcome a positive development such as the recent agreements in spite of the efforts of a number of members, clearly illustrates the complexities of Council action on this issue.

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# Yemen

## Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is expected to hold its monthly briefing on Yemen, followed by closed consultations. Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg and an OCHA official will brief. Major General Michael Beary, the head of the UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), is expected to brief during consultations.

## Key Recent Developments

The truce between the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebel group, which began on 2 April and was extended at the beginning of June, is set to expire on 2 August. The truce has reduced fighting and led to the re-opening of Sana'a's airport to civilian flights. It has also eased Yemen's fuel crisis, despite both sides' allegations of violations and the build-up of forces.

One of the truce's key elements, to re-open roads around the Houthi-blockaded city of Taiz, remains unresolved. Briefing the Council on 11 July, Grundberg reported that he had recently shared with the parties a second updated proposal for the phased re-opening of roads in Taiz and other governorates but that the Houthis had not accepted it. During the briefing, Grundberg raised concerns about recent “worrisome escalatory rhetoric” by the parties questioning

the truce's value. Grundberg said that he would continue efforts to reach a negotiated solution on re-opening the roads while exploring the possibility of a longer extension of the truce with the parties. According to news reports, Grundberg has suggested a six-month extension to the parties.

During the 11 July briefing, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya flagged funding shortfalls for UN relief efforts and other critical initiatives. Without new donor funding, the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM), which was established in 2016 to facilitate commercial shipping into the Houthi-held ports of Hodeidah and which requires \$3.5 million to continue operating until the end of the year, will have to close by September. The UN also continues to face a \$20 million shortfall to begin the first phase of a plan to transfer oil from the decrepit Safer oil tanker, which could cause an environmental disaster in the Red Sea if the oil on board leaks or the ship explodes. More broadly, the Yemen humanitarian response plan is only 27 percent funded. Msuya also highlighted that it was important for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to disburse the \$3 billion economic support package for Yemen that they announced in April, given the economic pressures that are driving humanitarian needs. Major

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2643 (13 July 2022) renewed the mandate of UNMHA until 14 July 2023. S/RES/2624 (28 February 2022) extended the Yemen sanctions regime for an additional year. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9091 (13 July 2022) was the adoption and explanation of vote on the mandate renewal of UNMHA. S/PV.9088 (11 July 2022) was a briefing on Yemen.



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## Yemen

General Beary briefed in consultations, reportedly noting an uptick in hostilities since his last briefing and that UNMHA was monitoring reports of increased military preparedness by both sides.

On 13 July, the Council adopted resolution 2643, renewing the mandate of UNMHA until 14 July 2023. Resolution 2643 welcomed the establishment of an UNMHA presence in Yemeni government-controlled areas, which the mission recently created in the port city of Mokha, and demanded that the Houthis end the restrictions and hindrances to the movement of UNMHA personnel, including by allowing announced and unannounced UNMHA patrols. Moreover, resolution 2643 welcomed the truce and the Yemeni government's flexibility in enabling the entry of fuel ships into Hodeidah and enabling round-trip civilian flights from Sana'a to Amman and Cairo. It called upon the Houthis to act with flexibility in negotiations and immediately open the main roads around Taiz and urged that a strengthened truce be translated into a durable ceasefire and an inclusive, comprehensive political settlement under the auspices of the UN.

Yemen featured prominently in a 15 July meeting in Riyadh between US President Joe Biden and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and their delegations. The two sides committed to "doing everything possible to extend and strengthen the UN-mediated truce", according to a White House press release. On 18 July, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the UK, and the US—known as the "Quint"—met virtually to discuss the situation in Yemen. They were joined by Grundberg and UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, David Gressly. In a communiqué, the Quint stated their full support for Grundberg's efforts to extend and expand the truce on 2 August.

### Key Issues and Options

The extension and consolidation of the truce is a key issue. The Houthis' rejection of several UN proposals to re-open roads in Taiz and other governorates and the emerging stalemate in these talks is undermining some of the truce's initial positive momentum and is a cause for concern. A further key issue is restarting a political process based on Grundberg's multitrack framework dealing with political, security and economic issues for a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

Council members are likely to monitor Grundberg's efforts to

secure an extension of the truce. They could consider adopting a presidential statement to endorse any agreement that he brokers while encouraging the parties to maintain and translate the truce into a ceasefire agreement. A statement could also reiterate calls for the Houthis to demonstrate flexibility by opening the main roads around Taiz as the government has agreed to open Sana'a airport and increase fuel shipments through Hodeidah.

Rising global food and energy prices as a result of the war in Ukraine present significant threats to efforts to ease Yemen's humanitarian crisis and threaten to worsen the situation. Members could encourage donors to contribute to the UN's 2022 Yemen humanitarian response plan and to UNVIM and to fill the remaining funding requirements to begin implementing the UN-facilitated plan for the FSO Safer.

Additionally, threats to and intimidation of humanitarian personnel have been a growing issue of concern for several months. This includes the Houthis' continued detention of two UN staff members based in Sana'a since last November and the kidnapping of five UN staff members in February in Abyan, presumably by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.

### Council Dynamics

Council members are generally united over Yemen. Members have encouraged the parties to uphold the truce and want to see it translated into a durable ceasefire, which could facilitate progress on a political process for a comprehensive settlement to end the war. They are also concerned about the humanitarian situation.

The UAE, an elected Council member, is a member of the Saudi Arabia-led military coalition that backs the Yemeni government and has strongly pushed for its views to be reflected in Council products. Russia has often pushed back on language in Council products that it perceives as too critical of the Houthis or not balanced. However, the importance of its bilateral relations with the UAE appears to have made it more flexible this year in Council negotiations on Yemen. The US Special Envoy for Yemen, Timothy Lenderking, has coordinated closely with the UN in support of Grundberg's efforts to advance a political process, as have the P5 ambassadors to Yemen (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US).

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

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## Lebanon

### Expected Council Action

In August, the Security Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) ahead of its 31 August expiry. Prior to that, Council members will hold closed consultations on UNIFIL. Khaled Khiari, the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, is the anticipated briefer.

### Key Recent Developments

Following the 15 May legislative election, the parliament designated

caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati on 23 June as the new head of government responsible for forming a cabinet. (See our brief on Lebanon in the July *Forecast*.) Over two months after the elections, however, Lebanon remains without a government.

In a 7 July press statement, Council members noted Mikati's appointment and called for expediting the government's formation. Reiterating similar previous messages, Council members recalled the need for implementation of reforms that "would enable the quick conclusion of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund

# Lebanon

(IMF) to respond to the demands of the Lebanese population”. (In April, the IMF and the Lebanese government reached a preliminary agreement to support Lebanon for 46 months with around \$3 billion on the condition that Lebanon implements a series of prior actions and reforms, including adopting the 2022 state budget and reforming the bank secrecy law.) The statement also encouraged measures to enhance women’s political participation and representation, including in the new government, and their economic empowerment.

Lebanon continues to suffer the effects of an enduring socio-economic crisis, with the recent period marked by strikes and a continuation of demonstrations.

The situation of refugees in Lebanon also remains a matter of concern. On 4 July, caretaker Minister for the Displaced Issam Charafeddine announced a plan to begin repatriating Syrian refugees living in Lebanon. In a 6 July statement, Human Rights Watch said that “Syria is anything but safe for returnees”, and any forced returns would amount to a breach of Lebanon’s international obligations.

Developments in southern Lebanon are likely to be a key focus of Council members’ attention ahead of the negotiations on UNIFIL’s mandate renewal. The Secretary-General’s 13 July report on the implementation of resolution 1701, which in 2006 called for a cessation of hostilities between Shi’a group Hezbollah and Israel, said that tensions remained high in UNIFIL’s area of operations. The report, which covers the period from 19 February to 20 June, documented several violations of resolution 1701 and condemned the 25 April rocket fire from Lebanon towards Israel as well as Israel’s response fire. Overall, while UNIFIL’s freedom of movement was “respected in most cases”, the mission continued to face some restrictions.

The Secretary-General’s report noted that UNIFIL helicopter patrols observed four firing ranges in Sector West of the mission’s area of operations. UNIFIL, which has yet to gain access to these locations, observed shooting exercises taking place at some of the firing ranges. The report also stated that containers and prefabricated structures have been erected in several locations with a vantage point of the Blue Line, a border demarcation between Israel and Lebanon. The Secretary-General’s report noted that UNIFIL “peacekeepers were verbally threatened against entering the area” and that a chain across the road leading to one of the containers prevented UNIFIL from accessing the Blue Line in one location. The report says that “[l]ocal authorities have confirmed that some of the containers are on private land and that some belong to Green without Borders”. According to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), these structures are intelligence-gathering positions belonging to Hezbollah acting under the guise of an environmental protection organisation.

According to the Secretary-General’s report, the IDF continued to enter Lebanon’s airspace in violation of resolution 1701 and of the country’s sovereignty, “caus[ing] distress to the Lebanese population, and undermin[ing] UNIFIL’s credibility”. The IDF has reported downing drones that crossed over into Israeli territory from Lebanon on 17 May and 18 July.

In June, the arrival at the Karish natural gas field in the Mediterranean Sea of a floating production, storage and offloading vessel to extract gas for Israel sparked renewed tensions between Lebanon and Israel, which have yet to agree on how to delineate the maritime border between them. While Israel maintains that the Karish field

is within its exclusive economic zone, Lebanon says that the gas field is partly located in a disputed area and that any activity in the area before an agreement on the maritime border is reached would constitute a hostile act. On 2 July, the IDF shot down three Hezbollah drones heading towards the Karish field. According to media reports, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah had previously said that the group would not “stand by and do nothing in the face of [Israel’s] looting of Lebanon’s natural wealth”. US Senior Advisor for Global Energy Security Amos Hochstein is mediating indirect talks between Israel and Lebanon on the demarcation of the maritime border.

According to the Secretary-General’s report, the IDF Navy warned a UNIFIL Maritime Task Force vessel in early June against approaching the area of the Karish field and took a series of actions against the UNIFIL patrolling vessel in violation of resolution 1701, including overflights with fighter aircraft that triggered supersonic booms, the launching of flares in proximity of the UNIFIL vessel and directing “a fire-control-radar in lock-on-mode towards it”.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 24 June, Lebanese Interior Minister Bassam Mawlawi sent a letter to the Internal Security Forces and the General Security Directorate (the national intelligence agency) instructing them to ban any gathering aimed at “promoting sexual perversion”. According to a 4 July letter by the Coalition to Defend Freedom of Expression in Lebanon, which comprises Lebanese and international NGOs, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, the ministry’s letter was followed by a “wave of anti-LGBTI hate speech on social media by individuals and some religious groups”. In a 29 June statement, the UN in Lebanon expressed concern at these developments saying that they “suggest a rollback on human rights”. The statement encouraged the Lebanese government to respect its human rights obligations, “including the rights of all people to freedom of assembly, association, and expression – regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics”.

## Women, Peace and Security

From 28 to 30 June, members of the Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security (IEG) undertook a visiting mission to Lebanon. The visit included stops in Lebanon’s capital Beirut and to several locations in the North and South of the country, including UNIFIL’s headquarters in Naqoura, in southern Lebanon. IEG members held meetings with Lebanese authorities, women peacebuilders and members of parliament, women refugees, and civil society representatives. IEG members also met with UN representatives in Lebanon, including Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wronecka, UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander Major General Aroldo Lázaro Sáenz, and UNIFIL’s gender advisors and focal points. While field visits focused on Women, Peace and Security were envisaged in the 2016 IEG guidelines, this was the first such visit by members of the IEG.

## Key Issues and Options

UNIFIL’s mandate renewal will be the pivotal issue for Council members in August. Protecting the mandate’s integrity and providing the mission with the necessary tools to carry out its operations remain key priorities for the Council. One option is to renew UNIFIL’s mandate for an additional year without substantive changes to the mission’s mandate and configuration.

Resolution 2591, which extended UNIFIL’s mandate until 31 August 2022, urged the parties to ensure that UNIFIL’s freedom of movement, including access to all parts of the Blue Line, was fully respected. It also called on the Lebanese government to facilitate

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# Lebanon

UNIFIL's access to sites requested by the mission for the purpose of investigations while respecting Lebanese sovereignty. In light of recent developments, several members may stress the importance of retaining and possibly strengthening language on the mission's freedom of movement and access needs.

A new element in resolution 2591 was the request for 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 a 15 March letter, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon requested that the temporary and special measures be extended for an additional year. During the 25 April and 26 July quarterly open debates on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question", Lebanon expressed the hope that the Council would look favourably upon its request. In his latest report on resolution 1701, the Secretary-General said that the "support provided appears to have had a positive impact on the capacity and reach" of the LAF and called for supporting the Lebanese government's request for an extension. As part of her briefing at the 21 July consultations on the 1701 report, Wronecka encouraged support for the LAF and other state security forces as an indispensable investment in Lebanon's stability. An option would be for the Council to reauthorise the temporary and special measures mandated by resolution 2591 for one year.

An important issue for some Council members remains how to best support women's participation in political and peacebuilding processes in Lebanon. During last year's UNIFIL negotiations, members had tried but did not succeed in adding language to resolution 2591 requesting the mission to support and engage with women's civil society organisations, a recommendation made by UN Women during the 25 May 2021 IEG meeting on Lebanon. An option would be to incorporate language requesting the mission to support and engage with a wide range of diverse women's civil society organisations in all areas of its work in the upcoming renewal resolution. Also, the IEG co-chairs (Ireland and Mexico) could share their findings from the visit to Lebanon by IEG members through a publicly available summary report ahead of the negotiations.

The substantial amount of weaponry held by Hezbollah and other non-state actors in Lebanon remains a key issue for the Council.

The Council will continue to monitor tensions around the Karish natural gas field and developments related to the US-mediated talks between Israel and Lebanon on maritime border demarcation.

## Council Dynamics

There is broad consensus among Council members in support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security, as well as on the need for the Lebanese government to carry out the reforms needed for the country to overcome its socioeconomic crisis. The higher number of press statements on Lebanon issued this year (three so far) compared to recent years (one in 2021 and none in 2020) may be seen as an indicator of consensus on these and the other key issues highlighted in the statements. At the same time, some members have been consistently wary of assenting to language they see as overly prescriptive regarding Lebanon's internal political matters.

A key difference among members remains the role of Hezbollah. 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. Russia sees Hezbollah as a legitimate sociopolitical force.

Regarding the temporary and special measures in support of the LAF, last year the European members of the Council were broadly in favour of including the paragraph on UNIFIL providing support to the LAF, while other members—including China and Russia—were only persuaded to accept it after the addition of qualifying language, such as that the measures "should not be considered as a precedent" and should be provided "while fully respecting Lebanese sovereignty and at the request of the Lebanese authorities". China and Russia questioned whether UNIFIL was an appropriate channel for the LAF to receive support and expressed concerns regarding the measures risking a change in the relationship between the mission and the host country authorities, and creating a precedent where other UN peacekeeping missions would be asked to provide material and logistical support to national armies, generating unsustainable demands for the limited UN peacekeeping budget.

France is the penholder on Lebanon.

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# Libya

## Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is expected to hold a briefing, followed by consultations, on the situation in Libya. The chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Ravindra Raguttahalli (India), will brief on the committee's activities.

The mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expires on 31 October 2022.

## 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 Abdul 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

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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.9098](#) (25 July 2022) was a briefing on UNSMIL.

# Libya

way towards elections. Leading the other faction is 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.

Under the auspices of the UN, the presidents of the High Council of State (the executive institution and constitutional authority established by the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement and mandated to propose policies and recommendations on various political issues) and the House of Representatives met in Geneva on 28 and 29 June to review outstanding provisions of the 2017 Libyan Draft Constitution. The meeting was intended as a follow-up to the third and final round of a dialogue forum—hosted in Cairo—from 12 to 19 June. In a 30 June statement, UN Special Advisor on Libya Stephanie Turco Williams said that “disagreement persists on the eligibility requirements for the candidates in the first presidential elections” and “while the progress secured during three rounds of consultations in Cairo and this round in Geneva is significant, it remains insufficient as a basis to move forward towards comprehensive national elections, which is a genuine desire of the Libyan people”. (At the time of writing, Williams was expected to leave the post at the end of July.)

On 1 July, demonstrations took place in several cities in Libya, including Tripoli, Tobruk and Benghazi, reportedly to protest deteriorating living conditions and the dire political situation. According to local media reports, hundreds of people stormed the House of Representatives headquarters in Tobruk. Armed groups supporting Dbeibah and Bashagha clashed on 21 July in Tripoli and on 23 July in Misrata.

On 13 July, the Tripoli-based government of Dbeibah announced the dismissal of the chairman of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Mustafa Sanalla, and the appointment of Farhat Bengdara, a former central bank chief during Muammar Gaddafi’s dictatorship. Sanalla reportedly refused to leave office, arguing in a televised speech that Dbeibah’s government lacked legitimacy. In response, Dbeibah reportedly sent troops to take control of the NOC headquarters and force him out.

Between September 2021 and April, the Council 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. Most recently, the Council adopted resolution 2647 on 28 July, renewing the mandate of UNSMIL for three months until 31 October. The resolution maintained UNSMIL’s core mandated tasks as well as the 30-day reporting cycle. It included language on the need to agree on a pathway to hold elections as soon as possible and called on the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative promptly. (For more, see our *What’s in Blue* story of 28 July.)

The Council met on the situation in Libya on 25 July. Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobe briefed saying that “the overall situation in Libya remains highly volatile”. She noted that the electoral process remains the UN’s priority, but also emphasised the need to support Libya in addressing the wider political and economic situations, including issues that triggered demonstrations and clashes in July. She also expressed serious concern over the human rights situation.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 6 July, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue with the Independent Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) on Libya and considered its report (A/HRC/50/63). Mohamed Auajjar, Chair of the FFM, said the team had conducted four investigative missions to Libya during its mandate and identified violations, including direct attacks on civilians during the conduct of hostilities; arbitrary detention; enforced disappearances; sexual and gender-based violence; torture; violations of fundamental freedoms; persecution of and violations against journalists, human rights defenders, civil society, minorities, and internally displaced persons; and violations of the rights of women and children. On 8 July, the HRC adopted a resolution without a vote that extended the mandate of the FFM “for a final, non-extendable period of nine months, to present its concluding recommendations” (A/HRC/50/L.23).

## Sanctions-Related Developments

On 13 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2644, renewing the measures related to the illicit export of petroleum from Libya until 30 October 2023 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee until 15 November 2023. The resolution included new language that expressed support for the ongoing facilitation of intra-Libyan consultations to create the conditions and circumstances for elections on a constitutional and legal basis and expressed serious concern over continued violations of the arms embargo.

## 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 about how to promote dialogue between the rival political factions in Libya and support an inclusive political process leading to elections.

Another issue for the Council remains the continuing gap in the mission’s top leadership at a vulnerable time for the country. At the time of writing, a Special Representative had still not been appointed. On 19 July, the spokesperson for the Secretary-General said during the noon press briefing that there was no update on the nomination of a new Special Representative. (The position of Special Representative is expected to replace the role of Special Envoy, as decided in resolution 2629. Former Special Envoy Jan Kubiš resigned in November 2021, and at the time of writing, Williams was expected to leave her post at the end of July.)

## Council Dynamics

Council dynamics on Libya remain difficult, leading to challenging negotiations on the UNSMIL mandate renewal resolutions in recent months. At the briefing on 25 July, members expressed the urgent need for a Libyan-led inclusive political process and the holding of elections. Several members also expressed concern over the security situation following demonstrations and clashes in July. Kenya, also speaking on behalf of Gabon and Ghana (the A3), called for the position of Special Representative to be filled with a candidate from Africa as soon as possible, which was supported by China. Several members expressed support for a one-year renewal of UNSMIL’s mandate, such as Albania, Norway and the US. Russia urged the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to appoint a

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## Libya

Special Representative and expressed support for an extension of UNSMIL's mandate for three months, adding that once a Special Representative is appointed, future steps can be taken towards a more extensive mandate.

During negotiations on resolution 2647 in July, as with negotiations on resolution 2629 in April, disagreements apparently centred on the length of the mission's mandate. The UK (as penholder) initially circulated a draft text that would have renewed the mission's

mandate for one year and reverted to the 60-day reporting period. As was the case in April, Russia expressed a preference for an even shorter text and insisted on the three-month renewal and the 30-day reporting cycle decided on in resolution 2629. Resolution 2647 was adopted by a vote of 12 in favour and three abstentions from the A3, due to their position that the mandate should have been renewed for longer than three months.

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## Syria

### Expected Council Action

In August, the Security Council is expected to hold one meeting on political and humanitarian issues in Syria, and another on chemical weapons in the country.

### Key Recent Developments

On 12 July, the Security Council adopted resolution 2642, reauthorising the cross-border humanitarian aid mechanism in Syria for six months until 10 January 2023 and requiring a separate resolution to extend the mandate for an additional six months until 10 July 2023. The resolution received 12 votes in favour, with three abstentions (France, the UK, and the US). In their explanations of vote, the abstaining members said that they would have strongly preferred a 12-month reauthorisation.

Resolution 2642 urges efforts by humanitarian organisations “to step up further initiatives to broaden the humanitarian activities in Syria, including water, sanitation, health, education, electricity where essential to restore access to basic services, and shelter early recovery projects...and calls upon other international humanitarian agencies and relevant parties to support them”. It requests the Secretary-General to submit a special report on the humanitarian needs in Syria no later than 10 December, in addition to reports at least every 60 days on the implementation of the resolution. The resolution also encourages the convening of an informal interactive dialogue (an informal, closed-meeting format) with key stakeholders every two months to review and follow up on the implementation of the resolution, including progress on early recovery projects.

The negotiations on the text were arduous. Resolution 2642 was adopted only after two previous drafts failed to be adopted on 8 July: an Irish-Norwegian draft that was vetoed by Russia and received 13 affirmative votes and one abstention (China) and a Russian draft that received two affirmative votes (China and Russia), three votes against (P3 members) and ten abstentions. (For background on the negotiations leading up to the adoption of resolution 2642, please see our 11 July *What's in Blue* story, *Syria: Vote on Draft Resolution Reauthorising the Cross-Border Aid Mechanism*.)

Following Russia's 8 July veto, the General Assembly held a session on Syria on 21 July. This was in accordance with General Assembly resolution A/RES/76/262, adopted earlier this year, which states

that the General Assembly is expected to convene “within 10 working days of the casting of a veto by one or more permanent members of the Security Council, to hold a debate on the situation as to which the veto was cast”. In the General Assembly session, Russian Deputy Permanent Representative Dmitry Polyanskiy maintained that his country had vetoed the Irish-Norwegian draft because it called for a 12-month reauthorisation of the mandate, whereas Russia wanted a six-month reauthorisation that would require a Council resolution for an additional six-month extension.

On 20 July, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu briefed the Council on the issue of chemical weapons in Syria. Nakamitsu said that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Technical Secretariat continues to seek information from Syria regarding the unauthorised movement and remains of two destroyed cylinders related to the 7 April 2018 chemical weapons incident in Douma. She also expressed regret that the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) had been unable to hold its 25th round of consultations with Syrian authorities in Damascus because of the unwillingness of the Syrian government to issue a visa to one member of the DAT.

In a 16 July statement, UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen expressed regret that the ninth round of meetings of the Constitutional Committee, originally planned for 25 to 29 July in Geneva, was “no longer possible”. In his statement, Pedersen emphasised “the importance of all the stakeholders in this conflict protecting and firewalling the Syrian political process from their differences elsewhere in the world”, and he encouraged them “to engage in constructive diplomacy on Syria”. It appears that the delegation representing the government side was unwilling to participate because of concerns expressed by Russia about the venue of the talks; in this regard, on 16 June, Alexander Lavrentyev, Russia's Presidential Representative for Syria, called for the Constitutional Committee for a new venue for the next round of talks because it does not view the Swiss government as an impartial actor. The previous eight rounds of talks of the Constitutional Committee, which was launched in 2019, have all been held in Geneva.

On 19 July, Presidents Vladimir Putin (Russia), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Türkiye) and Ebrahim Raisi (Iran) held a summit on Syria in Tehran. In a joint statement following the meeting, the three

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2642 (12 July 2022) reauthorised the cross-border humanitarian aid mechanism in Syria for six months until 10 January 2023 and required a separate resolution to extend the mandate for an additional six months until 10 July 2023. **Security Council Meetings S/PV.9089** (12 July 2022) was the meeting at which resolution 2642, which reauthorised the cross-border aid mechanism in Syria, was adopted. **S/PV.9087** (8 July 2022) was the meeting at which the two draft resolutions on Syria failed to be adopted, including one that was vetoed by Russia. **Other Documents S/2022/541** (8 July 2022) was the Russian draft on Syria cross-border assistance that received two affirmative votes (China and Russia) and failed to be adopted. **S/2022/538** (8 July 2022) was the Irish-Norwegian draft on Syria cross-border assistance that was vetoed by Russia.

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# Syria

leaders emphasised, among other things, their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria; expressed their determination to continue to work together to combat terrorism; and rejected unilateral sanctions.

At the time of writing, Council members were expected to hold consultations on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria on 28 July. Pedersen and OCHA's Acting Director of the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division Heli Uusikyla were the anticipated briefers.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 July, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in Syria by a vote of 25 in favour; six against, including permanent Security Council member China; and 15 abstentions, including elected Security Council members Brazil, India and the United Arab Emirates (A/HRC/50/L.5/Rev.1). Among other things, the resolution condemned in the strongest terms all acts of sexual and gender-based violence committed by all parties since the start of conflict in 2011. It requested that the Commission of Inquiry on Syria consider updating its report on sexual and gender-based violence, taking a victim- and survivor-centred approach.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how it can support the Special Envoy's efforts to promote positive momentum on the political track in Syria, especially in light of the postponement of the ninth round of talks of the Constitutional Committee. An option for the Council is to adopt a statement that supports the Special Envoy's efforts to reinvigorate the political track.

The humanitarian crisis in the country remains an ongoing concern for Council members. The country continues to contend with a dire economic situation, rising food and fuel prices, and high unemployment.

Another option would be for Council members to hold 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.

## Council Dynamics

The difficult negotiations on the Syria cross-border aid reauthorisation last month once again highlighted the difficult Council dynamics on Syria. Most Council members are strongly supportive of the

cross-border mechanism, arguing that cross-line assistance (that is, across domestic frontlines from Syrian government-held areas into areas outside government control) alone cannot address the scope of humanitarian needs in Syria. Over the years, the pen on the humanitarian track has been held by elected members (E10). In this year's negotiations, the E10 showed particularly strong solidarity. They met during various phases of the negotiating process to discuss a joint approach and voted as a block on the two drafts that failed to be adopted as well as on the one that was adopted. Kenya, as the E-10 coordinator for July, spoke on behalf of the group in the Council chamber prior to votes on the failed texts on 8 July and the adoption of resolution 2642.

China and Russia have been less supportive of the mechanism than other members. They have expressed concern about cross-border aid being diverted by terrorist groups, emphasised that the cross-border aid mechanism constitutes a violation of Syria's sovereignty, and argued that it needs to be phased out and replaced by enhanced cross-line deliveries. As a result of these views, China and Russia are inclined towards shorter renewals of the mechanism. This was clearly seen in the negotiations on resolution 2642, where one of the main issues was the length of the mandate of the cross-border mechanism. Most members—including the P3 and all of the elected members—would have preferred a 12-month reauthorisation. In this regard, several Council members maintained that a one-year mandate would allow humanitarian actors to plan, staff and procure supplies more effectively for humanitarian operations in Syria and that it would promote continuity of assistance during the winter months. Russia's position was that the agreed 6-month reauthorisation was needed to allow for an assessment of the implementation of the resolution prior to a decision on an extension of an additional six months. Russia also emphasised that the resolution would encourage efforts to improve cross-line deliveries and urged stepped-up early-recovery initiatives.

Council members also 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 OPCW. Several members have consistently expressed support for the OPCW's work, maintaining that it is credible and essential, but other members, such as China and Russia, claim that its work is biased and politicised.

Ireland and Norway are the penholders on humanitarian issues in Syria.

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# Mali

## Expected Council Action

In August, the Council is expected to renew the Mali asset freeze and travel ban sanctions, which expire on 31 August, and the mandate of the Mali Panel of Experts, which expires on 30 September.

## Key Recent Developments

On 29 June, the Security Council adopted resolution 2640, extending the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2023. Resolution 2640 maintained the mission's strategic priorities to support the implementation of the 2015 Mali Peace and Reconciliation

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2640 (29 June 2022) extended the mandate of MINUSMA until 30 June 2023. S/RES/2590 (30 August 2021) renewed the Mali sanctions regime until 31 August 2022 and the mandate of the Mali Panel of Experts until 30 September 2022. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9082 (29 June 2022) contained the explanation of votes at the adoption of resolution 2640 renewing MINUSMA's mandate. Security Council Press Statement SC/14958 (5 July 2022) condemned an attack earlier that day in which two MINUSMA peacekeepers from Egypt were killed and five were wounded. Sanctions Committee Document S/2022/232 (28 February 2022) was the mid-term report of the Mali Panel of Experts.

# Mali

Agreement, the political transition, and efforts to stabilise central Mali. It called for a cessation of all restrictions on MINUSMA's freedom of movement and expressed serious concerns about repeated and increased allegations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the Malian defence and security forces.

Resolution 2640 further expressed support for the Secretary-General's plan to conduct an internal review of MINUSMA. This should, according to the resolution, be submitted no later than 13 January 2023 and include analysis of the political and security challenges affecting the mission's ability to implement its mandate; an assessment of cooperation with the host country authorities and movement restrictions; recommendations about the necessary conditions for MINUSMA to continue operating; and options for MINUSMA's future configuration, force levels, and uniformed personnel ceiling.

For the first time, the Council adopted the resolution renewing MINUSMA's mandate without unanimity as China and Russia abstained. They cited concerns over the resolution's "intrusive language" on human rights and the excessive emphasis placed on MINUSMA's human rights mandate. Malian Ambassador Issa Konfourou, speaking at the adoption, reiterated Mali's "firm opposition to the freedom of movement of MINUSMA in the execution of its human rights mandate" and told the Council that "Mali does not intend to implement those provisions of the resolution".

At a 3 July summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Accra, Ghana, West African leaders lifted the economic and financial sanctions on Mali that the regional bloc had imposed on 9 January. In taking this decision, ECOWAS cited the Malian authorities' submission of a new timetable to hold elections to restore civilian rule by 29 March 2024. Asset freeze and travel ban sanctions that ECOWAS established in November 2021 on individual members of the transitional authorities remain in place.

On 10 July, Malian authorities arrested 49 soldiers from Côte d'Ivoire who had arrived at Mali's international airport. Mali said the soldiers had arrived without permission and accused them of being mercenaries. Authorities also noted that some of the arrested soldiers' passports indicated non-military professions and that they had been inconsistent in explaining why they had been deployed.

Côte d'Ivoire demanded the release of the soldiers in a 13 July statement. It said that the soldiers were deployed as part of a security and logistics support contract signed with MINUSMA in 2019 and that their mission order had been sent to airport authorities and the transitional government before their arrival. MINUSMA spokesperson Olivier Salgado supported Côte d'Ivoire's version of events in a series of tweets on 11 July, indicating that they were part of a unit that provided routine logistical support to MINUSMA's Ivorian military contingent.

On 14 July, Mali announced that it was suspending all MINUSMA troop rotations, including those already scheduled, for "national security" reasons. Since February, the authorities have blocked the rotations of seven West African contingents to MINUSMA in retaliation for the ECOWAS sanctions imposed in January. On 15 July, Egypt announced that it would suspend, starting on 15 August, the participation of its 1,035-member contingent to MINUSMA. Egypt

cited the rising number of its casualties. Two Egyptian peacekeepers were killed and five were wounded in a 5 July attack in northern Mali, bringing the number of Egyptian peacekeepers killed in Mali since 2021 to seven.

On 20 July, Mali announced the expulsion of MINUSMA spokesperson Olivier Salgado, giving him 72 hours to leave the country because of his Twitter posts about the diplomatic incident with Côte d'Ivoire. According to media reports on 26 July, MINUSMA has acknowledged "dysfunctions" in the deployment of the Ivorian soldiers in a note verbale to Mali's foreign ministry. These reports said that the Ivorian soldiers may have been contracted to provide security at a base for German "national support elements", as opposed to MINUSMA's Ivorian contingent. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean Pierre Lacroix visited Mali from 24 to 28 July.

On the security front, Al-Qaida-affiliated group Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) claimed responsibility for an attack on 22 July on the Kati military base, which had been used to stage successful coups d'état in 2012 and 2020 and is located about 10 miles northwest of Bamako. According to the authorities, two suicide bombers attacked the base using explosive-laden vehicles. Two other insurgent attacks occurred near Bamako against a checkpoint and a police base on 15 and 21 July.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for Council members will be to assess and renew the Mali sanctions measures. The Council established the sanctions regime in 2017 to increase pressure on the signatory parties of the 2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement to implement the accord. The peace process between the government and Tuareg separatist groups in the north remains stalled as attention has been diverted to restoring constitutional order. Amid the standstill and growing distrust between the parties—the Agreement Monitoring Committee, which is supposed to meet monthly, has not met since October 2021—the Panel of Experts has apparently raised concerns about the risk of the resumption of hostilities between the government and northern armed groups in its latest final report. (At the time of writing, the report had yet to be publicly released). Regarding the panel, its members were not appointed until January, about three-and-a-half months after the expiration of the panel's previous mandate. This was due to a hold on the proposed expert candidates until mid-December. As a result, the panel was unable to submit a detailed mid-term report as is customary.

A related issue is the continuing need to raise awareness among Malian authorities and regional states regarding the individuals that are subject to the sanctions and to push for better enforcement. Eight individuals, all from the country's north, have been designated. Five are subject to the travel ban and asset freeze measures, and three are subject only to the travel ban.

How to address the deteriorating relationship between MINUSMA and the authorities in the upcoming sanctions resolution is another potential issue.

The most likely option is for the Council to renew the sanctions regime for another year while updating the text of the sanctions resolution to reflect important recent developments. Given the late appointment of the panel, the resolution could also urge the timely appointment of the members of the panel. Moreover, Council

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## Mali

members are likely to continue closely monitoring developments between MINUSMA and Mali's authorities.

The 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee may also consider engaging in further outreach to Mali and the region to improve compliance with the sanctions. This may include encouraging relevant states to appoint focal points for the sanctions regime in capitals and organising with Mali and regional states a sanctions workshop to improve understanding and enforcement.

### Council Dynamics

Council discussion on Mali has become increasingly polarised this year since the reported deployment of the Wagner Group, the Russian private security company, to the country. China and Russia have been supportive of Mali's positions and views in the Council, pitting them against the US and European members on several issues, including reported human rights abuses by Mali's security forces and the authorities' restrictions on MINUSMA's activities. The African

Council members, known as the A3 (Gabon, Ghana and Kenya), play an important role in Council negotiations on Mali. Despite tensions between ECOWAS and the transitional authorities over delays in restoring constitutional order, the A3 are cautious about criticising Mali, particularly about human rights, which they believe could prove counter-productive to MINUSMA's efforts to induce cooperation.

Russia held up the approval of the Mali Panel of Experts as well as several other panels during the past year, citing, in the case of Mali, a lack of geographical balance among the panel's members. There appears to be little appetite among Council members for new designations to the sanctions list, the last of which occurred in December 2019.

France is the penholder on Mali. Ambassador Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) chairs the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee.

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## Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

### Expected Council Action

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

### Key Recent Developments

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have continued to escalate significantly in recent months. Since early May, the DPRK has conducted a number of ballistic missile tests in spite of Council resolutions that prohibit the DPRK from launching ballistic missiles.

On 4 May, the Republic of Korea (ROK) military announced that the DPRK had fired a ballistic missile eastward into the Sea of Japan from Sunan, a northern district of Pyongyang. The missile travelled approximately 470 kilometres and reached an altitude of about 780 kilometres.

On 7 May, the ROK reported that the DPRK had fired a short-range ballistic missile from a submarine in waters near Sinpo, a city on the DPRK's east coast. The test, which was conducted three days before the 10 May inauguration of ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol, marked the first time the DPRK has trialed a submarine-launched ballistic missile since October 2021 and came approximately two weeks after DPRK leader Kim Jong-un vowed to expand the DPRK's nuclear arsenal "at the fastest possible speed". Yoon has promised to adopt a tougher stance toward the DPRK than his predecessor, Moon Jae-in.

On 12 May, the ROK announced that the DPRK had launched three short-range ballistic missiles from Sunan and said that the missiles flew approximately 360 kilometres to an altitude of about 90 kilometres before landing in the Sea of Japan.

US President Joe Biden visited Japan and the ROK in late May.

In a 21 May joint statement, the ROK and the US reaffirmed the US commitment to "deploy strategic assets in a timely and coordinated manner as necessary" and "identify new or additional steps to reinforce deterrence in the face of DPRK destabilising activities". The statement also referred to expanded cooperation between the ROK and the US in a range of areas, including cyber security, nuclear energy, regional security, and supply chains.

On 24 May, the ROK reported that the DPRK had fired three ballistic missiles from Sunan toward the Sea of Japan. The first missile appeared to be the Hwasong-17, the DPRK's largest intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), and reportedly travelled approximately 360 kilometres to a maximum altitude of about 540 kilometres. The second missile failed mid-flight, and the third was a short-range ballistic missile that flew about 760 kilometres and reached a maximum altitude of approximately 60 kilometres. On the same day, the ROK's deputy national security adviser Kim Tae-hyo said that the DPRK also appeared to have conducted multiple experiments with a detonation device in preparation for a nuclear test.

In a 5 June statement, the ROK announced that the DPRK had fired eight short-range ballistic missiles from Sunan. The test came a day after the ROK and the US ended joint military drills in the region, including exercises involving a US aircraft carrier. The missiles flew between 110 to 600 kilometres at altitudes from 25 to 90 kilometres. The launch took place during a visit to Seoul by US Special Representative for the DPRK Sung Kim and prompted a joint ROK-US missile test in response, as well as a joint military exercise between Japan and the US.

On 7 June, Kim warned that the DPRK could conduct a nuclear test "at any time" and said that the DPRK has shown "no interest" in returning to negotiations. The previous day, Director

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK Security Council Resolution S/RES/2627** (25 March 2022) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 30 April 2023. **Security Council Meetings S/PV.9048** (26 May 2022) was the meeting at which China and Russia vetoed a draft resolution that would have updated and strengthened the 1718 DPRK sanctions regime. **S/PV.9004** (25 March 2022) was a meeting at which resolution 2627 was adopted, extending the mandate for the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 30 April 2023. **Sanctions Committee Document S/2022/132** (1 March 2022) was the final report of the Panel of Experts. **Other S/2022/431** (26 May 2022) was a draft resolution proposed by the US and vetoed by China and Russia that would have updated and strengthened the 1718 DPRK sanctions regime.



## Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi told the IAEA's board that the DPRK has moved to expand key facilities at Yongbyon, its main nuclear site.

During the fifth plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (the DPRK's ruling party), which ran from 8-10 June, Kim Jong-un announced plans to boost the country's military power and defence research. The next day, the ROK announced that the DPRK had fired multiple artillery shots into the Sea of Japan.

During a meeting on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Madrid on 29 and 30 June, Japan, the ROK and the US reportedly agreed to explore further means to reinforce "extended deterrence" against the DPRK. This marked the first time that Japan and the ROK have attended a NATO summit.

On 5 July, Seoul announced that six US F-35A stealth fighters had arrived in the ROK for the first time since October 2017. The fighters engaged in joint military drills with the ROK air force. On 10 July, the ROK announced that it had detected "flight trajectories" suspected to be shots fired by multiple rocket launchers from the DPRK.

In a 28 July speech, Kim Jong-un reportedly said that the DPRK's "nuclear war deterrent is also ready to mobilise its absolute power dutifully, exactly, and swiftly in accordance with its mission". Kim also described Yoon as a "confrontation maniac" and accused the US of "demonising" the DPRK.

The Council voted on a US-initiated draft resolution updating and strengthening the 1718 DPRK sanctions regime on 26 May. The draft resolution was vetoed by China and Russia, with the remaining 13 Council members voting in its favour. The following day, the US imposed sanctions on two Russian banks, a DPRK company and an individual based in Belarus for their involvement with the DPRK's weapons programmes.

At a 31 May press conference, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield (US) said that the US will push for additional sanctions again if the DPRK conducts a nuclear test. A Reuters article published on 9 June noted that Ambassador Zhang Jun (China) has warned against making presumptions about how China will react if the DPRK conducts a nuclear test, reportedly saying, "let's see what will happen, but I think we should not prejudge what will happen with a nuclear test".

On 8 June, the General Assembly held a debate on China and Russia's use of the veto. The debate was the first time the General Assembly acted in accordance with resolution A/RES/76/262, which stipulates that the President of the General Assembly shall convene a formal meeting of the General Assembly within ten working days of a veto being cast by a permanent member of the Council.

On 12 May, the DPRK reported its first official case of COVID-19, describing the outbreak as the "gravest national emergency" and ordering a nationwide lockdown. Although very few cases of COVID-19 were officially confirmed due to a lack of testing equipment, DPRK authorities have reported a number of cases involving fever symptoms. On 19 May, the DPRK reported 263,370 new fever cases. In a 2 June video briefing, Executive Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Health

Emergencies Programme Michael Ryan said that the WHO has had "real issues in getting access to the raw data and to the actual situation on the ground" in the DPRK. Ryan also said the WHO assumes "the situation is getting worse, not better". On 18 July, the DPRK authorities reported only 250 cases of fever.

Despite the apparent severity of the outbreak, the DPRK has largely rebuffed offers of foreign aid made by the US and others, including offers to provide COVID-19 vaccines and other medical supplies. According to media reports, a 30 June statement issued by the DPRK's foreign ministry described the US offer as "foolish" and accused the US of seeking to water down international criticism of its approach to the DPRK.

### Key Issues and Options

The missile tests conducted by the DPRK in 2022 have dramatically escalated tensions throughout Northeast Asia and created a significant issue for the Council. The DPRK has carried out 18 tests so far this year, a marked increase compared to previous years.

Sanctions evasion is another important issue for the Council, as is the overall effectiveness of the sanctions regime, particularly given that the DPRK is widely believed to have increased its nuclear arsenal since the regime was introduced in 2006. The DPRK's ongoing refusal to return to denuclearisation talks and the humanitarian situation in the country are also important issues for the Council to consider.

In light of these issues, the Council could consider a product that condemns the recent missile tests, urges member states to comply with existing Council resolutions and calls for the DPRK to return to the negotiating table. At the committee level, the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee could request a report on options for strengthening sanctions enforcement from the Panel of Experts.

Council members may also wish to consider convening an informal interactive dialogue with key regional stakeholders and disarmament experts to discuss new ideas for addressing the DPRK's nuclear activities.

### Council Dynamics

Council members are sharply divided on the DPRK. The P3 (France, the UK and the US), along with other like-minded members, regularly condemn its ballistic missile tests and argue that they violate Council resolutions and destabilise the Korean peninsula. China and Russia, on the other hand, often argue that more information is needed to determine whether particular missile launches violate Council resolutions and also contend that sanctions should be eased because of their impact on the humanitarian situation in the DPRK. China and Russia have also suggested that easing sanctions may encourage the DPRK to engage in dialogue and have criticised the US for not offering the DPRK incentives to return to negotiations. Both states continue to express support for a draft resolution circulated by China in October 2021 that would provide sanctions relief to the DPRK.

Other Council members have also expressed concerns about the efficacy of the DPRK sanctions regime and its humanitarian

consequences. In its 26 May explanation of vote on the draft resolution vetoed by China and Russia, Brazil said that it shares “concerns about the humanitarian impact of sanctions and their effectiveness in changing states’ behaviour, especially in cases of comprehensive sanctions regimes that tend to last indefinitely...”. During its explanation of vote on 26 May, Kenya noted that it regrets “the current policy of protracted sanctions”. At a 25 March open meeting, Mexico said that “it is clear that the sanctions that the Council has imposed to curb the nuclear and ballistic missile program of the [DPRK] are not working”, while Gabon noted that “lessons must be urgently drawn from the inability of sanctions to offer an appropriate and effective response”.

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