

# Monthly Forecast

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## Overview

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

Ghana plans to organise two signature events during the month. The first signature event is a ministerial-level open debate on the theme “[Integrating Effective Resilience-Building in Peace Operations for Sustainable Peace](#)”. Ghana’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey is expected to chair the meeting. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs and Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye, Chair of The Elders Mary Robinson, and Security Council Report Executive Director Karin Landgren are the anticipated briefers.

The second signature event is a debate on “[Counter-terrorism in Africa—an imperative for peace, security, and development](#)”. Ghana’s President Nana Akufo-Addo is expected to chair the meeting. AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, President of the European Council Charles Michel, and a civil society representative are expected to brief.

In November, the Security Council will hold its annual briefing with the heads of [police components of UN peace operations](#). Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) police commissioner, Christine Fossen; the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) police commissioner, Mody Berethe; and Emma Birikorang, director at the Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, are the anticipated briefers.

The Council is also expected to receive its annual briefing from [UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) Filippo Grandi in November.

In addition to the debate on counter-terrorism in Africa, other African issues on the programme of work in November are:

- [Libya](#), the semi-annual briefing by the ICC Prosecutor concerning cases in the country;
- [Gulf of Guinea](#), briefing on the Secretary-General’s report on Gulf of Guinea piracy pursuant to resolution 2634;
- [The Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel \(FC-G5S\)](#), briefing and consultations on the activities of the force;

- [Sudan/South Sudan](#), mandate renewal of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA);
- [Central African Republic](#), meeting with troop-contributing countries to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and renewal of MINUSCA’s mandate; and
- [Somalia](#), renewal of the mandate of the 751 Somalia Sanctions regime and its Panel of Experts.

Middle East issues on the programme include:

- [Syria](#), monthly meetings on political/humanitarian developments and on the chemical weapons file, as well as the bi-monthly informal interactive dialogue on the implementation of resolution 2642;
- [Yemen](#), the monthly meeting on developments;
- “[The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question](#)”, the monthly meeting; and
- [Lebanon](#), consultations on the implementation of resolution 1701.

The Council is expected to meet on two European issues in November. It will hold the semi-annual debate on [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and reauthorise the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA). There are also likely to be one or more meetings on [Ukraine](#).

The only Asian issue planned in November is the consultations on the report of the [1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee](#).

The Council is expected to receive a briefing from the chairs of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh) and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee and the 1540 Committee. The Council is also expected to renew the mandate of the 1540 Committee.

The Security Council and General Assembly will both hold [elections for the International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) in November.

The annual Finnish workshop on “[Hitting the Ground Running](#)” is scheduled to take place on 17-18 November.

Other issues could be raised in November depending on developments.

### 1 November 2022

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## In Hindsight: The Role of the Security Council in Transitional Justice

Transitional justice is a complex and abiding issue in the aftermath of conflict or systemic oppression. International practice suggests—and experts generally agree—that understandings and definitions of transitional justice differ, depending on the context, and that there is no universal model. Acknowledging the breadth of transitional justice is helpful to seeing the variety of political and practical entry points to the issue.

In late October, Security Council Report released its first research report on transitional justice, titled [Transitional Justice: What Role for the UN Security Council?](#) The report aims to contribute to a better understanding of how the Security Council has positioned itself on transitional justice issues. It outlines elements that are at play in Council decisions on transitional justice, notably its understanding and perception of country-specific situations and the timing and sequencing of its actions. It also emphasises the powerful political considerations at work when the Council grapples with this issue. Drawing principally on five country situations (Burundi, Colombia, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan) and two expert seminars, the report discusses examples of how the Security Council has approached transitional justice and sets out recommendations on optimising its engagement.

The Security Council has considered aspects of transitional justice and included it in Council mandates since the early 1990s. The Council has viewed transitional justice as a core element of conflict-affected states' efforts to build and sustain peace, and tended to signal its support for holistic, gender-sensitive and inclusive transitional justice efforts. Perhaps most notably, Council members have recognised that approaches to transitional justice need to be context-specific, tailored by each country to its needs and traditions, with external actors supporting national processes through political support, funding or technical expertise.

Over the past three decades, the Council has associated transitional justice with a wide range of positive outcomes. These include:

- preventing the recurrence of conflict,
- strengthening accountability,
- building more effective justice and security institutions and national human rights bodies,
- promoting reconciliation,
- supporting truth-telling,
- enabling national dialogues,
- addressing the root causes of conflict, and
- promoting development and prosperity.

In analysing patterns of Council decisions and actions on transitional justice, our report identifies what might be termed “push and pull” factors affecting its approach to the issue. These include Council members' political considerations, national-level commitment to transitional justice processes, national-level openness to Council involvement, the Council's attempt to strike a balance between national ownership and international engagement on transitional justice, and the inevitable ebbs and flows in Council attention.

Some general conclusions can be drawn from these “push and pull” factors, as reflected in our case studies.

First, geopolitical dynamics, rather than a clinical evaluation of good practice, often dictate the content of a decision—on transitional justice, as on other Council matters; at other times, different perspectives on what constitutes good practice and on how to achieve sustainable peace in a particular situation can lead to seemingly

inconsistent practices.

Second, the Council appears most inclined to support transitional justice measures where these are promoted by the country's authorities and where specific transitional justice mechanisms have been agreed upon by the parties involved, whether in a peace agreement or a separate national agreement. It has been important for the Council to see that a genuine effort exists from national authorities to make transitional justice processes work, as in Colombia and Sierra Leone.

Third and relatedly, the Council has broadly been more willing to approve UN support for transitional justice initiatives in its mandating of UN peace operations when the request comes from the host country, as in the Central African Republic and Colombia.

Fourth, the Council's pursuit of transitional justice measures may sharpen in response to violent incidents: in requesting the establishment of an international Commission of Inquiry in Burundi in 1995 following the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye and the ensuing violence between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, for example, and in the Central African Republic in 2013 when the overthrow of the government by the Séléka rebel group set off widespread sectarian violence and serious human rights violations.

Fifth, while the Council has, in several cases, maintained attention to transitional justice even as conflict raged, it may shelve that focus to concentrate on immediate humanitarian and political crises, as has happened in South Sudan and Burundi.

Drawing on the Council's approach to transitional justice as presented in our case studies, as well as broader research, the report offers several recommendations for optimising the Council's engagement with transitional justice processes.

The Security Council should continue to emphasise the importance of transitional justice in the mandates of UN peace operations, and its other outcomes, underlining relevant standards of justice and accountability. It should also continue to support comprehensive approaches to transitional justice, in which the diverse elements complement one another, and to encourage national authorities to articulate their goals for, and commitment to, transitional justice. However, the Council is not best placed to provide detailed guidance in its peace operations mandating on the forms transitional justice should take in a given country situation, nor need it do so: far more important than excessively detailed mandates is a process of strategic planning and consultations, with Council members as well as within the UN Secretariat, leading to mandates that signal overall goals for the country.

In addition to peace operations mandates, other Council products, and members' statements, the Council's primary tools include establishing fact-finding mechanisms, sanctions and international (and hybrid) legal mechanisms. There appears significant scope for the Council to deploy these tools, although present geopolitical tensions make this difficult in some situations. Members can also press for fact-finding mechanisms via other channels.

Recognising the critical role of civil society in promoting and implementing transitional justice initiatives, the Council should itself continue to engage with civil society actors and encourage the UN and national authorities to engage with local populations and communicate transitional justice goals. Hearing directly from victims of human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law is important to Council members' understanding of transitional

# In Hindsight: The Role of the Security Council in Transitional Justice

justice in different settings. At the same time, mitigating the risk of reprisals against such individuals is essential.

Crucial to optimal Council engagement is high-quality information, analysis and recommendations on transitional justice from

the UN Secretariat (and where relevant agencies, funds and programmes), and, not least in transition contexts, strong interagency coordination and cooperation at both field and headquarters levels.

## Status Update since our October Forecast

### Iraq

On 4 October, the Council convened for a briefing on the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (S/PV.9145). Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNAMI Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert briefed. Iraq participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. The briefing was followed by closed consultations.

### Peace and Security in Africa: Financing of Armed Groups and Terrorists through Illicit Trafficking of Natural Resources

On 6 October, the Council convened for a debate on “Strengthening the fight against the financing of armed groups and terrorists through the illicit trafficking of natural resources” under the agenda item “Peace and security in Africa” (S/PV.9147). The debate was one of the signature events of Gabon's presidency and was chaired by Gabonese Minister of Foreign Affairs Michael Moussa-Adamo. The briefers were: AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security Bankole Adeoye; Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Ghada Fathi Waly; and Paul Simon Handy, Regional Director for East Africa and Representative of the Institute for Security Studies to the African Union. The Central African Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Morocco, and Senegal participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

### Burkina Faso

Following the 30 September coup d'état in Burkina Faso, Council members issued a press statement on 7 October that expressed serious concern about the unconstitutional change of government (SC/15057). They further expressed their support for regional and continental mediation efforts.

### UN-AU Cooperation

On 11 October, the Security Council held its annual debate on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations (S/PV.9149), focusing on the partnership with the African Union (AU). Gabon's Foreign Minister Michael Moussa-Adamo chaired the meeting. Secretary-General António Guterres and AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat briefed the Council. Egypt, Germany, Japan, Morocco, Namibia, Senegal, and South Africa also participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. During the meeting, Council members considered the annual report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the UN Office to the AU (S/2022/643). Gabon circulated a draft presidential statement as a

possible outcome of the meeting. At the time of writing, negotiation of the draft text continued.

### Climate and Security

On 12 October, the Security Council held a debate on “Climate and security in Africa” under the “Threats to international peace and security” agenda item (S/PV.9150). Gabon circulated a concept note in advance of the meeting (S/2022/737). The briefers were: Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobe; Tanguy Gahouma-Bekale, Permanent Secretary of the National Climate Council of Gabon and former Chair of the Africa Group of Negotiators on Climate Change; and Patrick Youssef, ICRC Regional Director for Africa. Colombia, Egypt, Germany (on behalf of the Group of Friends on Climate and Security), Italy, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Poland, South Africa, and Ukraine participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

### Colombia

On 12 October, the Security Council held an open briefing (S/PV.9151), followed by closed consultations, on Colombia. 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/2022/715). The Council was also briefed by Ambassador Muhammad Abdul Muhith (Bangladesh) in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and by Elizabeth Moreno Barco, Legal Representative of the Community General Council of San Juan, an organisation that defends the rights of Afro-Colombian communities.

On 14 October, Council members issued a press statement on Colombia (SC/15063). In it, they welcomed the commitment expressed by Colombian President Gustavo Petro Urrego to deepen the 2016 peace agreement's implementation and seek broader peace with other illegal armed groups. Members expressed concern regarding the pervasive effects of violence on communities, social leaders and former combatants, with a disproportionate impact on women and on indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. They also reiterated the need to accelerate the implementation of the ethnic and gender provisions of the 2016 agreement.

On 27 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2655, renewing the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia for another year until 31 October 2023. The resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Council within 45 days from the resolution's adoption recommendations on the possible expansion of the mission's mandate, in response to a 17 October letter from Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs Álvaro Leyva Durán. In the letter, Leyva Durán requested the Council to expand

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## Status Update since our October Forecast

the mission's mandate to include monitoring the implementation of the 2016 peace agreement's chapter on comprehensive rural reform and the agreement's ethnic chapter.

### Western Sahara

On 17 October, Council members held closed consultations to consider the Secretary-General's annual report on Western Sahara (S/2022/733). The Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to Western Sahara Staffan de Mistura and the Special Representative and head of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), Alexander Ivanko, briefed. On 27 October, the Council adopted resolution 2655, renewing the mandate of MINURSO until 31 October 2023. The resolution was adopted with 13 votes in favour, while Kenya and Russia abstained.

### UNDOF (Golan)

On 17 October, Council members held consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed.

### Haiti

On 17 October, the Security Council held an open briefing (S/PV.9153), followed by closed consultations, on Haiti. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and head of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) Helen La Lime briefed on recent developments and the Secretary-General's latest regular report on BINUH (S/2022/761). Mexico and the US, the co-penholders on Haiti, requested to move up the regular Council meeting on Haiti, originally scheduled for 21 October, in light of the severity of the conditions on the ground.

On 21 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2653, which established a sanctions regime on Haiti, including targeted assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo measures.

At the 17 October Council meeting, the US announced that it will work with Mexico on a resolution that will authorise a "non-UN international security assistance mission", which will operate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and will be led by a "partner country with the deep, necessary experience required for such an effort to be effective". This is in response to a 7 October request by the Haitian government and an 8 October Secretary-General's report (S/2022/747) suggesting that the Council welcome the establishment of a specialised international force. At the time of writing, the penholders have yet to circulate a draft text on the matter.

### Mali

On 18 October, the Council held a briefing, followed by closed consultations, to consider the Secretary-General's quarterly report on Mali (S/2022/731). Special Representative and head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) El-Ghassim Wane briefed (S/PV.9154). On 17 October, Council members issued a press statement (SC/15065) condemning an explosive device attack near Tessalit that killed three UN peacekeepers and wounded three others.

### Kosovo

On 18 October, the Council held its second regular briefing this year on the situation in Kosovo (S/PV.9155). Special Representative and head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Caroline Ziadeh briefed on the Secretary-General's latest UNMIK report (S/2022/739) and recent developments. Nikola Selaković, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Donika Gërvalla-Schwarz, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora of Kosovo, also addressed the Council. The discussion mainly focused on the need for continued dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the EU, as well as tensions in northern Kosovo and along the Kosovo-Serbia border over the issue of license plates.

### Women, Peace and Security

On 20 October, the Security Council held its annual open debate on women, peace and security (S/PV.9158). The title for this year's open debate was: "Strengthening women's resilience and leadership as a path to peace in regions plagued by armed groups". The briefers were: UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed; UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous; Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the AU Commission Bineta Diop; and Editor-in-Chief of ZAN Times Zahra Nader.

### Ethiopia

On 21 October, the Security Council convened a private meeting on the situation in Ethiopia under the "Peace and Security in Africa" agenda item (S/PV.9160). The meeting was requested by the A3 members of the Council (Gabon, Ghana and Kenya). OCHA Director of Operations and Advocacy Ghada Eltahir Mudawi and AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa Olusegun Obasanjo briefed. Ethiopia participated in the meeting. Following the private meeting, Council members held consultations to discuss the possibility of issuing press elements proposed by the A3. However, it appears that China and Russia opposed this proposal, and an outcome was not issued following the meeting.

### Afghanistan

On 24 October, Security Council members held a closed Arria-formula meeting titled "Engaging Afghanistan". The meeting was organised by Norway, the penholder on the file, and took place at Norway's permanent mission to the UN in New York. The briefers were: Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Roza Otunbayeva; Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Afghanistan Ramiz Alakbarov; Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Political) Markus Potzel; and Afghan women's rights activist Fatima Gailani. Participation was limited to current and incoming Council members. The meeting was not recorded, and no summary was prepared.

### Great Lakes Region

On 26 October, the Security Council held its semi-annual briefing and consultations on the Great Lakes region (S/PV.9165). Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region Huang

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Xia briefed on developments in the region based on the Secretary-General's latest report on the implementation of the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSC Framework) for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes Region (S/2022/735). Some regional countries—Burundi, South Africa and Rwanda—also participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

### Maintenance of International Peace and Security

On 26 October, the Council convened for an open briefing under the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security” (S/PV.9167). The meeting was requested by Russia in response to letters sent to the Council by France, Germany, the UK, and the US arguing that Iran's reported transfer of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to Russia contravenes resolution 2231 of 20 July 2015, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme. In requesting the meeting, Russia apparently cited alleged “risks to the integrity of the UN Charter, to the Organisation and the ability of the Security Council to perform its main function posed by the attempts of certain member states to influence the UN Secretariat in the discharge of its responsibilities in violation of Article 100 of the UN Charter”. Under-Secretary-General

for Legal Affairs and UN Legal Counsel Miguel de Serpa Soares briefed. Iran and Ukraine participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Council members also discussed the issue of alleged arms transfers from Iran to Russia under “any other business” on 19 October at the request of France, the UK and the US. Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed the meeting.

### The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

On 28 October, the Security Council held its quarterly open debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (S/PV.9174). Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland briefed.

### Sudan

On 27 October, Council members held a meeting on Sudan under “any other business” to discuss the violence in West Kordofan and Blue Nile. Special Representative and head of UNITAMS Volker Perthes briefed. At the time of writing, a press statement was a possible outcome.

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## Counter-Terrorism

### Expected Council Action

In November, Ghana is organising a high-level debate on “Counter-terrorism in Africa— an imperative for peace, security, and development”. The debate will be one of the signature events of Ghana's presidency. AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, President of the European Council Charles Michel and a representative of civil society are expected to brief.

No formal outcome is anticipated.

The Council is also scheduled to receive its annual briefing from the chairs of its counter-terrorism committees: Ambassador Trine Heimerback (Norway), chair of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee; Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj (India), chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC); and Ambassador Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico), chair of the 1540 Committee.

### Background

Ghana's concept note for the meeting says that it will focus on ongoing counter-terrorism measures in Africa and how the Security Council can support such measures. The meeting will also consider how the Council can work with regional mechanisms to address the threat posed by terrorism.

According to the concept note, Africa has experienced an influx of terrorist groups that seek to establish a presence in areas where states lack authority, including in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), northeast Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, northern

Mozambique, the Sahel, and Somalia. The concept note also refers to the 2022 Global Terrorism Index (GTI), a report prepared by the Institute of Economics and Peace, which found that close to half of the terrorist-related deaths recorded in 2021 occurred in Africa.

In recent years, affiliates of ISIL have become increasingly active in Africa. The 28th report of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Qaeda Monitoring Team, which was published on 21 July 2021, noted that “the most striking development of the period under review was the emergence of Africa as the region most affected by terrorism”. This trend has since continued. The Secretary-General's 15th biannual strategic-level report on the threat posed by ISIL/Da'esh, which was issued on 26 July, says that the situation on the continent has deteriorated further and that two of the three “most dynamic” ISIL networks are based in Africa. The report also says that member states remain “acutely concerned” about the rising incidence of terrorist violence in Africa and describes several examples of violence perpetrated by African organisations with links to ISIL. In the DRC, for example, the Allied Democratic Forces, a group that has pledged allegiance to ISIL, killed more than 383 civilians between December 2021 and February 2022.

According to the concept note, a funding shortfall for counter-terrorism measures in Africa has weakened the effectiveness of military operations and other measures designed to combat terrorism, including initiatives that are designed to respond to underlying causes of violent extremism, such as climate change, under-development, illiteracy, poverty, and the absence of a strong government presence. The

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2610 (17 December 2021) renewed and updated the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2020/5 (11 March 2020) was adopted during a debate entitled “Countering terrorism and extremism in Africa” under the agenda item “Peace and security in Africa”, a signature event of China's Council presidency. Secretary-General's Report S/2022/576 (26 July 2022) was the 15th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL/Da'esh to international peace and security. Sanctions Committee Document S/2021/655 (21 July 2021) was the 28th report of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

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## Counter-Terrorism

concept note also argues that several counter-terrorism operations and mechanisms that work in Africa have not yielded the expected results due to the volume of resources required and capability challenges, including the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS/AMISOM), the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S), the ECOWAS 2024 Action Plan, and the Accra Initiative.

Referring to the AU extraordinary session on terrorism and unconstitutional changes in Africa held in Malabo on 28 May, the concept note says that this summit acknowledged the funding and structural challenges faced in the fight against terrorism and called for “adequate, sustainable and predictable financing for counter-terrorism efforts on the continent”. The concept note further observes that the outcome document for the summit renewed the AU’s call for the UN to use assessed contributions for AU-mandated peace operations to strengthen counter-terrorism efforts. The Secretary-General has echoed these calls in the past. During the 2019 “African Regional High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and the Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism” in Nairobi, for example, the Secretary-General said that he “deeply believe[s] that African peace-enforcing and counter-terrorism operations must have strong and clear mandates by the [Council] backed by sufficient, predictable and sustainable financial support, namely through assessed contributions”.

Three guiding questions are outlined in the concept note:

- How can UN missions in Africa better support regional counter-terrorism efforts?
- In what ways can the UN support the building of resilience among member states to curb the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel and coastal west Africa?
- Which sustainable funding mechanism can be leveraged towards supporting resilience-building against terrorism in the Sahel region and coastal west Africa?

### Key Issues and Options

A key issue is how to enhance the capacity of counter-terrorism initiatives in Africa, such as the FC-G5S, a regional counter-terrorism operation founded by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The FC-G5S has carried out some joint operations but faces persistent challenges in securing financial and material resources, which prevent it from becoming fully operational. Additionally, in a significant setback to the force, Mali withdrew from the FC-G5S earlier this year. Similarly, the region’s states are also confronted by the need to allocate part of their national budgets to counter-terrorism,

which diverts funds from social services and development efforts.

Another issue is how to address violent extremism and terrorism in Africa in a more holistic manner. Besides West Africa, there are concerns about terrorist activity in other parts of Africa, including Somalia and Libya, and increasingly in central and southern Africa.

While no formal outcome is anticipated for the debate, in their statements Council members may elect to:

- advocate for financial and material support for regional counter-terrorism forces;
- emphasise the need for such forces to adhere to international human rights standards; or
- call for efforts to promote a continent-wide approach to counter-terrorism.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members share concerns about the spread of terrorism and organised crime in Africa, including previously unaffected regions, and its impact on civilians. However, since most members in principle do not consider UN political missions, good office engagements and peacekeeping operations to be appropriate for conducting counter-terrorism activities, they may be interested in exploring what the A3 (Gabon, Ghana and Kenya) may suggest in this context. The question of how to provide more adequate, sustainable, and predictable financing for African counter-terrorism operations, such as the FC-G5S, has also proven divisive for Council members over the years, particularly in relation to the possible use of assessed contributions to fund such operations.

The spread of terrorism in Africa was also an issue during the negotiations concerning the renewal of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and Al-Qaeda sanctions regime in December 2021. It seems that the zero draft of the resolution proposed by the US, the penholder on the file, suggested directing the 1267/1989/2253 Monitoring Team to submit a standalone report regarding ISIL’s activities in Africa to the 1267/1989/2253 Sanctions Committee. Russia opposed this change on the basis that it would overlap with the Monitoring Team’s existing reporting requirements. The amendment was also opposed by the then “A3 plus one” (Kenya, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Tunisia). In an attempt to find compromise, a revised draft of the resolution instead directed the Monitoring Team to incorporate information regarding ISIL in Africa in its existing reports. It appears this was also not acceptable to the “A3 plus one”, and the resolution does not contain an additional reporting requirement on ISIL in Africa.

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## UN Peacekeeping

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold a ministerial-level open debate on the theme “Integrating Effective Resilience-Building in Peace Operations for Sustainable Peace”. This is one of the signature

events of Ghana’s presidency. Ghanaian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey is expected to chair the meeting. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEKEEPING** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2378 (20 September 2017) requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive briefing to the Security Council on the reform of UN peacekeeping every 12 months, to be followed by a debate. Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2022/6 (31 August 2022) was on peace and security in Africa. S/PRST/2022/5 (12 July 2022) was on strategic communications in peacekeeping. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9123 (6 September 2022) was on UN peacekeeping operations.

# UN Peacekeeping

and Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye, Chair of The Elders Mary Robinson, and Security Council Report Executive Director Karin Landgren are the anticipated briefers.

No formal outcome is anticipated.

## Background and Key Recent Developments

Ghana would like this month's open debate to facilitate a discussion on the challenges of peacekeeping in a changing security landscape. It intends to use the meeting to highlight the increasing threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism, as well as other structural factors and drivers of conflict, such as poverty and climate change. Ghana seems to be keen to consider these issues in the context of the political, security and development challenges facing the Sahel and coastal West Africa.

At the 16th annual consultative meeting between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council in New York on 14 October, the situation in the Sahel and West Africa was discussed. In the joint communiqué the two Councils adopted at the end of the meeting, they expressed concern about the growing threat of terrorism and the resurgence of coups d'état plaguing the region. In this regard, they agreed on the need to address the underlying conditions contributing to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel and West Africa. The two Councils also "underscored the importance of strengthening the resilience of African States through creating an environment conducive to prosperity for youth and women by facilitating access to economic and social services and employment in addition to supporting deradicalization efforts through education, training, skill development and rehabilitation and reintegration programs".

In the same spirit, on 25 September, the UN, the AU, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) jointly launched a high-level independent panel under the leadership of the former president of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, to undertake a strategic assessment of "the underlying challenges in the Sahel, including the surge in violent extremism, growing fragility of the economies of the region due to the impact of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as complex political transitions". The panel's report and findings, due to be submitted in February, are expected to facilitate coordinated regional and international response to the complex political, security and development challenges of the Sahel.

Sustainable funding mechanisms are also foreseen as a topic for the high-level debate. Over the years, the AU has requested adequate, predictable and sustainable financing for its peace support operations from the UN's assessed contributions. This issue has gained some momentum in the Council over the last couple of months. On 27 July, Ghana convened an Arria-formula meeting on "Collective security through equitable burden sharing: strengthening regional arrangements for the maintenance of international peace and security", which provided an opportunity for Council members to discuss how financial and logistical support could be provided to regional efforts to address peace and security challenges in Africa.

On 9 August, China convened a Security Council open debate on capacity-building for sustaining peace during which the financing issue was again raised. The outcome of the meeting was a 31

August presidential statement that requested the Secretary-General to submit, by 30 April 2023, a report on progress made by the UN and the AU to fulfil the commitments set out in resolution 2320 of 8 November 2016 on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations and resolution 2378 of 20 September 2017 on peacekeeping reform. The report is also expected to include "recommendations on moving forward that reflect good practices and lessons-learned with the view to secure predictable, sustainable and flexible resources".

## Key Issues and Options

One of the key issues for Council members is how to enhance the role of UN peace operations to better respond to existing and new challenges to peace and security. A related issue is how to address the underlying causes of conflict and insecurity and build resilient communities. While no formal outcome is anticipated from the meeting, Council members may reflect on how various UN bodies and other relevant stakeholders can create greater synergies and coherence in support of national and regional efforts to tackle the root causes and drivers of conflict.

The other major issue is how to address the long-standing issue of financing AU peace support operations. The Secretary-General's report, pursuant to the 31 August presidential statement, is due by 30 April 2023. Next year, building on the discussion in the open debate, Ghana may wish to pursue a resolution taking advantage of the renewed momentum on the issue of sustainable financing of AU-led peace support operations through UN assessed contributions.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

Ghana is one of the top ten troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations and chairs the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. It has been active in discussions on peacekeeping and has attached particular importance to the security situation in its own region. Ghana seems keen to mobilise international efforts to respond to the growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism and other political, security and development challenges in the Sahel and West Africa through existing UN peace operations and other regional security arrangements.

Council discussions on these issues, however, have been difficult and contentious. Geopolitical dynamics in the region, with the growing influence of Russia and its deployment of the Wagner Group, a Russian private security company, in Mali have also further complicated these discussions.

The Security Council has long discussed the possibility that AU-led peace support operations could be funded through UN assessed contributions. The US, the world body's largest funder, had opposed this possibility during the Trump Administration. In 2018, it threatened to veto a draft resolution on the financing issue that was proposed by the three African members (A3). However, there seems to be a window of opportunity for progress on this issue because of the Biden administration's keenness to strengthen US relations with Africa. At the 11 October Security Council debate on UN-AU Cooperation, the US Permanent Representative made clear that "the implementation of [human rights and international humanitarian law] frameworks and other oversight mechanisms...remain key

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# UN Peacekeeping

considerations for any discussions about the use of UN assessed contributions”.

Although there is renewed interest in discussing the financing issue, Council members recognise that counter-terrorism operations

are not eligible for financial support from UN-assessed contributions because of the basic principles of peacekeeping—consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

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## Ukraine

### Expected Council Action

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

### Key Recent Developments

As the war enters its ninth month, hostilities remain concentrated in Ukraine’s eastern and southern regions. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on 30 September the annexation of the Russian-held regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia. Meanwhile, Ukrainian troops have continued to advance on the eastern and southern fronts. In the east, Ukrainian forces retook the strategic city of Lyman in the Donetsk region in early October and have continued pushing farther east, recapturing over 200 square kilometres of territory in the Luhansk region since 10 October. Russian forces have reportedly been repelled from the city of Bakhmut in the Donetsk region, which they have been trying to capture for weeks. In the south, the Ukrainian army broke through Russia’s line of defence on the west bank of the Dnieper River in the Kherson region, prompting the local occupation authorities on 22 October to order the evacuation of civilians from the city of Kherson.

Moscow blames Ukraine for an 8 October explosion on the Kerch Strait bridge, which connects Russia to the annexed Crimean Peninsula. In retaliation, Russia has been launching missile and air assaults against military and energy infrastructure across the country, including in the capital, Kyiv. Ukraine has not claimed responsibility for the attack. The most intense barrage took place between 10 and 12 October and sporadic attacks have continued since. Russia has reportedly used unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drones, to target critical infrastructure. The P3 members (France, the UK and the US) have accused Iran of supplying Russia with the drones, claiming that this violates Security Council resolution 2231 of 20 July 2015, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran’s nuclear programme. Tehran has denied these allegations.

In a 14 October letter to the Council, Ukraine alleged that Iran had transferred UAVs to Russia in late August and argued that this contravened resolution 2231. The letter invited “UN experts” to visit Ukraine to “inspect recovered Iranian-origin UAVs in order to facilitate implementation of [resolution 2231]”. France, Germany, the UK, and the US have also expressed support for a UN Secretariat investigation into these allegations. At a 19 October press briefing, Russian Deputy Permanent Representative Dmitry Polyanskiy rejected allegations that the drones used by Russian forces were supplied by Iran. He also said that Russia would reassess its cooperation

with the UN Secretariat and the Secretary-General should the UN accept Ukraine’s invitation to investigate the matter. (For more, see our 26 October *What’s in Blue* story.)

According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), between 10 and 18 October, Russian attacks resulted in at least 155 civilian casualties, including 38 deaths. The missile attacks have destroyed 30 percent of Ukraine’s energy facilities, according to Ukrainian authorities. The intensified campaign was a central focus of the Security Council’s 21 October briefing on Ukraine, which was requested by France and Mexico. At that briefing, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo expressed concern about the destruction of critical energy infrastructure, stressing that the “deprivation caused by these attacks threatens to expose millions of civilians to extreme hardship and even life-endangering conditions this winter”. (For more, see our 20 October *What’s in Blue* story.)

Russia has continued to accuse the US of funding military biological programmes in Ukraine in violation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). On 24 October, Russia sent a letter to the Council, lodging a formal complaint in accordance with article VI of the BWC, which stipulates that BWC states parties have the right to request the Security Council to investigate alleged breaches of the BWC. The letter contained a draft resolution which proposes the creation of a commission to investigate Russia’s allegations and calls on it to submit a report to the Council by 30 November. It appears that Russia has convened one round of negotiations on the draft text on 26 October and that it may put it to a vote in November.

On 27 October, the Council convened for an open briefing on this issue, at Russia’s request. At the meeting, Adedeji Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, said that “the UN is not aware of any such biological weapons programmes”. Following this briefing, the Council held a private meeting at Russia’s request, focused on general nuclear issues, including the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) and Russia’s allegations against Ukraine for developing and planning to detonate a “dirty bomb” on its own territory, with the aim of accusing Russia of launching a tactical nuclear weapon. (A dirty bomb is a weapon comprised of radioactive materials mixed with conventional explosives. For more, see our 27 October *What’s in Blue* story.)

Developments in the recent period have also cast uncertainty over the future of the 22 July Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is set to expire on 19 November. Russia signed the initiative as part of a package that included a memorandum of understanding on

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON UKRAINE** [Security Council Meeting Records S/PCV.9171](#) (27 October 2022) was a briefing under the agenda item “maintenance of international peace and security”, requested by Russia, that focused on its allegations of military biological activities in Ukraine. [S/PCV.9161](#) (21 October 2022) was a briefing on Ukraine, requested by France and Mexico, which focused on the protection of civilians and critical infrastructure.

# Ukraine

the UN's scope of engagement to facilitate unimpeded exports of Russian food products and fertilisers to global markets. It has criticised the implementation of the package deal and has threatened not to renew the grain initiative when it expires. UN Conference on Trade and Development Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths travelled to Moscow on 16 October to discuss the extension and expansion of the deal, including proposals to renew the initiative for one year and to export through Black Sea ports Russian ammonia that prior to the war was transferred through a pipeline running from Russia to Ukraine.

On 29 October, Russia announced that it will suspend its implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, citing an alleged Ukrainian drone attack against Russian ships in Crimea. In a 29 October statement, Secretary-General António Guterres emphasised that “it is vital that all parties refrain from any action that would imperil” the grain initiative. On 31 October, the Security Council held a meeting on the matter, at the request of Russia. Griffiths and Grynspan briefed at the meeting. (For more, see our 30 October *What's in Blue* story.)

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 18 October, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Ukraine submitted a report to the General Assembly on findings around events during late February and March in the four regions of Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Sumy (A/HRC/49/71). The report, requested by Human Rights Council resolution S-34/1, found “reasonable grounds to conclude” that war crimes and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have been committed in Ukraine since the start of the war on 24 February. Russian armed forces were “responsible for the vast majority of the violations identified”, while “Ukrainian forces have also committed international humanitarian law violations in some cases, including two incidents that qualify as war crimes”, the report said. Among other things, the report documented “the relentless use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas” and “patterns of summary executions, unlawful confinement, torture, ill-treatment, rape and other sexual violence committed in areas occupied by Russian armed forces across the four regions”.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how to support the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Council members may wish to convene a private meeting, or a closed Arria-formula meeting, to allow for a frank exchange of ideas with key actors in the banking, insurance and transportation sectors on the package deal's implementation.

Another key issue is the need to promote the safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine. Shelling around the ZNPP—which Ukraine and Russia blame on each other—has continued to raise concerns about a possible catastrophe. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi held meetings with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and with Putin on 6 October and on 11 October, respectively, to discuss his proposal for establishing a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the plant. Periodic briefings from Grossi could help keep the Council informed of ongoing risks and efforts to mitigate them.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

The Security Council remains starkly divided on the situation in Ukraine. Russia continues to justify its invasion, which it refers to as a

“special military operation”, while several Council members—including Albania, France, Ireland, Norway, the UK, and the US—condemn Russia for what they consider an unprovoked war. Members' sharply diverging positions on this issue and the direct involvement of a permanent member in the conflict have made agreement on Council products on Ukraine difficult.

Another issue that has complicated Security Council products on Ukraine is a perceived lack of transparency in some negotiations. In its explanation of vote on 30 September, after abstaining on the Albania-US draft Security Council resolution condemning Russia for organising the “illegal so-called referendums” (S/2022/720), Brazil cited concerns about the conduct of the negotiations, arguing that Council members “missed a valuable opportunity to engage collectively in a transparent manner, making full use of our consultation spaces in the Security Council”. It appears that the co-authors of the draft resolution, which was vetoed by Russia, had chosen to negotiate the text through bilateral consultations rather than in a collective manner.

While most issues on the Council's agenda have one or two penholders, this is not the case with Ukraine. With Albania and the US considered political co-penholders, and France and Mexico serving as humanitarian co-penholders on Ukraine, there are no clear penholders on its many other tracks, including on the Black Sea Grain Initiative and on chemical, biological and nuclear issues.

Divisions have become more pronounced in recent months between groups of Council members who appeared united in condemning Russia in the days following its intervention in Ukraine. The US and European members have argued that supporting Ukraine is about protecting the rules-based international order wherein no member state can redraw the borders of another by force. These members have consistently called for supporting Ukraine while isolating Russia politically and economically.

Other Council members, however, have increasingly cautioned that such measures risk limiting the prospects of a negotiated settlement over Ukraine. These members—including Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—contend that the Council's priority should be to establish conditions for the parties to engage in diplomatic negotiations. In this regard, they frequently call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and return to dialogue without explicitly condemning Russia. Of these members, China and India have been the most reluctant to criticise Russia in the Council.

Nonetheless, support for Ukraine's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity among the wider UN membership remains high. On 12 October, the General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning Russia for organising “illegal so-called referendums” while calling on all member states to reject their validity and not to recognise any change in the status of the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia regions. The resolution received 143 votes in favour, five against (Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Russia, and Syria), and 35 abstentions (including China and India). Ten member states did not vote.

# UN High Commissioner for Refugees

## Expected Council Action

In November, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi will provide his annual brief to the Council. The briefing will focus on the situation of refugees in several country-specific situations on the Council's agenda. No outcome is expected.

## Background and Key Recent Developments

Since the 1990s, the Security Council has increasingly considered the links between the situation of refugees and threats to international peace and security. The High Commissioner for Refugees has briefed the Council several times about specific country situations on the Council's agenda, including the Sahel in December 2012 and Syria in December 2015. In addition to country-specific briefings, the Council has received several briefings under the agenda item "Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", which allows for a general update by the High Commissioner on the situation of refugees pertaining to various settings on the Council's agenda.

The first of these briefings took place on 10 November 2000 by then-High Commissioner Sadako Ogata. Since then, the Council has received four briefings under this agenda item, most recently in December 2021 under Niger's presidency. In that meeting, High Commissioner Grandi underscored that humanitarian agencies "are not a replacement for real engagement and political solutions" and that forced displacement is one of the many faces of the Council/multilateral system's inability to prevent conflict. (For more, see our 6 December 2021 *What's in Blue* story.)

In the past decade, UN member states have shown significant concern over the issue of forced displacement. In 2016, the General Assembly unanimously adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, reaffirming the importance of the international refugee regime and paving the way for its affirmation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) two years later. The GCR remains a key global framework for addressing the issue of forced displacement through more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing and offers guidance for states and international organisations about how to support refugees and meet their needs in ways that benefit them and their host communities. Its objectives are to ease pressures on host countries, promote refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, and support conditions in countries of origin to facilitate refugees' safe return.

The main vehicles for follow-up and review under the GCR include the Global Refugee Forums (GRF) held every four years, the High-Level Officials Meeting held two years after each GRF, the biennial GCR indicator report, and the High Commissioner's annual reporting to the General Assembly. The first High-Level Officials Meeting took place in December 2021. The next Global Refugee Forum is set to take place in December 2023.

The global displacement crisis has worsened since High Commissioner Grandi briefed the Council last year. According to UNHCR, the total number of refugees and displaced people had risen to an unprecedented high of 100 million people by May 2022. UNHCR's report, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2021*, released earlier

this year, observed that 69 percent of people displaced abroad in 2021 came from five countries of origin: Syria (6.8 million), Venezuela (4.6 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.4 million) and Myanmar (1.2 million). Developments in Ukraine are not reflected in these figures. UNHCR estimates that there have been over 7,750,000 refugees from Ukraine, 6,250,000 IDPs, and close to 4.5 million persons who have registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe since the Russian invasion in February.

There have been several Council meetings this year on the displacement caused by the crisis in Ukraine. These include briefings by Grandi on 28 February, the UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Raouf Mazou on 17 March and Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Kelly T. Clements on 19 April. In addition, on 7 September, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and head of the UN Human Rights Office in New York Ilze Brands Kehris briefed the Council on forced displacements, deportations and "filtration" camps in Ukraine.

## Key Issues and Options

One key issue is the combined effects of conflict, COVID, and climate change on the humanitarian needs of refugees and other displaced persons.

Another important issue is addressing the differential effects of displacement on men, women and children. In their interventions in this month's briefing, members may discuss ways to protect refugees from sexual/gender-based violence, abuse, and exploitation.

Also a key issue is that UNHCR has a funding gap of over \$700 million, almost 7% of its budget of \$10.5 billion (original programme budget of \$8.9 billion and \$1.5 billion to address exceptional circumstances in Afghanistan, Cameroon and Ukraine) for 2022. According to UNHCR's "Underfunded Report" of September 2022, UNHCR's work in 12 countries (Bangladesh, Chad, Colombia, DRC, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and Yemen) is particularly at risk. As at August 2022, these 12 programmes received less than 50% of their necessary funding. If the gap is not addressed, UNHCR says it will have to make catastrophic cuts to lifesaving aid to refugees and displaced people later this year and in early 2023. UNHCR has requested \$10.2 billion for 2023, the largest needs-based programme budget it has sought. In their statements, Council members could discuss how the funding gap exacerbates the humanitarian conditions facing persons displaced by conflict and appeal to member states to increase their financial support of UNHCR.

In the future, Council members could consider convening private meetings or informal interactive dialogues to discuss the many challenges related to displacement in particular cases. Unlike closed consultations, these meeting formats allow for the participation of non-Council member states. As a result, they could enable a frank exchange of ideas among Council members and affected countries that may be conducive to strategic thinking and problem-solving with regard to particular displacement crises.

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON BRIEFINGS BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES** Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9150 (12 October 2022) was the debate on the theme "Threats to international peace and security: climate and security in Africa". S/PV.9126 (7 September 2022) was an open briefing on the situation in Ukraine. S/PV.9018 (19 April 2022) was a briefing on humanitarian developments in Ukraine. S/PV.8998 (17 March 2022) was a briefing on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. S/PV.8983 (28 February 2022) was an open meeting on humanitarian developments in Ukraine. S/PV.8919 (7 December 2021) was a briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. [General Assembly Document A/AC.96/1224](#) (2 September 2022) is the report which presents the consolidated needs-based 2023 budgetary requirements of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for country and regional programmes, headquarters and global programmes. [A/77/12](#) (29 August 2022) was the latest report of the High Commissioner for Refugees to the General Assembly.

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# UN High Commissioner for Refugees

## Council Dynamics

The Council is generally united in its support for UNHCR and the work of the High Commissioner. It appears, however, that political sensitivities in the Council over issues such as Syria and Myanmar have affected Council deliberations on the issue of refugees. While all Council members agree on the need to promote the safe and voluntary return of refugees, there is a divergence of views on whether such conditions for return have already been met in these countries.

Several Council members blame Russia for creating the displacement crisis in Ukraine and have repeatedly urged Russia to withdraw its troops from the country. They have also underscored concerns

that Russia is forcibly migrating civilians, including children, to Russia. Russia denies accusations that it is forcibly transporting Ukrainian civilians to Russia, maintaining that such accusations are part of a disinformation campaign by Western countries.

Some countries have highlighted the connection between climate change and refugees. At the High Commissioner's 2021 briefing, several states noted the links between climate change and displacement. During the 12 October meeting on "Climate and security in Africa", some Council members highlighted how climate change is destabilising the African continent and increasing displacement.

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## Bosnia and Herzegovina

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold its semi-annual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The Council also expects to vote on the reauthorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA) prior to its 3 November expiration.

### Background and Key Recent Developments

The 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace, also known as the Dayton Agreement, created two entities within BiH: the predominantly Bosniak and Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the predominantly Serb Republika Srpska (RS). The two entities are linked by a rotating tripartite inter-ethnic presidency and a two-chamber legislative branch with equal representation by the three major ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs). Both entities also have their own executive and legislative branches.

General elections in BiH were held on 2 October. Voters decided the makeup of BiH's presidency and its lower chamber of parliament, RS's executive and legislative branches, and FBiH's lower chamber of parliament and the ten cantonal assemblies. In BiH's presidential election, voters in the FBiH elected Bosniak Denis Bećirović and re-elected Croat Željko Komšić, while voters in RS elected Serb Željka Cvijanović. At the state- and entity-level parliamentary elections, results confirmed the dominance of nationalist parties among the three ethnic groups, suggesting that the political blockades of previous years will likely continue to hinder reform efforts.

The entity-level presidential election in RS was marked by controversy. On election night, opposition candidate Jelena Trivić declared victory based on preliminary polling results. However, the following morning, results published by BiH's Central Electoral Commission (CEC), based on 98 percent of votes counted, showed that the apparent winner was Milorad Dodik, who has served as the Serb member of the BiH presidency since November 2018. Trivić alleged irregularities and demanded a recount, submitting a formal complaint to the CEC on 5 October.

On 9 October, opposition parties staged a protest that drew thousands of supporters in Banja Luka, RS's largest city. The following day, the CEC ordered a recount of votes, with CEC President Suad

Arnautović citing evidence of electoral irregularities. In a 10 October post on Twitter, Dodik accused the CEC of not respecting the law for conducting the recount. Opposition parties filed criminal complaints with the RS's prosecutor's office on 18 October, accusing Dodik of committing electoral fraud. On 22 October, Dodik said he would file criminal charges against the CEC for failing to publish the results of the presidential elections by the 22 October deadline. However, following its recount, the CEC declared Dodik the winner of the presidential election on 27 October.

Leading up to the general elections, High Representative for BiH Christian Schmidt issued several decrees aimed at securing the funds for organising the elections and strengthening their integrity. On 7 June, Schmidt enacted a package of decisions enabling the financing of the 2 October general elections and all others thereafter. His decree was issued following weeks of failed attempts by BiH authorities to ensure an adequate budget for the elections. On 6 June, the BiH Council of Ministers decided to allocate funding to the CEC—an amount considered "belated and insufficient", according to an 8 October communiqué issued by the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) Steering Board. (The PIC was established in 1995 to garner international support for the Dayton Agreement and the Steering Board serves as its executive arm.)

On 27 July, Schmidt issued a decree enacting a set of measures aimed at strengthening the integrity of BiH's elections and improving transparency in the management of the election process. The decree, which sought to bring BiH election law in line with international standards, established new prohibitions on hate speech and empowered the CEC to sanction violations of the rules of conduct in electoral campaigns, including removing a party or individual from candidacy.

Shortly after polling stations closed on election day, Schmidt issued a set of decrees aimed at improving the functionality of the FBiH's political institutions and ensuring the timely implementation of the results of the 2 October elections. His decrees came as political parties in FBiH were unable to agree on a package of constitutional and electoral reforms in negotiations that the EU and the US had facilitated in mid-2021. The decrees, known as the Functionality

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2604 (3 November 2021) renewed the authorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA) for another year until 3 November. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9029** (11 May 2022) was the semi-annual high-level debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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## Bosnia and Herzegovina

Package, establish mechanisms to unblock paralysis in the FBiH's legislatures, including setting deadlines for the formation of the government after the election. The package also improves the proportionality of representation by raising the number of representatives in the FBiH's upper house of parliament.

### Key Issues and Options

The role of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) remains a key issue for the Council. Neither China nor Russia recognise Schmidt's authority as High Representative and may once again call for the early closure of the OHR in this month's debate.

During the 3 November 2021 debate on BiH, Russia apparently blocked Schmidt's briefing by threatening to veto the Council's renewal of EUFOR ALTHEA's authorisation. The meeting did not feature a briefing since some Council members did not want to risk setting a precedent by inviting someone other than the High Representative to brief the Council. Russia was unable to block Schmidt's participation at the most recent BiH debate on 11 May, which took place during the US Council presidency. As Russia once again holds leverage over the renewal of EUFOR ALTHEA's authorisation, Ghana, as Council President in November, may opt to avoid complications by once again refraining from having a briefer on the situation in BiH.

Divisions over Schmidt's legitimacy as High Representative have also apparently adversely affected negotiations on a substantial resolution renewing EUFOR ALTHEA's authorisation. During the November 2021 debate, several Council members, including Norway, expressed regret that the Council was unable to agree on a more substantial text. Russia described the support for EUFOR ALTHEA's mandate renewal as the only "common denominator" among Council members on the issue of BiH.

One option for the Council is to consider a presidential statement proposing a review of OHR's future role in exchange for recognition by the P2 (China and Russia) of Schmidt's legitimacy as High Representative.

### Council Dynamics

Deep divisions related to BiH's Euro-Atlantic integration and possible accession to NATO—particularly between Russia on the one hand and the US and European Council members on the other—colour Council dynamics on BiH. The situation in Ukraine is likely to continue to permeate the Council's engagement on BiH and contribute to further division between these two camps.

Council members largely share concerns over BiH's divisive ethnic politics and support efforts to reform BiH's constitution and electoral system. However, divisions between the UK and the US, on one hand, and the EU, on the other, became apparent following Schmidt's 2 October decision. The UK and the US expressed support for the decrees, while the EU delegation to Sarajevo stressed in a 2 October statement that the decision was "of the High Representative alone", adding that the "Bonn Powers" entrusted to the High Representative "should be used solely as a measure of last resort against irreparable unlawful acts". (The Bonn Powers refers to the legislative powers granted to the High Representative by the PIC in 1997. These include the ability to adopt binding decisions and unseat elected officials who are found to be in violation of legal commitments made under the Dayton Agreement or the terms of its implementation.)

In a 4 October interview, Schmidt downplayed the tone of the EU's 2 October statement, saying that he did not interpret it as criticism directed at him but rather at the political community in BiH. Suggesting that the EU may have "underestimated that things in [BiH] would not happen by themselves", Schmidt acknowledged that "sometimes they need to be pushed and supported".

The BiH Coordination and Drafting Group, which is responsible for preparing the first draft of Council products on BiH, currently consists of Albania, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Russia, the UK, and the US. Ireland was the penholder on BiH in October. It appears that, following bilateral discussions with Council members, Ireland placed a draft resolution in blue on 28 October, after it passed a silence procedure from 21 to 25 October. The draft resolution in blue is a straightforward renewal of EUFOR ALTHEA's authorisation.

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## Libya

### Expected Council Action

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

### Background and Key Recent Developments

Libya is not a state party to the Rome Statute of the ICC. The Security Council referred the situation in Libya to the ICC through the unanimous adoption of resolution 1970 on 26 February 2011, which invited the ICC Prosecutor to update it every six months. The ICC has jurisdiction over crimes listed in the Rome Statute committed on the territory of Libya or by its nationals from 15 February 2011

onwards. The ICC opened investigations in March 2011 related to alleged crimes against humanity, including murder, imprisonment, torture, persecution, and other inhumane acts; and war crimes, including murder, torture, cruel treatment, and outrages upon personal dignity. Three outstanding arrest warrants pertaining to Libya are currently before the Court. One is for Saif al-Islam Qaddafi, the son of deposed Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi. In November 2021, Saif al-Gaddafi, who is sought on two counts of alleged crimes against humanity, announced he would be a candidate in the Libyan presidential elections that were scheduled for 24 December 2021 but have yet to be held.

Khan last briefed the Council on the Court's work in Libya on

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2647 (28 July 2022) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 31 October. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9162 (24 October 2022) was a briefing on UNSMIL.S/PV.9024 (28 April) was the semi-annual briefing of the ICC Prosecutor.

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## Libya

28 April, during which he outlined “a renewed investigative strategy” involving the allocation of additional resources, increased engagement with those affected by alleged crimes in Libya, and more effective cooperation with Libyan authorities. Among other things, he highlighted an increased need to focus on certain areas, specifically financial investigations and tracking, sexual and gender-based crimes, and crimes affecting children. He also referred to the need for “better and closer engagement with the Libyan authorities”, including agreeing on a memorandum of understanding, and expressed his intention to visit Libya.

From 20 to 23 June, the Deputy Prosecutor of the ICC, Nazhat Shameem Khan, conducted a visit to Tripoli to convey the commitment of the Office of the Prosecutor to a renewed strategy for action in relation to the situation in Libya, as Khan had outlined during his briefing to the Council. On 7 September, the Office of the Prosecutor formally became a member of the Joint Team supporting investigations into crimes against migrants and refugees in Libya, joining relevant national authorities from Italy, the Netherlands, the UK and Spain and supported by the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol).

On 14 October, the Special Representative for Libya and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Abdoulaye Bathily, arrived in Tripoli following his appointment in September. In a statement that day, he said that his priority is “to identify a consensual pathway towards the holding of inclusive and credible national elections, which should be held as soon as possible on a solid constitutional framework”.

On 24 October, Bathily briefed the Council saying, among other things, that the Council must stress to Libyan actors the need to work together towards elections (For more, see our *What’s in Blue* story of 21 October.) On 28 October, the Council adopted a resolution renewing the mandate of UNSMIL for one year. (For more, see our *What’s in Blue* story of 27 October.)

### Human Rights-Related Developments

On 11 October, OHCHR released a report that highlights key human rights risks and protection gaps faced by migrants in Libya in the context of assisted return and reintegration. These include lack of access to pathways for safe and regular migration; lack of free, prior and informed consent; and returns to unsustainable situations. The report contained testimony from some of the 65 migrants who had recently been returned to The Gambia. It made a series of recommendations directed at Libyan authorities, countries of origin, the AU and its member states, the EU and its member states, and UN entities.

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## UN Policing

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold its annual briefing with the heads of police components of UN peace operations. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) police commissioner, Christine

### Key Issues and Options

An underlying key issue for the Council is how to promote justice and accountability for past atrocities committed in Libya. In addition to receiving Khan’s briefing, Council members supportive of the ICC’s work could consider holding an informal meeting with the prosecutor to facilitate a dialogue on ways in which his Office could strengthen its cooperation with Libya.

In addition to the ICC’s pursuit of accountability in Libya, another key issue related to the Council’s engagement on this file continues to be the precarious security and political situations linked to Libya’s uncertain electoral path. A related concern for the Council will be how to foster common political ground between the country’s two rival governments so they can agree on a constitutional framework to pave the way for Libya’s long-delayed elections. Council members could consider holding a closed Arria-formula meeting with Libyan civil society representatives to help generate ideas for promoting dialogue between the rival political factions in Libya and supporting an inclusive political process leading to elections.

### Council Dynamics

Council members have reiterated the urgent need for a Libyan-led inclusive political process and the holding of elections. Many members are also concerned about the precarious security situation. The Council is divided on the work of the ICC. Albania, Brazil, France, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, and the UK are states parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC, while China, India, Russia, the UAE, and the US are not. These distinctions, however, do not necessarily reflect how members view the Court’s work on Libya. For example, the US, which is not a party to the Rome Statute, is supportive of the ICC’s efforts with regard to Libya. Among the wider UN membership, African countries have long expressed concerns about the Court’s disproportionate focus on Africa.

At the briefing on 28 April, most Council members expressed their support for the approach outlined by Khan. However, members such as Russia and India were more critical of the role of the Court and the prosecutor’s strategy. In its statement, the US said that “the ICC’s work in Libya is a critical element of our shared commitments to accountability, peace and security” and “with reports of atrocities occurring daily in Ukraine, we see the need to uphold support for international justice mechanisms, including the ICC”.

The UK is the penholder on Libya.

Fossen; the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) police commissioner, Mody Berthe; and Emma Birikorang, director at the Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, are the anticipated briefers.

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UN DOCUMENTS ON POLICING Security Council Resolution S/RES/2594 (8 September 2021) was on peace operations transitions. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8901 (10 November 2021) was the annual briefing of the heads of UN police components.

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# UN Policing

## Key Recent Developments

Annual briefings with the heads of police components of UN peace operations were initiated in 2014. Last year, the meeting was held with a particular focus on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, with Lacroix, the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) police commissioner Violet Lusala, and the UN Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) police commissioner Bettina Patricia Boughani briefing the Council on 10 November 2021.

At last year's briefing, Lacroix explained the role of UN Police in advancing Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+)—a set of priorities being implemented in 2021–2023 to accelerate peacekeeping reform—and in strengthening the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. He underscored the need to continue enhancing partnerships with regional and subregional organisations, particularly in the areas of strategic guidance, development and training. He also highlighted the UN Police's efforts to enhance gender-responsive policing, including through the promotion of women's networks. Regarding the accountability of peacekeepers, he referred to pre-deployment and in-mission training by UN Police to promote zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. Lacroix also explained UN Police's role in improving strategic communications for better community-oriented policing and its efforts to improve cooperation with host countries to facilitate smooth transitions.

Lusala briefed on the meaningful participation of women and the protection of civilians in UNISFA. She reported that “the proportion of women in police components in UNISFA has reached 60 percent deployed in professional positions, including the sexual and gender-based violence adviser, and 34.7 percent of individual police officers”. She described the ground and aerial patrols conducted by the mission's police component to protect civilians from threats such as attacks by armed groups, intercommunal violence and cattle rustling. She also mentioned the mission's engagement with local communities.

Boughani briefed on gender mainstreaming and the provision of operational support in MINUSMA. She indicated that women constitute 20.58 percent of individual police officers at the mission and are deployed in Bamako and other regions. But she emphasised the need to do more to increase women's representation in formed police units and command positions. Boughani also explained the work of the mission's police component in supporting community policing, monitoring infrastructure through joint patrols, and implementing quick-impact projects to support women.

The third UN Chiefs of Police Summit (UNCOPS) took place in New York from 31 August to 1 September to discuss the role of

UN Police in the maintenance of international peace and security. The annual meeting included the participation of ministers, chiefs of police and other high-level officials from 121 member states and representatives from several partner organisations. In remarks delivered at the summit, the Secretary-General emphasised the important role of UN Police in the realisation of Our Common Agenda, which embodies his vision of global cooperation to respond to current and future challenges. In this regard, he stressed the need for “specialized expertise to keep the peace, maintain public order, fight increased organized crime and natural resource trafficking, and advance environmentally responsive policing practices”.

One subject discussed at UNCOPS was key challenges facing UN peacekeeping in general and the implementation of the A4P+ priorities in particular. Also addressed was the nexus between security and development, including the contribution of UN Police to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Our Common Agenda. Furthermore, attendees considered the performance and effectiveness of UN Police. The outcome of the summit was a chair's note that summarised the understanding reached at the meeting, including the need to accelerate the implementation of A4P+ priorities, foster sustainable peace and development through the global policing goal (developed in line with Agenda 2030 for sustainable development to mobilise national and international effort on policing), and bridge identified gaps in the performance of UN Police.

## Key Issues and Options

The key issue for Council members will be how to strengthen the contribution of UN Police to realising the A4P+ priorities. In this regard, they will focus on the performance and effectiveness of UN Police and its role in enhancing the protection of civilians.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

There is general agreement among Council members about the importance of UN Police in helping to maintain public order, protect civilians, and assist host states in building their law enforcement capacities. Council members also recognise the critical role UN Police plays in countries in transition.

At this year's UNCOPS, the United Arab Emirates offered to provide financial support to organise the next UNCOPS meeting in New York in 2024. Ghana will host the 2023 peacekeeping ministerial, which will provide an opportunity for member states to make pledges to support UN Police, including through the deployment of formed police units and individual police officers and by providing training and technology.

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# Somalia

## Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council is expected to renew the 751 Somalia sanctions regime set to expire on 15 November and the

mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee, which expires on 15 December.

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2657 (31 October 2022) extended the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) until 31 October 2023. **Secretary-General's Report S/2022/698** (15 September 2022) was a technical assessment report on Somalia's weapons and ammunition management. **S/2022/392** (13 May 2022) was on the situation in Somalia, covering developments from 1 February to 6 May 2022. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9157** (19 October 2022) was the briefing by the Chair of the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee. **S/PV.9125** (7 September 2022) was a briefing on the situation in Somalia.

# Somalia

## Key Recent Developments

The new Somali government has intensified its fight against Al-Shabaab, a terrorist group affiliated with Al-Qaeda that maintains a strong presence in several parts of the country, particularly in southern and central Somalia. The group is said to have acquired sophisticated weaponry, such as commercial drones and armoured suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (SVBIED), to launch attacks, including against the Somali security forces and the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). On 3 October, the group used SVBIED to target a local government office in Beledweyne, Hiraan region that killed 20 people, including senior government officials and two ATMIS soldiers.

In his speech at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud expressed his government's firm resolve to defeat Al-Shabaab. The government is also trying to counter the group's ideology and propaganda by cracking down on its affiliated media outlets and social media platforms. In an 8 October press release, the government announced the criminalisation of "the dissemination of terrorist messages and encouraging their act of brutality—by any media or person on social media". Accordingly, it suspended four Al-Shabaab affiliated websites (SomaliMemo, Radio Al-Furqaan, AmiirNuur, and Calamada) and blocked 40 social media pages on Twitter and Facebook.

The AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) is providing support to the ongoing military operations of the Somali security forces and allied forces, which have made significant military gains in removing Al-Shabaab from several villages and towns in Hirshabelle and Galmudug states. ATMIS is also assisting in stabilising liberated areas and safeguarding critical infrastructure. Although the Somali government is expected to make progress in force generation and integration so that ATMIS can gradually draw down and hand over security responsibilities to the Somali security forces, there is concern that delays in implementing the Somali Transition Plan may affect the timeline set out in resolution 2628 of 31 March, which reconfigured the mission from the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to ATMIS. On 31 December, ATMIS is expected to reduce the number of its uniformed personnel by 2,000 (currently, the mission has an authorised strength of 19,626 uniformed personnel).

The severe drought facing Somalia underpins its dire humanitarian situation, with humanitarian actors working against the clock to avert a looming famine. According to OCHA, "Famine... is projected to unfold in the Bay region of south-central Somalia during October to December if multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance does not urgently reach the people in most need". International partners are said to be scaling up their support for the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan, which calls for \$1.4 billion. OCHA says that "critical sectors remain underfunded, and needs are growing".

On 31 October, the Security Council renewed the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) for one year with 14 votes in favour and one abstention (China). (For more, see our *What's in Blue* story of 30 October.)

## Sanctions-Related Developments

The 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee held informal consultations on 7 October to receive a briefing by the Panel of Experts on its final report, which

noted, among other things, that "Al-Shabaab remains the most immediate threat to the peace, security and stability of Somalia". On 14 October, the committee received briefings from OCHA on challenges in the provision of humanitarian assistance in Somalia and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on maritime security and the countering of terrorism financing in the country. The chair of the committee, Ambassador Fergal Mythen (Ireland), briefed the Council on 19 October, covering the activities carried out by the committee over the previous three months.

Pursuant to resolution 2607 of 15 November 2021, the Secretary-General submitted a technical assessment of Somalia's weapons and ammunition management capability on 15 September. The report said that "Somalia is on a positive trajectory in its management of weapons and ammunition", noting the important steps the country has taken to implement a National Weapons and Ammunition Management Strategy. However, the report also referred to continued challenges that need to be addressed by the federal government and the federal member states and presented options for benchmarks to assist the Security Council in its consideration of the arms embargo in November.

## Key Issues and Options

The key issue for Council members in November is the extension of the 751 Somalia sanctions regime and the mandate renewal of the Panel of Experts. In this regard, they may draw on the findings of the technical assessment and the recommendations contained in the panel's final report. Council members may consider how they can support ongoing efforts to fight Al-Shabaab by tightening the sanctions measures to disrupt its financing and to prevent the transfer of electronic items, such as learning code receivers and motorcycle alarms, used in improvised explosive devices. Members may also consider how to support the government's efforts to strengthen its security institutions and improve its ammunition and weapons management.

A possible option for the Council is to extend the sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts by one year. In doing so, they are likely to review the exemption provisions to support the Somali security institutions and to establish benchmarks for ammunition and weapons management.

Another important issue is how to address the tensions between Eritrea and Djibouti as this dispute has been referenced in the language on Somalia sanctions for several years. While Eritrea wants language related to the dispute removed from the sanctions resolution, Djibouti would like to see it maintained.

## Council Dynamics

Somalia has long called for the lifting of the arms embargo, and the government reiterated this position in its meeting with the technical assessment team. The three African members of the Council—Gabon, Ghana and Kenya—have recently been vocal in their concerns about the adverse effects of sanctions in several contexts. It remains to be seen, however, if they will support Somalia's request for the lifting of the arms embargo. In light of the ongoing military operations against Al-Shabaab, they could be supportive of tightening the sanctions measures against the group and the review of the exemptions procedure to assist the Somali government in its efforts to strengthen its security institutions.

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## Somalia

Last year, the Council extended the 751 Somalia sanctions regime with two abstentions. China abstained in support of Somalia's position on wishing the arms embargo to be lifted, and Russia abstained in relation to the text's reference to the dispute between

Djibouti and Eritrea, arguing that the issue no longer posed a threat to regional peace and security and could be handled diplomatically through bilateral engagement.

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## Central African Republic

### Expected Council Action

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

The 2127 CAR sanctions regime expires on 31 July 2023, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee expires on 31 August 2023.

### Key Recent Developments

On 19 October, the Security Council met to discuss the Secretary-General's latest report on MINUSCA. Valentine Rugwabiza, the Special Representative for the Central African Republic (CAR) and head of MINUSCA, briefed the Council, highlighting major developments regarding the mission's strategic priorities over the past four months. She explained the coordination meetings that have been taking place under the chairmanship of CAR Prime Minister Félix Moloua with the objective of accelerating implementation of the roadmap adopted by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in support of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR. Rugwabiza noted the steps taken to implement the timelines agreed within this framework, and also mentioned a 14 September meeting between the government and the representatives of 11 armed groups that are signatories of the political agreement to discuss the possible dissolution of these armed groups.

On 26 August, the government adopted a decree setting up a committee to draft a new constitution with a view to removing presidential term limits. The current constitution, adopted in 2016 following popular consultations, does not allow the president to run for a third term. In a 23 September decision, however, the CAR Constitutional Court invalidated the decree establishing the drafting committee, declaring the committee's work unconstitutional. Rugwabiza welcomed this decision and commended the maturity of the CAR's institutions.

The security situation in CAR remains fragile. MINUSCA has adopted a proactive posture in support of the CAR armed forces (FACA) to curtail the activities of armed groups, improve security, protect civilians, facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, and help the extension of state authority. But a serious concern has been the resurgence of armed groups in the north-western part of the country and the increasing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which continue to pose threats not only to civilians but also to peacekeepers. On 5 October, Council members issued a press

statement condemning the IED attack that led to the deaths of three Bangladeshi peacekeepers on 3 October.

One of the challenges faced by MINUSCA has been continued violations of the status of forces agreement (SOFA). The Secretary-General's latest report, dated 13 October, noted a reduction in SOFA violations during the reporting period, but expressed concern about the seizure of contingent-owned equipment and the obstruction of freedom of movement, including through restrictions on night flights. Rugwabiza requested the CAR authorities to lift restrictions on night flights, which she said are critical for the safety and security of peacekeepers. However, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, Francophonie and Central Africans abroad Sylvie Valérie Baipo Temon, who attended the 19 October Security Council meeting, rejected claims about interference with the mission's freedom of movement and restrictions on night flights and asserted that CAR authorities are simply requesting for procedures to be followed and the country's sovereignty to be respected.

Rugwabiza welcomed the work of the Special Criminal Court (SCC)—a hybrid court composed of national and international judges with the authority to investigate, prosecute and try serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the CAR—which started its deliberations in August after having completed the hearings of its first trial. She called on the government to renew the mandate of the SCC and requested international partners to continue providing financial support and expertise to the court.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 51st session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on 5 October with the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the CAR, Yao Agetse, and considered his report (A/HRC/51/59), which covered July 2021 to June. The report found that "armed forces, defence and security forces and internal security forces" have committed multiple human rights violations and international humanitarian law. It also said that "allied Russian forces cannot operate outside the law" and "must refrain from obstructing the work of MINUSCA". On 7 October, the HRC adopted a resolution that renewed the mandate of the independent expert for one year, without a vote (A/HRC/51/L.35/Rev.1).

In a 12 October statement following a four-day visit to the CAR, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ilze Brands Kehris welcomed some recent advances in addressing human rights issues but highlighted that challenges persist, including forcible displacement as well as continued reports of summary and extrajudicial execution, arbitrary detention, torture, and conflict-related sexual violence.

### Sanctions-Related Developments

On 29 July, the Council adopted resolution 2648, extending the CAR

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2648 (29 July 2022) renewed the CAR sanctions regime until 31 July 2023 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the CAR Sanctions Committee until 31 August 2023. **Secretary-General's Report S/2022/762** (13 October 2022) was the most recent Secretary-General's report on the situation in the CAR. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9156** (19 October 2022) was a Security Council briefing on the situation in the CAR. **Security Council Press Statement SC/15055** (5 October 2022) was a press statement condemning the IED attack that led to the deaths of three peacekeepers.

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## Central African Republic

sanctions regime for an additional year. 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.

Following the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the work of the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, the Secretary-General appointed four panel members on 31 August. They are from Tunisia, Congo, Netherlands, and Norway, with expertise on arms, armed groups, finance/natural resources, and humanitarian affairs, respectively. The Secretary-General indicated that an expert on regional affairs will be appointed in due course. On 30 September, the Panel of Experts briefed the committee on its workplan in accordance with resolution 2648.

### Key Issues and Options

A major preoccupation for Council members is the renewal of MINUSCA's mandate. The Secretary-General recommended a one-year extension that maintains the mission's current authorised strength of 15,760 personnel. He also underscored the need to enhance MINUSCA's mobility to enable the mission to effectively implement its mandate and called on troop- and police-contributing countries and other partners to provide support in this regard.

Council members are expected to unanimously extend the mandate in line with the Secretary-General's recommendations in a demonstration of their strong support for the renewed dynamism of the CAR political process.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are supportive of regional efforts to reinvigorate

the implementation of the 2019 political agreement and the ICGLR roadmap. At the 19 October meeting, they also welcomed the improvement in relations between MINUSCA and the CAR authorities, including the reduction in SOFA violations. Several members supported the call by the Secretary-General for the lifting of restrictions on MINUSCA's freedom of movement.

Council members are divided on the issue of sanctions. When the Council renewed the 2127 CAR sanctions regime in July, the three African members—Gabon, Ghana and Kenya—backed CAR's request for the lifting of the arms embargo, with the support of China and Russia. The other contentious issue that continues to influence the discussions on CAR is the role of the Wagner Group, a Russian private security company, and its alleged involvement in serious human rights abuses.

Last year, China and Russia abstained on the vote renewing the mandate of the mission, arguing that the text did not take into consideration the concerns of the host country. At the 19 October meeting, Russia emphasised the need to maintain dialogue and understanding with the host country for the effective implementation of MINUSCA's mandate. The A3 also argued that the upcoming mandate renewal should be evaluated in the context of the changing security landscape as well as the needs and expectations of the CAR authorities.

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

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## Sudan/South Sudan

### Expected Council Action

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

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

### Background and Key Recent Developments

For more than ten years, the governments of Sudan and South Sudan have made no significant progress in resolving the final status of Abyei, the disputed area along the Sudan-South Sudan border. In this regard, the Secretary-General's 13 October report, which covers 15 April to 3 October, expresses concern that the parties have not held a meeting of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) since 2017, but welcomes the intention expressed by both countries in June to hold such a meeting in the "near future". (The AJOC is designed to provide administrative and political oversight of Abyei and is co-chaired by a Sudanese official and a South Sudanese official.)

According to the Secretary-General's report, the security situation remained "mostly calm, with some incidents of concern", including 19 direct attacks against civilians, which resulted in the death of 28 civilians. During the reporting period, UNISFA troops were attacked on seven occasions. In a 26 September statement, UNISFA expressed alarm over renewed clashes between the Twik and Ngok Dinka communities in Agok in the Sector South area, 28 kilometres from Abyei town. On 14 October, the spokesperson for the Secretary-General said that the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) had expressed grave concern about clashes in the border area between Abyei and Warrap State.

Last year, tensions in the region affected the mission, which included calls from Sudan for the replacement of all Ethiopian troops. (Since the mission's establishment in 2011, Ethiopia had been the sole troop-contributing country until recently.) The Secretary-General's report states that the reconfiguration of UNISFA's military component is approaching completion, including the arrival of 570 troops from Pakistan, 570 troops from Ghana, 77 troops from Nepal, and 184 troops from Viet Nam. Additionally, 307 out of the 570 troops from India arrived, as well as 86 Chinese peacekeepers in the military utility helicopter unit. All 491 troops from Bangladesh

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2630 (12 May 2022) renewed the mandate of UNISFA until 15 November 2022. **Secretary-General's Report S/2022/760** (13 October 2022) was on the situation in Abyei. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9170** (27 October 2022) was a briefing on UNISFA and Sudan/South Sudan. **S/PV.9031** (12 May 2022) was the meeting to adopt resolution 2630.

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## Sudan/South Sudan

serving in the JBVMM have been deployed. As outlined in the Secretary-General's report, all Ethiopian troops have been repatriated except for a three-person rear party as well as some who have chosen to stay in Sudan.

On 29 September, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) held a meeting on the political and security situation in the Abyei region and adopted a communiqué, which among other things, reiterated its call for Sudan and South Sudan to accelerate the implementation of the 2011 Agreement on Temporary Security and Administrative Arrangements for the Abyei Administrative Area, particularly in finalising the establishment of the Abyei Area Administration, the Abyei Area Council, and the Abyei Police Service. The communiqué also expressed deep concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation and decided that the AU PSC will undertake a field mission to Abyei, although a date was not specified.

The Council renewed UNISFA's mandate until 15 November with the unanimous adoption of resolution 2630 on 12 May. The resolution did not make any changes to the force's mandate or structure. (For more, see our *What's in Blue* story of 11 May.)

The Council was last briefed on Abyei on 27 October by Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa Hanna Serwaa Tetteh. (For more, see our *What's in Blue* story of 26 October.)

### Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council leading up to UNISFA's renewal in November is what modifications to make, if any, to the mandate and force structure. A likely option is for Council members to consider the findings and recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of UNISFA's mandate, including the recommendation that the mandate be extended for one year. (Since the mission's establishment in 2011, the Council has extended the mandate for four- or six-month periods.)

The report provides updates on several long-standing issues, in particular that:

- Sudan has not permitted the deployment of 98 out of 148 individual police officers and there has been no progress in the

deployment of the three formed police units authorised in resolution 2469 of May 2019;

- the civilian deputy head of mission requested in resolution 2469 (2019) has not been appointed;
- no progress has been made on the usage of the Anthony airstrip, which is crucial for medical evacuation; and
- 91 visas remain pending for personnel to support the implementation of the mission's mandate.

An option would be for the Council to adopt a resolution renewing the mission's mandate for one year, without making any changes to the mandate, and demanding progress on the above issues.

### Council Dynamics

Council members agree on the important roles that UNISFA and the JBVMM play in support of achieving peace, security and stability in Abyei and the broader region. Many members are critical of the lack of progress by Sudan and South Sudan in resolving the final status of Abyei as well as on the long-standing issues outlined above.

It seems that negotiations on resolution 2630 adopted in May were generally smooth, given that Council members apparently agreed that there was no need to update UNISFA's mandate and configuration. The penholder, the US, apparently sought a straightforward renewal without making substantial changes to allow UNISFA to adjust to its new composition following the replacement of the Ethiopian troops. Discussions during the negotiations centred on such issues as human rights reporting; humanitarian access; quick-impact projects for UNISFA; and language on women, peace and security. (For more, see our *What's in Blue* story of 11 May.)

In a statement following the adoption of resolution 2630, Russia referred to its proposal during the negotiations to add language on quick-impact projects and expressed regret that the penholder did not include this in the resolution. It seems that Russia also raised this issue during Council members' latest closed consultations on UNISFA, which took place on 21 April. Other members apparently felt that this was a matter for discussion in the General Assembly's Fifth Committee that should not be addressed in a Security Council resolution.

The US is the penholder on Abyei.

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## Yemen

### Expected Council Action

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

### Key Recent Developments

Yemen's truce, which had been in place since April and was extended twice, expired on 2 October, despite intensive efforts to renew and expand the truce agreement. In a statement on 2 October, Grundberg expressed regret that the parties had not accepted his latest proposal, submitted the day before, to extend the truce. According to the envoy, this proposal entailed a six-month truce renewal, the payment of civil servants' salaries and pensions, the opening of specific roads in Taiz and other governorates, additional flight destinations

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN** Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9152 (13 October 2022) was a briefing on Yemen. Security Council Press Statement SC/15080 (26 October 2022) condemned the "Houthi terrorist drone attacks" on 21 October that struck the Al-Dubba oil terminal. SC/15054 (5 October 2022) expressed "deep disappointment" about the expiration of Yemen's truce and reiterated that the parties should find a way forward to reinstate the truce.

# Yemen

from Sana'a airport, unhindered entry of fuel ships into Hodeidah port, a commitment to release detainees urgently, and the strengthening of de-escalation mechanisms through the Military Coordination Committee (MCC). Grundberg said that he would continue to engage the parties in order to reach an agreement, while calling on the sides to maintain calm and refrain from any actions that could escalate violence.

The main obstacle in the talks to renew the truce was the Houthis' position that their security forces be included in the salary payments of civil servants, which the government could not accept. In a 5 October press statement, Council members expressed "deep disappointment" that the truce had not been renewed and said that the Houthis' "maximalist demands" had hindered efforts to reach agreement. Council members reiterated that they expect the parties to find a way to reinstate the truce.

Briefing the Council on 13 October, Grundberg expressed "regret that Ansar Allah came up with additional demands that could not be met", referring to the Houthis by their official name. He reported, however, that since the truce's expiry, there had not been a significant escalation of military operations. Other arrangements established by the truce have also continued, such as civilian flights between Sana'a and Amman, Jordan, and fuel ships' access to Hodeidah port, according to Grundberg.

Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya also briefed, addressing the Council via videoconference from Yemen, where she had been on mission, visiting Aden, Ma'rib, Sana'a, and Hodeidah since 8 October. Msuya described witnessing how the collapse of the economy and basic services were the main drivers of humanitarian need, making food in markets too expensive for many people and leaving hospitals and schools without basic equipment. In a sign of progress, new evaluations of the humanitarian situation show that the number of people estimated to face acute food insecurity during the last quarter of 2022 had fallen to 17 million from 19 million earlier this year, Msuya said. The number of people estimated to be in famine-like conditions is projected to reduce from 161,000 people to zero. Msuya also reiterated calls for the parties to reach an agreement to extend and expand the truce.

On 21 October, the Houthis used explosive-laden drones to target an oil tanker off the al-Dubba oil terminal in Hadramawt governorate, claiming that this was a "warning strike" to prevent pro-government forces from using the terminal for oil exports. The Greek shipowners said there were "two drone-driven explosions in close proximity" to the vessel as it tried to load at the port but that the vessel had not sustained damage. Leading up to the truce's expiry, the Houthis had announced that foreign and national companies should halt oil exports as long as the issue of salary payments was not resolved. Grundberg condemned the attack in a statement, calling it "a deeply worrying military escalation". Security Council members condemned the "Houthi terrorist drone attacks" against the oil terminal in a 26 October press statement. They called the attack a serious threat to the peace process and stability of Yemen, as well as to maritime security including the navigational rights and freedoms provided under international law.

## Human-Rights Related Developments

During its 51st session, the Human Rights Council adopted (without a vote) a resolution on 7 October that requests the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide substantive capacity-building and technical assistance to the government of Yemen (A/HRC/51/L.38).

## Key Issues and Options

Averting an escalation and restoring the truce are critical issues. Council members are likely to monitor Grundberg's ongoing mediation efforts. Members may call on the parties, especially the Houthis, to show flexibility in talks and recall the benefits brought by the truce agreement. In the event that an expanded truce agreement is brokered, the Council could adopt a presidential statement to endorse the deal while encouraging the parties to maintain and translate the truce into a ceasefire agreement that leads to an inclusive political process under UN auspices for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

Rising global food and energy prices as a result of the war in Ukraine have complicated efforts to address humanitarian needs in Yemen despite the reduction in fighting since the April truce. Members could encourage more donors to contribute to the UN's 2022 Yemen humanitarian response plan, which in mid-October was 48 percent funded, with the US providing more than \$1 billion of the \$2 billion that has been received so far. Members may also closely monitor progress towards starting the salvage operation for the FSO Safer oil tanker that is moored off Hodeidah port; in September, the UN-facilitated plan to remove the oil from the decrepit ship finally received the donor commitments required to conduct the first phase of the operation.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members want the parties to restore the truce and have criticised the Houthis' "maximalist demands" that prevented the renewal and expansion of the armistice agreement in October. The United Arab Emirates (UAE)—an elected Council member that has been closely involved in the conflict as a member of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition battling the Houthis—actively pushes for its views, particularly regarding the Houthis, to be reflected in Council products. Russia traditionally resists language in Council products that it perceives as too critical of the Houthis or not balanced. This year, however, Russia has been more flexible in Council negotiations on Yemen, which appears to reflect its bilateral relations with the UAE. The US Special Envoy for Yemen, Timothy Lenderking, has engaged in regional diplomacy to support UN efforts to extend and re-establish the truce. While Saudi Arabia exercises leverage on the Yemeni government, Oman often plays an important role as an interlocutor with the Houthis. Ahead of the truce's renewal on 2 August, an Omani delegation visited Sana'a to help secure its extension, and it similarly sent a delegation to Sana'a ahead of the truce's 2 October expiry date.

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

# Group of Five for the Sahel

## Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to hold its bi-annual briefing and consultations on the counter-terrorism Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S) that Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger (G5 Sahel) established in 2017. Expected briefers are Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and G5 Sahel Executive Secretary Eric Tiaré.

## Key Recent Developments

The security situation in the Sahel remains dire and Sahel-based terrorist groups increasingly threaten northern parts of coastal West African countries. Moreover, political instability in several Sahelian countries and tensions between Mali and its neighbours have undermined cooperation among the G5 Sahel countries.

On 15 May, Mali's military-led government, which came to power following coups d'état in August 2020 and May 2021, announced that it was withdrawing from all G5 Sahel institutions, including the FC-G5S. According to the authorities, the decision came after some G5 members blocked Mali from assuming the group's rotating presidency, which Mali was scheduled to take up in February. Chad's transitional President Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno issued a statement on 19 May as the G5 Sahel president, affirming his commitment "to do everything" to preserve the unity and cohesion of the FC-G5S and encouraging Mali to reconsider its decision. On 14 June, Mali officially terminated its participation in the FC-G5S. On 30 June, the headquarters of the FC-G5S relocated from the Malian capital Bamako to Chad's capital, N'Djamena.

The security landscape in the Sahel continues to evolve. On 15 August, France completed the withdrawal from Mali of its regional counter-terrorism force, Operation Barkhane. French forces had been in Mali since intervening in January 2013 to oppose jihadist militants, who had seized control of the northern half of the country in 2012. But relations between France and Mali steadily worsened following the May 2021 coup d'état. France announced in February that Barkhane would leave Mali shortly after the Russian private security company, the Wagner Group, reportedly deployed to the country to partner with the Malian defence and security forces in counter-terrorism operations. While the UN has reported some gains against terrorist groups during these operations, it has also noted, as have several human rights organisations, a significant rise in alleged human rights violations by security forces.

This year has also been marked by strained relations between Mali and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Restrictions on MINUSMA's freedom of movement to conduct flights and patrols (often in areas of counter-terrorism operations), to rotate mission personnel, and to monitor and help investigate violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law have called into question the peacekeeping operation's ability to carry out its mandate.

Burkina Faso experienced its second coup d'état in nine months when on 30 September, soldiers led by Captain Ibrahim Traoré announced that they had overthrown transition President Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba. Damiba came to power after leading a coup d'état in January amid growing public anger over

the government's handling of the jihadist insurgency in Burkina Faso. Since the January coup, however, the security situation has continued to deteriorate. On 27 September, Islamist militants ambushed a 150-vehicle convoy that was seeking to supply the besieged city of Djibo. Eleven soldiers were killed and 50 civilians were missing, according to authorities; this ambush appeared to trigger the coup against Damiba.

Initially, there was some uncertainty as to whether the coup would succeed. After Traoré claimed on 1 October that France was protecting Damiba at a military base—which France denied—protesters attacked the French embassy in Ouagadougou and pillaged other sites linked to France. On 2 October, Damiba resigned in exchange for assurances that the new junta would not harm him or loyalist soldiers and would respect commitments to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to restore constitutional order by July 2024.

Both ECOWAS and the AU issued initial statements through their respective chairpersons, Omar Aliou Touray and Moussa Faki, that condemned the coup, as did UN Secretary-General António Guterres. On 4 October, an ECOWAS delegation—led by the former President of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, as the ECOWAS mediator to Burkina Faso—met in Ouagadougou with Traoré, who promised to maintain the transition timeline for restoring civilian rule. Council members issued a press statement on 7 October that expressed serious concern about the unconstitutional change of government and their support for regional and continental mediation efforts.

Chad is also conducting a political transition. On 20 October, more than sixty people were killed as police repressed protests against recent decisions made at the National Dialogue Conference to extend the transition by two years and allow transition president Mahamat Idriss Deby to stand as a candidate in elections.

Against this backdrop, the humanitarian situation continues to be dire, especially in the central Sahel. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths concluded a mission on 20 October to Burkina Faso, where he discussed the situation with Traoré. In Burkina Faso, more than 4.9 million people need emergency assistance, a 40 percent increase since January, and there are more than 1.5 million displaced persons. As at 10 October, the Burkina Faso humanitarian response plan (HRP) was thirty percent funded, having received \$241 million of the \$805 million required.

The UN, the AU, ECOWAS, and the G5 Sahel are undertaking a Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA) on the Sahel. On 22 September, during the General Assembly's high-level week, the Independent High-Level Panel on Security and Development that is conducting this assessment was formally launched. Chaired by former President Issoufou, the panel is expected to assess the peace and security challenges facing the Sahel and make recommendations about how to improve joint and coordinated regional and international responses. The panel's findings will be presented during the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in February 2023.

## Key Issues and Options

Mali's withdrawal from the G5 Sahel has been a major setback for

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## Group of Five for the Sahel

the FC-G5S. Key issues are how to strengthen support for and cooperation among G5 Sahel countries in the FC-G5S, given Mali's departure, and to encourage Mali to return to the force.

With the setbacks to the FC-G5S and the evolving security situation, another issue is how to support other existing initiatives combatting terrorism and transnational organised crime in West Africa and the Sahel. These initiatives include the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) fighting Boko Haram-affiliated groups in the Lake Chad basin, the Accra Initiative, the Nouakchott Process, and the ECOWAS Priority Action Plan on the eradication of terrorism.

Additionally, tackling structural drivers of instability in the Sahel, such as weak governance, under-development and climate change, is a key issue. Multiple strategies have been developed since 2013 in this regard, including the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the G5 Sahel Priority Investment Plan.

Several critical assessments are being conducted which, upon their completion early next year, are likely to guide further Council decisions regarding the region. These include the Joint Strategic Assessment and an internal UN review of MINUSMA, which is expected to be submitted to the Council by 13 January 2023 and will include analysis of the political and security challenges affecting the mission's ability to implement its mandate. Until then, including during the upcoming November briefing, Council members may encourage better cooperation between regional and international actors to combat terrorist groups and stress the equal importance

of addressing the root causes of the region's instability to complement security responses. Members may further highlight the need for donors to contribute to the region's humanitarian needs.

### Council Dynamics

Previously, Council discussion on the FC-G5S revolved around whether to authorise a UN office to provide logistical support and more predictable funding, with members being divided over the issue. This, however, has been sidelined amid the divisions that have developed among G5 Sahel countries. Uncertainty about the future of the FC-G5S and the expanding presence of terrorist groups towards littoral West African states have also caused members to focus more on other security initiatives. Russia's entry into the Sahel through the provision of military assistance to Mali and the deployment of the Wagner Group has further polarised discussion on the region in the Council. Western Council members have condemned Mali's cooperation with the Wagner Group, while popular demonstrations in Burkina Faso have called for Russian intervention. While France has withdrawn Barkhane from Mali, it has strengthened its presence in neighbouring Niger, and says it remains engaged in the Sahel, Gulf of Guinea and Lake Chad region.

France has served as the penholder on the FC-G5S. The African Council members (the A3, consisting of Gabon, Ghana and Kenya) have been the penholders this year on Council press statements on Burkina Faso.

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## Non-Proliferation (1540 Committee)

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the 1540 Committee and its Group of Experts.

### Background and Key Recent Developments

Adopted in 2004, resolution 1540 aims to address concerns related to the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors for terrorist purposes. (Individuals and sub-state groups are not covered under existing treaties dealing with nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.) It requires all states to prevent non-state actors from acquiring access to nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their delivery systems. Furthermore, the resolution requires states to establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of such weapons.

On 25 April 2008, the Council adopted resolution 1810, which extended the 1540 Committee's mandate for a period of three years. The resolution also requested the committee to consider a comprehensive review of the implementation status of resolution 1540. The precise scope and modalities of the review process were outlined in Security Council letter S/2009/170, dated 1 April 2009, which determined that the comprehensive review would assess the evolution of risks and threats; address specific, unresolved issues; and identify new approaches for improving the implementation of resolution 1540.

As part of the comprehensive reviews, the 1540 Committee holds

open consultations with broad participation—including UN member states, international organisations, regional and sub-regional organisations, and civil society—to exchange views and provide practical ideas on how to enhance implementation of resolution 1540.

In April 2011, with the adoption of resolution 1977, the Council renewed the mandate of the 1540 Committee for ten years and approved the appointment of a group of experts to assist the committee in its work. Experts are appointed by the Secretary-General and approved by the 1540 Committee. The resolution called for the committee to conduct two comprehensive reviews on the implementation of resolution 1540: one after five years and the other before the renewal of the committee's mandate in 2021.

Following the completion of the first review, the Council adopted resolution 2325 in December 2016, which encouraged the submission of voluntary national implementation action plans and the designation of national focal points.

In 2020, the committee was supposed to conduct activities related to the second comprehensive review; open consultations were planned for June 2020. However, because of restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee decided in August 2020 to postpone those activities.

On 22 April 2021, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2572, which extended, until 28 February, the mandate of the 1540 Committee and its group of experts. At the time, the Council

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UN DOCUMENTS ON NON-PROLIFERATION Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2622 (25 February 2022) extended the mandate of the 1540 Committee and its Group of Experts until 30 November. S/RES/1540 (28 April 2004) established the 1540 Committee and its mandate.

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## Non-Proliferation (1540 Committee)

opted for a straightforward renewal of the mandate to allow the committee to complete its comprehensive review. The Council adopted another technical rollover of the committee's mandate on 25 February, extending it until 30 November, to allow for completion of the comprehensive review, including its open consultations.

From 31 May to 2 June, the 1540 Committee held open consultations. In her opening remarks, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu commended the work of the 1540 Committee and warned that the current security context "is very different from when the Security Council conducted previous reviews". Nakamitsu urged the committee to focus on addressing threats posed by emerging technologies, suggesting that these "lower the barrier for non-state actors to gain access to materials and manufacturing techniques necessary to acquire weapons of mass destruction".

On 5 July, the committee held informal consultations to discuss the outcomes of the open consultations. Committee members exchanged views on the various ideas presented at the open consultations. They also considered proposals to enhance outreach efforts and elements to be included in the final report of the comprehensive review.

### Key Issues and Options

The overarching issue for the Council is how to respond to the findings of the comprehensive review with a view to improving implementation of resolution 1540 amidst concerns about growing proliferation risks enabled by advances in science, technology and international commerce. Key issues addressed during the review include how to improve monitoring and national implementation, technical assistance, international cooperation, and transparency and outreach.

A key issue that emerged during the review is the need to address proliferation financing; that is, the provision of funds to non-state actors related to the manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, developing, transporting, and transferring or use of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery. Some members—including the UK and the US—support the introduction of robust language about this issue in the 1540 Committee's mandate renewal. At the open consultations, the UK suggested that a definition of

proliferation financing "will improve awareness and understanding of the issue" and offer a conceptual framework to combat it. Mexico, the 1540 Committee Chair, also noted the importance of "a more detailed study" of the implications of proliferation financing, stressing the need to enhance international cooperation "aimed at addressing illicit financial flows".

The main option for the Council is to adopt a resolution renewing the mandate of the 1540 Committee and its Group of Experts, endorsing the comprehensive review and deciding on new measures aimed at improving implementation, such as enhancing the facilitation of technical and legal assistance; strengthening cooperation with regional, sub-regional, and multilateral institutions; and increasing outreach efforts, including by expanding the mandate of the group of experts.

### Council Dynamics

Most Council members support an active role for the committee and its group of experts in engaging with member states to provide technical assistance and capacity development in implementing resolution 1540. These members also tend to encourage interactions between the experts' group, civil society actors and academia to help inform the group's work.

Some members believe there should be less committee oversight on the group of experts' work. During the open consultations, the US argued that the group must have a clear mandate to do its work "without having to seek individual approval for each and every action it seeks to undertake", adding that "no other subsidiary body of the Security Council is forced to operate under such self-defeating constraints".

Russia, however, believes that the group should have a more limited role. When the Council renewed the 1540 Committee's mandate in February, Russia cautioned against the committee's becoming "an invigilator, controller or judge" and against the group of experts' being "endowed with attributive functions, permitting it to interfere in the internal affairs of States". China and Russia have emphasised the need to uphold the leading role of member states in the implementation of resolution 1540.

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## Gulf of Guinea Piracy

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council is expected to hold a briefing and consultations on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea to consider the Secretary-General's report on Gulf of Guinea piracy pursuant to resolution 2634 of 31 May. Representatives of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the Gulf of Guinea Commission, and civil society are expected to brief.

### Background and Recent Developments

In recent years, the Gulf of Guinea has been labelled the world's 'hotspot' for piracy. In 2020, over forty percent of reported piracy incidents occurred in the Gulf of Guinea (81 incidents out of 195 globally), according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB). Moreover, since 2019 the Gulf of Guinea has experienced an unprecedented rise in the number of crew kidnappings. In 2020, 130 crew members were kidnapped in 22 separate incidents, accounting for

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON GULF OF GUINEA PIRACY** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2634](#) (31 May 2022) condemned piracy and armed robbery at sea, including acts of murder, kidnapping and hostage-taking, in the Gulf of Guinea. [S/RES/2039](#) (29 February 2022) welcomed the Secretary-General's assessment mission on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and called on states to implement its recommendations. [Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2016/4](#) (25 April 2016) encouraged regional states, regional organisations and international partners to make fully operational the Gulf of Guinea counter-piracy mechanisms as soon as possible. [S/PRST/2013/13](#) (14 August 2013) welcomed the summit on maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea and stressed the importance of regional coordination for counter-piracy efforts. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9050](#) (31 May 2022) contained the explanation of votes on resolution 2634 on Gulf of Guinea piracy. [S/PV.7675](#) (25 April 2022) was a meeting on piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea. [Security Council Letter S/2021/722](#) (12 August 2021) contained the briefing record and statements from the August videoconference open debate on maritime security.

## Gulf of Guinea Piracy

over 95% of the world's kidnapped seafarers. A December 2021 study by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the non-profit Stable Seas estimated that ransom payments to Gulf of Guinea pirate gangs generated approximately \$5 million annually. Especially significant, according to the study, were piracy's effects on trade, with direct and indirect costs estimated at \$1.925 billion annually for twelve Gulf of Guinea countries.

The situation has shown possible signs of improvement. Piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea declined from 81 in 2020 to 34 in 2021. Kidnappings also fell to 57 last year, though the Gulf of Guinea nonetheless accounted for all kidnappings at sea worldwide in 2021. The IMB attributed the improvement to the increased presence of international naval vessels and cooperation with regional authorities. In the first six months of 2022, there were 12 reported piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea and no crew kidnappings. Despite the declining incidents, the IMB has cautioned that the threat in the Gulf of Guinea remains, highlighting an incident in early April of a Panamax bulk carrier that was attacked and boarded by pirates 260 nautical miles off the coast of Ghana. The ship and crew were saved by an Italian navy warship and its helicopter that quickly intervened after regional authorities and international warships were alerted to the situation.

The threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea prompted Ghana and Norway to initiate negotiations this past January on a Council resolution on the issue, seeking to renew attention to and mobilise greater support for regional and national efforts to tackle the challenge. Prior to the adoption of resolution 2634 on 31 May, more than ten years had passed since the Council's last resolution on Gulf of Guinea piracy, resolution 2039 of 29 February 2012. It has also been nearly six years since the Council's last dedicated meeting on this subject in April 2016.

Resolution 2634 expresses the Council's deep concern about the "grave and persistent threat" posed by piracy, armed robbery and transnational organised crime in the Gulf of Guinea to international navigation, security and the sustainable development of regional states. The resolution called on states in the region to criminalise and prosecute acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea under their domestic laws, and emphasised the need to enhance and support national, regional, and international efforts to counter piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea. It further requested a Secretary-General's report on Gulf of Guinea piracy within five months, including analysis on any possible and potential linkages with terrorism in West and Central Africa and the Sahel. The report should be issued by 31 October, ahead of next month's meeting.

The "Yaoundé Code of Conduct", signed by 25 West and Central African countries at the heads of state summit in 2013, is the main maritime security architecture to address the problem of piracy in the region. Regional centres have been established through this framework for information sharing and pooling resources, though funding has been a persistent problem in operationalising the framework. These centres include the Interregional Coordination Centre (ICC) in Yaoundé, Cameroon; the Regional Centre for Maritime Security of West Africa (CREMAO) in Abidjan, Ivory Coast; and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security of Central Africa (CRESMAC) in Pointe-Noire, Congo. Multinational Maritime

Coordination Centres (MMCCs) or zonal centres have also been set up, including in Douala, covering Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Cameroon; Cotonou, covering Nigeria, Benin, and Togo; and Accra, covering Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. Plans also exist for MMCCs in Luanda, covering Angola, Congo, and DRC and in Praia, covering Guinea Bissau, Senegal, The Gambia and Cape Verde.

Other more recent initiatives include Nigeria's Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure, also known as the Deep Blue Project, which was launched in June 2021. The country has invested \$195 million towards vessels, maritime domain awareness platforms, and land and sea assets, which includes a maritime security unit made up of 600 specially trained troops. Several non-regional countries have also increased the deployment of naval vessels to conduct anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Guinea, including Denmark and the UK in October 2021.

### Key Issues and Options

One key issue is the need to maintain attention to Gulf of Guinea piracy. The session will provide an opportunity to do so. There is concern that the recent decline in piracy incidents could be reversed without sustained engagement. Related to this is the need to build momentum for expected events next year to recognise the ten-year anniversary of the Yaoundé Architecture. In this regard, considering how to support regional initiatives financially and logistically will also be a key issue.

Another major issue is assessing the possible links between Sahel-based terrorist groups and Gulf of Guinea pirates. Former Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office of West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) Mahamat Saleh Annadif, briefing the Council in July 2021, asserted in reference to piracy in the Gulf of Guinea that the "risks of a confluence between the threat coming from the sea and that coming from the Sahel are real". Addressing the socioeconomic challenges in Gulf of Guinea countries that contribute to piracy is also a critical issue.

Possible Council follow-up action is likely to depend on the recommendations made in the forthcoming Secretary-General's report. Members could issue a press statement that welcomes recent progress towards tackling Gulf of Guinea piracy, reiterates calls for regional states to criminalise and prosecute acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea under their domestic laws, and stresses the importance of sustained and enhanced national, regional and international efforts and cooperation.

### Council Dynamics

The issue of countering piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is important for Ghana, and was one of the priorities of its president, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo during his recently concluded chairmanship of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Council members Brazil, France, Gabon, Ghana, India, Norway, the UK, and the US are members of the G7++ Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (FOGG), which supports the implementation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct.

Negotiations on resolution 2634 were drawn out, but not because of notable differences between members over how to address Gulf

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## Gulf of Guinea Piracy

of Guinea piracy. Instead, the main dispute was over how to refer to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Over the past year, the UNCLOS has become a sensitive issue during discussions related to maritime security, which stems from China's claims in the South China Sea. In negotiations on resolution 2634, China sought language providing a narrower interpretation of UNCLOS'

jurisdiction and universality than was acceptable to most members. Eventually, after five months, an agreement on the text was reached. China initiated the Council's last meeting on Gulf of Guinea piracy in April 2016, when the Council adopted a presidential statement on the issue.

Ghana and Norway were co-penholders on resolution 2634.

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## Lebanon

### Expected Council Action

In November, Security Council members expect to receive a briefing in consultations on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), which called for a cessation of hostilities between the Shi'a group Hezbollah and Israel. Briefings are expected from Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wronecka and a senior official from the Department of Peace Operations, possibly Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix.

### Key Recent Developments

Over five months since the 15 May legislative elections, Lebanon remains without a government, as caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Lebanese President Michel Aoun have so far failed to reach an agreement on the composition of the cabinet.

At the time of writing, Aoun's presidential term was set to expire on 31 October, and no candidate had received the requisite parliamentary support to replace him. (The Lebanese president is elected by the Parliament and, according to Lebanon's power-sharing arrangement, must be a Maronite Christian, while the prime minister is a Sunni Muslim and the parliamentary speaker a Shi'a Muslim.)

In a 5 October statement, the International Support Group for Lebanon (ISG)—which consists of the Arab League, the EU, the UN, China, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UK and the US—emphasised the importance of electing a new president who “could unite the Lebanese people and work with all regional and international actors to overcome the economic and humanitarian crisis for the greater public good”. It referred to the importance of “an empowered new government...that can implement...direly needed reforms”.

With Lebanon mired in an economic crisis, the government has continued efforts to meet the conditions to finalise a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) worth around \$3 billion that was tentatively agreed upon in April. After months of deliberations, the Lebanese Parliament adopted the 2022 state budget on 26 September, and on 18 October, the Parliament approved some revisions to a banking secrecy law. The adoption of the budget and the lifting of banking secrecy are among the IMF's conditions for releasing the funds. The IMF has made unlocking the funds contingent on other conditions as well, including the implementation of capital controls, external public debt restructuring, and stronger provisions against money laundering. To date, the measures the government has taken

have not been sufficient to release the funds.

Following several months of negotiations, Lebanon and Israel reached an agreement on the demarcation of their maritime border in the Mediterranean Sea. The negotiation process concluded on 27 October with the handing over by Israel and Lebanon of separate letters to US Department of State Senior Advisor for Energy Security Amos Hochstein, who mediated the indirect talks between Israel and Lebanon that led to the agreement. UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wronecka received the coordinates of the maritime border from Lebanon and Israel that will be deposited at the UN in New York.

According to the deal, Israel will maintain full control over the Karish gas field, while Lebanon will have control over the Qana gas field. However, Israel will be entitled to a percentage of revenues that French oil company TotalEnergies derives from its exploration of the part of Qana field on the Israeli side of the maritime border, known as Line 23. In a 13 October statement, the Secretary-General welcomed the announcement of the agreement, calling it an “encouraging development [that] can promote increased stability in the region and enhanced prosperity for the Lebanese and Israeli peoples”. On 19 October, Security Council members also issued a press statement in which they “commended the announcements that Lebanon and Israel have agreed to end their dispute over their maritime boundary and delineate it permanently”.

There are currently 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, which has the highest per capita ratio of Syrian refugees in the world. On 12 October, Lebanese President Michel Aoun announced that his country would soon begin sending Syrian refugees back to their country of origin. The Secretary-General's 11 October report noted that the “assessment of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is that the relevant conditions for safe and sustainable return have not yet been met in the Syrian Arab Republic”. In response to a question at the 12 October press briefing, Spokesperson for Secretary-General Stéphane Dujarric recognised Lebanon's generosity to Syrian refugees since the start of the Syrian conflict but also noted that “[a]ll returns should be voluntary and done in dignity”, with people returning to safe places.

On 19 October, Council members received their semi-annual briefing in consultations on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1559. Adopted in 2004, the resolution called for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon, the disarmament of all militias, and the extension of government control over

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2650 (31 August 2022) extended the mandate of UNIFIL for another year. **Secretary-General's Report S/2022/749** (11 October 2022) was a report on the implementation of resolution 1559. **Security Council Press Statement SC/15069** (19 October 2022) commended the announcements of the end of the maritime dispute between Israel and Lebanon.

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# Lebanon

the whole Lebanese territory. Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, briefing the Council, told members that Hezbollah continues to strengthen its capacities and that Israel continues to violate Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In this regard, the Secretary-General's report expressed concern about Hezbollah's maintenance of "sizeable and sophisticated military capabilities" outside of the Lebanese government's control and called on Israel to "withdraw its forces from the northern part of the village of Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line and to immediately cease its overflights above Lebanese airspace". (The Blue Line, or the "Line of Withdrawal", was identified in 2000 by the UN to confirm the withdrawal of Israel Defence Forces from Lebanese territory in accordance with resolution 425 of 19 March 1978, which called for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon.)

## Key Issues and Options

The delayed presidential election (and a possible power vacuum) is a potential issue for the Council that could exacerbate political instability and delay much needed reforms.

The substantial amount of weaponry held by Hezbollah and Israel's violations of Lebanon's territorial integrity and sovereignty remain ongoing issues for the Council.

One option is for the Council to issue a statement that:

- urges the Lebanese Parliament to elect a new president and calls for the formation of a new government;
- encourages reforms to promote socioeconomic stability;
- underscores the importance of non-refoulement of Syrian refugees currently in Lebanon; and
- emphasises the need for the parties to adhere to resolutions 1559 and 1701.

Another option would be to hold a private meeting with Lebanon and other countries in the region to discuss strategies to address the challenges of hosting refugees from Syria. (A private meeting is a closed formal meeting of the Security Council that allows persons other than Council diplomats and Secretariat officials to participate.)

## Council Dynamics

There is consensus among Council members in support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. Although more contentious than in 2021, the negotiations on resolution 2650 renewing the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in August showed that consensus still exists among Council members on the mission's core mandate or, at least, that members are willing to find compromises to retain this consensus even where their views do not necessarily align.

Council members broadly agree on the need for the Lebanese government to carry out reforms to overcome the socioeconomic crisis. A number of members also emphasise the need to ensure that Syrian refugees in Lebanon who choose to return to Syria do so in ways consistent with the principle of non-refoulement.

Marked differences remain among members regarding Hezbollah. Russia sees Hezbollah as a legitimate socio-political force in Lebanon. In contrast, the UK and the US see Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation and a source of instability. During the negotiations on resolution 2650, the United Arab Emirates broke silence to demand the inclusion of stronger language condemning the possession of weapons by "armed groups" outside the state's control, a request that was accommodated by the penholder, France.

Russia has also suggested that merging the reporting on resolutions 1559 and 1701 would be a more economical use of the Council's time.

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# DPRK (North Korea)

## Expected Council Action

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

## Key Recent Developments

Since 25 September, the DPRK has conducted nine tests involving ballistic or cruise missiles. It has now carried out 27 such tests so far this year, a record number.

On 4 October, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) announced that the DPRK had fired a ballistic missile over Japanese territory for the first time since 15 September 2017. The missile—which was reportedly launched from Mupyong-ri in the northern province of Jagang, near the DPRK's border with China—travelled approximately 4,600 kilometres to a height of about 1,000

kilometres and flew directly over northern Japan, prompting the Japanese government to suspend some train services in the region and order residents to evacuate. According to a statement issued by the White House, US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida spoke by phone and jointly condemned the test, describing it as a clear violation of Security Council resolutions and confirming that they will "continue to closely coordinate their immediate and longer-term response bilaterally, trilaterally with the ROK, and with the international community".

The following day, on 5 October, the Security Council convened for an open briefing to discuss the DPRK's 4 October missile test. The meeting, which was followed by closed consultations, was requested by Albania, France, Ireland, Norway, the UK, and the US. Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific Mohamed Khaled Khiari briefed. Japan and the ROK participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

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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. Sanctions Committee Document S/2022/668 (7 September 2022) was the midterm report of the Panel of Experts.

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## DPRK (North Korea)

It seems that the US circulated a draft press statement ahead of the meeting that condemned the 4 October test and encouraged efforts to engage in dialogue, among other matters. While the majority of Council members appeared to support the draft statement, it was not issued because of opposition from China and Russia.

The latest round of tests began two days after a US aircraft carrier arrived in the ROK for joint drills with the ROK military for the first time in four years. Shortly after the tests began, US Vice President Kamala Harris was scheduled to meet ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol and visit the demilitarised zone (DMZ). In a 29 September speech delivered after her tour of the DMZ, Harris said that the “commitment of the [US] to the defence of the [ROK] is ironclad” and that the US “will do everything in our power to ensure that it has meaning ... includ[ing] our extended deterrence commitment which is supported by the full range of US military capabilities”. The tests have also prompted the ROK and the US to impose fresh sanctions on the DPRK, while Japan has flagged its intention to do the same.

Japan, the ROK and the US have engaged in a series of joint military exercises in recent weeks, including “real-world day and night manoeuvres simulated to counter [the DPRK’s] nuclear, missile and other various threats”. The DPRK has appeared to use these drills to justify its latest missile tests, reportedly describing the tests as a “normal, planned self-defence measure to protect our country’s security and regional peace from direct US military threats”. It has also responded to the exercises with military action of its own, including by firing artillery shells into a buffer zone established by a 2018 inter-Korean agreement designed to reduce military tensions and by conducting further missile tests.

On 10 October, DPRK state media claimed that its latest missile tests were designed to simulate a nuclear attack on the ROK and involved “tactical nuclear operation units”, which demonstrated that its “nuclear combat forces” are ready “to hit and wipe out the set objects at the intended places in the set time”.

The DPRK’s recent missile tests are the latest of several developments that have escalated tensions on the Korean peninsula. In a speech delivered on the ROK’s National Liberation Day (15 August), Yoon offered to provide the DPRK with different forms of aid, including a large-scale food programme and assistance with infrastructure projects, if the DPRK agrees to take steps toward denuclearisation. In a 19 August statement responding to Yoon’s proposal, Kim Yo-jong, DPRK leader Kim Jong-un’s sister, reportedly said that “it would have been more favourable for his image to shut his mouth, rather than talking nonsense”.

Several weeks later, on 9 September, the Supreme People’s Assembly, the DPRK legislature, passed legislation that appears to authorise a pre-emptive nuclear strike in certain circumstances, including when an imminent attack against “important strategic objects” or the DPRK’s leadership is detected. The legislation also describes the DPRK as a “nuclear weapons state” and provides that a nuclear strike will be launched “automatically and immediately” if “the command-and-control system over the state nuclear forces is placed in danger”.

On 28 September, two ROK parliamentarians who received a briefing from the ROK intelligence services regarding a possible nuclear test by the DPRK spoke to reporters. The legislators said

that they were told that the DPRK had completed its preparations for a nuclear test and that it might be carried out between 16 October and 7 November.

After initial discussions in the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, the midterm report of the Panel of Experts was issued on 7 September. Among other matters, the report describes continued violations of the sanctions imposed by the Council. The Panel noted that illicit imports of oil and exports of coal continued, and found that the same entities, networks and vessels have used the same methodologies in the same places to evade sanctions. The report also observed that the DPRK’s cyberactivity remains a problem, with two major cyberattacks taking place so far this year, leading to the theft of cryptocurrency assets worth hundreds of millions of US dollars. The Panel referred to reports by UN agencies of a continuing humanitarian crisis and concluded that there is “little doubt” that UN sanctions have unintentionally affected the humanitarian situation. The report also confirmed that the DPRK has made preparations at its nuclear test site.

### Key Issues and Options

The record number of missile tests conducted by the DPRK in 2022 have created a significant issue for the Council. Sanctions evasion is another important issue, 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 and has shown little inclination to scale back its weapons programmes. The DPRK’s ongoing refusal to engage in dialogue and the humanitarian situation in the country are also problems for the Council to consider.

In light of these issues, the Council could issue a product that condemns the recent missile tests, urges member states to comply with existing Council resolutions and calls on the DPRK to return to the negotiating table. Council members may also wish to consider convening an informal interactive dialogue with humanitarian actors providing assistance to the DPRK, with a view to better understanding the humanitarian problems facing the country.

The dire human rights situation in the DPRK remains an issue. Every December from 2014 to 2017, the Council held an open briefing with the High Commissioner for Human Rights on this topic. Although the Council has not held an open meeting on this issue since December 2017, convening such a meeting before the end of 2022 is an option for the Council. Council members discussed the human rights situation in the DPRK under “any other business” in December 2020 and December 2021.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

On 2 September, the new special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, Elizabeth Salmón, released a statement during her first official visit to the ROK from 29 August to 3 September. Salmón, who assumed this position on 1 August, said that a priority during her mandate would be to take a victims-centred approach. She highlighted several concerns around food and health, women and girls, and separated families, and said she would “seek engagement opportunities with the DPRK authorities through concrete issues such as women and girls’ rights”.

### Council Dynamics

The Council remains sharply divided over the DPRK. The P3

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## DPRK (North Korea)

(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. These members are generally supportive of using sanctions to manage the threat posed by the DPRK and often urge the country to engage in dialogue and abandon its weapons programmes while emphasising that it is responsible for raising tensions in the region.

China and Russia, on the other hand, blame the US for escalating the situation and accuse it of not doing enough to incentivise the

DPRK to participate in denuclearisation talks. China and Russia have also contended that sanctions should be eased because of their impact on the humanitarian situation and continue to express their support for a draft resolution circulated by China in October 2021 that would provide sanctions relief to the DPRK if adopted. Other Council members, including Brazil, Kenya, Mexico, and Gabon, have expressed apparent concerns about the overall efficacy of the 1718 DPRK sanctions regime.

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## Syria

### Expected Council Action

In November, there will be the monthly meetings on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria, as well as on the use of chemical weapons in the country. Council members will also hold an informal interactive dialogue (IID) in accordance with resolution 2642 of 12 July, which reauthorised the Syrian cross-border humanitarian aid mechanism and encouraged an IID every two months to regularly review and follow up on the implementation of the resolution, including progress in early-recovery projects.

### Key Recent Developments

On 17 October, Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen met with Syrian Foreign Minister Fayssal Mekdad in Damascus. In a press stakeout after the meeting, Pedersen acknowledged that the political process in Syria had not delivered results. He emphasised that the UN would continue its efforts to promote a nationwide ceasefire and to address the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people. Pedersen said that he had discussed with Mekdad his ideas for all parties to engage in a “step-for-step” approach, whereby various stakeholders in the conflict would agree on reciprocal confidence-building measures. While he did not specify the nature of such measures, Pedersen has previously noted that they could focus on such matters as abductees, detainees, and missing persons; humanitarian assistance and early recovery; the conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees; and the restoration of better economic conditions. In addition to his visit to Damascus, Pedersen discussed his ideas for the “step-for-step” approach with government officials and diplomats in New York, Washington, Berlin and Amman in September and October.

Civilians continue to pay a heavy price in the Syrian conflict, with deaths and injuries resulting from airstrikes, ground-based strikes, improvised explosive devices, explosive remnants of war, targeted killings, and armed skirmishes. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has determined that such incidents led to the deaths of at least 92 civilians and injuries to at least 80 civilians between 1 August and 27 September.

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to deteriorate while the UN also reports funding shortfalls. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths noted in his 14

September Council briefing that 14.6 million people are in need of assistance—the highest number since the war’s outset. As at 30 September, the humanitarian response plan for Syria was 26.7 per cent funded. In north-west Syria alone, OCHA estimates that 4.1 million of the area’s 4.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. In addition, 3.1 million people in the north-west are food insecure and 2.8 million people there have been internally displaced.

A cross-line delivery of humanitarian aid (that is, across domestic frontlines from Syrian government-held areas into areas outside government control) was conducted on 22-23 October. This was the eighth cross-line delivery since the adoption of resolution 2585 in July 2021 encouraging efforts to improve such deliveries, with 18 trucks entering north-west Syria from Aleppo, carrying food, water, sanitation items, and other supplies expected to assist some 56,000 people.

Cholera rates continue to increase across the country. According to the World Health Organisation, as at 14 October, 68 deaths from cholera had been registered and 15,823 cases of the disease had been suspected across the country. An apparent factor in the spread of cholera has been decreased access to clean water resulting from damage to water infrastructure.

On 26 September, Security Council members held their first informal interactive dialogue on Syria in accordance with resolution 2642. Griffiths briefed during the IID. He reportedly underscored the importance of the cross-border aid mechanism, and described progress being made with regard to cross-line aid deliveries and early recovery projects. He also reiterated his concern about the shortage of funds to support the humanitarian response in Syria. Griffiths and other OCHA officials discussed the recruitment and procurement challenges of implementing a six-month mandate, as opposed to a one-year mandate, for the Syria humanitarian aid resolution.

On 25 October, the Security Council received briefings on political and humanitarian developments in Syria from Pedersen and OCHA Director of Operations and Advocacy Reena Ghelani, respectively. Pedersen noted that he was urging all stakeholders to engage in step-for-step confidence building measures to help move the political process forward. Ghelani urged donors to disburse pledged funds to deal with the growing cholera crisis and requested additional support for the humanitarian appeal for Syria. She

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA** [Security Council Resolutions 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 another six months until 10 July 2023. [S/RES/2585](#) (9 July 2021) reauthorised the cross-border humanitarian aid mechanism. [S/RES/2254](#) (18 December 2015) was on the political process in Syria. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9164](#) (25 October) was on the chemical weapons track in Syria. [S/PV/9163](#) (25 October 2022) was on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria. [Secretary-General's Report S/2022/775](#) (19 October 2022) was the 60-day report on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

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# Syria

emphasised the importance of continued cross-border aid delivery (through the Bab al-Hawa crossing on the Syrian-Turkish border) and the need to step up cross-line aid deliveries.

Also on 25 October, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu briefed the Council on the Syria chemical weapons track. As has been the case in her briefings to the Council for several years, Nakamitsu reiterated that gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies remain in Syria's declaration of its chemical weapons stockpiles to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

## Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 51st session, the Human Rights Council held an interactive dialogue on 22 September with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria and considered its report (A/HRC/51/45) covering 1 January through 30 June. The report documents continuing grave violations of fundamental human rights and humanitarian law across the country, including arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment in incommunicado detention; appalling conditions in displacement camps in the north-west of the country; and deteriorating conditions faced by approximately 37,000 children in the Hawl and Rawj camps. The report also notes that Syria is facing "the worst economic and humanitarian crisis since the conflict started."

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how to reinvigorate the political track in Syria. The deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country, which has been exacerbated by the cholera outbreak, is another ongoing issue of concern for Council members.

One option for the Council is to adopt a presidential statement that:

- supports Pedersen's efforts to reinvigorate the political process;
- condemns attacks on civilians and underscores the need for the parties to the conflict to abide by international humanitarian law and human rights law; and
- encourages donors to enhance their support for the Syria humanitarian response plan and the efforts to address the cholera outbreak.

An additional option in the future would be a Council visiting mission to the Bab al-Hawa crossing on the Syria-Türkiye border. On such a visit, Council members could meet with the UN and other officials responsible for implementing and overseeing the cross-border aid delivery mechanism to get a better understanding of how it works and its importance in addressing the country's humanitarian crisis.

## Council Dynamics

There are strong divisions on the Council with regard to Syria. China and Russia tend to be sympathetic to the Syrian government, emphasising the need to respect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity and drawing connections between unilateral sanctions on Syria and the challenging humanitarian situation in the country. On the other hand, the P3 (France, the UK and the US) and others are highly critical of the government for violating international humanitarian law and human rights law, arbitrarily detaining people, and not engaging meaningfully in political dialogue.

The government-nominated representatives to the Constitutional Committee have been unwilling to proceed with the talks in Geneva,

in deference to Russia's view that Switzerland should no longer be the venue for the Committee's meetings. Russia has argued that Switzerland is not a neutral site, given Bern's position on the war in Ukraine. Some members have maintained that this is a tactic to stall the political process, a perspective expressed by Albania, France and the UK at the 25 October Council meeting on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria. The Constitutional Committee has not met since early June.

Most Council members emphasise the importance of aid delivery through both cross-line and cross-border modalities in Syria, while underscoring that the cross-border aid mechanism, most recently renewed through resolution 2642 in July, is essential to saving lives in Syria. In contrast, China and Russia believe that cross-border deliveries are an extraordinary measure that undermines Syria's sovereignty and should be supplanted by enhanced cross-line assistance as soon as possible.

Council members hold starkly different views on the chemical weapons track in Syria. Several members have expressed support for the OPCW's work, maintaining that it is credible and essential, and have criticised Syria for not adhering to its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Russia, on the other hand, claims that the OPCW's work is biased and politicised. Other members tend to be less critical of the OPCW and the Syrian authorities, emphasising the need for both sides to enhance their cooperation with one another.

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