

Monthly Forecast

- 1 Overview
- 2 In Hindsight: the Security Council and Regional Arrangements
- 4 Status Update since our August Forecast
- 6 Leadership for Peace
- 7 Haiti
- 9 UN Peacekeeping
- 10 Sudan
- 12 Yemen
- 14 Syria
- 15 Afghanistan
- 17 Libya
- 18 Democratic Republic of the Congo

Overview

In September, Slovenia will hold the presidency of the Security Council.

Slovenia plans to organise one signature event, a high-level open debate on “Leadership for Peace” under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item. Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob is expected to chair the meeting, which will be held during the UN General Assembly’s high-level segment. Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief. The open debate is designed to generate ideas for addressing some of the most intractable peace and security challenges facing the Council, such as conflicts in Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine, among others.

This month, the Security Council will hold an open debate on [peacekeeping](#) reform pursuant to resolution 2378 of 20 September 2017. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix is expected to brief.

Council members are also expected to hold a high-level [Informal Interactive Dialogue \(IID\) with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States \(LAS\)](#), Ahmed Aboul Gheit, and members of the Arab Summit Troika—a group of three rotating countries that monitor the implementation of resolutions and commitments adopted by the LAS, which consists of the outgoing, current, and incoming Arab Summit chairs (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Iraq). Slovenia’s Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Tanja Fajon, will chair the meeting, which is being convened in accordance with a 29 January 2021 Security Council presidential statement (S/PRST/2021/2) that encouraged the holding of an informal meeting between Council members and LAS representatives on the margins of the General Assembly’s high-level segment.

Fajon will also chair two Council meetings on

regional files: the quarterly briefing and consultations on the UN Assistance Mission in [Afghanistan](#) (UNAMA) and the monthly briefing and consultations on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”.

In September, the Council expects to receive a briefing from Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator (SHRC) for [Gaza](#) Sigrid Kaag in line with resolution 2720 of 22 December 2023. Additional meetings on this file may be convened depending on developments in Israel and Gaza.

Other Middle Eastern issues on the programme are:

- [Syria](#), meetings on political/humanitarian issues and on chemical weapons; and
- [Yemen](#), monthly briefing and consultations.

African issues on the programme of work in September are:

- [Sudan](#), briefing on the work of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee and renewal of the sanctions regime;
- [Libya](#), renewal of the authorisation to inspect and seize vessels suspected of being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking; and
- [Democratic Republic of the Congo \(DRC\)](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the work of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee.

In September, the Security Council may renew the authorisation of the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in [Haiti](#), which expires on 2 October.

As in previous months, the Council may hold one or more meetings on [Ukraine](#) in September. Other issues could be raised during the month depending on developments.

31 August 2024

This report is available online at [securitycouncilreport.org](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org).

For daily insights by SCR on evolving Security Council actions please subscribe to “What’s In Blue” at [securitycouncilreport.org](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org) or follow @SCRtweets on X/Twitter.

In Hindsight: the Security Council and Regional Arrangements

The contours of the relationship between the UN Security Council and “regional arrangements and agencies” have long been the subject of debate.¹ This debate has assumed renewed significance following the publication of *A New Agenda for Peace*, a July 2023 policy brief that sets out UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ vision for an effective multilateral security system. The brief argues that robust regional frameworks and organisations that have strong partnerships with the UN are necessary for managing growing competition among member states and the increasingly transnational threats facing the international community.²

Among the many recommendations directed towards or involving regional arrangements, Guterres suggests that the UN, regional organisations, and their respective member states should “operationalise rapid responses to emerging crises through active diplomatic efforts” and calls for repairing regional security architectures where they are in danger of collapsing; building them where they do not exist; and enhancing them where they can be further developed.³

Addressing the role of regional organisations in the context of peace operations, the brief argues that “peace operations must be significantly more integrated and should leverage the full range of civilian capacities and expertise across the [UN] system and its partners, as part of a system of networked multilateralism and strengthened partnerships.”⁴ UN support for African peace support operations receives particular attention. The brief calls for a new generation of peace enforcement missions and counter-terrorism operations in Africa, led by African partners with a Council mandate under Chapters VII and VIII of the UN Charter and guaranteed funding from member states’ assessed contributions to the UN. It also recommends systematic consideration of requests made by the AU and subregional organisations for the provision of support to peace support operations.⁵

These recommendations implicitly acknowledge the increased involvement of regional arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security in the post-Cold War period. This has been partly caused by some regions’ preference for regional solutions, particularly in Africa; a desire to share the burden of conflict management; and growing awareness by the Council and member states that regional arrangements offer useful strategic flexibility when managing or responding to a crisis, among other matters.

But the turn to regional actors has not always been the result of an overarching strategy. It has more often come about as a pragmatic response to the particular circumstances of a given case, usually driven by political considerations.

The forthcoming SCR research report examines the legal framework governing the relationship between the Council and regional arrangements, as well as past models of cooperation, and concludes with observations regarding the issues that have arisen in the past.

It delves deeply into Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, offering an

interpretation drawn from an analysis of practice and the text. Chapter VIII is relatively short, comprising only three articles. The first of these, Article 52, deals primarily with the peaceful settlement of disputes by regional arrangements. Article 53 governs regional enforcement action, while Article 54 provides that the Council must be kept fully informed of the activities of regional arrangements relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Cooperation between the Council and regional arrangements can take many forms. Most often, it arises in the context of peace operations. The report therefore focuses primarily on models of cooperation that involved peace operations. The models considered are set out in the table below. Overall, the examples chosen demonstrate that cooperation between regional arrangements and the Council, as well as the UN more broadly, has generally produced mixed results. While there have been successes, there have also been many challenges, and the overall relationship has not always been smooth. The problems that have arisen raise questions relating to the appropriate level of Council oversight, managing strategic disagreements, the structures for effective operational coordination, and adequate resourcing, among other matters.

Our report further explores mandating decisions, the importance of Council unity and coordinated regional diplomacy, Council oversight of regional efforts to peacefully settle disputes, the benefits of political alignment, re-hatting, doctrinal differences, and the question of complementarity and comparative advantage.

In light of this review, the report makes the following observations:

- When the Council opts for cooperation between the UN and regional arrangements, it is essential for it to have a clear understanding of the role that each organisation will play, its capacity to do so, and the proposed relationship among the different actors. Processes and structures that facilitate exchanges—such as interactive discussions between the Council and its counterparts in regional arrangements, joint assessments, and regular desk-to-desk meetings geared towards outcomes—can contribute to better alignment.
- The lack of a clear political strategy can cause problems for peace operations premised on cooperation between the UN and regional arrangements. As *A New Agenda for Peace* notes, the primacy of politics “remains a central tenet of peace operations”.
- Disagreements over strategy between the UN and regional arrangements can be hard to avoid, however, given the often diverging viewpoints of the principal actors. Coming at the onset of a crisis, this can lead to delays while the situation deteriorates; later, it can complicate implementation. It will be essential to streamline the mandate authorisation process for AU-led peace support operations outlined in resolution 2719 and clarify contentious issues covered in the resolution, including financial burden-sharing and joint planning.⁶

1 In September, Security Council Report will publish a research report on the relationship between the Security Council and regional arrangements. This *In Hindsight* excerpts the executive summary. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter refers to “regional arrangements and agencies” rather than regional organisations. Both our report and this *In Hindsight* use the term regional arrangements, except where paraphrasing. The term “regional arrangements” captures both traditional regional organisations and less formal arrangements.

2 *Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace*, UN Doc EOSG/2023/9 (July 2023) 12.

3 *Ibid* 18.

4 *Ibid* 24. Emphasis added.

5 On 21 December 2023, just over five months after *A New Agenda for Peace* was published, the Council adopted resolution 2719 on the financing of AU-led peace support operations. Pursuant to resolution 2719, the Council agreed to consider on a case-by-case basis requests from the AU Peace and Security Council seeking authorisation for access to UN assessed contributions for AU-led peace support operations. This resolution is considered in further detail below. *Ibid* 26.

6 Eugene Chen, ‘Next Steps on the Financing of African Peace Support Operations: Unpacking Security Council Resolution 2719 (2023)’ (February 2024) <<https://cic.nyu.edu/resources/>

In Hindsight: the Security Council and Regional Arrangements

- Where the UN and regional arrangements are deployed in parallel, a lack of adequate coordination can inhibit the development and maintenance of a coherent overall strategy in respect of international engagement, and can also obfuscate accountability among organisations.
- Parallel leadership structures (for example, where control over the military and political aspects of a mission is divided between different organisations) will be a drag on responsiveness, a problem in complex security environments.
- Council unity can play an important role in facilitating effective cooperation between the UN and regional arrangements. Successful collaboration can also be bolstered by coordinated diplomacy involving regional actors that is consistent with the overall strategy being pursued by the Council. Conversely, divisions among Council members can prevent the Council from taking action and communicating clear signals to the parties.
- Regional efforts to peacefully settle disputes can be hampered by constraints such as divisions among its members, its organisational culture and structure, and its decision-making processes. Where regional efforts are faltering, the Council's oversight role and its powers to facilitate peaceful settlement of disputes need to come to the fore. However, members have sometimes used the involvement of a regional arrangement to argue for Council inaction.
- Where a peace operation is deployed, political alignment with the host state is particularly important, not least in circumstances where the UN is working with a regional arrangement. A compact signed by relevant actors outlining the commitments they have made and their roles, similar to the type recommended in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, could be helpful. Where the host state is intent on obstructing the mission, however, processes intended to ease disagreements may find limited success.
- Regional arrangements often face resource constraints far greater than those experienced by UN peace operations. Authorising regional peace operations without taking timely steps for their financial and logistical support will cause delays.

- Troop re-hatting processes are difficult and require careful planning, adequate time, and thorough training. Procedures that screen out troops involved with prior human rights violations are critically important. Differences in equipment and interoperability issues can be particularly problematic during a re-hatting process. Periods of planned overlap can help to minimise difficulties during re-hatting and lead to a smoother transition.
- Doctrinal differences regarding peacekeeping operations—over the use of force, for example—can lead to strategic differences between the UN and its regional partners that complicate efforts to collaborate. They can also cause operational problems, particularly where missions with differing bureaucratic arrangements, needs, and expectations are mandated to work closely together.

The examples considered in our report highlight some of the comparative advantages enjoyed by the UN and its regional partners. Regional actors have, for example, at times been able to deploy quickly and shown a willingness to undertake peace enforcement actions requiring a robust mandate. The UN, on the other hand, has shown that it can boost flagging regional peace operations and provide logistical support to regional actors.

But experience also shows that the UN and its regional partners may fall short of their aims, impeded by resource constraints and political disagreements. And the UN will tend to become closely associated with regional arrangements that deploy in parallel—which can be problematic where those regional arrangements are unpopular among local populations.

All in all, is the turn to regional organisations a good idea? There are advantages and disadvantages to greater regional involvement. But the role for regional arrangements in efforts to maintain international peace and security seems likely to grow, as part of the trend toward regionalisation and the current emphasis on developing a system of networked multilateralism, which is reflected in the many references to regional arrangements in the current draft of the Pact for the Future.

Table of examples considered in SCR's forthcoming research report.

NO.	MODEL	EXAMPLE	YEAR
1.	Re-hatting a regional peace operation into a UN peace operation	AFISMA and MINUSMA (Mali)	2013
2.	Utilising regional arrangements to establish a transitional administration	UNMIK (Kosovo)	1999
3.	Deploying a UN peace operation in parallel with a regional peace operation	UNOMIL (Liberia)	1993
4.	Deploying a hybrid UN/regional arrangement peace operation	UNAMID (Sudan)	2007
5.	Establishing a UN support office to provide logistical support to a regional peace operation	UNSOA (Somalia)	2009
6.	Directing a UN peace operation to provide support to a regional peace operation	MINUSMA and FC-G5S (Mali)	2017
7.	Authorising a regional arrangement to use force	NATO (Libya)	2011

[next-steps-on-the-financing-of-african-peace-support-operations/](#).

In Hindsight: the Security Council and Regional Arrangements

NO.	MODEL	EXAMPLE	YEAR
8.	Authorising a regional force to work within a UN peace operation	MONUSCO and the FIB (DRC)	2013
9.	Authorising the deployment of a regional peace operation	MISCA (CAR)	2013
10.	Expressing support for regional efforts to resolve a dispute peacefully	ASEAN (Myanmar)	2021
11.	Utilising a regional arrangement to support a UN peace operation	MINURCAT and EUFOR Chad (Chad)	2007
12.	Authorising a predominantly regional multinational force with regional leadership to support a UN peace operation	INTERFET (Timor-Leste)	1999
13.	Expressing support for a regional peace enforcement operation	ECOMIG (The Gambia)	2017
14.	Authorising a UN peace operation that took over from a regional peace operation	UNAMSIL (Sierra Leone)	1999
15.	Expressing support for a joint UN/regional arrangement peace operation	MICIVIH (Haiti)	1993

Status Update since our August Forecast

Women, Peace and Security

On 7 August, the Security Council held a briefing on “Sustaining women, peace and security commitments in the context of accelerated drawdown of peace operations” (S/PV.9700). The briefing was chaired by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone Frances Piagie Alghali. The briefers were Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous, and Founding Director of Confluence Advisory Kholood Khair. This meeting represented the Security Council’s first thematic briefing on UN peace operations transitions and women, peace and security.

Counter-Terrorism

On 8 August, the Security Council convened an open briefing (S/PV.9701) on the Secretary-General’s 19th biannual strategic-level report on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh) to international peace and security (S/2024/583). Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism and Head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) Vladimir Voronkov and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) Natalia Gherman briefed.

Security Council Reform

On 12 August, the Security Council convened a high-level debate titled “Addressing the historical injustice and enhancing Africa’s effective representation on the UN Security Council” under the

“Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item (S/PV.9702). This was one of the signature events of Sierra Leone’s August Council presidency. Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio chaired the meeting. The briefers were UN Secretary-General António Guterres, President of the UN General Assembly Dennis Francis, and Dr. Sithembile Mbete, Senior Lecturer of Political Sciences at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria.

Somalia

On 12 August, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2747, extending the authorisation for AU member states to deploy uniformed personnel in the country to carry out the mandated tasks of the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) by three days, until 15 August. In suggesting a short technical rollover, the UK (the penholder on Somalia) apparently sought to allow time for further deliberations on a substantive resolution deciding the next steps regarding post-ATMIS security arrangements.

On 15 August, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2748, extending the authorisation for the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) until 31 December. The resolution requested the Secretary-General, jointly with the AU Commission Chairperson and in consultation with Somalia and international stakeholders, to report on the overall mission design for a successor mission by 15 November.

Ukraine

On 13 August, Russia convened an Arria-formula meeting titled “Crimes of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the nationalist

Status Update since our August Forecast

battalions”. Briefings were delivered by Rodion Miroshnik, Russian Ambassador-at-Large on the Crimes of the Kyiv Regime; Maxim Grigoriev, a member of the Russian Civic Chamber and Chairman of the International Public Tribunal on Ukraine, which was established by the Russian Civic Chamber in March 2022; and Oleg Soldat, Assistant Professor at the University of Banja Luka in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On 28 August, the Security Council held a briefing on the situation in Ukraine under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item (S/PV.9714). Slovenia and the US, the co-penholders on political issues in Ukraine, requested the meeting to discuss the political and security situation in the country. Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča briefed. Ukraine and the EU participated in the meeting under rules 37 and 39 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, respectively.

On 30 August, at Russia’s request, the Council held a briefing under the “Threats to international peace and security” agenda item to discuss “the risks of spiralling escalation resulting from the increasing weapons transfers by the Western countries to the Kyiv regime” (S/PV.9716). Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Adedeji Ebo briefed the Council.

Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

On 13 August, the Security Council held a briefing on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (S/PV.9704). Algeria, supported by Slovenia, requested the meeting to discuss the ongoing hostilities in Gaza and the 10 August Israeli strikes on a school sheltering displaced people. The briefers were Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo and OCHA’s Director of the Financing and Partnerships Division Lisa Doughnten.

On 22 August, the Security Council held an open briefing, followed by closed consultations, on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (S/PV.9711). The briefers were Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland and Louisa Baxter, Operations Lead at Save the Children’s Emergency Health Unit in Gaza.

On 29 August, the Security Council held an open briefing on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (S/PV.9715). Switzerland and the UK called for the meeting in light of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and following a 27 August statement by UN Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security Gilles Michaud on the dire security situation for humanitarians and UN personnel in Gaza. The briefers were Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya and Michael Ryan, World Health Organization (WHO) Deputy Director-General and Executive Director of the Health and Emergency Programme.

Georgia

On 14 August, Security Council members discussed the situation in Georgia under “any other business”. Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča briefed. The meeting, which marked the 16th anniversary of the 2008 conflict between Russia and Georgia, was requested by France, Japan, Malta, Slovenia, the UK, and the US. Following the meeting, those

members, together with incoming members Denmark and Greece, delivered a joint statement at a press stakeout reaffirming their support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

South Sudan

On 14 August, the Security Council convened an open briefing (S/PV.9705), followed by closed consultations, on the situation in South Sudan and the Secretary-General’s 90-day report on the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which was published on 29 July and covered developments from 16 February to 15 July (S/2024/572). The briefers were Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of UNMISS Nicholas Haysom, Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) Major General (Retired) Charles Tai Gituai, and Director of OCHA’s Operations and Advocacy Division Edem Wosornu.

Humanitarian Personnel

On 19 August, coinciding with World Humanitarian Day, Council members held discussions on humanitarian personnel under “any other business” at the request of Slovenia and Switzerland. In the press elements issued after the meeting, Council members highlighted the ongoing challenges and risks faced by humanitarian personnel, lamenting that 2023 had been the deadliest year on record for aid workers, and reiterated the obligations of states and conflict parties to comply fully with international humanitarian law, including the need to respect and protect humanitarian workers.

Nord Stream Explosion

On 20 August, Council members held a meeting under “any other business” to discuss developments pertaining to the domestic investigations conducted by Denmark, Germany, and Sweden into the 26 September 2022 explosions that caused physical damage to the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea. The meeting, requested by Russia, did not include any briefers.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

On 21 August, the Security Council held an open debate on “A New Agenda for Peace—Addressing Global, Regional and National Aspects of Conflict Prevention” under the “Peacebuilding and sustaining peace” agenda item (S/PV. 9710). Sierra Leone’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Timothy Musa Kabba, chaired the meeting, which was one of the signature events of Sierra Leone’s August Council presidency. Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support Elizabeth Spehar, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye, Executive Secretary of the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion of Sierra Leone Hawa Sally Samai, and a civil society representative briefed the Council.

Informal Visit to Geneva

On 25 and 26 August, members of the Security Council visited Geneva to mark the 75th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The objective of this informal visit was to provide Council members an opportunity to reaffirm the enduring importance of international humanitarian law (IHL) and to take collective political

Status Update since our August Forecast

action to uphold the principles enshrined in the Geneva Conventions. The visit also gave Council members the chance to engage with Geneva-based experts who specialise in data collection and analysis and technological innovation on issues relating to conflict prevention. All Security Council members participated in the visit except Russia.

Lebanon

On 19 August, members of the Security Council received a briefing in consultations on the work of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Mohamed Khaled Khiari.

On 28 August, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2749, which extended the mandate of UNIFIL for another year, until 31 August 2025.

DPRK (North Korea)

On 29 August, the Chair of the 1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl (Switzerland), briefed Council members in closed consultations on the 90-day report on the Committee's work.

West Africa and the Sahel

On 29 August, following the consultations on the 1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee, Council members held a meeting under "any other business". Russia requested the meeting to discuss a 19 August letter to the Council from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, in which they alleged that Ukraine is supporting terrorist activity in the Sahel.

Leadership for Peace

Expected Council Action

In September, Slovenia plans to convene a high-level open debate on "Leadership for peace" under the "Maintenance of international peace and security" agenda item. Robert Golob, the Prime Minister of Slovenia, is expected to chair the meeting, which is the signature event of his country's Council presidency. UN Secretary General António Guterres is expected to brief. The meeting is designed to generate ideas for addressing some of the most intractable peace and security challenges facing the Council, including Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan, among others.

Background

In recent years, the number of conflicts and conflict-related deaths have been on the rise. The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) 2024 Global Peace Index reported that the number of active conflicts in the world (56) is at its highest level since 1945. In a 2023 study covering 1946–2022, the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) observed that conflict-related deaths were at their highest level in nearly three decades. And in 2023, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), over 117 million people were forcibly displaced because of violence, conflict, persecution, and human rights violations, among other reasons. That is more than double the 51.2 million forcibly displaced a decade earlier in 2013.

The Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, has struggled to cope with this challenging peace and security environment and to uphold the principles of the UN Charter. It has been unable to gain much traction in addressing many of the conflicts on its agenda—for example, Gaza, Myanmar, Sudan, and Ukraine—notwithstanding the significant time and energy it devotes to several of these issues.

Contentious negotiations, frequent vetoes, and a high percentage of non-unanimous resolutions have been features of its work in recent years. In the nearly eight years since the start of 2017, 30 resolutions have been vetoed; this is the same number of vetoed

resolutions in the 22 years between 1994 and 2016. Last year, 70 percent of resolutions were adopted unanimously—a slightly higher percentage than the 67 percent in 2022 but well below the first two decades of the post-Cold War period, when annual percentages of unanimous adoptions frequently exceeded 90 percent.

Key Issues and Options

An overarching key issue is whether Council members can develop the trust and understanding needed to strike compromises and reach agreement on difficult peace and security issues. Reducing tensions over sanctions regimes and the mandates of peace operations—while making these instruments more effective—could be a springboard toward more constructive Council engagement on many files.

Another key issue is how well the open debate galvanises support among the wider UN membership for a more effective Security Council. Member state interventions at the meeting may provide a good indication of their perceptions of the Council's work and their ideas for strengthening the UN's peace and security efforts in general.

One option for the Council would be to consider a presidential statement that:

- affirms the centrality of the UN Charter in international law and urges member states to adhere to its norms and principles;
- urges member states to resolve their disputes peacefully, drawing on tools such as negotiations, mediation, conciliations (among others) outlined in Article 33 of the Charter;
- underscores the importance of abiding by international humanitarian and human rights law in the conduct of war while recognising the 75th anniversary of the August 1949 Geneva Conventions; and
- encourages efforts to reinvigorate and find common ground about long-standing Council tools such as peace operations and sanctions.

Another option could be for Slovenia to produce a chair's summary capturing the major themes of the open debate.

Leadership for Peace

Council Dynamics

The Council is more divided than it has been at any point in the post-Cold War era. In some cases, veto-wielding permanent members have strong strategic interests in situations the Council grapples with or may even be parties to the disputes being discussed, severely limiting the Council's room to play a meaningful role. Gaza, Mali, and Ukraine have been notable examples in recent years.

Members also differ on the use of some of the Council's tools, including peacekeeping, sanctions and legal accountability. China and Russia tend to emphasise the importance of extending state authority and promoting security sector reform in peacekeeping mandates while several others typically highlight the need to protect civilians and promote women's participation in peace processes.

The sanctions divide is particularly stark between Western

countries, on the one hand, and China, Russia, and African countries, on the other. Western countries often maintain that arms embargoes and targeted sanctions, such as assets freezes and travel bans, are vital tools in mitigating violence and supporting the implementation of peace agreements. While China, Russia, and the Council's African members recognise that sanctions can be a useful Council tool, they point to countries that have remained under Council sanctions for several years as evidence that sanctions are insufficiently adjusted to account for progress.

The Council is strongly divided on the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Ecuador, France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the UK are state parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC. Algeria, China, Mozambique, Russia, and the US are not.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council may renew the authorisation of the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in Haiti, which resolution 2699 of 2 October 2023 authorised for an initial period of 12 months to help Haitian authorities re-establish security in the country and build conditions conducive to holding free and fair elections.

Background and Key Recent Developments

After the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021, Haiti descended into a multidimensional crisis characterised by political deadlock, extreme violence, and dire humanitarian conditions. Criminal gangs have overrun an estimated 80 percent of Port-au-Prince, the capital, employing brutal tactics such as kidnapping, sexual violence, and murder to subdue and subjugate the civilian population. The country also continues to suffer from a governance crisis as elections have not taken place since 2016.

In October 2022, the Haitian government appealed for the immediate deployment of an "international specialised force" to temporarily reinforce the efforts of the Haitian National Police (HNP) to combat gangs. Secretary-General António Guterres endorsed the request, recommending that "[o]ne or several Member States, acting bilaterally at the invitation of and in cooperation with the Government of Haiti, could deploy, as a matter of urgency, a rapid action force" to support the HNP. In July 2023, ten months after Haiti's initial request, Kenya agreed to lead a multinational force to the country, pledging to deploy 1,000 police officers. After Kenya's announcement, several countries—including the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Chad, and Jamaica—declared their intention to participate in the force.

Although the UN would not administer the proposed mission, Kenya, Haiti, and other stakeholders sought Security Council authorisation for the deployment. The Council on 2 October 2023 adopted resolution 2699, authorising member states to form and deploy the MSS mission to Haiti. The resolution mandated

the mission to provide operational support to the HNP to counter gangs—including by building its capacity through the planning and conduct of joint security support operations—and to support the HNP in the protection of critical infrastructure sites.

The resolution authorised the mission for an initial period of 12 months, to be reviewed after nine months, and required participating countries to notify the Secretary-General of their intention to contribute personnel. Additionally, it specified that the cost of the operation would be borne by voluntary contributions and support from individual countries and regional organisations. Subsequent assessments indicated that the mission would total up to 2,500 officers, deployed in phases, at an annual cost of approximately \$600 million.

The mission was initially scheduled to deploy in February, but that timeline was postponed repeatedly for several reasons, including a lack of funding, a judicial challenge in Kenya, and a surge in gang violence in Haiti. The violent surge led to an agreement brokered by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to replace interim Prime Minister Ariel Henry with a Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) that is responsible for organising elections by February 2026. (For more information on the country's political situation, see the brief on Haiti in our July *Monthly Forecast*). In June and July, Kenya deployed the mission's first two contingents, totalling 400 officers. At the time of writing, a third contingent from Jamaica was expected to deploy soon.

According to media reports, the MSS mission has helped the HNP achieve some success in retaking neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince that were previously under gang control. It remains under-resourced, however, reportedly lacking critical capabilities such as air assets and turreted armoured vehicles, while continuing to face personnel and equipment shortfalls that limit its ability to take and hold territory beyond the capital. The mission has also faced some criticism for a lack of transparency as it has withheld details about its concept of operations, citing security concerns.

In line with resolution 2699, which requested the Secretary-General to provide recommendations on possibly adapting the MSS

Haiti

mission's mandate within nine months, the Secretary-General's most recent report on the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), dated 27 June, said that the mission's mandate "remains valid and will remain necessary beyond October 2024". It added that "[t]he mandated tasks of re-establishing security in Haiti and creating security conditions conducive to the holding of free and fair elections will require continuous deployment, at least until the restoration of democratically elected authorities".

The report cautioned that the contributions and pledges that the mission has received to date—which include more than \$300 million in promised logistical and financial support from the US, in addition to \$21 million deposited into the mission's UN-administered trust fund—remain insufficient for the mission to fulfil its budgetary and operational needs and ensure its presence for the duration of Haiti's political transition. According to the report, the mission will be unable to complete a 12-month deployment without "substantial additional funding".

Regarding the establishment of a compliance mechanism to prevent human rights violations by MSS forces, as requested by resolution 2699, the Secretary-General's report said that "parts" of the UN system have advised the mission on best practices for complying with "international human rights and with international standards of conduct and discipline". This technical assistance has included steps for integrating human rights concerns across mission activities and creating mechanisms to address "disciplinary and accountability issues". The report further noted that the UN, upon request, could provide the mission with additional substantive support in relation to the "consistent and continuous implementation" of compliance mechanisms to minimise the risks of human rights violations in the planning and conduct of operations.

While Haiti's gang violence appears to have receded from its peak earlier this year, the country's security and humanitarian situations remain dire. Between 1 April and 30 June, BINUH recorded 1,379 people who were victims of murder or injury, a 45 percent decrease compared to the previous reporting period, but still an alarmingly high figure. Additionally, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) designated the country a "famine hotspot of highest concern" in their latest outlook report covering the period from June to October of this year.

On 12 July, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2743, renewing BINUH's mandate for another year, until 15 July 2025. The resolution included new language emphasising the need for coordination between BINUH, the MSS, and other stakeholders to "ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of efforts" in the provision of international support for the HNP. Emphasising the mission's need for additional resources, the resolution also encouraged member states and regional organisations to support the MSS through voluntary contributions in the form of financial, personnel, and in-kind commitments.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 20 June, several UN human rights experts voiced deep concern over the escalating gang violence and political instability in Haiti, resulting in a record 578,074 internal displacements in 2024 and making Haiti the country with the highest internal displacement globally due to crime-related violence. Among the displaced are over 310,000 women and girls and 180,000 children. The experts warned that a growing number of unaccompanied children are at risk of exploitation, abuse, and trafficking by gangs, while sexual violence against women and girls in internally displaced persons (IDP) sites is also surging.

The experts called for the MSS mission in Haiti to support the HNP and ensure security in line with international human rights standards. They also emphasised the need to increase funding for Haiti's 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan, to facilitate humanitarian access, and to strengthen protection mechanisms for IDPs.

Key Issues and Options

The central task for the Security Council in September is to renew the MSS mission's authorisation. The Council is expected to retain the mission's core mandate, which is to support the HNP's efforts to build security conditions conducive to holding elections by providing operational support and securing critical infrastructure.

Regarding the mission's resource shortfall, the Council is likely to maintain the mission's voluntary funding model, but it may reiterate its call for additional contributions from the international community. In this regard, Council members could encourage countries and regional organisations to consider specific initiatives to enhance their support, such as a pledging conference.

Additionally, Council members could request the mission to expedite efforts to establish a functioning compliance mechanism to prevent human rights violations. Members may also request the UN to enhance its substantive and technical support to the mission in this regard and report on progress achieved towards making such a mechanism operational.

Council Dynamics

Council members are united in their concern about Haiti's multi-dimensional crisis and broadly agree on the need for a Haitian-led political solution that addresses both security and socioeconomic challenges. The unanimous adoptions of resolutions 2699 and 2743 are indicative of members' general support of the UN and broader international engagement on Haiti.

Some Council members have expressed scepticism about the MSS mission, however. Russia has criticised a provision of the CAR-ICOM-brokered agreement on Haiti's transitional governance structure that required members of the TPC to support the MSS mission, which Moscow has described as interference in Haiti's domestic affairs. Additionally, both China and Russia have questioned the lack of operational detail from the mission and whether conditions are conducive to its success in light of Haiti's persistent political instability. During the negotiations on resolution 2743, the two members apparently sought to limit references to the MSS mission, arguing that BINUH's mandate should not pre-empt separate Council discussion on the renewal of the MSS mission's authorisation.

UN Peacekeeping

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council will hold an open debate on peacekeeping reform pursuant to resolution 2378 of 20 September 2017. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix is the anticipated briefer.

Key Recent Developments

Resolution 2378 requested the Secretary-General “to provide a comprehensive annual briefing to the Security Council on reform of United Nations peacekeeping every twelve months to be followed by a debate”. Last year, the Council held the annual meeting on 7 September in a briefing format. Lacroix briefed on progress and challenges in the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P); the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+); and the Secretary-General’s initiative to accelerate peacekeeping reform. A4P is an initiative designed to enhance the impact of UN peacekeeping operations, while A4P+ is the strategy for implementing this initiative. It has been six years since the Secretary-General launched his A4P initiative, and nearly four years since the launch of A4P+. The fourth progress report on the implementation of A4P+, released in January, highlighted progress in its seven key priority areas—collective coherence behind a political strategy, strategic and operational integration, capabilities and mindsets, accountability to peacekeepers, accountability of peacekeepers, strategic communication, and cooperation with host countries.

Since the last annual briefing, several UN peace operations have closed or begun to draw down. The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) completed its withdrawal from the country by the end of 2023, following the Council’s termination of its mandate on 30 June 2023. The UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), a UN Special Political Mission (SPM), also withdrew from the country following the Council’s termination of its mandate on 1 December 2023.

The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) is implementing a disengagement plan, which was agreed with the Congolese government and endorsed by the Security Council through resolution 2717 of 19 December 2023. MONUSCO completed its withdrawal from South Kivu province in June as part of the first phase of the mission’s drawdown process. When renewing the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in November 2023, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to conduct an independent strategic review of the mission and provide detailed recommendations regarding its reconfiguration, including a possible transition plan for its drawdown when conditions are met. Council members received the outcome of the MINUSCA strategic review on 13 August, and its recommendations are likely to inform the upcoming mandate renewal negotiations in November.

This year, Iraq and Somalia have requested the SPMs in their respective countries to leave. Accordingly, the Security Council adopted resolution 2732 on 31 May, renewing the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for a final 19-month period until 31 December 2025. At the time of writing, Council members were expecting to receive the Secretary-General’s written

update on the future of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSNOM), which was due by the end of August.

On 20 July 2023, the Secretary-General launched the policy brief *A New Agenda for Peace* (NAfP), which recognised the “challenges posed by long-standing and unresolved conflicts, without a peace to keep, by complex domestic, geopolitical and transnational factors” and “the limitations of ambitious mandates without adequate political support”. In this regard, the NAfP called for “a serious and broad-based reflection” on the future of peacekeeping, underscoring the need to move towards “nimble adaptable models with appropriate, forward-looking transition and exit strategies”.

The NAfP is the main input for the peace and security section of the draft Pact for the Future—the outcome document expected to be adopted at the Summit of the Future in September—which is currently under negotiation by UN member states. The latest version of the draft pact requests the Secretary-General to “undertake a review on the future of all forms of United Nations’ peace operations, taking into account lessons learned from previous and ongoing reform processes, and providing strategic and action-oriented recommendations for the consideration of Member States on how the United Nations’ toolbox can be adapted to meet evolving needs, to allow for more agile, tailored responses to existing, emerging and future challenges”.

The NAfP recommended that where peace enforcement is needed, the Council should “authorize a multinational force, or enforcement action by regional and subregional organizations”. It added that peace enforcement actions should be complemented by “inclusive political efforts to advance peace and other non-military approaches such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, addressing main conflict drivers and related grievances”.

On 21 December 2023, the Security Council adopted resolution 2719 on the financing of African Union (AU)-led peace support operations (AUPSOS). The UN and the AU have been consulting on the implementation of this landmark resolution through their joint task team. The team is organised along four workstreams: joint planning, decision-making and reporting; mission support; financing and budgeting; and compliance and protection of civilians. The joint task team had in-person meetings in Addis Ababa (May) and New York (July), and elaborated a Joint AU-UN Roadmap on the Operationalisation of resolution 2719 and Planning Modalities, which will be submitted to the UN Secretary-General and the AU Commission Chairperson for adoption during their next UN-AU annual high-level conference scheduled to take place in October in Addis Ababa.

Meanwhile, discussions have been underway on possible cases to be considered by the Council under resolution 2719. In respect of the successor mission to the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)—which is expected to withdraw by the end of December—the Security Council adopted resolution 2748 on 15 August, requesting the Secretary-General to present the overall mission design and options for financing it, including but not limited to resolution 2719, jointly with the AU Commission Chairperson and in consultation with Somalia and international stakeholders.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for Council members in September will be the future of UN peacekeeping in light of the ongoing negotiations on the draft

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 Meeting Record S/PV.9413** (7 September 2023) was a briefing on peacekeeping reform.

UN Peacekeeping

pact and the upcoming Summit of the Future. The former Special Representative and head of MINUSMA El-Ghassim Wane is leading a team to review various models for the future of UN peacekeeping in the context of the next Peacekeeping Ministerial to be hosted by Germany in May 2025. Slovenia, which holds the Council Presidency in September, could consider inviting him to brief the Council at the open debate.

Council Dynamics

Peacekeeping remains one of the most important tools at the Security Council's disposal in discharging its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Geopolitical dynamics and the changing nature of conflict, however, have posed serious challenges to peacekeeping operations. The growing frustration among host countries and communities because of the perceived ineffectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations has also complicated

the operating environment.

The issue of partnerships in peacekeeping has regained renewed momentum with the adoption of resolution 2719. On 6 August, the Security Council adopted resolution 2746, authorising MONUSCO to provide operational and logistical support to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the DRC (SAMI-DRC), which has been operating in eastern DRC since December 2023. In November, the Council is expected to authorise support for the ATMIS successor mission based on the Secretary-General's proposal on the mission's design and financing options. As well, it seems that preliminary discussions have started behind the scenes on a possible mission in Sudan, exploring various options from a lighter-footprint mission with military observers to a full-fledged AUPSO, depending on the outcome of the ongoing Sudanese mediation process.

Sudan

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council is expected to vote on a draft resolution to extend the Sudan sanctions regime (targeted sanctions and the arms embargo), which expires on 12 September.

The mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee expires on 12 March 2025.

Ambassador Joonkook Hwang (Republic of Korea), the chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, is expected to brief the Council on the committee's work.

Key Recent Developments

The ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which began in April 2023, has triggered a catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Sudan, including significant civilian casualties, mass displacement, severe food and water shortages, and the collapse of healthcare and essential services. As at 23 August, more than 20,000 people had been killed since the onset of the conflict, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, a non-governmental organisation that collects conflict-related data. Some estimates suggest, however, that the number of casualties may be significantly higher. The war has displaced approximately 10.3 million people, 2.2 million of whom have sought refuge in Sudan's neighbouring countries—the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, and Uganda—making it the world's largest displacement crisis. (For background and more information, see the brief on Sudan in our June 2024 *Monthly Forecast*.)

Council members have been closely following the food insecurity situation in Sudan. On 6 August, the Council held an open briefing on the 1 August report of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Famine Review Committee (FRC). The report determined that famine conditions were present in the Zamzam camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) located near El Fasher, capital

of North Darfur state, which houses approximately 500,000 people, and are expected to persist through October. The report noted that similar conditions are likely to prevail in other IDP sites in the El Fasher locality, notably in the Abu Shouk and Al Salam camps. (For background, see our 28 July and 5 August *What's in Blue* stories.)

Mediation efforts aimed at resolving the conflict and securing humanitarian access have continued. In a 23 July press statement, the US announced that it had extended invitations to the SAF and the RSF to participate in ceasefire talks in Switzerland, co-hosted by Saudi Arabia, with the African Union (AU), Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the UN participating as observers. The talks aimed to reach an agreement on a nationwide cessation of violence and to develop a robust monitoring and verification mechanism to ensure implementation of any agreement. Although the RSF agreed to participate in the meeting, the SAF did not. It sent a delegation, headed by Sudanese Minister of Minerals Mohamed Bashir Abu Nommo, to Jeddah on 9 August to consult with the US on the proposed agenda and structure of the negotiations. These talks ended without agreement on the SAF's participation in Switzerland, reportedly because of disagreements on several issues, including representation of civilian stakeholders at the talks and the composition of the SAF's delegation.

Despite the SAF's absence, the talks in Switzerland commenced on 14 August using a hybrid negotiating model that combined in-person, proximity and virtual modes to engage both parties. On 15 August, the Sudanese government announced its decision to authorise the opening of the Adre crossing at the Chad-Sudan border for three months for cross-border humanitarian operations. (Sudan suspended cross-border aid delivery through the Adre crossing on 21 February, citing concerns about potential weapons transfers into Darfur by the RSF.) In a 16 August statement, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan Clementine Nkweta-Salami welcomed Sudan's decision to open the Adre crossing, noting

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2736 (13 June 2024) demanded that the RSF halt the siege of El Fasher and called for an immediate halt to the fighting and for de-escalation in and around El Fasher. S/RES/2725 (8 March 2024) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee until 12 March 2025. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.9698 (6 August 2024) was on the humanitarian situation in the country. S/PV.9656 (13 June 2024) was a briefing on the work of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Sudan

that it remained the “most effective and shortest route to deliver humanitarian assistance to Sudan at the scale and speed required, especially to Darfur”.

At the end of the talks in Switzerland on 23 August, the participants—collectively called the Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan (ALPS) Group—adopted a communiqué. In addition to ensuring access through the Adre border crossing, the ALPS group obtained guarantees from the warring parties to provide safe and unhindered humanitarian access along the Dabbah Road, with access through the north and west of Port Sudan. The communiqué indicated that deliberations continued toward opening an access route through Sennar state, noting that the UN is undertaking a feasibility study for routes across the country that can enable aid access. It further noted that the ALPS group presented to the warring parties proposals for a compliance mechanism to resolve disputes, receive complaints, and address problems arising in relation to implementation of protection of civilian commitments. The communiqué expressed regret at SAF’s decision not to join the talks in Switzerland, which it said limited the group’s ability to make substantial progress on key issues, such as a cessation of hostilities. Following the talks, media reports quoted General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the SAF, as saying during a press conference that the talks in Switzerland aimed to “whitewash” the RSF and countries supporting the paramilitary group. He reiterated the SAF’s refusal to negotiate with the RSF and objected to the UAE’s participation in the talks. (Sudanese authorities have accused the UAE of providing armaments and other material support to the RSF). In a press encounter on 27 August, US Special Envoy for Sudan Tom Perriello reportedly indicated a significant proliferation in the number of external actors fuelling the conflict. He said that the UAE is supporting the RSF, and that “foreign fighters” have arrived in Sudan from across the Sahel. He also accused Iran and Russia of supporting the SAF.

Sanctions Related Developments

On 19 August, the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee met with its Panel of Experts to receive a briefing on the panel’s mid-term update, which was transmitted to Council members on 7 August. During the meeting, it appears that the US proposed two names for targeted sanctions.

It appears that the update report, which is not a public document, analysed the ongoing conflict in El Fasher, North Darfur—the only capital city in the five Darfur states outside the RSF’s control—including patterns of violence, the warfare tactics employed by the warring parties, and the impact on civilians and the region. The report apparently confirmed that all parties failed to distinguish between civilians and combatants in the hostilities in El Fasher. It noted that the indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure by all warring parties violated international humanitarian law and constituted war crimes. It further confirmed the presence and use of heavy weaponry by both sides, as well as military overflights by the SAF, in violation of the Sudan sanctions regime. The report described how the ongoing conflict has contributed to destabilising the region, particularly through ongoing recruitment campaigns in neighbouring countries such as Libya, Chad, and the CAR. (For background related to Sudan sanctions, see the brief on Sudan in our February 2024 *Monthly Forecast* and 17 June *What’s in Blue* story.)

Human Rights-Related Developments

The International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan, established by the Human Rights Council in October 2023, visited Chad from 30 June to 18 July and travelled to several areas in eastern Chad along the border with Sudan, including Adre, Farchana, and

Abeche. The mission met with victims and survivors of the conflict in Sudan as well as members of Sudanese civil society and the UN country team. In its press release following the visit, the mission reported that the Sudanese refugee community provided firsthand accounts of horrific acts, including killings, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, looting, the burning of houses, and the use of child soldiers. It indicated that many of these violations appear to be specifically targeted against professionals such as lawyers, human rights defenders, teachers, and doctors. (For more information, see the brief on Sudan in our August 2024 *Monthly Forecast*.)

Women, Peace and Security

Khlood Khair, the founder and director of Confluence Advisory, a think tank formerly based in Khartoum, briefed the Council during the 7 August meeting titled “Sustaining women, peace and security commitments in the context of accelerated drawdown of peace operations”. Among other issues, she focused on the exits of the UN/AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID, in 2020) and the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS, in 2023). Khair called the timing of UNAMID’s withdrawal “a massive miscalculation”, noting that it “took place before any alternative national force could be set up in its stead”, leading to a “gaping protection vacuum”. Although women’s rights activists “implored the international community to let UNAMID stay”, she said that their voices were ignored.

Regarding UNITAMS, Khair noted that the limited mandate given to the mission and its hasty termination represented “another instance where the perspectives and needs of Sudanese women were not considered” by the Council. She added that in the wake of UNITAMS’ departure, and despite reports of sexual violence, “the UN has not established adequate monitoring and reporting arrangements” on the situation in Sudan.

Khair provided several recommendations, including establishing a diplomatic track complementary to but separate from ongoing ceasefire talks focused on “addressing violence against civilians, with targeted measures for the protection of women and girls, including from conflict-related sexual violence”. Noting that the flow of arms is “exposing women and girls to horrific forms of gender-based violence”, she recommended expanding the arms embargo across Sudan and adding conflict-related sexual violence as a stand-alone designation criterion for targeted individual sanctions. She further called on all actors working on the ceasefire talks—including the Secretary-General’s Personal Envoy Ramtane Lamamra—to ensure the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women.

Key Issues and Options

An immediate key issue for the Council is the extension of the Sudan sanctions regime (targeted sanctions and the arms embargo). One option for the Council is to extend the panel’s mandate for one year. Some members may also suggest extending the sanctions regime until March 2025, aligning it with the mandate cycle of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions regime, most recently renewed by resolution 2725.

Ensuring strict compliance with the sanctions regime is another important issue for Council members. On several occasions, most recently in resolution 2736 of 13 June, the Council has reiterated its call on all member states to refrain “from external interference which seeks to foment conflict and instability and instead to support efforts for a durable peace”. The resolution reminded all parties to the conflict and member states that facilitate the transfers of arms and military material to Darfur of their obligations to comply with the arms embargo measures and that those who violate the arms embargo may be designated for targeted measures.

During the 13 June Council briefing on the work of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, Sudan called on the Council to identify and hold accountable the states that support and arm the RSF. He argued that “there is no reason to maintain the Darfur sanctions if they do not include the countries involved in violating the relevant

Sudan

Council resolutions, namely, the UAE and Chad”.

Along with extending the sanctions measure, Council members could also encourage the panel to collaborate with other panels of experts, particularly those assisting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, and the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee. In this regard, chairs of the respective committees could consider holding joint committee meetings in order to facilitate an exchange of information about the regional impacts of the conflicts in these countries.

Keeping in mind the information brought forth by the Panel of Experts reports, some Council members may wish to have a substantive discussion about the sanctions measures, including, but not limited to, expanding the geographical scope of the measures to the rest of the country, the designation criteria, and additional listings of individuals and entities under the current regime.

Council Dynamics

Most Council members share similar concerns about the political, security, human rights, and humanitarian situations in Sudan. Members have had diverging views about the utility of the Sudan sanctions regime. Several members have underlined the importance of the Panel of Experts’ reporting on the humanitarian and security situations and in identifying violations of the sanctions regime. During the 13 June Council meeting, however, Russia argued that Council sanctions have failed to stabilise the situation in Darfur, noting that weapons continue to flow into the region illegally. It expressed the view that “any restrictions imposed by the Security

Council, especially if we consider the option of expanding them, will not bring peace closer”.

Continuing sanctions regime violations and lack of accountability have contributed to frustration among some Council members. At the 13 June Council meeting, Ambassador Joonkook Hwang (the Republic of Korea), who serves as the committee’s chair, said in his national capacity that “[w]e are receiving the observation of the panel of experts about a considerable amount of supply and use of foreign weapons in Darfur on a daily basis”. Talking about the measures against arms embargo violations, he said that the “consensus-based nature of the Sanctions Committee tends to result in having to resort to the least common denominator”. He called on Council members to collectively take concrete action to guarantee the effective implementation and strengthening of the current sanctions regime.

Since the start of the conflict, the US has imposed bilateral sanctions on several individuals and entities for exacerbating Sudan’s instability. In its most recent round of sanctions, the US designated two individuals on 15 May for their role in leading the RSF’s war campaign; one of them was reported to have been instrumental in the RSF’s operations in Darfur, including its offensives in North Darfur. The UK has also introduced bilateral sanctions against at least nine entities linked to the warring parties.

Similarly, the EU has issued restrictive measures against six entities and six individuals responsible for supporting activities that undermine the stability and political transition in Sudan.

The UK is the penholder on Sudan, and the US is the penholder on Sudan sanctions.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council is expected to hold its monthly briefing and consultations on Yemen.

The mandate of the UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) expires on 14 July 2025.

Key Recent Developments

The Council most recently discussed the situation in Yemen in a briefing and consultations held on 15 August. During the briefing, UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg reiterated his warning that the precarious environment in the Middle East risks drawing the country further into conflict and unravelling the gains made since Yemen’s April 2022 truce. He emphasised that continued attacks by the Houthi rebel group on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and retaliatory US-led strikes against Houthi targets have created an unsustainable situation. In a recent worrying development, the Houthis claimed responsibility for a 21 August attack in the Red Sea against the Greek-flagged crude oil tanker Sounion, reportedly carrying 150,000 tonnes of crude oil. The vessel, whose crew was evacuated, has been on fire since 23 August, raising concerns about a potential environmental catastrophe. At the time of writing, no signs of an oil spill had been reported.

At the 15 August meeting, Grundberg asserted that the regional escalation was taking place in parallel with “real and urgent challenges” inside Yemen. Although the levels of violence along the front lines remain lower than before the 2022 truce, ongoing military preparations and reinforcements by the Yemeni parties and reports of clashes in areas such as Hodeidah and Taiz governorates continue to demonstrate the volatility of the situation, according to the Special Envoy.

Among the major challenges that the country is facing is the persistence of overlapping humanitarian crises. Briefing at the 15 August meeting, Director of the Financing and Partnerships Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Lisa Doughten described the devastating effects of torrential rains and flooding that began in March and intensified through early August. She reported that the floods led to the death of approximately 98 people and injuries to more than 600 others. In addition, some 69,500 families were affected, many of which lost their homes and sources of livelihood. Doughten also expressed concern about the spread of cholera in Yemen, noting that the number of suspected cases across the country stood at 147,000 in early August. She warned that cases could rise to more than 250,000 in “just a few weeks” unless response efforts were immediately bolstered and emphasised that additional funding was urgently needed to that end.

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9707 (15 August 2024) was the latest monthly Council meeting on Yemen.

Yemen

Food security continues to deteriorate across the country. A 19 August report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Technical Working Group in Yemen, which analysed conditions in government-controlled areas, warned that by the end of 2024, an estimated 609,808 children will be acutely malnourished, representing a 34 percent increase compared with the previous year. According to the report, the malnutrition crisis in Yemen is driven by several factors, including ongoing conflict, economic instability, the high prevalence of diseases such as cholera and measles, and limited access to safe drinking water. In a joint statement after the report's publication, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) noted that Yemen has been facing some of the highest malnutrition rates in the world and warned that more people could sink into food insecurity if current low levels of humanitarian funding persist.

Doughten said at the 15 August briefing that rates of severe food deprivation in Houthi-controlled areas more than doubled since last year, rising from 17 to 36 percent. She highlighted that families' struggle with food insecurity has forced 30 percent of girls in Yemen into marriage before the age of 18 and that the number of children out of school, which currently stands at 4.5 million, is likely to rise as they are forced to leave school in order to provide for their households.

Efforts by the UN and its partners to respond to these crises have faced challenges stemming from a lack of funding and a shrinking humanitarian operating space. The Houthis continue to detain 13 Yemeni national staff employed by several UN agencies and offices and more than 50 workers of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society whom the rebel group arrested in early June. In a 19 August statement, Secretary-General António Guterres reiterated his call for the UN staffers' immediate and unconditional release. He also condemned the 3 August incident in which the Houthis forcibly entered the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Sana'a and took control of the premises. The Houthis handed the premises back to UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen Julien Harneis on 19 August, according to the statement.

Key Issues and Options

The destabilising effects on Yemen of regional tensions are a key issue for the Council. Members are following with concern developments related to the 31 July assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran. Tehran has blamed Israel for the assassination—for which Israel neither claimed nor denied responsibility—and vowed to retaliate. There are concerns that the Houthis, who are aligned with Iran, could participate in a retaliatory attack, further drawing Yemen into conflict. Council members are likely to continue urging restraint and to call on Yemeni parties to focus on an intra-Yemeni political process for the benefit of their people. Members apparently hope that the recent agreement reached between the Houthis and the Yemeni government to de-escalate the economic warfare that they have been waging against each other could provide momentum for the parties

to re-engage on the political process.

Addressing humanitarian needs in the country, where 18.2 million people require assistance and protection services, remains a priority. Council members could consider ways to increase attention on humanitarian funding shortfalls, particularly during the UN General Assembly's High-level Week, which will take place between 23 and 27 September. An option would be to encourage member states to consider initiatives to enhance financial support, such as a pledging conference. In light of the severe effects on children of the humanitarian crisis, Council members may also consider inviting a briefer from UNICEF or a relevant NGO to their next meeting on Yemen who can speak about concrete steps that the international community could take to address the situation.

Council Dynamics

Yemen is an issue on which Council members have maintained general unity in support of UN mediation to achieve a sustainable resolution to the conflict. The Red Sea crisis, however, has produced some notable divisions. The P3 members (France, the UK, and the US) have criticised the Houthis' destabilising actions, while Council members such as Algeria, China, and Russia emphasise that ending the conflict in Gaza is critical to resolving the crisis in the Red Sea and preventing further regional escalation.

The P3 often accuse Iran of supplying weapons to the Houthis in contravention of the arms embargo imposed on the group through resolution 2216 of 14 April 2015. These members have raised concerns that Iranian ships have travelled to Hodeidah Port since October 2023 without informing the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM), which provides clearance for and inspects ships travelling to Houthi-controlled ports to ensure compliance with the arms embargo. In addition, US officials have alleged that the Houthis are considering providing weapons to the Somali terrorist group Al-Shabaab. At the 15 August Council meeting, the UK expressed concern over the reported growing links between the two groups, calling on the relevant Security Council sanctions committees to coordinate their efforts to "counter this worrying trend".

The US has called for stronger Council action to impede Iran's supply of arms to the Houthis, including by strengthening UNVIM, which was established in 2016 through an agreement between the UN and the Yemeni government and relies on voluntary funding. Further punitive measures by the Council against the Houthis or Iran appear unlikely, however, given Council dynamics. Russia traditionally seeks to remove references to the Houthis and is reluctant to single them out in Council products. A red line for Russia has also been identifying Iran as violating the arms embargo against the Houthis.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen. The US and Japan have served as co-penholders on the Red Sea crisis. Ambassador Joonkook Hwang (Republic of Korea) chairs the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council expects to hold two meetings on Syria: one on the political and humanitarian issues and another on the chemical weapons track.

Key Recent Developments

Syria remains mired in a civil war, now in its 14th year, marked by fighting on multiple fronts and a lack of progress on the political process. The Syrian Constitutional Committee has not met since June 2022 because Russia, a close ally of Syria, has opposed Geneva as the venue for Committee meetings, following Switzerland's imposition of sanctions on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

In his remarks at the 22 July Council meeting on Syria, Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen acknowledged the increasing frustration among regional and international stakeholders who, he said, perceive the status quo as “dangerous and unsustainable” and added that interest in Syria is waning in “some quarters”. He stressed the need for an approach that encompasses all relevant military, political or economic actors and addresses the range of issues that continue to drive the conflict or are directly relevant to its resolution.

In a 12 August press release, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) welcomed the Syrian government's decision to extend its authorisation for the use of the Bab al-Salam and Al Ra'ee border crossings at the Syria-Türkiye border—used by UN humanitarian agencies and their partners for conducting cross-border humanitarian operations—until 13 November. Humanitarian operations have also continued through the Bab al-Hawa border crossing at the Syria-Türkiye border, which, according to OCHA, is an essential lifeline for reaching millions of Syrians in north-west Syria who remain in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including food, nutrition, health, shelter, protection, education, and other critical support.

The situation in north-east Syria remains volatile. Since 6 August, significant escalation in hostilities has been reported on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River in Deir-ez-Zor governorate, following the outbreak of fighting between pro-government forces, allegedly backed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a primarily Kurdish group opposing the Syrian government. An 11 August OCHA flash update reported that critical public infrastructure had been targeted or used for military purposes, resulting in heightened risks for civilian access to essential services on both banks of the river. Despite the scale of hostilities, the update said there had been no shift in territorial control. As at 14 August, the clashes had resulted in the death of at least 37 people, with 43 others injured, according to European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

Tensions have continued to intensify across the region against the backdrop of the Israel-Hamas war that erupted on 7 October 2023. The escalation has resulted in increased violence spilling over into Syria, where sites have frequently been the target of attacks. Israel and the US have historically targeted positions associated with Iranian forces and affiliated militants in Syria, and Iran-linked proxy groups have been accused of attacking US forces stationed in the region. On 5 August, a US military air base in western Iraq was struck by rocket fire, allegedly by Iranian-backed militias, injuring at least five US soldiers. On 9 August, US and coalition forces deployed

at Rumalyn Landing Zone (an international coalition base) in eastern Syria were attacked using a one-way attack uncrewed aerial system. The strike resulted in injuries to eight US service members. According to a 13 August Reuters article, Iranian-backed militias targeted the international coalition base in the Koniko gas field in the Deir-ez-Zor countryside earlier that day; however, the base was not hit and no injuries were reported.

In response to the recent surge in tensions following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on 31 July, the US announced adjustments in its military posture in the Middle East to improve US force protection and defend Israel. In a 2 August press release, Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh announced the deployment of a strike group led by the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and additional ballistic missile defence-capable cruisers and destroyers to the US European and Central Command regions. The US has also deployed an additional fighter squadron to the region to reinforce defensive air support capabilities. (For background and more information on regional developments, see the brief on Lebanon in our August *Monthly Forecast*.)

On 24 July, the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) released the monthly report on the implementation of resolution 2118 of 27 September 2013, which required the verification and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. The report said that the 27th round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) of the OPCW and the Syrian authorities took place in Damascus in May. During this round, the DAT requested explanations from the Syrian authorities regarding the results of analysis of the samples it collected between September 2020 and April 2023. The results indicated potentially undeclared activities related to several chemical warfare agents. The report noted that considering the unresolved gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies that remain, the declaration submitted by Syria cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for Council members is the ongoing hostilities in Syria. Continuing violence and the lack of accountability threaten to destabilise the country further. The deteriorating socioeconomic conditions in the country are also of concern. Determining how the Council can address the spillover effects of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and de-escalate rising tensions in the region, including in Syria, is an important issue for the Council.

One option would be for the co-chairs of the Informal Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians (Switzerland and the UK) to hold a meeting on the situation in Syria to receive briefings from relevant UN entities about the impact of the conflict on civilians.

As well, a key issue is how to alleviate the growing humanitarian needs throughout the country. According to OCHA, approximately 16.7 million people—nearly 70 percent of Syria's population—remain in dire need of humanitarian assistance, with 15.4 million people facing acute food insecurity. Despite the rising humanitarian needs across the country, securing funding has been a challenge for the UN and partner agencies. At the time

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2254](#) (18 December 2015) was the first resolution focused exclusively on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. It was adopted unanimously. [Security Council Letter S/2024/584](#) (31 July) was a letter from Iran following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9690](#) (22 July 2024) was a meeting on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria.

Syria

of writing, Syria's 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan, which requires \$4.07 billion, was only 24.1 percent funded. Council members may call on donors to quickly disburse funding commitments and scale up the humanitarian response in Syria. At the 27 May EU-sponsored eighth Brussels Conference, the donor community pledged €7.5 billion, including €5 billion in grants and €2.5 billion in loans for 2024 and future years.

The need to break the underlying political impasse in the country and support the Special Envoy's work in this regard is another key issue. The Council could consider holding a private meeting with stakeholders to discuss the impediments to the resumption of the Syrian Constitutional Committee, including the issue of venue, and support Pedersen's efforts to reinvigorate the political process. (A private meeting is a closed, formal meeting format; unlike closed consultations, non-Council member states are allowed to participate in this format.)

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 3 August, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria (COI) released a position paper on the tenth anniversary of the "Yazidi genocide" committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh). The paper called for the repatriation of alleged members of ISIL from third countries and their prosecution for international crimes, including gender-based crimes, in national courts. The COI also expressed support for establishing an international victims' reparation fund to ensure justice and accountability in Syria.

Council Dynamics

Over the years, Syria has been one of the most divisive files on the

Council's agenda. China and Russia are supportive of the Syrian government, emphasising the need to respect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity and drawing connections between unilateral coercive measures on Syria and the challenging humanitarian and economic situations in the country. In contrast, the P3 (France, the UK, and the US) and other like-minded members criticise the government for violating international humanitarian law and human rights law, arbitrarily detaining people, not engaging meaningfully in political dialogue, and not creating conditions for the safe and voluntary return of refugees.

Russia has consistently criticised the presence of US forces in Syria, accusing them of destabilising the country. The US maintains that its deployment of forces in the country remains focused on fighting Da'esh and has blamed Damascus for allowing Iranian-backed militias to operate in the country.

With regard to the chemical weapons track, Council members have displayed starkly different views over the years on a range of related issues, including responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria, the credibility of the work of the OPCW, and numerous procedural aspects of the OPCW's decision-making bodies. While several members have consistently expressed support for the OPCW's work, maintaining that it is credible and essential, other members, such as China and Russia, claim that its work is biased and politicised.

Switzerland is the penholder on the Syria humanitarian file.

Afghanistan

Expected Council

In September, the Security Council will convene for its quarterly open briefing on Afghanistan. Special Representative and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Roza Otunbayeva and UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous are expected to brief. A civil society representative may brief as well. Closed consultations are scheduled to follow the briefing.

UNAMA's mandate expires on 17 March 2025.

Key Recent Developments

On 21 June, Otunbayeva; Lisa Doughten, the Director of the Financing and Partnership Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); and Manizha Wafeq, the co-founder of the Afghanistan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, briefed the Council. Otunbayeva said that in UNAMA's consultations with Afghan people, there is broad agreement that the de facto authorities should not be recognised "until the issues of women's rights, girls' education and an acceptable constitution" are addressed. Doughten noted that approximately 23.7 million people in Afghanistan—more than half the population—need humanitarian assistance. She described how the adverse effects of climate change, manifested by the increased number and intensity of extreme weather

events, had exacerbated the humanitarian situation in the country. Wafeq described the severe restrictions that the Taliban authorities had imposed on women's rights, including in the educational and employment spheres, and asserted that "the participation and rights of Afghan women are essential and non-negotiable".

In a 15 August press release, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) observed that Afghanistan is the "only country in the world where secondary and higher education is strictly forbidden to girls and women", with 1.4 million girls deliberately deprived of secondary education since the Taliban took power in 2021.

From 30 June to 1 July, the UN convened the third meeting of Special Envoys and Special Representatives on Afghanistan on 30 June and 1 July in Doha, Qatar. Taliban officials participated, which they had not in the first two Doha meetings, in May 2023 and in February. Over 25 countries and international organisations took part in the meeting. The discussion focused on two tracks: economic matters (including developing the private sector) and counter-narcotics. As an outgrowth of the meeting, working groups are expected to be established on private sector economic matters and counter-narcotics that will develop lines of communication between the Taliban and donor countries and states in the region. Civil society representatives (including women) were excluded from the discussion.

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2727 (27 March 2024) extended the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) until 17 March 2025. Security Council Meeting S/PV.9663 (21 June 2024) was on Afghanistan.

Afghanistan

Briefing the press following the meeting, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, who represented the UN, indicated that although the de facto authorities (that is, the Taliban) would not “sit across the table with Afghan civil society in this format...they heard very clearly the need to include women and civil society in all aspects of public life”.

The Taliban released “The Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice” on 21 August, which restricts women from speaking, singing, and showing their faces and bodies in public. Special Representative Otunbayeva issued a statement on 25 August in which she asserted that the new law is a “distressing vision for Afghanistan’s future”.

On 21 August, the Taliban barred Richard Bennett, the UN Human Rights Council’s Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, from entering the country. Abdul Qahar Balkhi, a foreign ministry spokesman for the Taliban, claimed that Bennett’s reports “are based on prejudices and anecdotes” harmful to the interests of Afghanistan and its people.

On 12 July, extremists from the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, which is affiliated with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), reportedly killed eight Pakistani soldiers in a suicide attack on a military base in Bannu, Pakistan. Pakistan has accused the Taliban of giving refuge to the TTP in Afghanistan, including at a 19 July press briefing by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Taliban has denied these accusations.

The Taliban announced on 17 August that it had signed agreements worth \$2.5 billion in trade and investment with neighbouring Uzbekistan. These agreements were finalised during a visit of Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov to Afghanistan.

On 21 August, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) accepted the credentials of Badruddin Haqqani as the Taliban’s ambassador to the UAE. The UAE is only the second country to accept diplomatic credentials from a Taliban envoy, after China did so on 30 January.

Women, Peace and Security

On 13 August, UN Women issued a policy paper taking stock of the effects of three years of Taliban rule on Afghan women and girls. The paper aimed to alert the international community about the consequences of “diminished attention to the women’s rights crisis and limited investments in women’s resilience” in Afghanistan. It said that three years of edicts, statements and decrees by the de facto authorities have “targeted the rights, lives and bodies of women and girls, closing spaces for them” in their households and communities as well as nationally. None of these decrees has been reversed, with the paper noting that Afghan women and international human rights advocates increasingly refer to the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan as “gender apartheid”.

The paper identified several actions and principles for the international community, such as supporting women-led civil society organisations through long-term flexible funding and committing to assigning at least 30 percent of all funding for Afghanistan to initiatives focused on gender equality and women’s rights. It said that, from 2005 to 2020, 80 percent of peace negotiations did not include Afghan women, noting that the “legacy of decades of women’s exclusion from key discussions and agreement” has resulted in “a pathway that continues today”. As a result, the paper called for involving women in all decision-making forums that concern the future of Afghanistan and warned against the normalisation of discriminatory practices as well as “actions that could unintentionally support or normalize the Taliban’s discriminatory policies, norms and values”.

Key Issues and Options

How to engage with the Taliban authorities on security and humanitarian issues is a key issue for the Council. Council members could consider inviting DiCarlo to brief them on the formation and envisioned activities of the working groups arising from the third Doha meeting and on any plans for future meetings of Special Envoys and Special Representatives on Afghanistan, including with the participation of the Taliban.

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is a significant issue for the Council. An informal meeting with humanitarian organisations working in Afghanistan could allow Council members to learn more about the problems facing those working to deliver aid in the country while also providing an opportunity to consider whether there is anything the Council can do to help manage these challenges.

The human rights situation in Afghanistan, particularly for women and girls, is another major issue. Council members could hold an informal meeting with representatives of UN Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and civil society to discuss how the Council can exert pressure on the Taliban regarding its practices and policies that restrict human rights.

The Council could also consider reviewing the 1988 Afghanistan sanctions regime, which, apart from the humanitarian exception established by resolution 2615, has not been updated since the Taliban seized power in August 2021. Such a review could analyse whether the regime is fit for purpose or whether it should be updated in light of current circumstances.

The terrorist threat in Afghanistan is another key concern. The Council could meet with a counter-terrorism expert, which would give members a chance to discuss possible options for bolstering the Council’s efforts to manage the threat posed by terrorism in Afghanistan.

Council Dynamics

While Council members are generally united in their desire to see a prosperous, peaceful Afghanistan free from terrorism and ruled by an inclusive government, they have been divided over how to achieve this goal.

Some members, including the P3 (France, the UK, and the US) and other like-minded states, have argued that the Taliban must adhere to international norms if they want to obtain international recognition and receive economic and development aid from the international community. Several of these members appear to favour maintaining pressure on the Taliban, particularly regarding their policies and practices that violate the rights of women and girls.

China and Russia, on the other hand, have contended that the international community should provide assistance to Afghanistan without linking it to other issues, such as human rights, and appear to prefer dialogue and engagement with the Taliban without any increased pressure. China has sent an ambassador to Kabul and, on 30 January, became the first country to accept diplomatic credentials from a Taliban envoy. Beijing has emphasised, however, that it has not officially recognised the Taliban regime as Afghanistan’s government. Russia invited the Taliban to its economic forum in St. Petersburg, which took place from 5 to 8 June, and is also considering

Afghanistan

removing the Taliban from its list of banned terrorist organisations.

Council members considered issuing a press statement critical of the release of “The Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice” on 21 August. However, the statement was not agreed, as two members questioned the value of such a product at the current time; in this regard, they reportedly maintained that the law was

an internal issue, that UNAMA was still studying its implications, and that other Council products had already noted the challenge to women’s rights in the country.

Japan is the penholder on Afghanistan while Ecuador is the chair of the 1988 Sanctions Committee.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council is expected to renew the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect and seize vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking from Libya.

The current authorisation expires on 29 September.

Key Recent Developments

On 30 August, Council members received an advance copy of the Secretary-General’s most recent annual report on migrant smuggling and human trafficking in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya. The previous report, dated 30 August 2023 and covering developments from 30 August 2022 to 10 August 2023, noted a significant increase in migrant and refugee crossings: approximately 169,219 persons arrived in Europe along the three main sea routes across the Mediterranean between September 2022 and July 2023, representing a 51 percent increase compared with the previous reporting period. The central Mediterranean route accounted for the vast majority of these arrivals, with approximately 133,514 refugees and migrants arriving at Italy and Malta by sea, of which most had departed from either Libya (45 percent) or Tunisia (43 percent). An estimated 3,111 persons died or went missing in the Mediterranean Sea between August 2022 and June 2023, representing a 78 percent increase compared with the same period in the previous year.

According to the Secretary-General’s 30 August 2023 report, the EU estimated that approximately 70,216 people were rescued or intercepted in 1,292 operations conducted during the reporting period by vessels in the area of operations covered by the EU Naval Force military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI). With Operation IRINI, the EU is the only regional organisation implementing the authorisation given by the Council to inspect vessels suspected of migrant smuggling and human trafficking off the coast of Libya. In the report, the Secretary-General reiterated his recommendation to EU member states to conclude a “credible and predictable agreement for disembarkation”, which would determine the re-location of migrants rescued in EU territorial waters. On 14 May, after several years of negotiations, the EU formally adopted the Pact on Migration and Asylum, which includes a “solidarity” mechanism to balance the receipt, processing, and cost of asylum applications among member states.

The Secretary-General’s latest report on the UN Support Mission

in Libya (UNSMIL), dated 8 August and covering events since 9 April, details more recent developments relevant to the upcoming reauthorisation. During the reporting period, 6,105 migrants and refugees were intercepted attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya. As of May, there were 725,304 migrants and refugees in the country, approximately 4,300 of whom were arbitrarily detained in official detention centres. Armed groups operate six unofficial detention centres, to which the UN does not have access and where an additional 3,000 people are estimated to be arbitrarily detained.

According to the Secretary-General’s UNSMIL report, human rights violations against migrants and refugees in Libya have persisted, particularly in detention. UNSMIL has received reports of arbitrary arrests of migrants and asylum seekers and their detention in “abhorrent conditions”, in which they face “persistent patterns of abuse, exploitation, forced labour, extortion, torture, and other forms of ill-treatment by guards”. The report urged Libyan authorities to meet their international and national human rights obligations and adopt a comprehensive legal and policy framework on migration that prioritises “the human rights, dignity and well-being” of migrants and refugees, including by decriminalising irregular entry into the country, considering non-custodial measures as alternatives to detention, and implementing measures to prevent arbitrary detention, forced labour, slavery, and human trafficking.

On 17 July, 16 countries participated in the Trans-Mediterranean Migration Forum in Tripoli. The forum was organised by the country’s UN-recognised Government of National Unity (GNU) with the aim of strengthening international cooperation on and devising solutions to the issue of irregular migration. In a statement, UNSMIL welcomed the forum as an important opportunity to advance a “human rights-based approach to migration governance”. The statement stressed the importance of a concerted international effort to address current challenges and re-emphasised the need for Libyan authorities to adopt a new legal and policy framework on migrants and refugees in line with the country’s international legal obligations.

Regarding the broader political situation in Libya, the country remains divided between the GNU, based in Tripoli and led by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah with advisory support from the High State Council (HSC), and the eastern-based Government of National Stability (GNS), led by Prime Minister Osama Hamad and backed by the House of Representatives (HoR) and the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) under the command of General Khalifa Haftar. According to the Secretary-General’s most

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2698](#) (29 September 2023) renewed for one year the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect and seize vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking from Libya. [Secretary-General’s Reports S/2024/598](#) (8 August 2024) was the 120-day report on UNSMIL [S/2023/640](#) (30 August 2023) was the annual report on migrant smuggling and human trafficking off the coast of Libya.

Libya

recent UNSMIL report, the parties have not achieved any progress in resolving disagreements about proposed electoral legislation that would allow national elections to be held and reconcile the country's divided government. The main point of contention concerns the formation of a unified interim government to organise the elections, a move favoured by the GNS and HoR but opposed by the GNU and some segments of the HSC. (For more information on Libya's political situation, see our 19 August *What's in Blue* story.)

On 20 August, the Council held its regular bimonthly briefing and consultations on Libya. Deputy Special Representative and Political Officer in Charge of UNSMIL Stephanie Koury updated Council members on recent political, security, and humanitarian developments in the country. The chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kazuyuki Yamazaki (Japan), briefed on the committee's activities. On 28 August, Council members issued a press statement on Libya, in which they called on the parties to refrain from unilateral actions that can increase tensions and to make compromises necessary to advance the Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process. The statement also stressed "the importance of ensuring the full, equal, effective, meaningful and safe participation of women, and inclusion of youth and civil society representatives, in all activities and decision-making relating to democratic transition".

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 9 July, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk addressed the Human Rights Council, highlighting the ongoing suffering of the Libyan people due to economic hardship and political exclusion. He expressed concern that the targeting of civil society organisations, political activists, journalists, and others is fostering a climate of fear, undermining the very foundations necessary for Libya's democratic transition, emboldening spoilers, and allowing security actors to commit human rights violations with impunity. Türk said that the building blocks for securing a lasting peace in Libya include a rights-based, people-centred transitional justice and reconciliation process; a sustainable political settlement that reflects the rights and aspirations of all Libyans; the restoration of the rule of law, including accountability for human rights violations; and the emergence of unified, legitimate institutions.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council in September is the renewal of the authorisation to combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking

off the coast of Libya, which was most recently extended by resolution 2698 of 29 September 2023. Prior to this year's reauthorisation, the Council may invite a briefer from the EU to update members on Operation IRINI's recent activities. In the past, such briefings have taken place in an informal setting during Council negotiations or in an informal interactive dialogue (IID), a closed format that, unlike consultations, allows for the participation of non-UN Secretariat officials and briefers.

Council Dynamics

The Council initially established the anti-migrant smuggling and human trafficking authorisation through resolution 2240 of 9 October 2015 and has renewed it annually. Until 2023, the renewals were straightforward extensions adopted unanimously, except in 2016, when then-member Venezuela abstained.

During negotiations on last year's renewal, Russia proposed new language reflecting the Secretary-General's reporting on the increasing number of migrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea and the human rights violations to which they were subjected. Russia also suggested that the resolution refer to the Secretary-General's recommendation that EU member states conclude an agreement on disembarkation. Elements of the former proposal were included in the final text, but the latter was not. Russia consequently abstained on resolution 2698.

Concerning the situation in Libya more generally, Council members remain united on the need for a Libyan-led, inclusive political process resulting in elections that will help to restore political, security, and economic stability to the country. Broader geopolitical tensions still influence Council dynamics with respect to the country, however. The US and other Western members remain concerned about Russia's growing presence in the eastern part of the country that is under Haftar's control, while Russia routinely blames Libya's current instability on the NATO-led military intervention in 2011 and accuses Western countries of seeking to exploit Libya's oil reserves for economic gain.

France and Malta are co-penholders for the authorisation on Libya under consideration in September.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council will hold a briefing and consultations on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The anticipated briefer is Bintou Keita, the Special Representative and Head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO).

MONUSCO's mandate expires on 20 December.

Key Recent Developments

During her recent briefing to the Council in July, Keita described

the deteriorating security situation in the eastern DRC, expressing extreme concern about the rapid expansion in North Kivu province of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), which has captured several strategic locations. The violence in North Kivu has exacerbated the humanitarian situation there, with more than 2.5 million people internally displaced in the province, according to OCHA. Keita also noted the expansion of the conflict to South Kivu province, increasing communal tensions.

On 4 July, the US announced that a humanitarian truce had been agreed by the parties to the conflict in eastern DRC. The truce,

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2746 (6 August 2024) authorised MONUSCO to provide operational and logistical support to SAMIDRC. S/RES/2717 (19 December 2023) renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 20 December 2024. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9681** (8 July 2024) was on the situation in the DRC. **Security Council Press Statement SC/15739** (20 June 2024) was on the situation in the DRC.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

which took effect at midnight on 5 July and continued for two weeks, until 19 July, appears to be a follow-up to the November 2023 visit by US Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines to the DRC and Rwanda and her ensuing interaction with their presidents, Felix Tshisekedi and Paul Kagame. The truce was extended for another two weeks until 3 August with the hope that the parties would eventually agree to a durable cessation of hostilities.

While the truce was largely respected, there were allegations of violations, with the situation in North Kivu remaining volatile. According to OCHA, at least seven people were killed and eight injured in Bweremana (in the Masisi territory in North Kivu) when two bombs exploded on 15 and 16 July.

On 30 July, the DRC and Rwanda signed a ceasefire agreement in Luanda under Angola's auspices, which took effect on 4 August. Based on the agreement, the ceasefire will be monitored by the Ad-Hoc Verification Mechanism established as part of the Luanda process—a regional initiative under the leadership of Angola's President João Lourenço to ease tensions between the DRC and Rwanda. The two countries' foreign ministers met again in Luanda on August 20 and 21 to continue discussing the peace agreement proposed by Angola to find a lasting and durable solution to the long-standing conflict in eastern DRC.

The Security Council welcomed the signing of the ceasefire agreement in resolution 2746 of 6 August. The resolution authorised MONUSCO to provide operational and logistical support to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC), operating in the eastern DRC since December 2023. On 17 August, SADC held its ordinary summit in Harare, Zimbabwe, and commended Angola for its role as a mediator. However, the communiqué released after the summit did not mention the adoption of resolution 2746.

In June, MONUSCO concluded the withdrawal of its forces from South Kivu in accordance with the disengagement plan agreed with the Congolese government and endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2717 of 19 December 2023. The process faced some challenges, however, including a lack of adequate resources, including logistics and manpower, and the deteriorating security situation. In resolution 2746, the Council “urged MONUSCO to consolidate the handover of responsibilities to the DRC Government in South Kivu and to continue to jointly plan the next steps of the gradual, responsible and sustainable withdrawal of the mission before further moving forward”.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 4 July, UN Human Rights experts expressed alarm at reports of widespread human trafficking, particularly sexual slavery and exploitation, as well as the increasing number of child and forced marriages resulting from conflict and displacement in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

The experts noted that between August 2023 and June 2024, at least 531 victims of conflict-related sexual violence were reported in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Tanganyika, and Maniema. They highlighted several challenges that prevent victims from reporting to authorities and UN entities, including fear of reprisals by armed groups, social stigma, inadequate tracking of abducted victims who may be trafficked, difficulties in identification, delayed referral to protection services, and widespread impunity.

The experts expressed concern that “with the MONUSCO withdrawal, key components of early warning systems for human rights violations will no longer be

operational, significantly limiting human rights monitoring, reporting, and investigation”. They called on the DRC government to guarantee unhindered access for human rights actors across the entire territory to ensure the documentation and prevention of human rights violations, including those related to conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking.

Women, Peace and Security

A survey conducted in April by Epicentre—a non-profit organisation that conducts field epidemiology activities and research projects for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)—recorded alarming levels of violence, particularly sexual violence, in and around four displaced persons' camps near Goma, in eastern DRC, which together house over 200,000 people. More than ten percent of women respondents aged 20 to 44 reported having been raped in the five months before the survey, with rates exceeding 17 percent of women in this age group in some camps. The survey also showed a high incidence of sexual violence among teenage girls and women over 45.

In a 5 August press release about the survey, Camille Niel, MSF's emergency coordinator in Goma, said that these findings align with the high number of sexual violence cases treated by MSF's medical teams in displaced persons' sites around Goma. Niel added that victims and survivors of sexual violence have reported being attacked “by men, often armed, in the forests and fields where they have to go to collect firewood or the food they need to feed their families” as well as during violent incidents inside the camps. The persistence of the violence is leaving patients treated by MSF at high risk of being attacked again once they leave their clinics. In the press release, MSF urged authorities to guarantee the security of displaced persons' sites and called on aid agencies to increase food assistance and income-generating activities in the sites and to “support accommodation and shelter for victims and survivors of sexual violence in serious danger of being attacked again”.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for Council members remains the security situation in the eastern DRC and how to find a lasting solution to the conflict through diplomatic means. In September, Council members will be keen to learn about the ceasefire agreement's implementation. Council members could invite Angola to brief the Council on its ongoing mediation efforts and the implementation of the ceasefire agreement.

Also a key issue is MONUSCO's disengagement process. Council members expect to receive updates from the mission and the Congolese government on efforts being exerted to consolidate the handover of security responsibilities in South Kivu. At the July meeting, France, the co-penholder on the DRC, noted that the conditions that made the mission's withdrawal from South Kivu possible are not yet in place in North Kivu and Ituri, the two other provinces where MONUSCO operates. In this regard, France welcomed “the Congolese Government's determination to consolidate the transfer of responsibility in South Kivu before moving on to the next stages”.

The logistical and operational support provided by MONUSCO to SAMIDRC will be another issue. The Council has requested the Secretary-General to report by 15 November on the support provided to the force in line with resolution 2746 and the challenges encountered.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain seriously concerned about the security and humanitarian situation in the eastern DRC. They all seem to agree that the solution to this long-standing issue is political, and they continue to support regional efforts. Some Council members continue to call for external actors to stop supporting armed groups in eastern DRC. In particular, the US, France, Switzerland, and Slovenia remain vocal on the issue and continue to mention Rwanda's

Democratic Republic of the Congo

role in the region.

Council members continue to stress that the MONUSCO disengagement process must be implemented in a gradual, conditions-based, and responsible manner. At the July meeting, several Council members stressed the need to avoid leaving a security vacuum and called on the Congolese government to assume its security responsibilities to protect civilians.

Regarding MONUSCO's support to SAMIDRC, the A3+1 members (the African members, currently Algeria, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Guyana) emphasised the importance of resolution 2746 in facilitating cooperation between MONUSCO and SAMIDRC and in strengthening capacity, enhancing security, and reducing protection risks for civilians. While supporting the resolution, the US raised concerns about providing air assets and armoured vehicles to SAMIDRC, fearing it could escalate regional tensions. The UK also echoed these concerns.

France and Sierra Leone are the co-penholders on the DRC. Ambassador Michael Imran Kanu (Sierra Leone) chairs the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee.

Security Council Report Staff

Karin Landgren
Executive Director

Shamala Kandiah Thompson
Chief Operating Officer

Paul Romita
Managing Editor

Alina Entelis
Deputy Managing Editor

Dawit Yirga Woldegerima
Deputy Managing Editor

Vladimir Sesar
Development and Outreach Manager

Audrey Waysse
Operations Manager

Sara Bertotti
Policy Analyst

Matthew Blainey
Policy Analyst

Erik Ramberg
Policy Analyst

Gaurav Redhal
Policy Analyst

Rodrigo Saad
Policy Analyst

Anna Haven
Communications Officer

Abdulkadir Abdella
Research Intern

Lanxin Li
Research Intern

Security Council Report is a non-profit organisation supported by the Governments of Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the Carnegie Corporation, and Open Society Foundations.

Design Point Five, NY

Security Council Report
711 Third Avenue, Suite 1501
New York NY 10017

Telephone +1 212 759 9429

Web securitycouncilreport.org

Follow [@SCRtweets](https://twitter.com/SCRtweets) on X/Twitter