

Monthly Forecast

- 1 Overview
- 2 In Hindsight: The Security Council in 2024 and Looking Ahead to 2025
- 4 Status Update since our December Forecast
- 7 Syria
- 9 Libya
- 11 Yemen
- 13 Cyprus
- 14 Middle East, including the Palestinian Question
- 16 Counter-Terrorism
- 19 Colombia
- 20 Haiti

Overview

In January 2025, Algeria will hold the presidency of the Security Council.

Algeria intends to organise three signature events. The first one is the quarterly open debate on “[The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question](#)”, which will be elevated to ministerial level this month. Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Attaf is expected to chair the meeting. Secretary-General António Guterres may brief. Other meetings on this file may be convened depending on developments in Israel and Gaza.

The second signature event is a meeting on [countering terrorism in Africa](#) under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item. The meeting, which Attaf is expected to chair, is likely to focus on terrorism and its impact on sustainable development. Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye, and a civil society representative are the anticipated briefers.

Algeria’s third signature event is the annual debate on [cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States \(LAS\)](#). A senior UN official and LAS Secretary-General Ahmed About Gheit are the anticipated briefers. Attaf is expected to chair the meeting. A presidential statement is a possible outcome of the meeting.

Additional Middle Eastern issues anticipated in January include:

- [Yemen](#), the monthly meeting; and

- [Syria](#), a meeting on the political and humanitarian situations and possible additional meetings depending on developments in the country.

African issues that are expected to be discussed this month include:

- [Libya](#), renewal of the authorisation of measures contained in resolution 2146 of 19 March 2014 related to the illicit export of petroleum from Libya as well as renewal of the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee; and
- [Sudan](#), the semi-annual briefing of ICC Prosecutor Karim Asad Ahmad Khan on the ICC’s Darfur-related activities.

Issues in the Americas that are included in January’s programme of work are:

- [Colombia](#), the quarterly briefing on the work of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia and recent developments; and
- [Haiti](#), the quarterly briefing on the work of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and recent developments in the country.

The only European issue on the programme of work in January is [Cyprus](#), with the semi-annual consultations on the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), a meeting with UNFICYP troop-contributing countries, and renewal of UNFICYP’s mandate.

Additional meetings on these and other issues, including [Ukraine](#) and [Sudan](#), may be scheduled during the month.

30 December 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 2024, the Security Council was confronted with a world beset by multiple crises, including continuing wars in Ukraine and Gaza, severe deterioration of the situation in Sudan, and a sudden shift in the political situation in Syria. Differing strategic interests and irreconcilable world views among the major powers restricted the Council's ability to address these crises. The tensions among the major powers were frequently in evidence in the Council chamber, where members clashed on a range of issues. The efforts of the elected members were a bright spot during the year, as they drafted several important outcomes and attempted to break impasses, albeit with limited success. The Council faces numerous ongoing and potential new crises as it enters 2025 in the context of an unstable and fluid international peace and security environment.

A Divided Council: Understanding the Numbers

The Council's statistics provide insight into the difficulty the Council has had carrying out its responsibilities this year.

The decline in the number of resolutions continued: 46 resolutions were adopted in 2024—compared to 50 in 2023, 54 in 2022, and 57 in 2021. This is the lowest number since 1991 (42). In 2024, 65.2 percent of the resolutions adopted had the support of all 15 members—comparable to the proportion of unanimous adoptions in 2023 (70 percent) and 2022 (66.7 percent), but low for the post-Cold War period. In this regard, between the mid-1990s and the mid-2010s, it was not uncommon for more than 90 percent of adoptions to be unanimous in any given year. Significantly, non-unanimous adoptions may make it more difficult to implement resolutions, particularly in relation to the mandates of peace operations.

In total, there were 34 abstentions on the 16 resolutions that were not adopted unanimously in 2024. On these resolutions, Russia abstained the most times (14). Other members that abstained on non-unanimous resolutions were China (six), Algeria (four), Mozambique (four), Sierra Leone (two), Guyana (two) and the US (two). Of these 34 abstentions, 15 were cast on four sanctions-related resolutions, including eight abstentions by the three African members and Guyana (the A3 plus grouping), four by Russia, and three by China.

In 2024, there were seven draft resolutions that failed to be adopted due to a veto, the highest since 1986. A total of eight vetoes were cast on these failed drafts, including four by Russia, three by the US, and one by China. Russia vetoed draft resolutions on each of the following issues: the war in Gaza; weapons of mass destruction in outer space; the panel of experts of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) sanctions committee; and the conflict in Sudan. China joined Russia in vetoing a draft on the war in Gaza. The US vetoed two draft resolutions on the war in Gaza as well as one on the application of the State of Palestine for admission to the UN. The General Assembly met following each use of the veto in line with the 2022 veto initiative.

The difficulty in obtaining consensus in 2024 was also illustrated by the low number of presidential statements. The Council adopted seven presidential statements in 2024. This is only one more than the six adopted in 2023, which was the lowest number since the Council began using its current documentation for presidential statements in 1994. The 2024 statements were on the following: the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals; the role

of African states in addressing security and development challenges; the UN Office in West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS); the protection of civilians in armed conflict; the importance of international law, including the UN Charter; the role of science and technology in the UN's work; and the UN Office in Central Africa.

The UNOWAS and UNOCA adoptions marked the first presidential statements on these files since 2021 and 2019, respectively, following several years in which the Council would typically adopt, in any one year, two presidential statements on UNOWAS and one on UNOCA. Switzerland and Sierra Leone were the co-penholders on the UNOWAS presidential statement, while Mozambique and the UK drafted the UNOCA presidential statement. As penholders, these countries not only led the drafting process but also guided the negotiations that broke the years-long impasse—which in both cases was primarily caused by climate-related language—and resulted in the adoption of these texts.

Key Working Methods Developments

There were several notable working methods developments in 2024. On 13 December, the Council adopted a revised Note 507, a compilation of all the Council's working methods documents into a single document. Japan, as chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (IWG), led the year-long negotiations. This is the fourth version of Note 507, which was initially adopted during Japan's chairmanship of the IWG in 2006 (S/2006/507). New versions of Note 507 were released under Japan's chairmanship of the IWG during its subsequent terms on the Council in 2010 and 2017.

The latest Note 507 incorporates the 15 presidential notes that were adopted since the last revision of Note 507 in August 2017 (S/2017/507). At a 20 December press stakeout, Ambassador Yamazaki Kazuyuki (Japan) underscored key elements of the new Note 507, including the importance of mitigating threats and risks of reprisals against briefers, recognition of the principle that all Council members should receive full access to relevant documents, and strengthened language on the collaboration between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

While the P3 (France, the UK, and the US) still hold or co-hold the pen on most files, in 2024, the trend of elected members (E10) being penholders or sharing the pen with the P3 became further entrenched. Co-penholderships between permanent and elected members included: Slovenia and the US on political matters related to Ukraine; Ecuador and France on humanitarian issues related to Ukraine; Ecuador and the US on Haiti, including on sanctions; Sierra Leone and France on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), including on sanctions; and Mozambique and the UK on the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

There were other examples of co-penholding between E10 and P3 members during the year. Japan and the US cooperated in drafting Council products in response to attacks by the Houthis rebel group in Yemen against commercial vessels in the Red Sea. In July, Malta and the US co-penned resolution 2744, which strengthened the mandate of the Focal Point for Delisting and established an Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General UN Sanctions Issues. Sierra Leone and the UK co-authored a draft resolution on

the protection of civilians in Sudan that was vetoed by Russia in late November. Finally, Switzerland and the US co-authored resolution 2761, which was adopted in December and extended the application of the humanitarian carve-out established by resolution 2664 to the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions regime for an indefinite period.

As has been customary in recent years, E10 members served as sole penholders or co-penholders on Afghanistan (Japan), the Syria humanitarian file (Switzerland), and West Africa and the Sahel in 2024 (Sierra Leone and Switzerland). In addition, Guyana and Switzerland served as the informal co-focal points on conflict and hunger in 2024.

The E10's contribution as a penholder was particularly significant in relation to the war in Gaza. Elected members were responsible for three of the five draft resolutions tabled for a vote on this situation: one was penned by Algeria in February and vetoed by the US, and two draft resolutions collectively were authored by the E10, one adopted in March and the other vetoed by the US in November. While the February and November drafts were vetoed by the US, the March draft—which was adopted as resolution 2728 and demanded an immediate ceasefire for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, leading to a “lasting sustainable ceasefire”—marked the first time that the E10 collectively penned a resolution.

The Council conducted one formal visiting mission in 2024 to Colombia in February. The goal of the four-day visit was to reaffirm the Council's commitment to the peace process in the country. Three to five such trips were the norm in the years before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Difficulty agreeing on the destination, a heavy workload, and possible reluctance to the visits by host governments appear to have contributed to fewer visiting missions.

Nonetheless, a new development since late 2023 has been the informal visiting mission. Unlike official visiting missions, which require unanimous agreement among Council members and are funded by the UN, informal visits have been initiated by a specific member state, with the organising or participating countries covering all or some of the costs. Switzerland organised an informal visit of 14 Council members to Geneva on 25-26 August 2024 to mark the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and enhance the members' understanding of their meaning and purpose.

The informal visiting mission appears to be a useful innovation at a time of significant division in the Council, although this tool is in its nascent stages. The first such visit occurred when 11 members of the Security Council and four incoming members travelled on 11 December 2023 to the Rafah crossing, which connects Gaza with Egypt, at the initiative of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The Commitments Continue and Expand

Council members Ecuador, France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, the UK, and the US have given continuity to the Shared Commitments on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) initiative, which was started in 2021 by Ireland, Kenya, and Mexico. In this context, in 2024, some members participating in this initiative—Malta, ROK, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and the US—included a WPS focus during meetings on a country situation on the Council's agenda, on the Great Lakes in

April, Sudan in June, Libya in August, and Afghanistan in September and December, respectively. In addition, 15 joint press stakeouts on the WPS commitments were held in the context of various issues in 2024, including Colombia (11 January and 15 October), Sudan (29 January and 18 June), Afghanistan (26 February, 18 September and 11 December), conflict prevention (13 March), conflict-related sexual violence (23 April), the Great Lakes region (24 April), drawdowns of peacekeeping operations (7 August), Libya (20 August), “Women building peace in a changing environment” (24 October), South Sudan (7 November), and intergenerational leadership (3 December).

Another notable development has been the “climate pledges” among Council members who would like to see more systematic integration of climate, peace and security matters into the Council's work. On 22 March 2023, four members—Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, and the UAE—launched the “Joint Pledges related to climate, peace and security”. During 2024, the number of joint pledgers expanded to 11 Council members—France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, ROK, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, the UK, and the US. In 2024, the climate pledgers held eight press stakeouts in connection with meetings on relevant country/regional and thematic files. These stakeouts highlighted the connections among climate, peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel and the activities of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) (11 January and 20 December), food insecurity (13 February), Yemen (15 April and 13 November), Afghanistan (21 June), UN peacekeeping (9 September), and UN-AU Cooperation (2 October).

In 2024, the presidency trio for conflict prevention was launched by Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Switzerland during their August, September, and October Council presidencies. Through this initiative, these countries committed to joint action for conflict prevention based on trust, solidarity, and universality—principles that must be reinvigorated for an effective collective security system, according to *A New Agenda for Peace*, the Secretary-General's July 2023 report outlining ideas to prevent conflict and advance peace. In the coming year, Council members might expand this initiative to promote a more systematic approach by the Council to preventive action.

Challenges in the Year Ahead

In 2025, the Council will continue to face several difficult challenges around the world at a time when the body is more divided than at any time in the post-Cold War period. Major crises in Gaza and Ukraine are expected to continue to garner international attention. But they are only two of the often intractable, interconnected conflicts that will require skilful engagement and creative problem-solving from Council members.

The situation in the Middle East is particularly fluid. The Council will need to rethink its approach to Syria following the fall of the Assad government. This may provide opportunities to use Chapter VI tools to bring the parties together to help Syrians create a better future for their country. Restraining Iran's nuclear activities will be on the minds of many members. The fragile peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon and the impact of the war in Gaza on Yemen will also need the Council's attention.

The implementation of resolution 2719 on the financing of AU-led peace support operations may be a major focus of the Council

In Hindsight: The Security Council in 2024 and Looking Ahead to 2025

in the upcoming year; the newly authorised AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) will be the first test case for the implementation of resolution 2719. In addition, the rising threat of terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel should be a focus of the Council in 2025.

The Council's work on peace operations and peacebuilding will likely be informed by the Secretary-General's review of the future of all forms of UN peace operations and the Peacebuilding Architecture Review (PBAR)—both scheduled for 2025. In this regard, it is possible that the Council will consider transforming the underfunded Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in Haiti into a UN peacekeeping operation. If the Council were to do this, it would be the first new peace operation in more than a decade.

The five new members—Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama, and Somalia—will hopefully bring new energy and ideas into the Council at a time of heightened geopolitical friction. They enter shortly before Donald J. Trump's return to the White House on 20 January, which will likely be accompanied by a perceptible change in US policy. The new administration is likely to question the Council's work on climate, peace and security, and object to certain aspects

of the women, peace and security file. In addition, it is unclear what its approach to the war in Ukraine will be, while it is likely to be as supportive, if not more so, of the positions of the Israeli government than the Biden administration. In addition, it may question the value of US support for UN peace operations, and for the UN in general.

As they grapple with the challenges in the year ahead, members need to find ways of rebuilding trust and finding common ground. In this regard, the revival since late 2023 of “sofa talks”, which take place in a very informal setting and are meant to allow for frank discussion of difficult issues, is a promising development.

In the current difficult environment, Council members may also wish to seek ideas and inspiration from *A Pact for the Future* agreed through inter-governmental negotiations in September 2024, particularly its action points relevant to international peace and security. In this regard, Security Council Report recently released a [policy paper](#) that analyses the peace and security elements of the Pact and offers recommendations that they can pursue in implementing the Pact. We hope that Council members find it useful in 2025 and the years beyond.

Status Update since our December Forecast

Women, Peace and Security

On 3 December 2024, the Security Council held an open briefing on women, peace and security titled “Investing in the Transformative Power of Intergenerational Leadership on Women, Peace and Security” (S/PV.9797). The briefers were Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo and Tahani Abbas, the Executive Director of Nora Organization.

Lebanon

On 4 December 2024, Council members received a briefing in closed consultations on the situation in Lebanon. France, the penholder on the file, and the US requested the consultations following the announcement on 26 November 2024 of a cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel, which took effect the following day. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed.

On 18 December 2024, France, the penholder on Lebanon, circulated a draft presidential statement welcoming the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon that entered into effect on 27 November 2024 (S/2024/870), and calling for its full implementation. This initiative was apparently aimed at encouraging momentum in the implementation of the cessation of hostilities. Among other things, the draft presidential statement recalled Israel's and Lebanon's commitments under the cessation of hostilities agreement, expressed deep concern over violations of the agreement, and called for all violations to stop. After a period of negotiations, the US apparently requested on 27 December 2024 an extended pause in the negotiations citing concerns that the presidential statement could risk complicating de-escalation and compliance on the ground. It seems that all other Council members had supported the adoption of the presidential statement.

Ukraine

On 4 December, the Security Council held a briefing on Ukraine (S/PV.9799). The US, December's Council president, convened the meeting to discuss the effects of the war on children in Ukraine. The meeting featured briefings from Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell; Nathaniel Raymond, Executive Director of the Humanitarian Research Lab at the Yale School of Public Health; and Kateryna Rashevskaya, Legal Expert at the Regional Centre for Human Rights. Hedda Samson, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations also participated in the meeting under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

On 16 December, the Council held a briefing on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine at the request of Ecuador and France (S/PV.9816). Director of the Financing and Partnerships Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Lisa Doughten briefed the Council. The representatives of Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and Ukraine also participated in the meeting under rule 37.

On 20 December, at Russia's request, the Council held a briefing under the “Threats to international peace and security” agenda item to discuss Western arms transfers to Ukraine (S/PV.9827). High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu briefed the Council.

Arria-formula Meeting on Persons with Disabilities in Situations of Armed Conflict

On 6 December, Guyana and Slovenia convened an Arria-formula meeting, titled “Persons with disabilities in situations of armed conflict and related humanitarian crises—Heightening visibility and

Status Update since our December Forecast

eliminating discrimination” to consider the full implementation of resolution 2475 on the protection of persons with disabilities in armed conflict. Heba Hagrass, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; Laetitia Courtois, Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the UN; and Ermina Cerimovic, the Associate Director for Disability Rights at Human Rights Watch, delivered the briefings. It was also co-sponsored by the UK and Poland (Council member in 2018 and 2019), the resolution's co-penholders. The meeting focused attention on enhancing the visibility of persons with disabilities in the Protection of Civilians framework and the heightened vulnerabilities faced by such persons in armed conflict and related humanitarian crises.

Counter-Terrorism

On 6 December 2024, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2761, which extended the application of the humanitarian carve-out established by resolution 2664 to the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions regime for an indefinite period.

Iraq

On 6 December, the Security Council held an open briefing on the situation in Iraq (S/PV.9803), followed by consultations. Special Representative and Head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Mohamed Al Hassan briefed the Council on recent developments in the country and the Secretary-General's most recent reports on UNAMI and the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-party nationals and missing Kuwaiti property. The representatives of Iraq and Kuwait participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, in addition to Hanaa Edwar, Chairperson of the Iraqi Al-Amal Association under rule 39.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 9 December, the Security Council held an open briefing, followed by closed consultations, on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), including the work of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (S/PV.9804). The briefers were Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MONUSCO; and Passy Mubalama, Founder of the Action and Development Initiative for the Protection of Women and Children. The DRC, Angola and Rwanda participated in the meeting under Rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

International Criminal Tribunals

On 10 December 2024, the Council held its semi-annual debate on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT). The IRMCT's president, Judge Graciela Gatti Santana, and its chief prosecutor, Serge Brammertz, briefed (S/PV.9805). They met with the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals prior to the debate. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Rwanda, and Serbia participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Golan (UNDOF)

Council members held consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on 12 December. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed. On 20 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2766, renewing the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for six months, until 30 June 2025.

Arria-formula Meeting on Mine Action

On 12 December, Security Council members held an Arria-formula meeting on mine action at the initiative of Japan, titled “Safeguarding Lives, Sustaining Peace: Enhancing Mine Action for Stabilization, Protection, Recovery, and Inclusion”. The briefers were Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Ambassador Keo Chhea (Cambodia).

Afghanistan

On 12 December 2024, the Council convened for an open briefing on Afghanistan (S/PV.9810). The briefers were: Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Roza Otunbayeva, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher, Ambassador Andrés Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) in his capacity as Chair of the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee, and Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of the Digital Citizen Fund Roya Mahboob. The closed consultations that were scheduled to follow the open briefing were cancelled and did not take place. Afghanistan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

On 13 December 2024, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2763, which renewed the mandate of the Monitoring Team supporting the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee until February 2026.

On 27 December, Council members issued a press statement on Afghanistan (SC/15957). Among other matters, the press statement expressed deep concern about the continuing negative impact of the Taliban's policies and practices that restrict the enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also urged the Taliban to swiftly reverse these policies and practices, including the “vice and virtue” directive and the recent decision to suspend women's and girls' access to education in private and public medical institutions, noting that positive developments in this area are crucial for building confidence with the international community. It further underscored that dialogue, including through the Doha Process convened by the UN, is critical for a political settlement in Afghanistan as well as peace and stability in the country. The press statement was first circulated by Japan, the penholder on Afghanistan during 2023 and 2024, approximately a week after the open briefing that took place on 12 December 2024.

Somalia

On 27 December, the Security Council convened a meeting (S/PV.9828) to vote on a draft resolution, authored by the UK (the penholder on Somalia), regarding the successor mission to the African

Status Update since our December Forecast

Union (AU) Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Ethiopia and Somalia participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

At the meeting, the Council adopted resolution 2767, endorsing the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) to replace ATMIS with the AU Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). The resolution authorised AU members to take all necessary measures in this regard for 12 months, beginning on 1 January 2025. It also authorised AU members to deploy up to 12,626 uniformed personnel, including 1,040 police personnel, to AUSSOM until 30 June 2025, and to complete by this date the realignment of all AU troops from ATMIS to AUSSOM. The resolution was adopted with 14 votes in favour and one abstention (the US).

UNOCA (Central Africa)

On 13 December, the Security Council held a briefing and consultations on the Secretary-General's semi-annual report on the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the implementation of the UN's regional strategy to combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (S/PV.9813). Special Representative and Head of UNOCA Abdou Abarry and President of the Central African Women's Active Network and Vice-President of the Central African Civil Society Coalition for Peace and Conflict Prevention Daniele Nlate briefed.

Briefing by the Outgoing Chairs of the Security Council's Subsidiary Bodies

On 13 December, the five outgoing chairs of the Security Council Subsidiary Bodies briefed the Council on the activities of nine committees and working groups (S/PV.9814):

- Ambassador Yamazaki Kazuyuki (Japan) briefed the Council on his roles as chair of three subsidiary bodies: the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, the 2713 Al-Shabaab Sanctions Committee, and the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.
- Ambassador Francesca Maria Gatt, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta, briefed on Malta's work as chair of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.
- Ambassador Pedro Comissário Afonso (Mozambique), Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, briefed on his efforts as chair.
- Ambassador Andrés Efren Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) briefed the Council as the outgoing Chair of the 1540 Committee (non-proliferation) and 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee.
- Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl (Switzerland), Chair of the 1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee, briefed on the work of the Committee during her tenure as chair.

Iran

On 17 December, the Security Council convened a briefing on the Secretary-General's biannual report on the implementation of resolution 2231 (20 July 2015), which endorsed the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme (S/PV.9818). The Council also received reports from the resolution's facilitator, Ambassador Vanessa Frazier (Malta), and the Joint Commission, which was established to oversee the implementation of the JCPOA and comprises the current parties to the agreement: China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK, and Iran. Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo; Frazier; and Ambassador Stavros Lambrinidis of the EU, the coordinator of the Joint Commission; delivered briefings to the Council.

DPRK (North Korea)

On 18 December 2024, the Security Council convened for an open briefing under the agenda item "Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)" (S/PV.9820). The meeting was requested by France, Japan, Malta, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Slovenia, the UK, and the US and was intended to "raise awareness on the security implications arising out of expanding DPRK military engagements". The briefers were Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo and Executive Director of Conflict Armament Research Jonah Leff. The DPRK and Ukraine participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. Ambassador Stavros Lambrinidis, the Head of the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to the UN in New York, also participated in the meeting under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Artificial Intelligence

On 19 December, the Security Council convened for a briefing on artificial intelligence (AI) (S/PV.9827). The briefing, which was held under the "Maintenance of international peace and security" agenda item, was one of the signature events of the US' December Council presidency. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken chaired the meeting. The briefers were: UN Secretary-General António Guterres; Yann LeCun, Chief AI Scientist at Facebook's AI Research (FAIR); and Fei-Fei Li, Professor of Computer Science at Stanford University and Co-Director of Stanford's Human-Centered AI Institute.

Sudan

On 11 December, Ambassador Joonkook Hwang (the Republic of Korea), the chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, briefed the Council on the Committee's work (S/PV.9807). Sudan participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

On 19 December, the Council held a ministerial-level meeting on the situation in Sudan, initiated by the US, the Council's president for December (S/PV.9822). US Secretary of State Antony Blinken chaired the meeting. OCHA's Director of Operations and Advocacy Division Edem Wosornu briefed the Council. Shayna Lewis, senior advisor with Preventing and Ending Mass Atrocities (PAEMA) and Saad Bahr el-Din, Sultan of the Masalit, also briefed the Council. Egypt, Sudan, Türkiye, and the United Arab Emirates participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

West Africa and the Sahel

On 20 December, the Security Council held a briefing, followed by consultations, on West Africa and the Sahel (S/PV.9825). The briefers

Status Update since our December Forecast

were Special Representative and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) Leonardo Santos Simão and Levia Addae-Mensah, Executive Director of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding. Before the meeting, Council members that are supporters of the joint pledges related to climate, peace and security—France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the UK, and the US—held a stakeout on climate, peace and security issues in West Africa and the Sahel, delivering a statement highlighting the security challenges

Syria

Expected Council Action

In January, the Security Council will hold a meeting on the political process and the humanitarian situation in Syria.

Key Recent Developments

On 27 November 2024, rebel forces launched a major offensive that included Security Council-listed terrorist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the Syrian National Army, a coalition of armed groups allegedly backed by Türkiye, resulting in the ousting of President Bashar al-Assad. The offensive, which began in the northwestern Aleppo governorate, quickly advanced southward towards the capital Damascus with little resistance from the Syrian armed forces. Concurrently, opposition groups in the south launched attacks in the Daraa governorate and As-Suwayda city, creating a multi-front push toward Damascus. The offensive culminated with the fall of Damascus on 8 December, forcing Assad to flee the country. Russia granted asylum to Assad and his family, citing "humanitarian considerations". (For background and more information, see our 9, 16, and 26 December *What's in Blue* stories.)

On 10 December, Ahmed al-Sharaa (also known as Abu Mohammed al-Jolani), HTS leader and commander of the new administration, installed Mohammed al-Bashir to lead a caretaker government through March 2025. (Bashir had previously headed the Syrian Salvation Government [SSG] in Idlib, a body established by HTS in 2017 to govern the territory it controlled.) In the following days, the transitional government announced its ministerial portfolios, which reportedly included individuals affiliated with the SSG. On 12 December, the transitional authorities announced that the Syrian parliament and former constitution would be suspended for the interim transitional period, and a new legal and human rights committee would be established to examine and introduce amendments to the constitution.

On 14 December, the Arab ministerial contact group on Syria—comprising Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and League of Arab States (LAS) Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit—convened in Aqaba, Jordan. The meeting was also attended by the foreign ministers of Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In a statement released following the meeting, the representatives expressed support for a peaceful and inclusive political transitional process that will be "sponsored" by the UN and the LAS, and follow

of climate change in the region and ways to address them.

Children and Armed Conflict

On 20 December 2024, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2764, highlighting the need to facilitate adequate and sustainable child protection capacities in UN peace operations, including in the context of transitions to or from UN missions. The text, which was authored by Malta (the chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict), was co-sponsored by 111 member states.

the principles and objectives of resolution 2254. They stressed the need for an inclusive transitional period leading to a new political system through UN-supervised free and fair elections based on a new constitution and within specific timeframes in accordance with the mechanisms adopted by resolution 2254. They also requested the UN Secretary-General to begin working on establishing a UN mission to assist Syria in achieving a political process. On the margins, the Arab contact group and other countries that participated in the 14 December meeting held a joint meeting with Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen and representatives of France, Germany, Türkiye, the UK, the US, and the European Union (EU), and adopted a joint statement.

Pedersen travelled to Damascus from 15 to 18 December, engaging with a range of key stakeholders. These included Sharaa, Bashir, and members of other armed factions, as well as representatives of the Syrian Negotiations Commission (SNC), which was formed as the political opposition to the Assad government and includes military representatives involved in the recent military offensive. During his visit, Pedersen also visited Sednaya Prison, a facility located north of Damascus notorious for its use by the Assad government for carrying out torture and executions, and met with families of those who had been detained and missing, as well as representatives from civil society.

In his remarks at the 17 December 2024 Council meeting on the situation in Syria, Pedersen outlined the challenges facing the country, notably prevailing insecurity in some parts, particularly north-east Syria where front lines remain active. He stressed the need for de-escalation towards a nationwide ceasefire, as well as efforts to address tensions between military factions. He emphasised the importance of advancing efforts towards economic development, reconstruction, and addressing and ultimately lifting sanctions. Regarding the political process, Pedersen noted the broad understanding that, under the current circumstances, resolution 2254 cannot be applied mechanically, although its core principles enjoy widespread consensus among Syrians. Pedersen stressed the need for drafting a new constitution and conducting free and fair elections, in line with resolution 2254. Furthermore, he underscored the importance of transitional justice, including clarifying the fate of missing and disappeared persons and ensuring due process in criminal prosecutions to prevent acts of revenge. (For more information, see our 16 December *What's in Blue* story.)

The security situation in northern Syria remains fragile. In the

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 Press Statement SC/15943 (17 December 2024) called for the implementation of an inclusive and Syrian-led political process based on the key principles listed in resolution 2254.

Syria

days following Assad’s ousting, hostilities escalated significantly, with various factions competing for control and influence. Turkish backed-SNA forces launched an offensive in the territories controlled by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), capturing strategic locations such as Manbij and initiating operations in Kobani. (The SDF has been a crucial security partner for the US in the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant [ISIL\Da’esh]. Türkiye, however, views the SDF as closely linked to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party [PKK], pointing to the dominant role of YPG, a Kurdish militia, within the SDF and its overlapping leadership with the PKK.) The factions agreed to a short-term ceasefire brokered by the US, largely focusing on Manjib; however, conflicting reports have raised doubts about its effectiveness and longevity.

In remarks made to journalists on 20 December, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said Ankara expects countries to withdraw support for Kurdish fighters in Syria. Following her visit to Damascus, US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf reportedly said that the US was working with Türkiye and the SDF to find “a managed transition in terms of SDF’s role in that part of the country”. She added that “the conditions which led Kurds in northeast Syria to organise themselves and to defend themselves... were one set of conditions and things have really changed in a very dramatic fashion”.

Meanwhile, Israel continued its airstrikes on positions within Syria, targeting strategic military capabilities. Following the announcement of Assad’s overthrow, Israeli forces launched a series of intensive airstrikes across various locations, targeting naval assets, air bases, ammunition depots, and other military infrastructure. Reports indicate that Israel has carried out as many as 450 strikes during this period. In a 19 December press stakeout, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on Israel to halt the airstrikes, calling them violations of Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Israel reportedly has argued that its actions were aimed at destroying strategic weapons and military infrastructure to prevent them from being used by rebel groups. (For more information, see our 9 and 16 December *What’s in Blue* stories.)

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 16 December statement, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Syria urged all parties to the conflict in Syria to protect civilians, treat former combatants humanely, and preserve evidence and crime scenes, including mass grave sites, to ensure accountability in the future. The COI underlined the importance of allowing the victims and survivors to pursue their demands for truth, reparations and legal and institutional reforms. It reiterated the findings of its report dated 11 March 2021, which found that the Assad government committed crimes against humanity of extermination, murder, rape or other forms of sexual violence, torture, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, and other inhuman acts.

Women, Peace, and Security

In a 20 December statement, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten said that while a new chapter is unfolding in Syria following the fall of the Assad government, over a decade of conflict, mass displacement, and economic devastation have generated “a catastrophic humanitarian emergency in which the needs of women and girls remain unmet”. Patten underscored the critical need to address “the sexual violence that has marred the country’s history” as a foundation for durable peace and reconciliation. She called on the caretaker government to adopt a robust survivor-centred framework, including access to counselling, mental health services, and medical care. Additionally, Patten highlighted the importance of establishing a legal framework to hold perpetrators accountable, noting

that survivors have long been denied avenues for accountability and redress. She appealed to the international community to provide financial and technical support to “amplify survivors’ voices, meet their needs and safeguard their rights”.

Key Issues and Options

The most pressing issue before the Council is how to ensure a credible, transparent, and inclusive political process, guided by the principles of resolution 2254, that can prioritise the needs and aspirations of all Syrians, prevent fragmentation of the country, preserve state institutions, and result in establishing a non-sectarian and representative governance structure. During the 17 December closed consultations, Pedersen apparently cautioned that the coordination between HTS and other armed groups from the offensive might not have transitioned into political collaboration. It seems that he alluded to differing expectations among armed factions regarding the implementation of resolution 2254 and the role of UN facilitation. He called on Council members to stand united in reinforcing the message from the 14 December meeting in Aqaba.

A related issue is addressing the prevailing insecurity in the country, ensuring the protection of civilians, including religious and ethnic minorities, addressing human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, and preventing the resurgence of terrorist and extremist elements such as ISIL. The Council needs to navigate the competing interests of regional and international actors, who continue to shape Syria’s political and security landscape, while underscoring the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

The Council is expected to continue monitoring the developments on the ground closely. In addition to regular briefings from Pedersen, the Council could consider holding an informal interactive dialogue with interested regional and international stakeholders and invite Syrian representatives to deliberate, among other things, how to adapt the political process to the new realities on the ground and formulate an appropriate response strategy.

Another key issue is how to alleviate the growing humanitarian needs throughout the country and address the challenges associated with the recent hostilities. Since 27 November, almost 1.1 million people have been displaced across the country, the majority of whom are women and children. According to OCHA, humanitarian activities continued where security conditions allowed, with limited operations resuming in Damascus, Tartous, Latakia, and Ar-Raqqa. Humanitarian access and aid delivery, however, remain challenging in parts of north-east Syria, where movement is restricted across Ar-Raqqa, Tabqa, Hassakeh, and Derik due to checkpoints. (For more information, see our 16 December *What’s in Blue* story.)

Council members could consider calling for an international conference to mobilise support for Syria, including through securing additional funding for a humanitarian response and addressing key issues such as economic development and reconstruction. With the growing humanitarian needs across the country, there is an urgent need to ensure adequate funding for humanitarian operations. At the time of writing, Syria’s 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan, which required \$4.07 billion, was only 33.1 percent funded. On 17 December, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) launched an appeal for \$310 million to address the critical needs of

Syria

up to one million Syrian refugee returnees expected to arrive in Syria between January and June 2025 as part of spontaneous and host government organised movements from neighbouring countries.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council and the broader membership appear to be adjusting their responses to keep pace with the rapidly unfolding developments and determine the appropriate path forward. The developments in Syria so far have already brought about a pivotal shift in the region’s geopolitical landscape. Iran and Russia, Assad’s close allies who had maintained a military presence in the country over the years, are recalibrating their political and military engagement in the region.

Russia, for instance, has reportedly evacuated 400 soldiers from Damascus in coordination with HTS. It has confirmed its contacts with HTS and has expressed hope that it would be able to retain two key bases in Syria, a naval base in Tartous and the Khmeimim air base near Latakia. Media reports suggest that Russia has been transferring military equipment from Syria to eastern Libya, which is largely under the control of General Khalifa Haftar.

In recent weeks, several countries, including Western nations, have opened diplomatic channels to engage with the transitional authorities, including HTS leadership. Türkiye and Qatar have announced the reopening of their embassies in Damascus, marking the first time diplomatic relations have resumed since ties were severed during the Assad government’s violent crackdown on civil unrest in the Syrian civil war. Meanwhile, France, Germany, the UK, the US, and the EU, among others, have dispatched diplomatic contingents to engage with the de facto authorities.

On 20 December, a diplomatic mission led by US Assistant Secretary Leaf arrived in Damascus and met with interim authorities, including Sharaa. In a press briefing following the visit, Leaf described the discussions as “productive” and announced that the US would no longer pursue the Rewards for Justice offer of \$10 million for information on Sharaa. She also acknowledged Türkiye’s role in shaping discussions on Syria’s future, noting its influence and national security interests. On 19 December, Pentagon Press Secretary Major General Pat Ryder announced that there are approximately 2,000 US

Libya

Expected Council Action

In January 2025, the Security Council is expected to renew the authorisation of measures contained in resolution 2146 of 19 March 2014 related to the illicit export of petroleum from Libya. It is also expected to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts (PoE) assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee. Through resolution 2701 of 19 October 2023, the Council renewed the authorisation of petroleum-related measures until 1 February 2025 and extended the PoE’s mandate until 15 February, to be reviewed by 15 January.

Additionally, the Council may renew the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) this month. Resolution 2755 of

troops stationed in Syria, which is roughly 1,100 more than had been reported in the past. At the time of writing, it remains unclear how US foreign policy will evolve regarding developments in Syria and the broader region under the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump, who will assume office on 20 January 2025.

Following the start of the offensive, Council members met on 3 December to receive a briefing from Pedersen on the evolving security landscape. However, the dynamics within the Council remained marked by long-standing divisions. Russia condemned the rebel offensive, describing it as an “unprecedented terrorist attack”, and accused the US and its allies of providing support to the “terrorists” to varying degrees. Meanwhile, the US criticised the Assad government for its refusal to engage in a genuine political process and its reliance on Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, citing these factors as contributing to the conditions unfolding in the country.

Despite persistent underlying divisions, Council members managed to find a common voice following Assad’s ouster in their 17 December press statement. In it, members showed unity in calling for the implementation of an inclusive and Syrian-led political process based on the key principles listed in resolution 2254. They also showed support for Pedersen’s efforts in this regard and called for the political process to meet the legitimate aspirations of all Syrians, protect civilians and enable them to peacefully, independently and democratically determine their own futures. Members also reaffirmed their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Syria and called on all states to respect these principles. They also underlined the need for Syria and its neighbours to mutually refrain from any action or interference that could undermine each other’s security. Other areas of agreement were the importance of combating terrorism in Syria, the need to prevent ISIL/Da’esh and other terrorist groups from re-establishing their capabilities, and Syria abiding by all relevant Council resolutions regarding non-conventional weapons and cooperating with international efforts.

It remains unclear which Council member will assume the role of penholder on the humanitarian file, thereby replacing outgoing Council member Switzerland, which served as co-penholder with Brazil in 2023 and a sole penholder in 2024.

31 October 2024 extended the mission’s mandate until 31 January 2025, with a “further automatic extension” of an additional nine months, until 31 October, if a new Special Representative and head of UNSMIL has been appointed by 31 January.

Key Recent Developments

The political impasse in Libya continues between the UN-recognised Government of National Unity (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

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2755 (31 October 2024) extended UNSMIL’s mandate for three months, until 31 January 2025, with a “further automatic extension” of an additional nine months, until 31 October 2025, if a new Special Representative and head of UNSMIL has been appointed by 31 January 2025. S/RES/2701 (19 October 2023) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and the authorisation of measures contained in resolution 2146 of 19 March 2014 related to the illicit export of petroleum from Libya. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2024/895** (10 December 2024) was the 120-day report on UNSMIL.

Libya

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. The parties remain deadlocked over proposed legislation to hold national elections that would reconcile the country's divided government. A key 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. The prolonged stalemate between the rival governments—which has persisted since the indefinite postponement of the 2021 elections—is one of the root causes of Libya's political, security, and economic instability.

In a 4 December 2024 statement, UNSMIL announced that Deputy Special Representative and Political Officer-in-Charge of UNSMIL Stephanie Koury had recently intensified consultations with Libyan actors to “revitalise the political process” towards the holding of national elections, in line with resolution 2755. As part of this effort, Koury met with HoR Speaker Aguila Saleh, acting GNU Foreign Minister Taher Baour, and Presidential Council President Mohammed Al-Menfi. (The Presidential Council was established under the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement to serve as the country's head of state.)

In a subsequent 15 December 2024 statement, Koury provided additional details about this UNSMIL-facilitated process, which will comprise two stages. First, the mission intends to convene a technical committee of Libyan experts to develop options to overcome “contentious issues” in the electoral laws and reach elections “in the shortest possible time including with proposed guarantees, assurances and a timeframe”. Second, the mission will facilitate a national dialogue to “expand consensus” for the resolution of long-standing drivers of conflict. The dialogue will include all segments of Libyan society, including political parties, women, youth, social leaders, and “cultural components”. In her 16 December 2024 bimonthly briefing to the Security Council, Koury reiterated the details of this initiative.

While Libya's rival governments remain deadlocked over national elections, Libya's High National Election Commission (HNEC) organised the first round of municipal elections on 16 November 2024. Polls were held in 58 municipalities, with voter participation reaching 77 percent, according to the Secretary-General's most recent report on UNSMIL, dated 10 December 2024 and covering developments from 9 August 2024. In a 24 November 2024 statement, UNSMIL welcomed the successful holding of municipal elections—which were the first since 2014 to be held simultaneously across the western and eastern parts of the country—as a “crucial opportunity for the Libyan people to exercise their right to choose their representatives and foster accountable and responsive governance”. Similarly, in his most recent report on UNSMIL, the Secretary-General welcomed the municipal elections but cautioned that they “should not be seen as a substitute for the national elections which have been delayed for far too long and are essential to restore the legitimacy of the main State institutions”. At the time of writing, HNEC was expected to begin the electoral process for a second group of 59 municipalities later this month.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 5 December 2024, the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee met to discuss the PoE's

final report. As requested by resolution 2701, which most recently renewed the panel's mandate and extended the petroleum-related sanctions measures, the report made recommendations on possible actions that the committee could take to allow the Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) to re-invest its frozen assets. The LIA is Libya's sovereign wealth fund and has previously requested permission from the committee to re-invest its assets to preserve their value, which has reportedly declined under the asset freeze. On 12 December 2024, the committee met with representatives of the LIA to discuss its request.

Women, Peace and Security

Hala Bugaighis, a representative of the Libyan Women, Peace and Security Advisory Group, briefed the Security Council during the 9 October 2024 meeting on Libya. Among other issues, she stressed the importance of women's meaningful participation in the peace and political processes in Libya. She highlighted significant challenges women face in this respect, including movement limitations, restrictions on civil society organisations, and “the systematic targeting of women human rights defenders, particularly online”. Bugaighis called on the Security Council to demand that all actors end intimidation, attacks and reprisals against women civil society representatives and politically active women. Calling for UNSMIL's mandate to be renewed for twelve months, Bugaighis urged the Council to task UNSMIL with monitoring and reporting on violations against women human rights defenders and providing support to those at risk. She stressed the importance of the mission prioritising the women, peace and security components of its mandate and working closely with Libyan actors to address the human rights situation in the country.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Security Council in January is to renew the PoE's mandate and extend the authorisation of measures contained in resolution 2146, which allowed member states to inspect designated vessels on the high seas suspected of facilitating the illicit export of petroleum from Libya. In connection with these renewals, the Council may also act on the LIA's request to re-invest its frozen assets based on the panel's recommendations.

If the Secretary-General has not appointed a new Special Representative and head of UNSMIL by 31 January 2025, the mission's current mandate will end on that date. In that case, another issue for the Council is renewing UNSMIL's mandate, which it would most likely do through another short-term extension.

A related issue for the Council is the appointment of a new Special Representative. Filling this position—which has been vacant since then-Special Representative Abdoulaye Bathily stepped down in April 2024—is an important condition for maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of the UN's mediation role in Libya, in part because resolution 2755 made a full one-year renewal of the mission's mandate contingent on the appointment. Council members have urged the Secretary-General to take swift action on this issue, although positions diverge on the appropriate candidate for the position, which has delayed the appointment process.

More broadly, supporting political momentum towards national elections to unify Libya's divided governments remains a key issue for the Council. In this context, an important objective for the Council is to help foster common political ground between the country's rival governments to reach an inclusive agreement on electoral laws, including the possible establishment of a unified interim government to organise the elections. In this regard, Council members could consider issuing a presidential statement or press statement in support of Koury's revitalised efforts to facilitate dialogue between the Libyan political stakeholders.

Libya

Council Dynamics

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. They also remain broadly supportive of the UN's mediation role towards this end.

However, the recent extension of UNSMIL's mandate in the absence of a Special Representative rekindled older disagreements. When former Special Envoy Ján Kubiš resigned in November 2021, it took nearly a year to identify a successor, eventually leading to Bathily's appointment in September 2022. (Resolution 2629 of 29 April 2022 changed UNSMIL's leadership position from a Special Envoy to a Special Representative.) During this impasse, the Council renewed UNSMIL's mandate five times between September 2021 and July 2022 through short-term extensions, in part because Russia opposed a regular one-year renewal in the absence of appointed mission leadership. During negotiations on last year's renewal under similar circumstances, Russia again opposed a one-year extension, citing the previous short-term extensions as precedent. This resulted in the compromise solution whereby resolution 2755 renewed the mandate for a three-month period that may be automatically extended by an additional nine months upon the appointment of a

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In January 2025, the Security Council will hold its monthly briefing and consultations on Yemen. UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg and a representative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are expected to brief.

Council members may also consider extending the monthly reporting requirement for the Secretary-General contained in resolution 2722 of 10 January 2024 on attacks by the Houthi rebel group on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea. Resolution 2739 of 27 June 2024 most recently extended the reporting obligation until 15 January 2025.

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

Key Recent Developments

The situation in Yemen remains complex as the Middle East experiences seismic shifts, including the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, a fragile cessation of hostilities agreement reached between Israel and Lebanon, and the 8 December 2024 ousting of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Briefing at the Security Council's latest meeting on Yemen on 11 December 2024, Grundberg stated that the dramatic events in Lebanon and Syria demonstrate the urgent need for stabilisation across the region, including in Yemen. Some Council members, like the Republic of Korea (ROK), expressed hope that the recent developments will have a positive catalytic effect on Yemen. Other members, such as China, cautioned that these developments could create shockwaves that will further undermine peace efforts in the country.

new Special Representative.

Regarding sanctions, Council members may have differing positions on possible actions to accommodate the LIA's request to re-invest its frozen assets. During negotiations on resolution 2701, there was some disagreement among certain Council members—including China, Mozambique, Russia, and then-members Gabon, Ghana, and the United Arab Emirates—that wanted the Council to accommodate the LIA's request, and other—primarily Western—members that were more reticent in light of the LIA's management challenges and Libya's unstable political environment. The resolution's request for recommendations from the PoE on this issue was a compromise between those two positions.

More broadly, geopolitical tensions influence Council dynamics with respect to Libya. 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.

The UK is the penholder on Libya.

December 2024 also saw the intensification of direct conflict between the Houthis and Israel, as well as the continuation of Houthi attacks in the Red Sea. The Houthis launched more than eight attacks against Israel involving ballistic missiles and drones, three of which were not intercepted by Israeli air defence systems and hit civilian areas. On 9 December, a drone launched by the Houthis struck a residential building in the central Israeli city of Yavneh, causing no casualties. A 19 December Houthi missile attack damaged a school in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ramat Gan, with at least three people sustaining injuries. In the early hours of 21 December, a Houthi missile hit a playground in Tel Aviv's southern Jaffa area, reportedly injuring 16 people.

On 19 December, Israel carried out airstrikes in Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen, reportedly targeting Houthi infrastructure at the ports of Hodeidah, Salif, and the Ras Isa oil terminal on the Red Sea as well as Houthi energy infrastructure in the city of Sana'a. This was the third time that Israel claimed responsibility for direct strikes in Yemen, after carrying out attacks on 20 July and 29 September in response to Houthi assaults against Israel. On 26 December, Israel carried out another significant air assault against Yemen, targeting the Sana'a airport and two power stations.

In a 19 December statement, Secretary-General António Guterres expressed concern about the Israeli strikes, noting that initial reports indicate that they resulted in civilian casualties, including nine killed, and “considerable damage to the Red Sea ports that will lead to the immediate and significant reduction in port capacity”. He added that the strikes followed approximately a year of “escalatory actions by the Houthis in the Red Sea and the region that

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9806 (11 December 2024) was a Council meeting on Yemen.

Yemen

threaten civilians, regional stability and freedom of maritime navigation” and expressed concern about the 19 December Houthi attack against Israel. Guterres called on all actors to exercise restraint and to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law by protecting civilians and civilian infrastructure. On 30 December 2024, the Security Council held a meeting under the “Threats to international peace and security” agenda item to discuss these developments, following a request from Israel in a 24 December letter to the Council. (For more information, see our 29 December 2024 *What’s in Blue* story.)

During the 11 December Council meeting, Grundberg called on the Yemeni parties to re-engage on his efforts to promote a roadmap under UN auspices, which would “deliver a ceasefire, economic measures such as the sustainable payment of salaries and preparing for an inclusive political process”. The Special Envoy has continued working on such issues. Most recently, his office convened a meeting between 10 and 12 December 2024 with representatives from the Yemeni government in Amman, Jordan, to discuss the planning and management of ceasefires and transitional security arrangements. The participants reflected on “global examples of ceasefires and explored their relevance for a future nationwide ceasefire in Yemen”, according to a statement by the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 30 September, the Human Rights Council adopted the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Yemen. During the UPR, the government of Yemen stated that the continued control of parts of the country by the Houthis, which affects the lives of more than ten million citizens, is causing political, security, and social turmoil. It identified this as the primary obstacle to advancing human rights. The government also reported launching “livelihood” programmes to support girls’ education in rural areas. These programmes provide cash incentives to families on the condition that they send their daughters to school and include the distribution of food baskets to participating families.

Key Issues and Options

Minimising the effects of the destabilising regional tensions on Yemen and reinvigorating the stalled intra-Yemeni political process are overarching priorities for the Council. It is yet unclear what, if any, direct effect the fall of the Assad government in Syria may have on Yemen. Some analysts have argued that the changes in regional dynamics could weaken the Houthis’ hand, which might compel the group to recommit to intra-Yemeni negotiations. In contrast, others have commented that it could cause Iran to increase its support for the Houthis and reignite the fighting in Yemen after almost three years of relative calm.

The Council may seek to demonstrate its sustained attention to the Yemen file at this critical juncture. An option would be for Council members to issue a presidential statement or press statement encouraging the Yemeni parties to create conditions conducive to the resumption of talks. In this regard, members could urge implementation of the economic de-escalation agreement reached on 23 July between the Houthis and the Yemeni government.

Addressing the dire humanitarian situation in the country is another pressing priority. OCHA’s Global Humanitarian Overview for 2025, published on 4 December 2024, estimated that 19.5 million people in Yemen will require aid in 2025 and anticipated requiring \$2.5 billion to assist 10.5 million people. Council members could consider ways

to increase attention on humanitarian funding shortfalls, including by encouraging member states to convene a pledging conference.

The global humanitarian overview noted that Yemen ranks as the world’s third most vulnerable country to climate change and that the country lacks the capacity to mitigate or adapt to the effects of climate change. An option would be for the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on Climate, Peace and Security to visit Yemen to discuss strategies for building climate resilience.

Council Dynamics

Although Council members remain united in their support for Grundberg’s efforts to achieve a solution to the crisis in Yemen, dynamics on the file have become more complicated since the eruption of the Red Sea crisis in November 2023. Some of the Council’s permanent members have exchanged recriminations during Council meetings on Yemen, with the US alleging that Russia is considering transferring weapons to the Houthis and Russia saying that retaliatory strikes by the UK and the US against the Houthis were destabilising the situation in Yemen.

It remains to be seen how the upcoming US presidential transition may affect Council dynamics on the file. The current administration of US President Joe Biden has taken a strong position, advocating for further Council action to impede Iran’s supply of arms to the Houthis and to deter the rebel group from destabilising the region. This includes suggesting the enhancement of Council sanctions measures against the Houthis and calling for strengthening the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM), which inspects ships travelling to Houthi-controlled ports to ensure compliance with the arms embargo against the group. On 11 December 2024, US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking visited Djibouti, where UNVIM is based, and was quoted by media outlets as saying that the mechanism is currently not equipped for or given the mandate to carry out interdictions, and that the US was “working with partners to look at a change to the mandate”. Such a move appears difficult, however, given that Russia opposes stronger Council action against the Houthis or Iran.

US President-elect Donald Trump has historically taken a strong stance against Iran and its allies. During his previous administration (2016–2020), Trump designated the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist group (SDGT). While both designations trigger economic sanctions, only an FTO designation authorises sanctions on those who provide the designated group with “material support”. The Biden administration lifted these designations in February 2021, citing concerns that they may impede humanitarian aid from reaching Yemen. In January 2024, the Biden administration re-designated the Houthis as an SDGT. On 22 December, Trump’s pick for national security adviser, Mike Waltz, said in a podcast interview that the incoming administration will reinstate the Houthis’ FTO designation.

Vessels owned or operated by companies from Denmark, Greece, and Panama—elected members that are starting their two-year Council term in 2025—have been attacked by the Houthis in the Red Sea, as documented by the Secretary-General’s monthly reports on the matter. This aspect of the Yemen file is therefore expected to be of particular interest to these members.

Yemen

Incoming member Somalia may have an interest in the issue of the alleged cooperation between the Houthis and Al-Shabaab. The final report of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2140 Yemen Sanctions

Committee, dated 11 October, said that the groups are reportedly deepening their cooperation, indicating increased smuggling activities between them, mostly involving small arms and light weapons.

Cyprus

Expected Council Action

This month, the Security Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) ahead of its 31 January 2025 expiry. Earlier in the month, Security Council members are expected to receive a briefing in consultations on the situation in Cyprus by Special Representative and Head of UNFICYP Colin Stewart.

Key Recent Developments

Over the past six months, there has been no meaningful progress on the political front and no direct formal engagement between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders in the context of unification talks, which have been stalled since the collapse of negotiations in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in July 2017. The two sides have maintained alternative positions on the appropriate framework for resolving the Cyprus issue: the Greek Cypriots remain firmly committed to a settlement based on a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation (BBF) with political equality, as stipulated in previous Security Council resolutions, while Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar insists on a two-state solution based on sovereign equality.

On 5 January 2024, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of María Angela Holguín Cuéllar, a former Colombian foreign affairs minister, as his Personal Envoy on Cyprus, a good offices role with a mandate “to search for common ground on the way forward and to advise [the Secretary-General] on the Cyprus issue”. The two sides had consented to the appointment on the condition that her role be limited to “exploring whether common ground exists or not between the two sides...for the start of new, formal settlement negotiations” and that her mandate not exceed six months. Holguín’s mandate expired on 5 July.

In a 7 July 2024 open letter, Holguín emphasised the need for fresh approaches and trust-building. She underscored the consequences of prolonged division and the deep-rooted mistrust that have fostered a status quo characterised by confrontation and discrimination. Despite these challenges, Holguín highlighted the island’s potential for unity and prosperity, urging the sides to “heal the past and improve the present”, focusing on a hopeful future, and prioritising the younger generations.

Secretary-General António Guterres continued diplomatic engagement with the two sides. On 14 October 2024, he hosted an informal dinner in New York with Ersin Tatar and Greek Cypriot leader Nikos Christodoulides. The Secretary-General encouraged both leaders to identify ways to bridge their differences and rebuild trust, with the aim of advancing toward a settlement. According to the meeting’s readout, the leaders agreed to convene another informal meeting in a broader format under the Secretary-General’s auspices in the near future. They

also agreed to meet in Cyprus to explore the possibility of opening new crossings across the ceasefire line.

During an end-of-year reception hosted by UNFICYP on 10 December 2024 and attended by Christodoulides and Tatar, Stewart confirmed that the expanded format of the upcoming informal meeting would include the three guarantor powers: Greece, Türkiye, and the UK. Acknowledging the “unprecedented challenges” facing Cyprus, Stewart remarked that “we are witnessing some new glimmers of hope on the Cyprus issue”. He highlighted that, in the UN’s initial discussions with representatives of both leaders, there was mutual interest in reaching an agreement on the opening of new crossing points as soon as possible. Stewart stressed that such an agreement would enhance intra-island interdependence and create a more conducive environment for a settlement. According to Christodoulides, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo is expected to visit the island in the near future to discuss preparations for the informal meeting.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 30 September, the Human Rights Council adopted the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Cyprus. The review, held on 30 April 2024, included statements and recommendations from 89 delegations. Cyprus received a total of 236 recommendations, of which it accepted 199 during the adoption of its UPR outcome.

On 9 October, the General Assembly elected Cyprus as a member of the Human Rights Council for the 2025–2027 term. In its election bid, Cyprus pledged to prioritise gender equality; combat violence and discrimination against women and girls; enhance unhindered access to quality education for all, including children with disabilities and those from migrant backgrounds; and promote economic, social, and cultural rights.

Key Issues and Options

Since the collapse of the 2017 unification talks in Crans-Montana, the key issue for the Security Council has been the lack of meaningful progress on the political front and the diminishing prospects for a political settlement of the Cyprus problem.

Given the current deadlock, the Council could take several actions to revive the peace process. It could encourage the parties to approach negotiations based on “engagement without recognition” to facilitate the resumption of negotiations. It could also consider taking a more proactive approach to stimulate the negotiation process by exploring a change in UNFICYP’s mandate. For example, downsizing the mission could signal a shift towards reducing dependency on external peacekeeping forces, thereby emphasising the need for the parties to take ownership of the process. Such a move could apply subtle pressure by underscoring the unsustainable nature of the status quo and encouraging the parties to work towards a long-term solution. By tying adjustments in UNFICYP’s mandate

Cyprus

to a clear exit strategy, the Council might create a sense of urgency for the parties to reach an agreement.

Council members may consider pursuing a presidential statement to express support for renewing the mandate of the Personal Envoy, with the aim of identifying common ground on, and fresh approaches to, the Cyprus issue. While the Secretary-General has the authority to appoint such an envoy on his own initiative, the Council's request could provide important political backing. The Council could also consider holding a private meeting with Holguín to hear her insights on the prospects for progress on the political track, the most effective path toward a settlement, and ways in which the Council might facilitate this process.

Council Dynamics

Cyprus remains a low-intensity issue on the Council's agenda.

Council members with a vested interest in Cyprus include France, Russia, and the UK, which also serves as the penholder on the issue. Greece, which was elected on 6 June 2024 to serve as a non-permanent member of the Security Council from 2025 to 2026, is a key stakeholder in relation to UNFICYP and one of the three guarantor powers.

While the Council is united in its support for UNFICYP and a political process based on a BBF with political equality, members diverge on the conditions and timeframe for the unification talks. Some members have previously supported a comprehensive strategic review of the mission and timed benchmarks for an exit strategy tied to the political process. Russia remains adamant that there be no external interference or attempts to impose solutions or timelines that might influence the peace talks.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Expected Council Action

In January, the Security Council expects to hold its quarterly open debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (MEPQ). Algeria intends to hold the open debate, which will be one of the signature events of its January presidency, at ministerial level. Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Attaf is expected to chair. UN Secretary-General António Guterres is the anticipated briefer.

Council members may convene additional meetings during the month and evaluate whether further Council action is required.

Key Recent Developments

Indirect talks between Israel and Hamas facilitated by Egypt, Qatar, and the US on the terms of a ceasefire agreement are ongoing, reportedly focusing on the details of the release of the hostages taken captive during the 7 October 2023 Hamas-led attacks in Israel and of Palestinian prisoners detained by Israel, as well as the positioning of Israeli forces during the potential ceasefire.

The talks are taking place against the backdrop of the continuation of the war in Gaza between Hamas and Israel. A 17 December 2024 update by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that Israeli bombardment across the Gaza Strip continues to result in civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of civilian infrastructure. The update also says that fighting has been reported between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups in the North Gaza governorate, where Israel has been carrying out a ground offensive since 6 October 2024. It notes that Israel has tightened its siege in some areas. The update also cites reports of rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups towards Israel.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains abysmal. Approximately 90 percent of the population of the Gaza Strip has been displaced, often multiple times. Large areas of Gaza, including critical infrastructure, have been bombed to the ground, with about

69 percent of the total structures in the Gaza Strip estimated to be destroyed, severely damaged, moderately damaged and possibly damaged. Figures provided by Palestinian officials in Gaza cited by OCHA indicate that, as of 17 December 2024, at least 45,059 Palestinians had been killed during Israel's military campaign, while an estimated 10,000 remain under the rubble. In a recent statement, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said that more than 160 children have reportedly been killed in Gaza since the beginning of November 2024, an average of four children every day.

According to figures provided by Israeli authorities cited by OCHA, over 1,586 Israelis and foreign nationals have been killed between 7 October 2023 and 17 December 2024, the majority on 7 October 2023. As of 17 December 2024, an estimated 100 hostages remained captive in Gaza, being denied visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross. According to the latest report on resolution 2334 (S/2024/913), issued on 13 December 2024, the hostages continue to be held “in horrific conditions with reports of severe maltreatment”.

At a recent press conference, Head of OCHA's Sub-Office in Gaza Georgios Petropoulos addressed continuing impediments to humanitarian aid in Gaza. He said that Israel “imposes blanket prohibitions on nearly everything”, has consistently blocked humanitarian supplies, and frequently denied UN movements inside Gaza. Petropoulos described the violent and systematic looting of humanitarian cargo by armed Palestinians in the context of the breakdown of law and order in Gaza. He noted that “virtually every single practical solution” to discourage looting proposed by humanitarians to Israel—including simultaneously opening multiple access points, using alternative routes, and allowing private sector imports—has been rejected. Regarding northern Gaza, Petropoulos cited reports of the “decimation” of towns and “constant bombardment of shelters and hospitals”, with almost 150 humanitarian requests to access the area being denied by Israel since 6 October 2024.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

On 21 November 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, having found reasonable grounds to believe that they bear criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The ICC also issued an arrest warrant for Hamas military leader Mohammed Deif, having found reasonable grounds to believe that he was responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes. It is unclear whether Deif has been killed or is still alive.

Key humanitarian and human rights organisations have recently issued reports raising serious concerns about genocide and ethnic cleansing being committed by Israel in Gaza. In a 5 December 2024 report, Amnesty International assessed Israeli authorities' policies and actions in Gaza after the 7 October 2023 attacks “within the framework of genocide under international law”. The organisation concluded that “Israel committed and is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza”. In a 19 December 2024 report focusing on water deprivation, Human Rights Watch (HRW) found that “Israeli authorities' and forces' actions to deprive the population of Gaza of access to water amount to acts of genocide”. Regarding genocidal intent, which is required under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide for a finding of genocide, HRW said that the “pattern of conduct” described in the report, together with statements suggesting that some Israeli officials wished to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, “may indicate such intent”. In a 19 December report, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said that the organisation's “firsthand observations of the medical and humanitarian catastrophe” in Gaza are consistent with descriptions provided by legal experts and organisations “concluding that genocide is taking place in Gaza”. MSF added that while it does not have “the legal authority to establish intentionality”, the signs of ethnic cleansing and the ongoing devastation “are undeniable”.

Developments in the West Bank remain a source of concern. During the reporting period (12 September–6 December 2024) of the Secretary-General's report on resolution 2334 (S/2024/913), Israel advanced or approved approximately 540 housing units. Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures continued. According to the report, 94 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces during “operations, demonstrations, clashes, air strikes and other incidents”, while one Palestinian was killed by Israeli settlers. The report says that 8 Israelis were killed by Palestinians in the West Bank and Israel during the reporting period. The report also notes the intensification of displacement and settler violence against Palestinians in the context of the annual olive harvest.

On 20 November 2024, the US vetoed a draft resolution co-authored by the ten elected members of the Security Council (E10), which demanded an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire, and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. Following the draft resolution's failure, efforts to address the war in Gaza and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict have shifted to the General Assembly.

On 3 December 2024, the General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/79/81) which established modalities for convening an international conference on the implementation of UN resolutions on the question of Palestine and the two-state solution “for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the

Middle East”. The conference—which is scheduled for June and will be co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia—is one of the measures mandated by the September 2024 General Assembly resolution (A/RES/ES-10/24) on the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) Advisory Opinion on the “Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem”.

On 11 December 2024, the resumed Tenth Emergency Special Session (ESS) adopted two resolutions. The first resolution (A/RES/ES-10/25) affirms support for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). It follows the October 2024 adoption by the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) of two laws on UNRWA that, if implemented, are expected to severely impact the Agency's capacity to function in the OPT with “devastating consequences for Palestine Refugees”, as the Secretary-General underscored in his 9 December 2024 letter on this issue. (For background on the UNRWA legislation, see the brief on the MEPQ in our November 2024 *Monthly Forecast*.) The resolution deplors the legislation and demands that Israel enables UNRWA's operations to proceed without impediment or restriction. The second ESS resolution (A/RES/ES-10/26) demands a permanent ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and immediate access for the civilian population in Gaza to “basic services and humanitarian assistance indispensable to its survival”.

On 19 December 2024, the General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/79/232) spearheaded by Norway asking the ICJ to render an Advisory Opinion on Israel's obligations in relation to the presence and activities of the UN, other international organisations, and third states “in and in relation to” the OPT, including regarding the unhindered provision of supplies essential to the survival of Palestinian civilians and development assistance.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 12 December Decision, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) called for a ceasefire and the release of the hostages and arbitrarily detained Palestinians. The CERD urged Israel to implement the provisional measures ordered by the ICJ in the case on the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel) and called upon Israel and the State of Palestine to cooperate with the ICC. The CERD called on states party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to ensure that those suspected of being responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity are “promptly brought to justice”, including by complying with the ICC arrest warrants. It further called upon all state parties to respect their international obligations to cooperate to end violations and “prevent war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, including by ceasing any military assistance if there is a clear risk that such assistance could be used in violation of international law”.

Women, Peace and Security

In its latest report, issued on 11 September 2024, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the OPT, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, concluded that the “deliberate destruction of sexual and reproductive health-care facilities” in the Gaza Strip “constitutes reproductive violence and has had a particularly harmful effect on pregnant, post-partum and lactating women”. Among other things, the report says that direct attacks on healthcare facilities, including those offering sexual and reproductive health care and services, have affected approximately 540,000 women and girls. Many have been forced to give birth in unsafe conditions without medical support, increasing the risk of complications resulting in life-long injuries and death, a situation exacerbated by disrupted electricity and telecommunications. The Commission also documented unsafe conditions for women giving birth in hospitals, including lack of personnel, medication and equipment.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Key Issues and Options

The Council's failure to effectively expedite an end to the war in Gaza and its inability to safeguard the viability of the two-state solution are fundamental issues undermining the Council's credibility. That aid at scale is not reaching Palestinians in Gaza and that attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure have continued unabated are also issues of major concern.

As evidenced by the negotiations on the November 2024 E10 resolution, agreement on a text with a direct call for a ceasefire remains unlikely. Given the US' political and military support of Israel, resolutions imposing measures such as sanctions or arms embargoes are also likely to remain out of the Council's reach. Council members interested in promoting these measures could invite independent experts to brief the Council on the obligation to prevent and punish genocide or on the legal consequences of weapons and ammunition transfer when there is a clear risk that such weapons may be used to commit serious international law violations.

If a ceasefire agreement is achieved, Council members could request the Secretary-General to establish a UN-monitoring mechanism to verify compliance.

The US veto on the E10 draft resolution came after an extensive period of negotiations during which the E10 agreed to remove several elements from the draft in an attempt to secure a US abstention—such as language determining that the situation in Gaza and the regional escalation constitute a threat to international peace and security, and direct references to the ICJ orders of provisional measures in *South Africa v. Israel*. If a ceasefire remains elusive, members may want to consider putting to a vote a bolder text, backed by a broad coalition of Council members, to increase political pressure to end the war.

Members could also start consultations on the deployment of an international protective presence in the OPT, as recommended in the latest report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

An analysis by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security has noted that “Palestinian women civil society leaders have been noticeably absent from the Security Council”, with none invited to brief the Council since January 2022. Algeria could invite a Palestinian woman civil society representative to participate in the January open debate.

With reprisals against briefers persisting, including recent cases targeting civil society representatives who briefed the Council on this

file, it is essential that members and the UN take all possible measures to keep briefers safe, in consultation with the breifer, including carrying out risk assessments, developing protection plans, and responding to any reprisals.

Council Dynamics

Intractable dynamics have characterised the Council's response to the war in Gaza, which has been marked by contentious and prolonged negotiations with multiple failed adoptions. Negotiations of Council products on this file have clearly shown that it is not possible for the Council to adopt an outcome that the US, Israel's key ally at the Security Council, does not largely support.

Regarding the E10 November 2024 draft resolution, the US maintained that it could not support a text that did not feature an explicit conditional link between the Council's demands for a ceasefire and for the release of the hostages. In their explanation of vote following the US veto, several members expressed disappointment and a growing sense of frustration. Malta, for example, stressed that the text “represented the bare minimum of what is needed to begin to address the desperate situation on the ground”, and lamented that, due to the veto, the Council failed to uphold its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. The UK, which had abstained on the three previous draft resolutions on the war vetoed by the US, voted in favour of the E10 text, resulting in the US being the sole Council member not to support this initiative.

Overall, the US has vetoed four draft resolutions on the war. The US also vetoed a draft resolution that would have recommended that the State of Palestine be admitted to membership in the UN. China and Russia vetoed two US-proposed draft resolutions on the war, in both cases being accompanied by the negative vote of the Arab member of the Council (the UAE in 2023 and Algeria in 2024).

In December 2024, all the incoming elected members (Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama, and Somalia) voted in favour of the ESS resolution on UNRWA and the General Assembly resolution adopting modalities for the international conference on peace in the Middle East. All incoming members, except Panama which abstained, voted in favour of the ESS resolution demanding a ceasefire. Greece and Panama abstained on the resolution requesting an Advisory Opinion on Israel's obligations regarding humanitarian assistance.

The return of the Trump administration is expected to further shrink the already narrow space for compromise on this file.

Mohammed, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye, and former UN and AU official Said Djinnit will be requested to brief. This will be one of Algeria's signature events during its presidency, and a presidential statement may be proposed in connection with the meeting.

Counter-Terrorism

Background

The threat posed by terrorism in Africa has risen significantly during recent years. In remarks delivered in April 2024, Mohammed said that “the epicentre of terrorism has shifted from the Middle East and North Africa into sub-Saharan Africa, concentrated largely in the Sahel region”.

While Africa has experienced protracted and expanding terrorist violence for many years, this trend began to accelerate notably earlier this decade. The 28th report of the Monitoring Team assisting the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee (1267 Monitoring Team), which was published on 21 July 2021, noted that “the most striking development of the period under review was the emergence of Africa as the region most affected by terrorism”.

Since the publication of this report, the situation appears to have deteriorated further. The latest biannual strategic-level report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL/Da'esh, which was issued on 31 July 2024, says that the Secretary-General remains “concerned about the threat of terrorism in parts of Africa, in particular the risk that the continued expansion of terrorist groups results in an expanding area of instability across West Africa and the Sahel should Da'esh affiliates enjoy greater operational, financial and logistical autonomy”. It describes the magnitude and complexity of the problem as “alarming” and notes that “concerted action” is required.

During the open briefing on this report held on 8 August 2024, Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism and Head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov noted that two Da'esh affiliates in West Africa and the Sahel—Islamic State West Africa Province and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahel (ISGS)—have expanded and consolidated their areas of operation and highlighted the possibility that “a vast territory stretching from Mali to northern Nigeria could fall under their effective control”.

The situation is particularly serious in the central Sahel states of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, where Al-Qaida affiliate Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin and ISGS frequently attack security forces and civilians and have previously blockaded towns. The violence has contributed to the displacement of more than two million people and killed thousands more, and is also threatening neighbouring states. Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo have, for example, suffered attacks in their northern regions bordering Burkina Faso. Nigeria is another state in the region grappling with terrorist violence, particularly as a result of the long-running insurgency waged by Boko Haram and its splinter groups.

Efforts to respond to this threat are in a period of flux. Over the past two years, France's decade-long counter-terrorism operations have ended in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, while the US has recently withdrawn its troops, which had been involved in counter-terrorism operations, from Niger. Against this backdrop, the three central Sahel states have also increased their military cooperation with Russia. As part of this geopolitical realignment, the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S), which was established in 2017 by Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, and Chad to combat terrorism and organised crime, has dissolved. Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger—which are governed by military juntas that took power through coup d'état over recent years—in September 2023 formed the Alliance of Sahel States,

or *l'Alliance des États du Sahel* (AES), as an organisation of collective defence following their withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African states in January 2024.

On 7 July 2024, the possibility of deploying a regional counter-terrorism force was discussed during the ECOWAS summit in Abuja. The final communiqué issued in connection with the summit instructed the President of the ECOWAS Commission to “facilitate further consultations on modalities and options for mobilising internal financial and material resources on a mandatory basis to support the activation of the regional counter-terrorism force”. It also directed him to explore “resource mobilisation opportunities” with the AU Commission, including within the framework of resolution 2719, which authorised support for AU-led peace support operations through UN-assessed contributions on a case-by-case basis. Subsequently, the panel's report and recommendations were considered by the UN-AU High-Level Conference in Addis Ababa on 21 October, where the two organisations agreed to jointly advance the panel's key recommendations through their respective organs and institutional mechanisms.

The deployment of a counter-terrorism force in the region was discussed in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, which called for “the acceleration and full operationalisation of the Accra Initiative and the ECOWAS Standby Force in line with its 2020-2024 action plan to combat terrorism in West Africa”.

Other security mechanisms in the region include the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the Lake Chad Basin, which was created to fight Boko Haram. Following a 28 October 2024 attack reportedly carried out by Boko Haram that killed 40 Chadian soldiers, Chad's President Mahamat Idriss Déby reportedly threatened to withdraw from the MNJTF, which comprises troops from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria.

Incoming Council member Somalia also continues to grapple with a serious terrorist threat. The final report of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2713 Al-Shabaab Sanctions Committee, dated 15 October 2024, noted that Al-Shabaab remains the most significant threat to the peace and security of Somalia and said that its ability to carry out complex attacks against the Somali government, the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), and international forces remains undiminished. Da'esh is also active in the country, as discussed in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh, which notes that its affiliate in Somalia “grew stronger, expanding the number of recruits and enhancing its financial infrastructure”. On 27 December 2024, the Council adopted resolution 2767 endorsing the AU Peace and Security Council's decision to replace ATMIS with the AU Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). The mission is expected to have an important role to play in responding to the terrorist threat in Somalia.

Outgoing Council member Mozambique is battling an insurgency by Da'esh affiliate Ahl al-Sunna Wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) in its northern Cabo Delgado Province. The latest report of the 1267 Monitoring Team, which was issued on 22 July 2024, says that ASWJ has sought to broaden the theatre of conflict and is facing “much less resistance given the drawdown of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). (First authorised in

Counter-Terrorism

Expected Council Action

In January, Algeria plans to convene a meeting on counter-terrorism in Africa. Details regarding the meeting were still being finalised at the time of writing, however it appears that the meeting will be high-level and is likely to focus on terrorism and its impact on sustainable development. It also seems that Deputy Secretary-General Amina

UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM *Secretary-General's Reports* S/2024/583 (31 July 2024) 19th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security. S/2024/871 (2 December 2024) report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOWAS. **Sanctions Committee Document** S/2021/655 (21 July 2021) 30th report of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. S/2024/748 (15 October 2024) was the final report of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2713 Al-Shabaab sanctions committee. S/2024/556 (22 July 2024) 34th report of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

Counter-Terrorism

July 2021, SAMIM comprised up to 2,000 troops from eight SADC member states and withdrew from Mozambique in July 2024. Rwanda, which is not a member of SADC, has also sent soldiers to fight against ASWJ, who remain in the country.) The report further notes that ASWJ's tactics are more sophisticated, calculated and well-executed.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), authorities are dealing with violent attacks carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). According to the July 2024 report of the 1267 Monitoring Team, there was a dramatic increase in ADF attacks during the first half of 2024, with 260 civilians killed in the months of May and June alone.

From 22 to 23 April 2024, Nigeria hosted the “High-Level African Counter-Terrorism Meeting” in Abuja. The meeting was attended by senior UN officials, representatives of regional organisations, member states—including the permanent members of the Security Council—and civil society organisations. The “Abuja process”, an initiative designed to coordinate and mobilise resources for counter-terrorism in the African region, was launched in connection with this meeting.

Several African member states have held signature events on counter-terrorism in recent years. In March 2023, Mozambique organised a high-level debate on “Countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism by strengthening cooperation between the UN and regional organisations and mechanisms”. In November 2022, Ghana held a high-level debate on “Counter-terrorism in Africa—an imperative for peace, security, and development”. In October 2022, Gabon organised a high-level debate on “Strengthening the fight against the financing of armed groups and terrorists through the illicit trafficking of natural resources”. Sierra Leone also organised an Arria-formula meeting on “Combating the rise of terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel” in June 2024.

Key Issues and Options

The spread of terrorist groups in Africa and the significant rise in terrorist violence on the continent, including in many of the African files on the Council's agenda, have created a major issue for the Council. There is growing concern, in particular, about the stability of the AES countries as they grapple with terrorist groups intensifying their attacks and expanding their territorial control. The growth in terrorist activity in these countries has also raised concerns among Council members that these groups will expand into coastal West African states.

One option would be to request a briefing on options for enhancing security and responding to the terrorist threat in the Sahel region. This could include, for example, proposals for the deployment of an AU peace support operation largely funded through resolution 2719 or developing a mechanism for the provision of logistical and operational

support for regional counter-terrorism initiatives. Council members could also request that this briefing include information on the contents of the report of the Independent High-level Panel on Security, Governance and Development in the Sahel (that is, the Issoufou Panel), which focuses on strategies for tackling security and development challenges in the Sahel. The report has been shared with the UN Secretariat, but Council members have not had access to it.

Many African member states are also confronted by the need to allocate part of their national budgets to counter-terrorism, which diverts much-needed funds from social services and government programmes intended to facilitate development.

In March 2020, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the threat posed by terrorism in Africa. Among other matters, the presidential statement emphasised that the presence of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism can undermine social and economic development in affected states. It also underscored the importance of a holistic approach to counter-terrorism and efforts to address the development and socioeconomic dimensions of the challenge posed by terrorist groups.

The relationship between sustainable development and counter-terrorism was also highlighted in General Assembly resolution 77/298 on the eighth review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted on 22 June 2023. The preambular part of this resolution recognised, for example, that achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can contribute to the implementation of the strategy and noted that development has a role to play in the prevention of terrorism.

Council members could choose to highlight the points regarding counter-terrorism and development raised in these products in their statements during the meeting. If a presidential statement is pursued, it could build on these points and elaborate them further. A briefing from UN entities working on these issues, such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), could also be requested in connection with the meeting.

Council Dynamics

Council members share concerns about the spread of terrorism in Africa, including to previously unaffected sub-regions, and its impact on civilians. Members are also generally supportive of efforts to combat terrorism, however there are some differences among members regarding the best approach to managing the response to the terrorist threat. Some Council members favour an approach that is founded on human rights, addressing the root causes of terrorism and the involvement of civil society, while other members focus more closely on security and law enforcement.

Colombia

Expected Council Action

In January 2025, the Security Council is expected to receive a briefing from Special Representative and Head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia Carlos Ruiz Massieu on recent developments in Colombia and the Secretary-General's latest 90-day report on the mission, which was circulated to Council members on 26 December 2024.

The verification mission's mandate expires on 31 October 2025.

Key Recent Developments

On 24 November 2024, Colombia marked the eighth anniversary of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace concluded in 2016 between the government of Colombia and the former rebel group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). Secretary-General António Guterres, who was in Colombia for the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP16), emphasised in a 30 October 2024 press encounter that “this historic Agreement must remain at the centre of peacebuilding efforts” in the country. He welcomed the renewed efforts of Colombian President Gustavo Petro Urrego to accelerate implementation of the accord, including through the “shock plan” that the president announced during an 11 July 2024 Security Council meeting. Among other issues, Guterres also highlighted the importance of tackling violence through bringing state presence to historically neglected regions.

At the Council's latest meeting on Colombia, held on 15 October 2024, Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs Luis Gilberto Murillo Urrutia outlined six areas of focus for the “shock plan”. These include accelerating access to land and the implementation of the national plans on comprehensive rural reform as well as strengthening security, including for conflict-affected communities and former combatants. At that meeting, Ruiz Massieu welcomed the new momentum for implementation of the peace agreement. He voiced concern, however, that resources for “peace priorities” could be affected by fiscal constraints in the government's budget in 2025 and expressed hope that efforts would be made to protect resources for peace implementation in the national budget.

The last quarter of 2024 saw some developments in the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), the judicial component of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition established by the 2016 agreement. On 13 November 2023, the SJP charged six former members of the last Secretariat of the defunct FARC-EP guerrilla group as the main perpetrators in Case 07 on the recruitment and use of children during the conflict. In addition to recruitment and use, the accused were charged with other war crimes committed against children, including torture, homicide, and sexual and reproductive violence. Human rights organisations welcomed this move, with some emphasising the importance of the ruling's recognition of violence directed against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) children.

Signatories to the 2016 agreement continued to express concerns about the SJP's work, urging the court to hand down its restorative sentences, among other issues. In a 2 December 2024 interview, the new president of the SJP, Judge Alejandro Ramelli—who took

over the role from Judge Roberto Vidal on 6 November 2024—noted that the 15-year timeframe allotted for the SJP to conduct investigations is running out and indicated that once that happens, cases that the court has failed to investigate will be returned to the ordinary criminal courts. Rodrigo Londoño, the president of the Comunes party (which is comprised of former FARC-EP combatants), denounced the statement on 7 December, saying that it deviates from the 2016 agreement and that he would raise the issue with the Security Council. On that day, Ramelli issued a public letter, assuring that those appearing before the court will have the right to receive restorative sentences and to resolve their legal situation “as long as they assume their responsibility in a public manner and deliver detailed and exhaustive truth”.

The government also continued its dialogues with armed groups operating in the country as part of Petro's “total peace” policy. The process with the guerrilla group Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) stalled in May 2024 following the government's decision to hold a regional dialogue with one of the ELN's regional fronts. Following the expiry of the ceasefire between the sides in August 2024, the parties held several meetings to try to solve their differences, to no avail. A further meeting is planned for January 2025 in Caracas, Venezuela. The ELN's chief negotiator, Pablo Beltrán, reportedly said in late November 2024 that the focus is on making progress before Petro leaves office in August 2026, in order to “leave this process as consolidated as possible so that future governments can take it up again and continue it”.

The government also continued talks with some factions of the dissident group of the former FARC-EP that identifies itself as the Estado Mayor Central Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (EMC FARC-EP). This dialogue is more localised and is focused on finding agreement on the cessation of hostilities in a certain area in exchange for improvements in the situation of conflict-affected communities, including in their humanitarian conditions.

Between 9 and 12 December 2024, the Security Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict conducted a visit to Colombia. During the visit, Council experts met with officials from the Colombian government and from UN agencies, representatives of the SJP, and civil society representatives. In addition to meetings in Bogotá, the experts also travelled to the Caquetá, Cauca, and Norte de Santander departments, where they were able to see the conditions faced by children and young people, including lack of economic opportunities that make them more susceptible to recruitment by armed groups. It seems that the Council experts emphasised, among other things, the importance of involving UN actors such as UNICEF in the government's dialogue efforts with armed groups operating in the country, in order to facilitate discussion and agreement on action plans to end and prevent violations against children.

Human Rights-Related Developments

Following his 5-15 March 2024 visit to Colombia, José Francisco Cali Tzay, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, submitted a report on 10 September to the Human Rights Council on the situation of the indigenous peoples of Colombia. Among other recommendations, the Special Rapporteur urged the Colombian government to enact appropriate legislation to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples enshrined in international law and the 1991 Constitution; engage in direct

UN DOCUMENTS ON COLOMBIA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2754 (30 October 2024) renewed the verification mission's mandate. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9749 (15 October 2024) was the latest quarterly meeting on Colombia.

Colombia

dialogue with indigenous peoples, independent of dialogue with non-State armed groups, with a view to building lasting peace; and adopt the necessary legislation and measures to recognise indigenous political, territorial, and environmental authorities and strengthen self-governance processes.

On 5 December 2024, the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) concluded its 15-day visit to Colombia. The delegation emphasised the country's "systemic shortcomings, including fragmented legal frameworks, institutional inefficiencies, and a lack of clarity about the actual number of disappeared persons". Their preliminary findings revealed cases of tens of thousands of victims unaccounted for, forced recruitment, human trafficking and families left in despair despite decades of efforts to end this crime. The CED called for immediate and concrete actions, emphasising enhanced coordination between existing institutions, the need for sufficient funding and specialised staff, and strengthened accountability mechanisms as critical steps forward. It will publish a full report of its findings in April 2025.

Women, Peace and Security

On 30 November, the Colombian Ministry of Interior launched the country's first National Action Plan on women, peace and security (WPS) pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000. According to a post on X (formerly Twitter) by the Ministry of Interior, more than 1,500 women took part over the course of the past two years in developing the plan, which seeks to promote the participation of women in decision-making related to peace, to guarantee their protection, and to facilitate their access to leadership roles. The plan has over 105 actions aimed at eight main objectives, including active participation, access to health, and economic autonomy. A total of 33 entities will reportedly be responsible for implementing these actions and a committee will be set up to monitor and follow up on the plan for the next ten years.

Briefing at the Council's 15 October meeting, Beatriz Quintero, Co-founder of La Red Nacional de Mujeres (the National Women's Network), emphasised the importance of the national action plan, noting that feminists and women's organisations have campaigned for its adoption for years. She stressed that the action plan is "critical to bringing the total peace policy to fruition and must guarantee the participation of women and girls — in all their diversity — seen through a human security and feminist lens".

Key Issues and Options

An overarching priority for the Council remains supporting the full implementation of the 2016 peace agreement. As Petro reached the half-way point of his term in office, Council members have increasingly emphasised the need to take concrete action to that end. This will become pivotal in the upcoming year as Colombia prepares for presidential elections in 2026. Members may wish to continue emphasising the importance of continued focus on implementing the 2016 agreement to the current administration and candidates in the elections.

Supporting transitional justice efforts in the country is a

longstanding priority for the Council. Members have emphasised the importance of upholding the SJP's autonomy on numerous occasions, including through their press statements on Colombia. They also have an interest in seeing the concerns about legal uncertainty with regard to those appearing before the court addressed. An option would be for Council members to interact informally in New York with the SJP's new president, Ramelli. Such a meeting took place with Vidal in April 2024. This could help members get a better understanding of the challenges facing the SJP and to discuss the envisioned timelines for the handing down of restorative sentences.

Council Dynamics

Council members are united in their support for the peace process in Colombia and for the verification mission's work. This was reflected most recently during the generally smooth negotiations on resolution 2754 of 30 October 2024, which renewed the verification mission's mandate. (For more information, see our 30 October 2024 *What's in Blue* story.)

The advent of five new Council members in 2025—Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama, and Somalia—may affect Council dynamics on the Colombia file. Panama succeeds Ecuador in the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) seat. Like Ecuador, Panama shares a border with Colombia and has an interest in the cross-border effects of the activities of armed groups in Colombia. For instance, the Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC), Colombia's largest criminal group, controls drug trafficking routes across the Darién Gap, a strip of jungle between Colombia and Panama that is also used by migrants seeking to cross into Panama on their way to the US. The government's "total peace" dialogue efforts with armed groups operating in the country are therefore of interest to Panama.

Among the Council members that finished their term in 2024, Switzerland was closely involved in the "total peace" efforts, including as a guarantor country in the dialogue process with the EMC. It often advocated for a more proactive approach by the Council in supporting such dialogues. It remains to be seen whether any incoming or current Council member will continue to advocate for such a position.

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 85 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 instability has caused widespread displacement and acute

Haiti

food insecurity while exacerbating a governance crisis by preventing elections, which have not taken place in the country since 2016.

A new surge in gang violence starting in February 2024 prompted the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to facilitate an agreement among Haitian stakeholders on a political transition to stabilise the country's security situation and restore democratic governance. The agreement established a Transitional Presidential Council (TPC), which was formally installed in April 2024; it comprises seven voting members representing political parties and the private sector and two non-voting observers drawn from civil society and the religious community. The TPC was charged with selecting a new interim prime minister, establishing a provisional electoral council and national security council, and collaborating with the international community to accelerate the deployment of the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission that the Security Council authorised under Kenya's leadership through resolution 2699 of 2 October 2023 to help Haitian authorities re-establish security and build conditions conducive to holding free and fair elections. According to a political agreement signed by TPC members, the transitional period will culminate in the holding of elections by February 2026.

The TPC initially made some progress toward these objectives, including appointing former UN official Garry Conille as interim prime minister, selecting a transitional cabinet, and receiving the first MSS contingents from Kenya in June and July 2024. Other aspects of the TPC's work have stalled, however, such as the full formation of a provisional electoral council. This has reportedly been delayed because of internal disagreements among two civil society sectors—representing human rights and women's rights organisations, respectively—that are expected to serve on the body. Moreover, the TPC itself has been the subject of controversy, as three of its voting members have been implicated in a high-profile corruption scandal that has complicated its work and challenged its perceived legitimacy. The TPC also clashed with Conille over a variety of issues, including the handling of the corruption case, which eventually resulted in the TPC issuing a 10 November 2024 decree firing Conille and naming businessman and former Haitian Senate candidate Alix Didier Fils-Aimé as his successor.

Meanwhile, Haiti's security situation has continued to deteriorate. In the last quarter of 2024, gangs staged a new series of coordinated attacks on state institutions and critical infrastructure in Port-au-Prince, including police stations, prisons, and the main international airport, which temporarily closed for the second time that year. Gangs also launched deadly attacks on residential communities in and around Port-au-Prince, including a 3 October 2024 assault on the town of Pont-Sondé in which 115 people were killed, as well as a massacre that took place over several days in early December in the neighbourhood of Cité Soleil, in which at least 180 people were killed. This brought the total number of gang killings in 2024 to over 5,000, according to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk. In a 9 December 2024 statement, the Secretary-General condemned the Cité Soleil attack, called for a thorough investigation to ensure accountability, and urged Haitian stakeholders to accelerate the political transition.

The insecurity has continued to have a severe negative impact on Haiti's humanitarian situation. Between 11 and 20 November 2024,

the latest surge in violence displaced over 40,000 people, according to the International Organization for Migration, which previously estimated there was a total of 703,000 internally displaced persons in the country. The World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization continued to consider the country a "famine hotspot of highest concern" in their latest outlook report covering the period from November 2024 to May 2025, with nearly half the population facing acute food insecurity. Additionally, heavy rainfall in November and December 2024 caused severe flooding that damaged thousands of houses across the country and left several people dead. The deteriorating humanitarian situation has unfolded while the resurgent gang violence forced BINUH and some humanitarian organisations to temporarily reduce their in-country footprint and operations.

Meanwhile, the MSS mission continues to face challenges in subduing the gangs due to a lack of personnel and financial resources that limit the mission's ability to scale up its physical presence, which currently consists of about 400 police officers out of an expected total of 2,500. On 30 September 2024, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2751, renewing the mission's authorisation for one year under Kenya's leadership. Implicitly acknowledging the challenges the mission has faced, the resolution encouraged the mission to accelerate its deployment and the international community to provide additional voluntary contributions. Subsequently, Ecuador and the US—the Council's co-penholders on Haiti—introduced a separate draft resolution expressing the Council's intention to transform the MSS mission into a UN peacekeeping operation, which would secure it more predictable funding through the UN's regular peacekeeping budget. On 20 November, the Council held an open briefing and closed consultations at the request of China and Russia to discuss this proposal. Following additional informal consultations, the Council sent a letter dated 29 November to the Secretary-General that requested him to provide, within 60 to 90 days, strategic recommendations on the full range of options for UN support for Haiti, incorporating lessons learned from previous UN missions, political developments in Haiti, and the current MSS mission.

On 23 December, Council members issued a press statement in which they reiterated their deep concern about the crisis in Haiti. They strongly condemned the ongoing violence in the country and expressed their concern about the "slow progress on Haiti's road map for restoring democratic institutions". Further, they took note of the Council's 29 November letter to the Secretary-General requesting options for future UN support for Haiti.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 26 September, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provided an interim report on the human rights situation in Haiti. The report presents evidence of violence spreading beyond the capital to other regions of Haiti. The report concludes that the country's multidimensional crisis requires a comprehensive plan to achieve durable peace and security. The High Commissioner called upon all national stakeholders and government authorities to strengthen the Haitian National Police and to continue making progress in the establishment of the transitional governance arrangements providing for a democratic transition, leading to free and fair legislative and presidential elections in strict compliance with international law, including international human rights law.

On 20 November, UN High Commissioner Volker Türk expressed deep concern over the latest intensification of violence in Port-au-Prince as a coalition of gangs pushed for full control of the capital, further deepening the country's dire

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2752](#) (18 October 2024) renewed for one year the sanctions regime on Haiti imposed by resolution 2653 of 21 October 2022. [S/RES/2751](#) (30 September 2024) renewed for one year the authorisation for member states to deploy a Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission to Haiti to help re-establish security in the country and build conditions conducive to holding free and fair elections. [S/RES/2743](#) (12 July 2024) renewed BINUH's mandate for one year until 15 July 2025. [Secretary-General's Report S/2024/742](#) (15 October 2024) was the Secretary-General's 90-day report on Haiti. [Security Council Letter S/2024/704](#) (30 September 2024) was from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2653 (2022) addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the Panel of Experts' final report. [Security Council Press Statement SC/15954](#) (23 December 2024) was a press statement that reaffirmed the international community's continued support for the people of Haiti.

Haiti

humanitarian situation. Urgently calling for an immediate halt to the gang violence, Türk underscored the need for “concrete steps to bolster the Haitian police force and support the Multinational Security Support mission to protect the population and restore effective rule of law”.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 11 September 2024, the 2653 Haiti Sanctions Committee met to discuss the final report of its Panel of Experts, which covers the period from November 2023 to August 2024. The report found that illegal arms trafficking into Haiti “continues unabated” and that “[s]erious violations of human rights persist on a large scale with total impunity”, including killings, torture, kidnappings, sexual violence, and the forced recruitment and exploitation of children. On 18 October 2024, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2752, renewing the sanctions regime on Haiti for one year (For more information about that resolution, see our 17 October 2024 *What’s in Blue* story.)

Key Issues and Options

The Security Council’s overarching objective in Haiti is to support the country’s political transition and assist international and domestic efforts to stem the surge in gang violence, with the ultimate aim of restoring security conditions conducive to holding elections and addressing the root causes of the country’s instability.

One important task in this regard is ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the MSS mission. To this end, the Council could continue to consider options for transforming the mission into a UN peacekeeping operation. Alternatively, the Council could request the UN Secretariat to provide the mission with a logistical support package to assist it with certain administrative and back-stopping functions, which may ease the mission’s capacity constraints under its current structure. The recommendations that the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to provide on options for UN support for Haiti are likely to inform Council deliberations on this matter.

Additionally, the Council could convene an informal interactive dialogue (IID) with Haitian transitional authorities and civil society organisations to receive more detailed information about the progress and challenges that Haiti’s political transition is facing.

Council Dynamics

Council members are united in their concern about Haiti’s multi-dimensional crisis and generally agree on the need for a Haitian-led political solution that addresses both security and socioeconomic challenges. Members are also broadly supportive of UN engagement in Haiti.

Views vary, however, on appropriate Council responses to address the situation. The main point of contention concerns the possible transformation of the MSS mission into a UN peacekeeping operation. During negotiations on resolution 2751, Ecuador and the US apparently sought to include language expressing the Council’s intention to consider such a transformation, but China and Russia opposed this, referring to the chequered history of past UN peacekeeping operations in Haiti and arguing that the country’s political and security conditions were not conducive to a new operation. These two members remained opposed to the separate draft resolution that the co-penholders subsequently proposed on this issue, eventually resulting in the request to the Secretary-General for recommendations on UN support for the country as a compromise solution.

Security Council Report Staff

Shamala Kandiah Thompson
Executive Director

Katerina Limenopolou
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

Ashley Onwuzuruike
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, Türkiye, 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** on X/Twitter