

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

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

Pakistan plans to organise two signature events. The first is a high-level open debate on “[Promoting international peace and security through multilateralism and the peaceful settlement of disputes](#)” under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item. Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Ishaq Dar is expected to chair the meeting. UN Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief. Pakistan plans to pursue a resolution as an outcome of this meeting.

The second signature event is a briefing under the agenda item “[Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security](#)”, focusing on the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Dar is expected to chair the meeting. OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahim Taha and a UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) official are the anticipated briefers. A presidential statement is a possible outcome of the meeting.

Pakistan also intends to convene a briefing on [UN peace operations](#). A senior UN official is expected to brief.

In July, the Security Council will hold its quarterly open debate on “[The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question](#)”. Additional meetings on this file may be convened depending on developments in Israel and Gaza.

Other Middle Eastern issues on the programme include:

- [Syria](#), monthly meeting on the political and humanitarian tracks;

- [Yemen](#), monthly meeting on developments and renewal of the mandate of the UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA); and

- [Lebanon](#), consultations on the Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of resolution 1701. (Adopted in 2006, resolution 1701 called for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.)

African issues on the programme of work in July are:

- [Central African Republic \(CAR\)](#), renewal of the CAR sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee;
- [Sudan](#), the semi-annual briefing of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the ICC’s Darfur-related activities; and
- [West Africa and the Sahel](#), informal interactive dialogue (IID) on enhancing counter-terrorism cooperation in the region.

Regarding European issues, Council members are expected to hold consultations on the UN Peacekeeping Force in [Cyprus](#) (UNFYCIP).

The only Asian issue anticipated this month is the biannual consultations on the [UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia \(UNRCCA\)](#).

On the Americas, the Security Council will hold its quarterly meeting on [Colombia](#). The Council is also expected to hold a meeting on the situation in Haiti and to renew the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in [Haiti](#) (BINUH).

Other issues, including [Iran](#) and [Ukraine](#), could be raised in July depending on developments.

1 July 2025

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In Hindsight: Moving Towards a Second Era of Application of the Tools of the Children in Armed Conflict Agenda

Through the children and armed conflict agenda, the Council has developed a robust normative framework aimed at protecting children. Diplomats often exhibit a sense of pride in the concrete effects that the agenda has had on the ground, such as the release of more than 200,000 children from armed forces and groups since 1999 through dialogue and advocacy efforts by the UN.

This year, the children and armed conflict agenda commemorates several important milestones. It marks the 20th anniversary of landmark resolution 1612 of 26 July 2005, which established the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children.¹ As well, 25 years have passed since the adoption of the optional protocol to the UN conventions on the rights of the child (CRC), the most widely ratified human rights treaty.

This year also marks more sombre milestones. It was the third consecutive year where precipitous increases in violations were documented in the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict. His most recent annual report, dated 17 June, records “unprecedented levels” of violence against children in armed conflict situations in 2024, as the UN verified 41,370 grave violations, of which 36,221 were committed in 2024 and 5,149 were committed earlier but verified in 2024. This represents an alarming 25 percent increase compared with the previous reporting period and the highest number recorded since the MRM was established in 2005.

At the annual open debate on children and armed conflict, held on 25 June, many speakers emphasised that the bleak picture painted by the Secretary-General's report should serve as a call to action to protect children. Guyana, which chaired the meeting as Council president for the month of June, set the tone by expressing hope that the meeting will serve as “an opportunity to not just express outrage but to follow through with tangible action”. This *In Hindsight* analyses the messages and priorities outlined by Council members and other member states during the open debate. It also analyses the current challenges facing the agenda and makes recommendations for action, based on findings presented in our latest research report, titled “*Children and Armed Conflict: Progression, Regression or Maintenance of the Agenda?*”.

Annual Debate on Children and Armed Conflict

The annual debate was held under the theme of “Effective strategies to end and prevent grave violations against children”. In line with trends outlined in the Secretary-General's report, Guyana proposed to focus on ways to address the killing and maiming of children—including from the use of explosive ordnance and explosive weapons in populated areas—and rape and other forms of sexual violence against children.

Many speakers commented that the high numbers of violations illustrate a growing and blatant disregard for international humanitarian law (IHL) by conflict parties. They expressed shock about

the 35 percent increase in cases of rape and sexual violence against children compared with the previous year. Many also voiced alarm about the report's description of a “dramatic” increase in instances of gang rape, which “underlines the systematic use of sexual violence as a deliberate tactic of warfare”.

A cross-regional array of member states—including Council members China, Denmark, Greece, Guyana, and Sierra Leone, as well as member states such as Kazakhstan and Switzerland—called on conflict parties to abide by their obligations under IHL. Some speakers also noted that member states can take concrete action by ratifying relevant treaties, such as the 2022 Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA) and the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (also known as the Ottawa Convention or the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty).

There were also repeated calls for accountability for violations against children, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, in order to combat impunity and prevent their recurrence. Several Council members—including France, Guyana, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Sierra Leone, and Slovenia—mentioned the need for national and international justice mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court (ICC), to scale up investigations and prosecutions of such violations. Other accountability measures referenced by speakers include the annexes to the Secretary-General's annual report—which list perpetrators who commit grave violations against children and have come to be informally known as “the list of shame”—and designations in Security Council sanctions regimes.²

Several speakers called on donors to increase contributions for efforts such as the clearing of explosive ordnance, risk education, and victim assistance. Similar references were made to the need to provide specialised and gender-sensitive services to survivors of sexual violence. Among Security Council members, only the ROK provided concrete examples of contributions it has made in that regard, noting its partnership with UNICEF to deliver mine risk education and victim support in Myanmar as well as contributions to the establishment of multi-sectoral centres that assist survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

An issue that was on many speakers' minds is the financing crisis for the UN and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) resulting from funding cuts from traditional donors such as the US and some European countries. Some speakers stressed that cuts made as part of the UN80 initiative—a reform agenda aimed at streamlining the organisation in connection with its 80th anniversary—should not come at the expense of the protection of children. There was also emphasis on the need to support the MRM by facilitating adequate child protection capacities in UN peace operations, including in the context of drawdown or transition of

¹ The six grave violations, as determined by the Security Council, are child recruitment and use; killing and maiming; abductions; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; and the denial of humanitarian access.

² With the exception of the denial of humanitarian access, committing any of the other five grave violations could lead to a party being listed in the annexes of the annual report.

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such operations, and in entities such as UNICEF.

Some Council members such as France, as well as member states represented by the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict, emphasised the need to protect the tools developed by the agenda, including by supporting the MRM, calling for the even application of listing criteria in the annexes to the Secretary-General's annual report, and ensuring the effectiveness of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, including its ability to swiftly adopt conclusions on the Secretary-General's country-specific reports on children and armed conflict.

Many speakers referenced contexts where the highest numbers of violations were documented in the Secretary-General's report, namely Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), the DRC, Somalia, Nigeria, and Haiti. Issues that have been highly divisive in the Council sparked some controversial comments. Council member Algeria and the Observer State of Palestine accused the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG CAAC) of not doing enough to address the plight of children in Gaza, with Algeria noting that it had only issued two statements on the matter in the past year and that Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba had not visited Gaza since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war in October 2023.

Regarding Ukraine, Russia alleged that the Secretary-General's report does not adequately reflect violations committed by Ukrainian forces and argued that the forces' omission from the annexes to the Secretary-General's annual report reflects an unequal application of the listing criteria. Ukraine, for its part, maintained that the latest annual report provides unverified allegations of child casualties in Russia.

There was a new working methods innovation this year. Guyana proposed that Council members deliver a joint press statement at the stakeout ahead of the open debate. It proposed a draft text with standard language condemning all violations and abuses committed against children and expressing support for the OSRSG CAAC, UNICEF, and other UN entities engaged in child protection. However, divisions emerged during the discussions on the text. One apparent sticking point was Russia's request to remove references to the Secretary-General's report, which was unacceptable to several other members. The text eventually retained these references, leading Russia and Somalia to not join the statement. (Russia is listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual report for attacks on schools and hospitals and the killing of children in Ukraine, whereas the Somali National Army and the Somali Police Force are listed for killing and maiming as well as rape and other forms of sexual violence.) The US also decided not to participate in the statement, in line with its current approach to informal statements on other thematic issues such as women, peace and security (WPS) and climate, peace and security. The joint press statement was finally issued by 12 Council members.³

The positions of some Council members at the open debate and

the differences that emerged during the negotiations on the joint press statement are indicative of the complex dynamics on this issue and foreshadow some of the challenges that lie ahead in the Council's engagement on the file.

Options for Action

Our latest research report concludes that the children and armed conflict agenda appears to be both robust and fragile at the same time. Although it has developed strong tools for action, some of them have been under threat. In this regard, it is generally agreed that the annual report of the Secretary-General, which is based on credible information collected by the MRM, and the conclusions adopted by the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict promote accountability and help compel behavioural change from conflict parties. However, the working group has faced significant challenges to its ability to discharge its mandate, due to difficult Council dynamics that have precluded agreement on conclusions on some country situations, such as Myanmar and Syria. Meanwhile, the MRM is under increasing strain due to existing and prospective cuts that are likely to affect capacities related to monitoring and reporting on grave violations and the protection of children.

In a 2005 report in which he proposed the framework for the MRM, the Secretary-General stated that:

In spite of these advances, the situation for children remains grave and unacceptable on the ground. The international community is now faced with a cruel dichotomy. On the one hand, clear and strong children and armed conflict protection standards and important concrete initiatives, particularly at the international level, have been developed. On the other hand, atrocities against children and impunity for violators continue largely unabated on the ground.

The alarming findings of the Secretary-General's latest annual report demonstrate the continued relevance of these words, even 20 years later. The Secretary-General argued in his 2005 report that the key to "bridging this gulf" was the implementation of his campaign for the "era of application", which he had introduced in his 2002 annual report and the Council endorsed in resolution 1460 in 2003. He urged the international community to "redirect its energies from the normative task of the elaboration of standards to the compliance mission of ensuring their application on the ground".

Creating momentum around a second "era of application" appears crucial in the current environment. This will require political will and financial commitments from those who support the children and armed conflict agenda, both on and off the Council. Several potential areas for action are outlined below.

1. **Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict**- options to address the delays in the adoption of conclusions include:

- Convening an expert-level retreat involving relevant child protection actors, which can look at issues such as how to make

³ For more information, see the post-script to our 24 June *What's in Blue* story.

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conclusions more succinct and fit for purpose. The discussion could yield a “gentlemen’s agreement” that would allow for smoother negotiations.

- Having more sustained attention from the wider Council to the proceedings of the working group, including by raising the issue of stalled negotiations in meetings of political coordinators or under “any other business”.
- In light of the important role that experts play in the negotiation of conclusions, working group members can demonstrate more political will by ensuring that experts participating in the working group remain in that position for a sustained period of time.

2. **Support for the MRM**- bearing in mind that the MRM cannot be asked to do more with less, member states that wish to support the children and armed conflict agenda can:

- Focus financial contributions to entities that participate in the MRM, such as UNICEF, and can support extra-budgetary funding for additional child protection posts in UN peace operations. To better inform such contributions, an option would be for the UN to produce a list of contexts where there are significant capacity gaps that require additional funding;
- Ensure follow-up in the General Assembly’s Fifth Committee in cases where a UN peace operation is requested to carry out additional tasks relating to the protection of children or when relevant residual capacity is approved following the withdrawal of a UN peace operation from a certain country or area; and
- Council members supportive of children and armed conflict could strive to work together in the Fifth Committee, including with non-Council members, to ensure that child-protection capacities are approved and maintained in relevant budgets.

3. **Mainstreaming of the children and armed conflict agenda**-increasing the integration of the agenda into the Council’s work, including its products and its meetings, can help bring more visibility to issues affecting children and help member states better tailor responses to specific situations. In this regard, the children and armed conflict agenda could benefit from drawing on some elements of the innovations in working methods of other thematic issues. The shared commitments on WPS, for example, apply energy, creativity, consistent engagement, and cross-regional alliances in support of the agenda, both on and off the Council. Options include:

- Holding at least one additional meeting a year, besides the annual open debate, which addresses a cross-cutting issue relating to the children and armed conflict agenda, such as the protection of education or the recruitment and use of children;
- Identifying Council meetings on country-specific or cross-cutting issues that can benefit from a perspective on the situation of children and inviting relevant briefers (such as the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict or a UNICEF representative);
- Seeking more opportunities to inform sanctions committees about grave violations against children, including through holding joint meetings of relevant sanctions committees and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, a practice last used in July 2019 with the 2127 Central African Republic (CAR) Sanctions Committee;⁴ and
- In order to strengthen the sense of prestige, pride, and responsibility in being a member state that champions the protection of conflict-affected children, one or more member states can organise a high-level conference on children and armed conflict that would discuss creative ways to advance the agenda.

Status Update since our June Forecast

Security Council Elections 2025

On 3 June, the General Assembly held elections for Security Council membership for the 2026-2027 term. Bahrain, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Latvia, and Liberia were elected for the five available seats.

Ukraine

On 4 June, Russia convened an Arria-formula meeting on Ukraine titled “Understanding and Resolving the Ideological Roots of the Ukrainian Crisis”. The briefers were: Edouard Popov, Director of the Center for Public Cooperation and Information “Europe”; Natalya Seluykina, Executive Director of the Historical Memory Foundation; and Maxim Vilkov, coordinator of the Information Group on Crimes against the Person.

On 20 June, the Security Council held an open briefing on Ukraine (S/PV.9940). The meeting was requested by Ukraine in a 17 June letter following large-scale Russian aerial attacks on Kyiv and other cities across Ukraine on that day. Council members Denmark, France, Greece, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Slovenia, and the UK supported the meeting request. Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča and Director of the Operations and Advocacy Division at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Edem Wosornu briefed. Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Norway and Ukraine participated under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure.

UNOCA (Central Africa)

On 9 June, the Security Council held a briefing (S/PV.9931) and

⁴ “Special Representatives Deliver Briefings during Joint Informal Consultations of 2127 Sanctions Committee, Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict”, 29 August 2019, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/press-release/special-representatives-deliver-briefings-during-joint-informal-consultations-of-2127-sanctions-committee-working-group-on-children-and-armed-conflict/>.

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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/2025/342). The briefers were Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA Abdou Abarry and President of the Commission of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Gilberto da Piedade Veríssimo.

Iraq

On 10 June, the Security Council held an open briefing, followed by closed consultations, on the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (S/PV.9933). Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNAMI Mohamed Al Hassan briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's latest reports on UNAMI (S/2025/323) and the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-party nationals and missing Kuwaiti property (S/2025/320). Iraq and Kuwait participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

International Criminal Tribunals

On 11 June, the Council held its semi-annual debate on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) (S/PV.9934). The IRMCT's president, Judge Graciela Gatti Santana, and its Chief Prosecutor, Serge Brammertz, briefed during the debate and met with the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals on 10 June.

UNDOF (Golan)

Council members held consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on 12 June. Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Khaled Khiari briefed. On 30 June, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2782, renewing the mandate of UNDOF for six months, until 31 December 2025.

Iran

On 13 June, the Security Council held an emergency open briefing followed by closed consultations on Israel's military offensive against Iran (S/PV.9936). The meeting, which was held under the "Threats to international peace and security" agenda item, was requested by Iran in a letter sent to the Security Council earlier that day (S/2025/379). China and Russia supported the meeting request. Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi briefed the Council. Iran, Iraq, Israel, and Kuwait participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

On 20 June, the Council held another emergency briefing on the hostilities between Iran and Israel (S/PV.9939). This meeting was also held under the "Threats to international peace and security" agenda item and was requested by Iran in a letter dated 18 June (S/2025/391). Algeria, China, Pakistan, and Russia supported the meeting request. DiCarlo and Grossi briefed the Council. Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Türkiye, and Venezuela participated under rule 37 of

the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

On 22 June, the Council held a third emergency briefing on the situation in Iran, following US strikes against three Iranian nuclear facilities earlier that day (S/PV.9941). Like the prior two meetings, this briefing was also held under the "Threats to international peace and security" agenda item. It was requested by Iran in a letter dated 22 June (S/2025/405) and supported by Russia. The Council was briefed by Secretary-General António Guterres, Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča, and Grossi. Iraq, Iran, Israel, and Kuwait participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

On 24 June, the Council convened for its biannual briefing on the implementation of resolution 2231 of 20 July 2015, which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme (S/PV.9944). DiCarlo briefed Council members on the nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (S/2025/397). Members were also briefed by the Council's facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231, Ambassador Samuel Žbogar (Slovenia), and the Head of the European Union (EU) delegation to the UN, Ambassador Stavros Lambrinidis, in his capacity as coordinator of the JCPOA's Joint Commission. Germany, Iran, and Israel participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

On 16 June, Council members held closed consultations under the "Protection of civilians in armed conflict" agenda item. Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya briefed members on food insecurity in Gaza, following the circulation of a 2 June white note on the issue by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The meeting was requested by Guyana and Slovenia—the Council's co-focal points on conflict and hunger—together with Algeria. Pakistan and Somalia supported the request.

Sudan

On 16 June, Security Council members held closed consultations on Sudan. Denmark, Slovenia, and the UK (the penholder on the file) requested the meeting to receive an update on the humanitarian situation in the country. Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya briefed.

On 27 June, the Security Council held an open briefing (S/PV.9947), followed by closed consultations, on Sudan. Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee and Shayna Lewis, Senior Advisor and Sudan Specialist at Preventing and Ending Mass Atrocities, briefed in the open session. Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan Ramtane Lamamra briefed during the closed consultations. Sudan, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates participated in the open session under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Status Update since our June Forecast

Poverty, Underdevelopment, and Conflict

On 19 June and 23 June, the Security Council held an open debate on “Poverty, Underdevelopment, and Conflict: Implications for the Maintenance of International Peace and Security” (S/PV.9938 and Resumption I and II). The briefers were: UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific at the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Kanni Wignaraja, and African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf. Guyana’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hugh Hilton Todd, chaired the meeting.

Afghanistan

On 23 June, the Security Council convened for an open briefing on Afghanistan (S/PV.9942). Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Roza Otunbayeva, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya, and UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous briefed. Afghanistan, India, Iran and Qatar participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure. Closed consultations followed the open briefing.

Libya

On 24 June, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, briefed the Security Council on the situation in Libya (S/PV.9943). Closed consultations followed the open briefing.

Myanmar

On 24 June, Security Council members discussed Myanmar under the “any other business” portion of closed consultations, focusing on possible Council action on the file, including a draft presidential statement that had been circulated by the UK earlier in the month.

Children and Armed Conflict

On 25 June, the Security Council held its annual open debate on children and armed conflict (S/PV.9945 and Resumption I and II). Vindhya Persaud, Guyana’s Minister of Human Services and Social Security, chaired the meeting. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba briefed on the Secretary-General’s annual report on children and armed conflict, dated 17 June (S/2025/247). The Council was also briefed by Director of Child Protection and Migration at UNICEF Sheema SenGupta, and a child civil society representative from Syria.

Ahead of the open debate, 12 Council members—Algeria, China, Denmark, France, Greece, Guyana, Pakistan, Panama, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and the UK—held a joint stakeout at which Guyana read a joint statement that it had initiated. This was the first such joint informal statement by a group of Council members on the children and armed conflict agenda. Russia, Somalia, and the US did not join the statement.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 27 June, the Security Council held a briefing and consultations on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (S/PV.9948). Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the DRC and Head of MONUSCO Bintou Keita briefed based on the Secretary-General’s latest report on the situation in the DRC and the work of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (S/2025/403). The chair of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Michael Imran Kanu (Sierra Leone), also briefed on the work of the committee. DRC and Rwanda participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure.

On 30 June, the Council adopted resolution 2783 extending the 1533 DRC sanctions regime until 1 July 2026, and the mandate of the Group of Experts assisting the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee until 1 August 2026.

Conflict Prevention and Peaceful Resolution of Disputes

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council will convene a high-level open debate on “Promoting international peace and security through multilateralism and the peaceful settlement of disputes”. Pakistan, the Council president in July, is convening the debate as one of its signature events. Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, will chair the meeting. UN Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief. The meeting, organised under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item, is expected to highlight concerning trends of protracted and unresolved disputes that threaten international peace and security, and

to call for reinforced collective efforts to address them.

Pakistan aims to adopt a resolution in connection with the debate urging member states and the UN Secretariat to make full use of all Chapter VI mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes between nations, in line with Action 16 of the *Pact for the Future*.

Background and Key Recent Developments

The peaceful settlement of international disputes is rooted in fundamental principles of public international law—sovereignty, non-interference, and the prohibition of the use of force—and is enshrined in Chapter VI of the UN Charter and the Hague Conventions on Pacific Settlement of International Disputes.

UN DOCUMENTS ON CONFLICT PREVENTION Security Council Resolution S/RES/2171 (21 August 2014) was a resolution on conflict prevention. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2021/23** (16 November 2021) emphasised the importance of a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace, recognised the contribution of the UN’s principal organs to the maintenance of international peace and security, and expressed its continued commitment to fostering regular interactions with other principal organs, in accordance with their respective mandates, on matters relating to preventive diplomacy tools and mechanisms.

Conflict Prevention and Peaceful Resolution of Disputes

A broad coalition of states has recently emphasised the need for more robust pursuit of peaceful dispute resolution. Action 16 of the *Pact for the Future*, adopted by world leaders attending the Summit of the Future in September 2024, calls for political backing and allocation of adequate resources to the tools Chapter VI envisages—negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and judicial settlement before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Action 16 also calls for early-warning mechanisms and facilitation of confidence-building among parties to a conflict through the Secretary-General's good offices, and emphasises cooperation with regional partners to ensure transparent, inclusive and rules-based resolution of conflicts.

The Council's most recent resolution on conflict prevention was 2171 of 21 August 2014. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Council on actions taken to “promote and strengthen conflict prevention tools within the United Nations system” by 31 August 2015. Since then, the Secretary-General has been keeping the Council informed of UN preventive diplomacy efforts primarily through the mandated reports of special political missions and biennial reports on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Presidential statement S/PRST/2021/23 issued on 16 November 2021, following a high-level open debate chaired by the President of Mexico, remains the Council's most recent formal outcome on conflict prevention. It expressed the commitment of the Security Council to interact with other UN organs with regard to preventive diplomacy tools and mechanisms, while also recognising the importance of investing in peacebuilding for sustaining peace in the longer term.

In October 2023, Brazil convened a high-level open debate on conflict prevention as one of the signature events of its presidency. It was titled “Peace through dialogue: The contribution of regional, sub-regional and bilateral arrangements to the prevention and peaceful resolution of disputes” and was organised under the Council's agenda item on “Maintenance of international peace and security.”

The Council has also continued to incorporate cross-cutting discussions on conflict prevention into its “Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace” agenda item, recognising the increasing role of the UN peacebuilding architecture in conflict prevention. For example, in March 2024, Japan—serving as Council president—organised an open debate on “Promoting conflict prevention – Empowering all actors including women and youth” under the “Peacebuilding and sustaining peace” agenda item. During the meeting, the then Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Sérgio França Danese (Brazil), expressed the Commission's readiness to continue providing member states with the political space to discuss their prevention strategies and to advise the Security Council ahead of its consideration of countries that are undergoing conflict or transitioning from conflict.

Alongside these debates, Council members have organised several informal, off-site early-warning exchanges with PBC Chairs, drawing on briefings by academics, policy experts, and practitioners. These discussions—co-hosted by the UK and Brazil in 2023 and by the UK, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Sierra Leone in 2024—have apparently helped participants better anticipate conflict risks in different regions. Over the years, several other similar initiatives were discontinued—partly because some members were reluctant to discuss issues not formally on the Council's agenda.

The growing emphasis on peacebuilding as a prevention tool is also reflected in the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on the 2025 peacebuilding architecture review, which is expected to be finalised between October and December. From the outset, a growing chorus of member states has argued that the PBC should become the principal forum for the voluntary presentation of national prevention strategies, therefore complementing the conflict prevention work of the Security Council.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how the upcoming debate can generate actionable ideas to strengthen preventive diplomatic tools—leveraging the Secretary-General's good offices and other Chapter VI mechanisms—amid constrained political space and shrinking UN budgets. A related challenge is securing agreement on a new resolution that could provide a framework for advancing some of these ideas.

The Council could strengthen partnerships with coalitions of member states such as the Group of Friends of Mediation, co-chaired by Finland and Türkiye, as well as with regional organisations and mediation actors, to broaden diplomatic channels for peaceful dispute resolution and, where appropriate, mobilise resources in support of the UN's role in these efforts. The proposed draft resolution—expected to request an annual report from the Secretary-General on conflict prevention—could help the Council to institutionalise accountability and sustain focus on peaceful measures.

Another key issue is sustaining early-warning initiatives. The Council may wish to consider continuing the practice of informal early-warning briefings for Council members and PBC chairs with a view to anticipating conflict risks and mobilising collective action. When pursuing such initiatives, it is worth considering research showing that the wealth of information generated by the UN's human rights system may indicate growing risks of violent conflict. The Security Council can gain insights into conflict precursors by requesting more frequent input from, and supporting the work of, human rights actors where appropriate.

A third key issue is strengthening structural prevention through closer linkages with peacebuilding initiatives. The Council can deepen its engagement with the PBC—especially as the UN peacebuilding architecture undergoes review in 2025—by systematically requesting and drawing on PBC advice during conflict prevention deliberations and relevant mandate renewals.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Pakistan's emphasis on fully utilising Chapter VI mechanisms, which appears to be an impetus for its signature event on conflict prevention, reflects its underlying concern about perceived unilateral acts that risk escalating conflicts. For example, at the Council's emergency session on Iran on 22 June, Pakistan cautioned that Israeli and US strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities risked further escalation, urging recourse to dialogue and diplomacy. The open debate is also taking place just over two months after the emergency closed consultations on the India-Pakistan question, held on 5 May 2025 at Pakistan's request to discuss rising tensions following the 22 April Pahalgam attack, which exposed the fragility of deterrence and escalation control mechanisms between the two nuclear-armed states. (For more

Conflict Prevention and Peaceful Resolution of Disputes

information, see our 5 May 2025 *What's in Blue* story.)

While Council members broadly affirm the principle that the peaceful settlement of disputes is central to the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security, divisions persist over how rigorously the Council should promote dispute-settlement mechanisms. Some members underscore strict respect for state sovereignty and insist that any mediation must have explicit consent from the parties, while others argue that the Council has a responsibility to encourage or even recommend recourse to third-party mediation or arbitration when disputes risk escalation, even if one party is initially reluctant.

There are also different views over the scope and timing of early-warning and preventive engagement. Some members are concerned about overreach or politicisation of early-warning methodologies and favour narrow criteria for when the Council intervenes—arguing

that upstream diplomacy should be led by regional organisations or bilateral actors unless a dispute imminently threatens wider peace. Others advocate for more proactive, Council-led horizon-scanning and informal consultations to identify nascent conflicts and assertive decision-making.

Members also diverge on linking dispute-settlement efforts to emerging domains and cross-cutting issues. A number of states caution against expanding the Council's role into areas such as cyber disputes, climate-related transboundary tensions, or resource conflicts, viewing them as outside the traditional remit of interstate dispute resolution or better addressed through specialised fora. In contrast, proponents argue that contemporary disputes increasingly overlap with these new challenges and that the Council should develop tailored tools.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council is expected to vote on a draft resolution renewing the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) prior to its 15 July expiration. In addition, on 2 July, the Council plans to hold its 90-day briefing on the situation in Haiti. Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča will brief the Council on recent developments in the country and on the Secretary-General's latest report on BINUH. Closed consultations are expected to follow the briefing.

The authorisation of the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission to Haiti ends on 2 October.

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. Armed gangs have overrun an estimated 85 percent of Port-au-Prince, the capital, employing tactics including murder, kidnapping, and sexual violence on the civilian population amid widespread impunity. In recent months, the gangs have expanded their reach beyond the capital, including to parts of the Artibonite and Centre departments.

In a 13 June statement, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that at least 2,680 people were killed between 1 January and 30 May in Haiti. OHCHR also addressed the intensification of “clashes between gangs and so-called self-defence groups”, including an incident on 20 May during which at least 25 people were killed and 10 injured by armed individuals who accused the victims of supporting gangs. The statement further notes that at least 65 people have been summarily executed by police elements.

The situation of children in Haiti remains particularly concerning. According to the Secretary-General's most recent annual report on

children and armed conflict, dated 17 June, 2,269 grave violations were committed in 2024 against 1,373 children in Haiti. (The six grave violations, as determined by the Security Council, are: child recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abductions, and the denial of humanitarian access.) In a new development, the *Viv Ansanm* gang coalition (“living together” in Haitian Creole) has been added to the annexes of the Secretary-General's report, which list parties that have committed grave violations against children.

The Haitian National Police (HNP) and the Kenya-led MSS mission have struggled to make significant headway against the gangs. The MSS continues to face funding uncertainty and a lack of adequate equipment. Deployment levels are far short of the 2,500 officers envisaged in its Concept of Operations, with only around 1,000 personnel on the ground at the time of writing. The HNP also remains understaffed and underequipped.

Haitian authorities have reportedly hired US private military contractors to support a task force operating drones to target gang members. On 20 June, the current head of the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC), Fritz Alphonse Jean, confirmed that the Haitian government and the TPC engaged foreign contractors to support the security forces in fighting the gangs. The deployment of drones to curb violence in Haiti has raised concerns about the legality and effectiveness of their use.

The humanitarian situation remains dire. Approximately 5.7 million people are facing high levels of acute food insecurity, including more than 8,400 experiencing “catastrophic hunger” conditions (Phase 5 of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification). As at 11 June, nearly 1.3 million people were internally displaced. This represents a 24 percent increase since December 2024 and the highest number of people displaced by violence ever recorded in Haiti, according to the International Organization for Migration. Noting the compounding effects of deportations on Haiti's humanitarian

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2752 (18 October 2024) renewed the sanctions regime on Haiti imposed by resolution 2653 of 21 October 2022. S/RES/2751 (30 September 2024) renewed the authorisation for member states to deploy the MSS to Haiti for one year. S/RES/2743 (12 July 2024) renewed BINUH's mandate for one year, until 15 July.

crisis, the UN Humanitarian Country Team recently expressed deep concern at the “rising number of pregnant and breastfeeding women” deported from the Dominican Republic to Haiti in the context of large-scale expulsions.

Despite the deteriorating humanitarian situation, the humanitarian response remains severely underfunded. As of 24 June, only 8.3 per cent of the 2025 UN Humanitarian Response Plan for Haiti was funded. In a recent media briefing, the World Food Programme (WFP) said that, as Haiti enters the Atlantic hurricane season, “a single storm could push millions into a humanitarian catastrophe”. They warned that, unless resources are made available, the WFP will not have the capacity to respond in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

On the political front, the future of the transition—including the holding of elections—remains uncertain while dynamics in the TPC continue to be marked by internal divisions. The TPC was created pursuant to a March 2024 agreement facilitated by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the US following a dramatic surge in gang violence in February 2024. According to the 10 April 2024 Decree, which established the TPC, this transitional body will exercise presidential powers until a new president is elected by 7 February 2026. This date marks the expiration of the TPC’s mandate, which, as established by a May 2024 Decree, cannot be extended.

Transitional authorities have also committed to holding a constitutional referendum. The draft of Haiti’s new constitution was made public and presented to the TPC by a steering committee in May. The committee is expected to issue a revised draft after considering feedback from the public on the text.

On 28 May, the ten elected members (E10) of the Security Council requested closed consultations to receive an update on the situation in Haiti and discuss how the Council could respond to the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General’s 24 February letter on options for UN support to Haiti.

In his letter, the Secretary-General said that transforming the MSS mission into a peacekeeping operation was “not assessed as a feasible option”, adding that “[s]uch a transition could be considered once significant progress has been made in substantially reducing gang territorial control”. Instead, he recommended, among other things, the establishment of a UN Support Office to provide logistic and operational support to the MSS mission, such as accommodation, medical capability, and support for mobility and information technology. Regarding BINUH, the Secretary-General suggested focusing on tasks including supporting the Haitian authorities in handling the detention of “high-risk individuals” and enabling the Haitian authorities to implement UN sanctions, “notably the arms embargo”. (For more information, see the brief on Haiti in our April 2025 *Monthly Forecast*.)

Given that the 28 May consultations did not result in the substantive discussion of the options outlined in the Secretary-General’s letter—primarily due to the lack of clarity regarding the US position on the matter—Panama and the “A3 Plus” members (Algeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Guyana) requested a follow-up meeting. This second closed consultations meeting was held on 30 June to formally begin deliberations on the Secretary-General’s proposals. The request from Panama and the “A3 Plus” was also prompted by the deteriorating security situation in Haiti and a 19 June letter from

Kenya requesting “expeditious consideration” by the Council of the Secretary-General’s letter (S/2025/402). (For background, see our 27 June *What’s in Blue* story on Haiti.)

On 11 June, the UN Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission convened a joint meeting on “Building and Sustaining Peace in Haiti”. The discussion focused on the need for comprehensive approaches to the crisis, strengthening peacebuilding efforts and the importance of inclusive community violence reduction.

On 27 June, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted a resolution requesting the OAS Secretary-General to develop an action plan on the OAS’ support to Haitian authorities on issues including security, humanitarian assistance, and elections. The resolution also says that the OAS General Assembly resolves to recognise the organisation’s “strengthened role” in Haiti and urges its member states to intensify diplomatic engagement with the UN Security Council and Secretariat in support of a response to Haiti’s request for increased security assistance and for the consideration of all UN peace and stabilisation options, “including, but not limited to” the UN Secretary-General’s 24 February proposals.

Human Rights-Related Developments

A 28 March UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ report on Haiti concluded that a key driver of human rights violations and abuses in the country is the “widespread possession of a broad range of trafficked firearms and ammunition by gangs, mainly facilitated by corruption, impunity and poor governance”. Citing expert estimates, the report says that between 270,000 and 500,000 firearms are circulating illegally in the country, with most weapons “in the hands of criminals but also of other private actors, including private security companies”. It calls on the Haitian authorities to strengthen the HNP to better respond to gang violence and urges member states to support the continued deployment of the MSS. The report further calls on member states to follow arms control regulations, adhere to the arms embargo on Haiti, and update the list of individuals and entities subject to Security Council sanctions on the country.

Women, Peace and Security

In a 4 June statement, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten expressed grave concern at the “escalating levels of sexual violence being inflicted upon women and girls” in Haiti. The statement says that the “situation has reached a breaking point” with violations “overwhelmingly concentrated in areas under gang control”. It stresses that sexual violence is being used “deliberately and systematically to assert dominance and punish communities”, with survivors often assaulted in their homes or public spaces. It also warns about a “dramatic rise” in the past eight months in documented cases of sexual slavery.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The interim report of the Panel of Experts on Haiti was circulated to the members of the 2653 Committee in March and transmitted to the Security Council on 9 June.

In May, the US designated *Viv Ansanm* and *Gran Grifas* foreign terrorist organisations. The International Crisis Group observed that the “designation will likely do little to restore security and could complicate humanitarian operations”, while also noting that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio later said that Washington would not sanction humanitarian organisations forced to pay tolls imposed by gangs.

Key Issues and Options

The central task for the Security Council in July is to renew BINUH’s mandate. Protecting the mandate’s integrity in the current climate of violence and uncertainty and ensuring that the mission has the resources to carry out its mandated tasks is an important issue for the Council. One option is to extend BINUH’s mandate for one year

Haiti

through a straightforward renewal. In his latest report on the situation in Haiti, which was circulated to Council members on 26 June, the Secretary-General recommended the extension of BINUH's mandate for another year "with the logistical and security resources needed to operate in the current environment" (S/2025/418).

Responding to the Secretary-General's 24 February 2024 letter, including addressing how to provide adequate support to the MSS mission, is a further issue that Council members are likely to discuss in July.

Council Dynamics

Council members are united in their concern about Haiti's multidimensional crisis and generally agree on the need to tackle escalating gang violence and its impact on civilians. Views also converge on the importance of a Haitian-led political solution that addresses

both security and socioeconomic challenges. At the same time, positions have varied among Council members on how to appropriately respond to the security situation in Haiti.

The E10, as well as France and the UK, broadly share the view that the Council should respond to the Secretary-General's recommendations from February. It seems that, during the 28 May closed consultations, China expressed reservations on some aspects of the Secretary-General's proposal. While the US currently remains the principal provider of financial support to the MSS mission, at the time of writing, its position on the Secretary-General's proposal, and more generally, its approach to addressing the security situation in Haiti, remained unclear.

For the past three years, the Security Council has renewed BINUH's mandate unanimously.

The US and Panama are the co-penholders on Haiti.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council will hold its monthly briefing, followed by closed consultations, on Yemen. UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg and an official from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are expected to brief on political, security, and humanitarian developments in the country.

The Council is also expected to renew the mandate of the UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), which expires on 14 July, and the monthly reporting requirement on Houthi attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea, originally mandated by Security Council resolution 2722, which expires on 15 July.

Key Recent Developments

In June, strikes between the Houthi rebel group and Israel continued, as the Houthis maintained a campaign against Israel, which they say is in solidarity with the Palestinians. On 2 June, the Houthis claimed responsibility for a missile launched at Israel's Ben Gurion airport, which was intercepted by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). On 14 June, a Houthi-launched missile reportedly hit a town in the West Bank, injuring five Palestinians, including three children. On 10 June, Israel launched renewed strikes on Yemen's port city of Hodeidah—which they claim is being used by the Houthis to smuggle weapons—and threatened an "aerial and naval blockade" if the Houthis continue to attack Israel.

Despite a ceasefire agreed between the US and the Houthis in May, which ended months of US bombing of Houthi targets, on 22 June, the Houthis announced their willingness to "target US ships and warships in the Red Sea" in retaliation for the US strikes on Iran's nuclear sites on 22 June. The US strikes were conducted in support of Israel's military offensive on Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programme earlier in June. A ceasefire between Israel and Iran went into effect on 24 June. At the time of writing, no Houthi

attacks in the Red Sea have been reported since then.

Council resolution 2768 (15 January 2025) requests the Secretary-General to issue a monthly report on any new incidents involving Houthi attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea. A 9 June letter from the Secretary-General to the Council said that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) indicated that no new incidents occurred during the reporting period of 10 May to 9 June. The most recent verified attack against a commercial vessel was in December 2024.

On 5 June, Security Council members issued a press statement marking one year since the Houthis arbitrarily detained dozens of personnel from the United Nations, national and international NGOs, civil society organisations and diplomatic missions. In the statement, Council members reiterated their strong condemnation of the ongoing detentions, as well as the death of a World Food Programme (WFP) staff member on 10 February while in Houthi captivity. In the statement, members also reiterated their demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained, and for the Houthis to ensure safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to ensure assistance can reach civilians in need.

The Houthis' involvement in broader regional tensions has continued to stall progress towards a roadmap for peace in Yemen. On 29 May, however, the Houthis and the internationally recognised Yemeni government agreed to reopen a vital road, which had been closed for nearly seven years, linking the Houthi-controlled city of Sana'a with the southern port city of Aden. During the 12 June Security Council meeting on Yemen, both Grundberg and Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya praised the move as a trust-building step. Msuya highlighted that it will reduce travel time and improve access to healthcare for communities in a number of governorates.

Yemen is facing severe economic and humanitarian hardship. The World Bank's latest Yemen Economic Monitor report highlights that

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2768 (15 January 2025) extended the Secretary-General's monthly reporting requirement on Houthi attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea. S/RES/2742 (8 July 2024) renewed the mandate of UNMHA until 14 July 2025. Security Council Press Statements SC/16079 (5 June 2025) marked a year since the June 2024 wave of arbitrary detention of UN and NGO personnel by the Houthis. SC/15995 (13 February 2025) condemned the detention of UN and NGO personnel by the Houthis.

Yemen

the country's fragile economy has been exacerbated by the ongoing Houthi blockade on oil exports, the country's fragmentation into two economic zones, and tensions in the Red Sea.

In her briefing to the Council on 12 June, Msuya underscored that over 17 million people—nearly half of Yemen's population—are estimated to be “acutely hungry”, adding that malnutrition is affecting 1.3 million pregnant and breastfeeding women and 2.3 million children under the age of five. She appealed for “scaled-up, flexible funding based on needs” to sustain the UN's aid operations. A 17 June Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) update notes that the “reduction in emergency food aid and livelihood support following donor funding cuts eliminated a vital safety net that had been preventing alarming levels of acute food insecurity” and projects that food security is expected to rapidly worsen in the coming months.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how to help mitigate the risk of hostilities in Yemen and the Red Sea while advancing efforts to relaunch the stalled intra-Yemeni political process amid broader regional tensions. The relative calm in the Red Sea following the US-Houthi ceasefire represents an opportunity for Council members to support further de-escalation and to encourage the parties in Yemen to resume negotiations towards a nationwide ceasefire and a political settlement.

At the same time, the Council will need to ensure the protection and safety of navigation and shipping in the Red Sea by maintaining pressure on the Houthis to avoid resuming attacks on merchant ships and global supply chains. In this regard, a likely option for the Council is to extend for a further six months the monthly reporting requirement for the Secretary-General on attacks by the Houthis on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea.

Another likely option for the Council would be to renew the mandate of UNMHA, which includes monitoring the ceasefire in Hodeidah governorate, which the December 2018 Stockholm Agreement established, for another year. Hodeidah is a key point through which humanitarian aid is received, and, considering worsening humanitarian conditions in the country, Council members may want to ensure that UNMHA's efforts to minimise tensions in the region are adequately prioritised.

Given the increasingly fraught humanitarian context, Council members could also consider holding a public briefing, possibly at high level, focused specifically on Yemen's humanitarian

crisis—which could include a briefing from the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) or the WFP on the country's rapidly worsening food security—providing members the opportunity to highlight the urgent need for bolstering funding pledges.

Council Dynamics

Council members are largely aligned in support of an inclusive intra-Yemeni political process, the need to improve economic and humanitarian conditions in the country, and the need to restore freedom of navigation and security to the Red Sea. Advancing mediation efforts towards a resumption of dialogue and a peace process under UN auspices remains an overarching priority for members.

Nevertheless, Council members have divergent views on the reasons for the protracted political stalemate and insecurity in Yemen. The “A3 plus one” members, China, Pakistan, and Russia have all stressed that the situation in Yemen and the Red Sea cannot be discussed in isolation from the situation in Gaza, and some have directly blamed Israel for the current instability in the region. Russia has also heavily criticised the US military campaign against the Houthis as ineffective, claiming that it only served to degrade Yemen's already dire humanitarian situation.

On the other hand, the P3 members (France, the UK, and the US) have accused Iran of financially and militarily supporting the Houthis, fostering further regional tensions. The US has taken a hawkish stance against Iranian support of the group, viewing it as the key facilitator of the Houthi movement—which the US has designated as a foreign terrorist organisation. The US has repeatedly called for the Security Council to respond to Iranian defiance of the Council-mandated arms embargo.

During the 12 June Council meeting, the US claimed to have evidence of Chinese companies providing the Houthis with dual-use components and satellite imagery, adding that one company is financed by Chinese authorities and is backed by “senior leadership”. In its statement, China denied the accusations and noted that the company in question “has no business connections with either Iran or the Houthis”.

Several Council members have also called for the strengthening of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM), which inspects ships travelling to Houthi-controlled ports to ensure compliance with the arms embargo against the group.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen.

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

Expected Council Action

In July, Kaha Imnadze, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), is expected to brief Security Council members on the UNRCCA's work in closed consultations.

Key Recent Developments

Imnadze last briefed Council members on 6 February, in closed consultations. Among other matters, he provided an update on UNRCCA's activities pertaining to counter-terrorism, transboundary water management, border demarcation, and the women, peace and security, and youth, peace and security agendas. The consultations likewise focused on the border negotiations between Kyrgyzstan and

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

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

Tajikistan, as well as the situation in Afghanistan and its impact on Central Asia.

On 27 February, a group of UN human rights experts expressed concern over the introduction of new legislation restricting freedom of religion or belief in Kyrgyzstan. Signed by President Sadyr Japarov on 21 January, the new legislation includes laws “On Freedom of Religion on Religious Associations” and “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Religious Sphere”, the latter of which also amends the Code of Offences. The entry of these laws into force has been criticised by both national and international human rights experts on the basis that they limit Kyrgyzstan’s space for freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, while restricting freedom of expression, assembly, and association and the exercise of cultural rights.

In Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Presidents Japarov and Emomali Rakhmon (Tajikistan) signed a border agreement on 13 March, formally resolving their long-running border dispute. Building on the momentum of this agreement, on 31 March, Japarov and Rakhmon, with the addition of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, convened a trilateral summit in Khujand, Tajikistan. After two decades of negotiations, the three heads of state signed a treaty on the junction point of their country’s national borders.

This was complemented by the countries’ adoption of the Khujand Declaration of Eternal Friendship, the opening of a column symbolising friendship at the junction point, accompanied by the exchange of instruments of ratification by Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for their bilateral agreement. The development ushers in a new era of cooperation between the two countries following decades of conflict and division over the borders of Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan and Ferghana Valley. In a statement attributed to Stéphane Dujarric, the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, António Guterres, “congratulated the two countries on this achievement and commended their leadership and political will to bring the negotiation process to a successful conclusion”.

Member states continue to strengthen economic, political, and security ties with Central Asia, sparking increased diplomatic competition in the region. On 21 February, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had a call with Uzbekistan Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov during which they discussed continued cooperation between the two countries, including through the C5+1 diplomatic platform, which comprises the five Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and the US. The two also discussed Uzbekistan’s efforts to combat terrorism and illegal migration.

During the inaugural European Union-Central Asia summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 3-4 April, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen underscored the EU’s commitment to take its partnership with Central Asia to the next level, including by “deepening trade ties and expanding cooperation in transport, critical raw materials, digital connectivity, water, and energy”.

A Russia-Central Asia summit is scheduled for October and is expected to be held on the sidelines of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. Speaking at a press briefing on 23 April in Samarkand, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reportedly said that the meeting would

be dedicated to coordinating efforts aimed at developing cooperation in multiple areas related to transportation, energy, culture, technology, among other areas.

As part of their border agreement, on 3 April, Japarov and Rakhmon officially initiated the first phase of the Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000), commissioning a 500-kilovolt transmission line in Tajikistan. The project will reportedly connect their countries in transmitting surplus hydroelectricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through Afghanistan and then Pakistan.

On 27 May, Imnadze engaged in discussions with the Secretary-General of the CIS, Sergey Lebedev, regarding ongoing collaboration between the UNRCCA and the CIS, including potential opportunities for joint efforts in promoting security and regional cooperation in Central Asia. Imnadze also met with Samat Ordabaev, the Deputy Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), to confer shared concerns pertaining to regional security, with particular attention to the evolving situation in Afghanistan.

From 16 to 18 June, Chinese President Xi Jinping travelled to Astana, Kazakhstan, to attend the second China–Central Asia Summit. The summit brought together the heads of state from all five Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—in addition to Xi. During the conference, Xi reportedly pledged that China would provide Central Asian countries with 1.5 billion yuan (\$208.86 million) in grant assistance this year to support their livelihood and development projects. The leaders also adopted the Astana Declaration of the Second China–Central Asia Summit and signed a treaty on eternal good-neighbourliness, friendship, and cooperation, which, among other matters, aims to foster greater collaboration across multiple domains, including trade, infrastructure, security, and cultural exchange. According to media reports, the summit furthermore announced the signing of 12 cooperation documents regarding facilitation of people-to-people exchanges, trade, and other sectors.

Since his last briefing, Imnadze continued to promote dialogue and confidence-building among the Central Asian states and to support regional efforts aimed at preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism. On 30 April, UNRCCA—with the Government of Kazakhstan, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)—organised a Cross-regional Dialogue on the Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR) of Returnees from Conflict Zones.

Key Issues and Options

An underlying issue facing the Council is determining how the Council can most effectively support the efforts of the UNRCCA to facilitate preventive diplomacy and regional cooperation. The Council could choose to hold an open briefing on UNRCCA, which would enable members to voice support for its work and raise awareness of its activities. This open briefing could be followed by closed consultations to allow for a more frank and detailed exchange with Imnadze. The Council could also choose to hold a debate to provide the Central Asian states an opportunity to discuss the work of the UNRCCA in public.

UNRCCA (Central Asia)

The situation in Afghanistan and its impact on Central Asia present another matter of concern for the Council. The Council could consider inviting a representative of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to participate in the meeting and provide information regarding developments in the country that might affect the wider region.

Council Dynamics

Council members generally support UNRCCA and regard it as an important tool in promoting cooperation in Central Asia. Before mid-2018, Council members often issued press statements expressing support for UNRCCA and its work and encouraging increased

cooperation and coordination among the Central Asian countries, the UNRCCA, and “relevant regional organisations”. However, Council members have been unable to agree on a press statement on the UNRCCA since that time, due to disagreements among the permanent members about including references to specific regional organisations, including the CIS, the CSTO, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Press elements commending then-Special Representative and Head of the UNRCCA Natalia Gherman for her efforts and expressing support for UNRCCA’s work were read out following the UNRCCA consultations in January 2023.

Sudan

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council is expected to receive the semi-annual briefing on the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) activities related to the situation in Darfur. ICC Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan is expected to brief.

Background and Key Recent Developments

More than 17 years after the Council’s ICC referral on the situation in Darfur, through resolution 1593 of 31 March 2005, the first trial opened on 5 April 2022 with the case of *Prosecutor v. Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman* (“Ali Kushayb”). Abd-Al-Rahman, reportedly a former leader of the Janjaweed militia, is accused of 31 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed between August 2003 and approximately April 2004 in Darfur. The ICC concluded the trial in December 2024, and a decision is expected later this year. (For more information, see our 27 January *What’s in Blue* story.)

Four arrest warrants issued by the ICC remain outstanding—against former Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir; former Sudanese Minister of State for the Interior Ahmad Muhammad Harun; former Sudanese Minister of National Defence Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein; and former Commander-in-Chief of the Justice and Equality Movement Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain. Pursuant to resolution 1593 and the ICCs’ subsequent orders, Sudan remains under an obligation to surrender the four remaining suspects to the Court. According to the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP), following the outbreak of fighting in April 2023, Bashir, Hussein, and Harun—who had all been in custody in Kober prison in Khartoum—were released. Subsequently, media reports accused Harun of mobilising supporters of the former Bashir regime to fight alongside the army in Khartoum and other parts of Sudan.

According to the ICC Prosecutor’s most recent report, submitted to the Security Council on 16 January pursuant to resolution 1593, the OTP has gathered sufficient evidence to establish reasonable grounds to believe that a wide range of crimes under the Rome Statute have been—and continue to be—committed in Darfur, in

the context of the ongoing conflict in Sudan that began in April 2023. These include killings, pillaging, attacks against internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, indiscriminate targeting of civilian populations, gender-based crimes, and crimes against and affecting children. (Under the Rome Statute, the ICC has jurisdiction over four crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.) Furthermore, the OTP has continued to preserve evidence and information regarding alleged crimes committed by the Sudanese warring parties in North Darfur.

In his 27 January briefing to the Security Council, ICC Prosecutor Karim Ahmad Khan highlighted that the pattern of crimes, the perpetrators, and the targeted groups in the context of the ongoing conflict in Sudan closely resemble those from the 2003 conflict, which prompted the Council’s initial referral of the situation to the ICC. Khan emphasised the need to close the impunity gap and called for greater accountability. He expressed concern over widespread allegations regarding the targeting of women and girls, including reports of gender-based crimes. Khan confirmed that the OTP is taking steps to submit applications for arrest warrants in connection with crimes allegedly committed in West Darfur, while stressing that such applications will only be filed once the OTP is satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of conviction. He also underscored the importance of transferring Ahmad Harun to the ICC, noting its potential impact given the clear connection between Harun’s case and the recently concluded trial of Ali Kushayb.

In her remarks during the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide ad interim Virginia Gamba said that the Sudanese warring parties in the current conflict have committed serious human rights violations and that the risk of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in Sudan remains very high. She noted that continued and targeted attacks against certain ethnic groups, particularly in the Darfur and Kordofan regions, remain of particular concern. Gamba highlighted that the RSF and allied Arab militias continue to conduct ethnically motivated attacks against the Zaghawa, Masalit, and Fur groups.

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1593 (31 March 2005) referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9851** (27 January 2025) was the ICC Prosecutor’s semi-annual briefing on the Court’s work in Darfur.

Sudan

In a 16 May statement, ICC Prosecutor Karim Ahmad Khan announced that he would temporarily step aside while the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services conducts an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct, which he has denied. In his absence, the OTP confirmed that Deputy Prosecutors Nazhat Shameem Khan and Mame Mandiaye Niang have assumed leadership responsibilities.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 2 June, a humanitarian aid convoy comprising 15 trucks from the WFP and UNICEF came under attack in Al Koma, which is located approximately 80 kilometres from El Fasher. The attack resulted in the deaths of five personnel, injured several others, and destroyed multiple trucks and critical humanitarian supplies. A day earlier (1 June), a separate attack, reportedly attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), struck a busy market in Al Koma, killing 15 civilians and injuring dozens more. In a 4 June press release, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) called for prompt and impartial investigations into both incidents, along with meaningful steps to ensure accountability. It also urged all parties to the conflict to take concrete measures to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, and to facilitate safe and unimpeded humanitarian access in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

In a 17 June press release, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) for Sudan warned that the civil war is intensifying, with devastating consequences for civilians caught in the conflict. The IFFM reported the increased use of heavy weaponry in populated areas, with hospitals and medical facilities coming under siege, and a sharp rise in sexual and gender-based violence. It described the situation as “a grave human rights and protection emergency.” In El Fasher, civilians have been assaulted, detained, and killed, while villages have been attacked, burned, and looted by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). During one RSF assault from 10 to 13 April, more than 100 civilians were reportedly killed. The IFFM called on the international community to impose an arms embargo and to take concrete steps to ensure accountability for those responsible for serious human rights violations.

Key Issues and Options

An underlying issue for the Security Council remains how to effectively promote justice and accountability for both past atrocities committed in Darfur and the ongoing violations of international humanitarian and human rights law being perpetrated by Sudan’s warring parties across the country. Broadly, the continued violence, insecurity, and targeted attacks against civilians remain a major concern for Council members in the context of the current conflict. The failure to ensure accountability for crimes committed over the past two decades has contributed to the recurrence of violence and impunity in the current conflict.

A key challenge for the Council is how to strengthen cooperation between the ICC and relevant Sudanese authorities, as well as third states and international and regional organisations. This includes facilitating the execution of outstanding arrest warrants, supporting the ICC’s ongoing investigations, and enabling the safe collection and transmission of evidence. A pressing concern in this regard is the documentation, preservation, and analysis of evidence in a highly insecure and fragmented environment. The volatile political and security situation in Sudan and in some neighbouring countries has created numerous obstacles for the ICC, including the disruption of planned deployments, limited access to sources of information, and difficulties in maintaining contact with witnesses. Khan’s 16 January report also points to significant resource constraints faced by the OTP, which continue to adversely affect its ability to pursue investigations and carry out its mandate in relation to the situation

in Darfur.

Amid growing political sensitivities and divisions among states regarding the ICC’s work, an issue for the Council is how to ensure the Court receives the necessary political backing and resources to advance its mandate, uphold accountability, and help break the cycle of impunity. In addition to the regular briefing in July, Council members supportive of the ICC’s work in Sudan could consider holding a joint press stakeout in connection with the meeting to publicly reaffirm their commitment to justice and accountability.

Council members could also consider inviting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk to brief on the broader human rights situation in Sudan. Additionally, members may wish to invite the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, who visited Sudan from 13 to 17 April, to share insights into the scale and nature of conflict-related sexual violence and the protection needs of affected populations. (For more information, see the Sudan brief in our June 2025 *Monthly Forecast*.)

Council Dynamics

The Council is divided on the work of the ICC. Denmark, France, Greece, Guyana, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and the UK are states parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC. These members have expressed strong support for the ICC’s efforts, including the conclusion of Ali Kushayb’s trial, and have commended the OTP for its continued pursuit of accountability for crimes committed in Darfur. Several have also endorsed the Prosecutor’s announcement of imminent applications for new arrest warrants linked to the current conflict in Sudan and called on the Sudanese authorities to enhance cooperation with the ICC.

On the other hand, Algeria, China, Pakistan, Russia, Somalia, and the US are not states parties to the ICC’s Rome Statute and have expressed scepticism or outright criticism of the ICC’s role. Russia has been particularly vocal, accusing the Court of selective justice and political bias. Russia’s negative view of the ICC hardened following the Court’s announcement on 17 March 2023 that it had issued arrest warrants for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Commissioner for Children’s Rights Maria Lvova-Belova for allegedly committing the war crime of “unlawful deportation” and “unlawful transfer” of children from Ukraine to Russia.

During the Council’s 27 January briefing, Algeria, China, Pakistan, and Somalia underlined the importance of the principle of complementarity and supported Sudan’s judicial sovereignty. Algeria and Somalia also highlighted the need to revitalise Sudanese national justice institutions and to explore existing legal frameworks to administer justice, including African frameworks.

While the US has traditionally supported the ICC’s efforts concerning Sudan, it criticised the ICC for issuing arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant for crimes against humanity and war crimes linked to Israel’s military actions in Gaza since at least 8 October 2023. In response, on 6 February, US President Donald Trump issued an executive order imposing sanctions on the ICC and Khan. On 5 June, the US also sanctioned four individuals serving as ICC judges for their roles in authorising investigations

Sudan

into US personnel in Afghanistan and issuing arrest warrants for Israeli officials.

Several Council members, supportive of the ICC's work on Darfur, have expressed concern over efforts to undermine the Court's independence, including through the use of sanctions and political

pressure. These members have condemned any attempts to intimidate the OTP, warning that such measures could hinder the Court's ability to carry out its mandate not only in Sudan but also in other jurisdictions.

Cyprus

Expected Council Action

In July, Security Council members are expected to receive a briefing in consultations on the situation in Cyprus. Special Representative and Head of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) Colin Stewart is expected to brief Council members on the Secretary-General's forthcoming reports on UNFICYP and on his good offices mission in Cyprus, both of which are due on 3 July.

UNFICYP's mandate expires on 31 January 2026.

Key Recent Developments

Over the past six months, efforts to revive formal negotiations on the Cyprus issue have seen cautious but notable momentum, driven by renewed UN engagement and a range of agreed confidence-building measures (CBMs) designed to rebuild trust between the parties. While deep political divisions remain—especially over the framework for a comprehensive settlement—both sides have taken part in a series of high-level meetings facilitated by the UN, representing the most sustained dialogue since the breakdown of talks in 2017.

On 17 and 18 March, Secretary-General António Guterres hosted an informal meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, aimed at revitalising the stalled peace process in Cyprus. The gathering brought together Greek Cypriot leader Nikos Christodoulides, Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar, and representatives of the three guarantor powers—Greece, Türkiye, and the UK. Although the meeting did not yield a breakthrough on resuming formal settlement negotiations, the parties agreed on a set of CBMs. These included plans to open four new crossing points along the UN-controlled demilitarised zone known as the Green Line; establish a bicommunal Technical Committee on Youth; and advance joint initiatives on environmental and climate issues, such as addressing the impact of mining activities and promoting solar energy projects in the buffer zone. They also agreed to cooperate on the restoration of cemeteries. Guterres welcomed the outcome as “meaningful progress” and noted the emergence of a “new atmosphere” for dialogue. Christodoulides described the meeting as an “important first step”, while Tatar also expressed satisfaction. A follow-up informal meeting in this expanded format is planned for July.

On 2 April, the two leaders met on their own initiative in the divided city of Nicosia/Lefkoşa under UN auspices to assess progress on the agreements reached in March. In a joint statement following the meeting, they confirmed the establishment of a bicommunal Technical Committee on Youth. (First established in 2008 as key CBMs, the technical committees bring together experts from both communities to address practical, everyday issues impacting

Cypriots island-wide. The newly formed Youth Committee is the first such body to be created in over a decade, marking a significant step in revitalising this cooperative framework.)

Christodoulides and Tatar also agreed to tackle the issue of demining by exchanging information on a proportional number of suspected hazardous areas, with further discussions to be led by the Greek Cypriot Negotiator Menelaos Menelaou and the Turkish Cypriot Special Representative Gunes Onar. The Technical Committee on Environment was tasked with advancing initiatives addressing environmental and climate-related challenges, particularly those associated with mining activities, while the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage was given responsibility for cemetery restoration. Regarding the opening of new crossing points and the development of solar energy projects, the leaders instructed their representatives to continue negotiations with the aim of reaching mutually acceptable solutions.

A follow-up meeting held on 5 May and hosted by Stewart marked a continued effort to implement the CBMs agreed upon in Geneva. During the meeting, Christodoulides and Tatar officially launched the inaugural session of the bicommunal Technical Committee on Youth. The leaders also acknowledged progress in the restoration of cemeteries and instructed the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage to move forward with the implementation of related projects. They further agreed to explore additional initiatives addressing environmental and climate change concerns.

However, the meeting also underscored persistent disagreements over specific aspects of implementation. Tatar reportedly refused to advance discussions on the opening of new crossing points or the stalled bicommunal wastewater treatment plant in Mia Milia, focusing instead on the arrests by the Greek Cypriot authorities of individuals accused of selling Greek Cypriot-owned properties in the north. Despite these differences, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to joint initiatives and instructed their representatives to continue talks on outstanding issues regarding solar energy and new crossings.

On 2 May, Guterres reappointed María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar as his Personal Envoy on Cyprus. Holguín, who previously held the post from January to July 2024, returned to the island for a visit from 24 to 31 May, during which she held bilateral meetings with the two leaders. She also travelled to Ankara and Athens for consultations with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Greek Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis, respectively. Following her visit, Holguín noted that both Cypriot leaders had conveyed a willingness to advance the implementation of the Geneva CBMs in the lead-up to a high-level informal meeting planned for July.

UN DOCUMENTS ON CYPRUS [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2771](#) (31 January 2025) extended the mandate of UNFICYP until 31 January 2026. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2025/6](#) (3 January 2025) was the Secretary-General's report on the UN operation in Cyprus. [S/2025/7](#) (3 January 2025) was the Secretary-General's report on his mission of good offices in Cyprus.

Cyprus

Human Rights-Related Developments

Between 16 and 24 January, the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries conducted a nine-day visit to Cyprus. The delegation held meetings with representatives from governmental authorities, UN entities, and other stakeholders. The visit focused on assessing issues related to mercenaryism, mercenary-related actors and private military and security companies, particularly focusing on the maritime sector. The Working Group is expected to present a full report of its visit at the 60th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in September 2025.

On 21 January, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted a report to the HRC on the question of human rights in Cyprus. Covering the period of 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024, the report outlines key human rights concerns, including with respect to the right to life, the question of missing persons, and the principle of non-discrimination, among others. It concludes that meaningful progress in advancing human rights for all people in Cyprus remains elusive owing to the island's continued division and stresses the importance of effectively addressing human rights protection gaps and issues to support efforts to reach a lasting, peaceful solution.

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. The informal meeting in Geneva, followed by subsequent meetings between Christodoulides and Tatar, have generated cautious optimism.

The Council may wish to issue a presidential statement welcoming the renewed diplomatic engagement by the two sides and encouraging all parties to seize the opportunity presented by the Secretary-General's re-appointment of Holguín as his Personal Envoy on Cyprus.

Another option would be for Holguín to be invited to brief at the Council's forthcoming meeting on Cyprus or in a separate private meeting.

The uneven implementation of the CBMs agreed by the sides in Geneva is another issue for the Council. The bicomunal Technical Committee on Youth has been launched, work on cemetery restoration is underway, and the Environment Committee has begun exploring climate-related initiatives; however, disagreements persist over the location of new crossing points and solar-energy projects.

Council members could use the upcoming briefing in consultations to encourage Stewart to task UNFICYP with intensifying its support for the technical committees' work on these issues. They could also request that the Secretary-General include concrete benchmarks for progress in these areas in his next Good Offices report.

Council Dynamics

Cyprus remains a low-intensity issue on the Council's agenda. Permanent 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 bicomunal, bizonal federation (BBF) with political equality, members diverge on the conditions and time-frame 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 should be no external interference or attempts to impose solutions or timelines that might influence the peace talks.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council is expected to hold a meeting on political and humanitarian developments in Syria. An official from the Office of the UN Special Envoy for Syria and an official from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are expected to brief.

Key Recent Developments

Six months following the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad's government, Syria's new interim government continues to advance steps towards a credible political transition and to reactivate the country's economy.

On 13 June, Syria's interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa issued a presidential decree appointing a Supreme Committee for Elections to the People's Assembly, the transitional legislative authority. The committee will be responsible for overseeing the formation of electoral colleges, which will in turn elect two-thirds—100 out of 150 members—of the People's Assembly. The remaining 50 members

will be appointed directly by the President of the Republic.

A key component of the political transition in Syria is the interim government's goal to unify the country, including by consolidating all armed groups into the Syrian national army. Following a 10 March agreement, negotiations have continued between the Syrian caretaker authorities and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—a Kurdish-led group which controls most of Syria's autonomous northeastern territory—towards integrating the SDF's civilian and military structures into Syria's state institutions. Syrian media has reported that, despite the agreement, the SDF has continued its recruitment and training activities, and that negotiations regarding the exchange of detainees between the two sides have encountered some obstacles.

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) 1-5 June visit to Syria—its first since 2009—appears to have been an important step towards economic recovery in the country. During the visit, the IMF said that Syria urgently needs "substantial international assistance" towards rehabilitation and meeting urgent humanitarian needs.

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2254](#) (18 December 2015) focused exclusively on a political solution to the Syrian crisis and was adopted unanimously. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2025/4](#) (14 March 2025) condemned sectarian violence perpetrated in Latakia and Tartous and called for accountability and the protection of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religion. [Security Council Press Statement SC/16103](#) (26 June 2025) condemned a 22 June 2025 terrorist attack committed by a suicide bomber on a Greek Orthodox church in Damascus, Syria.

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There has been increased economic support from several countries, encouraged by steps taken by the European Union (EU), the US, and the UK to ease Assad-era economic sanctions on the country. On 29 May, Syria signed a memorandum of understanding with a consortium of US, Turkish, and Qatari companies to invest approximately USD 7 billion into building energy infrastructure in Syria. Additionally, on 3 June, the EU pledged 175 million euros towards the social and economic recovery of the country.

Syria continues to face persistent security challenges that endanger gains made towards stability. Regional tensions intensified when Israel launched a military offensive aimed at dismantling Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes on 12 June. (For more information, see our 13 June and 19 June *What's in Blue* stories.) Reportedly, both states used Syrian airspace to conduct their strikes, with multiple intercepted drones and ballistic missiles falling into Syrian territory. A fragile ceasefire was reached on 24 June that appeared to be holding at the time of writing.

Large-scale sectarian violence against Alawites and Druze in recent months has fueled fears of further violent eruptions. Briefing the Council on 17 June, UN Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Najat Rochdi said that "sporadic violent incidents" continued in various regions and highlighted the challenges faced by the interim authorities in controlling certain groups.

On 9 June, Syria's Supreme Fatwa Council announced a fatwa—a formal religious ruling—prohibiting revenge killings and extrajudicial retaliation, and urged the authorities to take responsibility for holding criminals accountable. The fatwa dovetailed with steps being taken by the Syrian Ministry of Justice to strengthen the country's judicial system by establishing the rule of law and pursuing transitional justice, including through the reinstatement of judges who had defected during Assad's rule.

Terrorism continues to be a significant challenge for the interim government. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a UK-based human rights monitoring organisation, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) has conducted at least 110 attacks since early this year. While most of these attacks targeted the SDF, on 30 May, for the first time, ISIL claimed responsibility for an attack against forces affiliated with the Syrian interim government. On 22 June, in the first incident of its kind in Syria in years, a suicide bomber attacked a crowded Greek Orthodox church in Damascus, killing at least 25 people and wounding at least 65 more. The Syrian Interior Ministry claimed that ISIL was responsible. UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen condemned the attack and called for a full investigation and action by the authorities. On 26 June, Security Council members issued a press statement condemning the attack, and underlining the need for accountability and for the protection of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity and religion. On 30 June, Council members met under "any other business" to discuss the security situation in Syria following the terrorist attack. UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen briefed.

On 3 June, the US announced that it is taking steps to reduce its military presence in Syria as part of a strategic recalibration. Approximately 2,000 US troops are currently in the country, engaged in anti-ISIL operations, which have also included providing support to the SDF.

Since the beginning of June, there have been renewed strikes and incursions by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) into Syrian territory. The IDF has described these moves as retaliation for rockets fired into the Golan and as part of operations targeting Hamas fighters within Syria. On 12 June, Syria's Interior Ministry condemned an overnight Israeli incursion into the countryside south of Damascus, in which one person was killed and several detained by Israeli forces, referring to it as a blatant violation of Syria's sovereignty and calling on the Security Council to stop such attacks in the interest of regional security.

On 11 June, Axios reported that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had expressed interest in negotiating a peace agreement with the Syrian interim government, with the US serving as mediator.

In her 17 June briefing to the Council on the humanitarian crisis in Syria, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya warned that NGOs are being forced to scale back their activities in the country as funding for aid work has significantly decreased. She said that 16 percent of health facilities have suspended or reduced their capacity due to funding cuts, while fewer than 60 percent of hospitals and primary healthcare centres are fully functional. Msuya also raised alarm at food insecurity caused by persistent drought—in line with a recent drought alert report issued by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). She also highlighted the urgent need for demining, noting that unexploded ordnance had killed at least 414 people and injured 600 since December 2024, a third of whom were children, and was hindering the safe return of displaced persons.

Women, Peace and Security

Amneh Khouli, the Executive Director of the civil society organisation Adalaty Centre, briefed the Security Council at the 17 June meeting on Syria. She urged the Council to encourage and support the Syrian government to guarantee the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women from all backgrounds in decision-making. Khouli called on the Security Council to welcome the lifting of "unilateral and multi-lateral sanctions" imposed on the Assad regime and undertake a review of the measures "that may impede Syria's economic recovery" enacted by the Council under the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. She also called for international support to accelerate early recovery efforts, including mine clearance, the removal of war debris, and the restoration of essential services such as health, education and telecommunications. Among other issues, Khouli underscored the criticality of transitional justice for Syria's future, stressing that "accelerating the effective launch of the justice process is the only true guarantee of genuine and sustainable peace".

Key Issues and Options

The main priority for the Council is to ensure that Syria's interim government pursues a credible, transparent, and inclusive political process grounded in the principles of Council resolution 2254. (Adopted on 18 December 2015, resolution 2254 focused on a political solution to the Syrian crisis). Council members will be closely monitoring efforts by the interim authorities—including by the newly established Supreme Committee for Elections to the People's Assembly—to ensure that inclusivity, openness, and transparency are present in all stages of the transitional process.

Related key issues are how the interim government advances transitional justice efforts, including accountability. The fact-finding committee established by the interim government to investigate the

Syria

mass killings in Latakia and Tartous in early March is due to submit its final report in early July. The Council could consider requesting a briefing on the findings of the investigation, while continuing to monitor how the interim government pursues justice, including potentially against any perpetrators affiliated with the authorities.

The threat of terrorism in Syria is another issue of concern for Council members. Should ISIL continue to escalate its attacks, Council members could consider convening a private meeting to receive a briefing on the extent of the threat and to engage with Syria on ways the interim government can mitigate security risks and combat terrorism.

In line with steps being taken by various Council member states to lift unilateral sanctions on Syria, the Council could also consider steps to alleviate UN sanctions which are impacting the interim government, including through delistings. Currently, both Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)—the Council-listed terrorist group which, under Sharaa's leadership, overthrew the Assad government—and Sharaa himself are listed under the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee.

The future of the UN's role in Syria is another key issue for the Council. Under instructions from the Secretary-General, the UN Secretariat has been conducting an integrated strategic assessment of the changing situation in the country, which will be finalised in an internal report. Based on this report, the Secretary-General will consider what type of UN presence in Syria would be most suitable to meet the country's current needs. Council action may be needed if the options include establishing a UN operation or adjusting the mandate of existing modalities.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are aligned on the need for the Syrian authorities to advance an inclusive, Syrian-owned and Syrian-led political process based on the key principles of resolution 2254. They also agree

that the Syrian interim government must credibly pursue transitional justice efforts and take measures to prevent any further violence against minorities as part of this process.

There is broad agreement among Council members that the new Syrian government requires international support to rebuild Syria and its crippled economy, including through the easing of sanctions, which several Council members are now pursuing.

Following a meeting in May between Sharaa and US President Donald Trump, relations between the two countries appear to have improved. During the 17 June Council meeting, the US spoke of a “new era in its relationship with Syria” and underlined efforts that it is taking to lift sanctions, allowing for reconstruction and investment in the country.

Many Council members also agree on the need for the Syrian interim government to take decisive measures to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), in line with the Council's 14 March presidential statement. On 2 June, Reuters reported that the Syrian interim government plans to integrate some 3,500 foreign fighters into the Syrian national army and that the US approved, provided that it is done “transparently”. Many of the fighters in question are Uyghurs who constitute part of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement—also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party—which China considers a terrorist organisation and is also listed under UN sanctions. During the 17 June Council meeting, China expressed grave concern about the reported integration of FTFs into the Syrian army and called on the Syrian authorities to take all measures to combat terrorist organisations listed by the Security Council, in line with counter-terrorism related resolutions.

Israel's presence and military activities in Syria remain a point of contention for Council members. Most members believe Israel's actions are fostering tensions and instability in Syria, but the US sees its actions as defensive in nature and tied to ensuring its national security.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In July, Council members expect to receive a briefing in consultations on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701. Adopted in 2006, resolution 1701 called for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. The Secretary-General's report, which is due on 11 July, will cover the period from 21 February to 20 June. Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Khaled Khiari are the anticipated briefers.

The mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) expires on 31 August.

Key Recent Developments

Lebanon stayed out of the confrontation between Israel and Iran over Iran's nuclear programme, during which the US intervened,

striking three of Iran's nuclear sites. While Hezbollah condemned Israel's attacks and the US strikes in Iran, it did not engage militarily in the conflict. (For background, see our 23 June *What's in Blue* story on the Security Council's briefing on the implementation of resolution 2231.)

The 26 November 2024 cessation-of-hostilities arrangement between Israel and Lebanon has continued to hold despite violations. Broadly based on the framework established by resolution 1701, the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement, which was brokered by the US and France, stated that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) would withdraw south of the Blue Line and, in parallel, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) would deploy to positions south of the Litani River. (The Blue Line is a withdrawal line set by the UN in 2000 to confirm Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. While not an international border, the Blue Line acts in practice as a boundary

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) called for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, and extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory.

Lebanon

between Lebanon and Israel in the absence of an agreed-upon border between the two states.)

The cessation-of-hostilities arrangement established that Israel will not carry out any offensive military operations against Lebanese targets in the territory of Lebanon and that the Lebanese government will prevent Hezbollah and all other armed groups from conducting operations against Israel. In addition, the LAF will dismantle unauthorised infrastructure and confiscate unauthorised arms, among other tasks. According to Israeli media reports, also cited by Lebanese news outlets, the US bilaterally provided additional guarantees to Israel with respect to the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement's implementation, including recognising "Israel's right to respond to Hezbollah threats".

Since the arrangement, Israel has carried out airstrikes in Lebanese territory—particularly in southern Lebanon—on numerous occasions, saying that it was targeting members of Hezbollah and weapons depots. These include the 5 June airstrikes on Beirut's southern suburbs, which Israel said were targeting a Hezbollah drone production facility. The 5 June airstrikes marked the fourth time Israel carried out airstrikes on Beirut since the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement. The most recent reports of rocket launches from Lebanon at Israel occurred in March. (For more information, see the brief on Lebanon in our May 2025 *Monthly Forecast*.)

On 25 June, the mechanism established under the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement to monitor, verify, and assist in "ensuring enforcement" of the commitments outlined in the arrangement met for the first time since March. Following the 5 June airstrikes, the LAF stated that although it had offered to inspect the locations identified by the IDF as hosting a drone production facility, Israel proceeded with the airstrikes. Consequently, the LAF warned that it might suspend cooperation with the monitoring mechanism over inspections of sites. In a statement condemning the Israeli airstrikes, France called on all parties to respect the ceasefire and noted that the mechanism "is there to help the parties deal with threats and prevent any escalation that would undermine Lebanon and Israel's security and stability". (The mechanism is a reformulated version of the tripartite mechanism established following the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. Under the terms of the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement, the revised mechanism is chaired by the US and hosted by UNIFIL. It also includes the IDF and the LAF, as well as France.)

Following the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement, UNIFIL developed an adaptation plan focused on, among other objectives, strengthening its operational posture, supporting the mechanism, securing local communities' support, and enhancing the mission's profile.

With UNIFIL's support, the LAF has gradually redeployed throughout southern Lebanon. In mid-February, Israel withdrew from most of south Lebanon but has since occupied five positions and two "buffer zones" in Lebanese territory near the Blue Line, with the IDF reportedly saying that it will remain there "until Israel is certain that Hezbollah will not return to the area south of the Litani River".

In several recent public statements, UNIFIL reported observing IDF presence in its area of operations. In a 14 May statement UNIFIL expressed concern over the IDF's "aggressive posture" towards UNIFIL personnel and assets near the Blue Line, including an incident on 13 May in which "direct fire hit the perimeter of a UNIFIL

position" marking the first time a UNIFIL position has been directly hit since the cessation of hostilities. UNIFIL has also continued to detect unexploded ordnance, weapons and ammunition caches. According to a 26 June update, UNIFIL has discovered 272 weapons caches since the cessation of hostilities. The mission has also reported several incidents of aggressive behaviour and obstruction of movement by groups of residents in its area of operations in southern Lebanon; a region where Hezbollah has historically maintained significant influence.

On 4 June, the Secretary-General announced that Major General Diodato Abagnara will take over from Lieutenant General Aroldo Lázaro Sáenz as UNIFIL head of mission and force commander. Abagnara assumed command of UNIFIL on 24 June.

In a 27 June letter to the Secretary-General, Lebanon requested the extension of UNIFIL's mandate for an additional year, until 31 August 2026.

According to media reports, Lebanese officials are currently evaluating a proposal put forward by US Ambassador to Türkiye and Special Envoy for Syria Thomas Barrack regarding, among other issues, Hezbollah's disarmament and the withdrawal of Israel from the five positions it has occupied in Lebanese territory.

In the Secretary-General's most recent annual report on children and armed conflict, dated 17 June, Lebanon was cited as one of the countries that has witnessed the sharpest increases in grave violations committed against children. (The six grave violations, as determined by the Security Council, are: child recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abductions, and the denial of humanitarian access.) The increase in violations took place during the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah between September and November 2024. The UN verified 669 grave violations against 628 children in Lebanon in 2024, representing a 545 percent increase compared with 2023. Verified violations included the killing and maiming of children by the Israeli armed forces, mostly through the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and the recruitment and use of boys by several armed groups, including Fatah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah. The Secretary-General in his report urged the parties to the conflict to "immediately implement measures to protect children", noting that he will be "particularly attentive to this situation" in the preparation of his next report.

On 24 June, the World Bank approved a \$250 million project for the repair and reconstruction of infrastructure damaged in Lebanon during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, as well as to support key services and the sustainable management of rubble in conflict-affected areas.

Key Issues and Options

Supporting the full implementation of the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement between Israel and Hezbollah remains the Security Council's foremost immediate priority.

Council members could consider issuing a presidential statement that urges all parties to fully implement the arrangement and underscores the importance of protecting civilians and civilian infrastructure. While stressing the need for Israel to fully withdraw from Lebanese territory, the statement could recommend the deployment of

Lebanon

UNIFIL to the five positions currently occupied by the IDF, as proposed by France in February. It could also emphasise the importance of the extension of the control of the government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory and welcome Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's commitment to make 2025 the year the Lebanese state achieves a monopoly over weapons. Council members could consider requesting the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon to offer its good offices in support of any intra-Lebanese dialogue process on the disarmament of all armed groups.

In July, Council members are likely to begin to direct their attention to UNIFIL's upcoming mandate renewal negotiations and evaluate whether the current situation requires any adjustment to how UNIFIL implements its mandate.

Council Dynamics

Council members agree on the need for the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement between Israel and Lebanon to hold.

Sharp differences persist in Security Council members' views of

Hezbollah. Some members distinguish between Hezbollah's political and military wings and have designated only its military wing as a terrorist organisation; other members, including the UK and the US, have listed Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organisation. On the other hand, Russia sees Hezbollah as a legitimate sociopolitical force in Lebanon.

Most Council members are supportive of UNIFIL and believe it plays a key role in Lebanon's stability. At the same time, on 28 May US President Donald Trump proposed that Congress rescind \$203 million of the \$1.4 billion appropriated in the fiscal year 2024 (thus eliminating unattributed balances) and \$158 million of the \$1.2 billion appropriated in the fiscal year 2025 for contributions for UN peacekeeping activities citing, among other reasons, dissatisfaction with UNIFIL.

China and Russia have opposed the Council taking positions that they perceive as overly prescriptive regarding Lebanon's internal affairs. France is the penholder on Lebanon.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council will hold its quarterly open debate on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" (MEPQ).

Council members may convene additional meetings during the month depending on developments on the ground.

Key Recent Developments

The war in Gaza has continued unabated following the expiry of the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas that was in effect from January to March. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as at 26 June, over 56,000 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of the conflict in October 2023, the majority of whom have reportedly been women and children. More than 680,000 people have been newly displaced since the end of the ceasefire, with approximately 82 percent of the Gaza Strip now within Israeli-militarised zones or under displacement orders.

Israel's decision in early March to prevent the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza—a tactic to pressure Hamas into releasing the remaining hostages it is holding—has further exacerbated the situation, causing an acute shortage of food, fuel, and medicine. Although Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced last month that Israel would partially restore humanitarian access to allow a "minimum" amount of aid to enter the territory, conditions remain dire as Israeli authorities have allowed only a few UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to resume the delivery

of aid and have authorised the entry of only very limited types of supplies, according to OCHA. The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) special snapshot—published on 12 May and covering the period between April and September—finds that Gaza faces a critical risk of famine, with the entire population (approximately 2.1 million people) expected to face "crisis" or worse levels of acute food insecurity (classified as IPC Phase 3 or above), including one in five projected to face "catastrophic" levels (IPC Phase 5). The report anticipates that food insecurity, acute malnutrition, and mortality rates would surpass the IPC famine thresholds under the "reasonable worse-case scenario" of a protracted and large-scale military operation and continuation of the humanitarian and commercial blockade, which is "becoming more likely".

Meanwhile, Israel and the US have established a new aid delivery mechanism coordinated by a private entity, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), which bypasses the existing delivery architecture run by the UN and its humanitarian partners. The GHF has begun delivering aid at designated distribution sites administered by US contractors and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The UN and its partners are not participating in the mechanism, which they view as a "militarized distribution system" that does not adhere to humanitarian principles and does not replicate the scale or accessibility of existing aid delivery channels. Since the mechanism became operational on 27 May, periodic security incidents involving IDF soldiers and Palestinians seeking aid at GHF sites have resulted in numerous mass casualty events. In a 24 June briefing note, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2735 (10 June 2024) welcomed the proposal for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that the US announced on 31 May 2024. The resolution was adopted with 14 votes in favour and one abstention (Russia). S/RES/2728 (25 March 2024) demanded an immediate ceasefire for the month of Ramadan, leading to a lasting, sustainable ceasefire. It also demanded the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. It was adopted with 14 votes in favour and one abstention (the US). S/RES/2720 (22 December 2023) requested the Secretary-General to appoint a Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator to establish a UN mechanism for accelerating humanitarian consignments to Gaza. It was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (Russia and the US). Other S/2025/353 (4 June 2025) was a draft resolution on the war between Israel and Hamas that was initiated by the Council's ten elected members (E10). The draft demanded an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire in Gaza; the immediate, dignified, and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups; and the immediate and unconditional lifting of all restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid into the territory. The draft failed to be adopted owing to a veto by the US. The remaining 14 members voted in favour.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

that over 410 people had been killed and 3,000 injured at the distribution points, forcing Palestinians to make “the inhumane choice of either starving to death or risk being killed while trying to get food”.

On the political track, negotiations between Israel and Hamas on a new ceasefire—mediated by Egypt, Qatar, and the US—remain deadlocked. Hamas continues to push for an agreement that permanently ends the war, while Israel insists that it will only agree to a temporary truce unless Hamas disarms, a demand that the group has resisted.

Violence has also persisted in the West Bank, where Israel has been conducting what it has described as a large-scale counterterrorism operation since January. The Secretary-General’s most recent quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 of 23 December 2016, which was circulated to Council members on 24 June (S/2025/415), said that the operation has resulted in “a large number of casualties and the extensive destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure, and the continued massive displacement of tens of thousands of Palestinians”. It has also coincided with an increase in settlement expansion, land seizures, and settler violence in the territory, according to the report. Notably, on 28 May, Israeli authorities recognised 22 new settlements, which Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz described as a “strategic move that prevents the establishment of a Palestinian state that would endanger Israel”. A spokesperson for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas called it a “dangerous escalation”.

Diplomatic pressure on Israel has mounted in response to these developments. On 20 May, the UK announced that it would suspend free trade negotiations with Israel and impose additional sanctions against West Bank settlers. On 10 June, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, and the UK imposed sanctions on Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich for inciting settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. A European Union (EU) report circulated to member states three days later found that Israel was likely in breach of its human rights obligations under the EU-Israel Association Agreement—a pact governing trading and diplomatic relations between the parties—which EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas said could lead to “further measures”. These may include the full or partial suspension of the association agreement.

The Security Council has convened several times in recent weeks to discuss the situation. On 4 June, the Council voted on a draft resolution initiated by the Council’s ten elected members (E10) that demanded a permanent ceasefire in Gaza; the release of all hostages held by Hamas; and the lifting of all restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid. The draft text failed to be adopted owing to a US veto. On 16 June, Council members held closed consultations to discuss food insecurity in Gaza, following the circulation of a 2 June white note on the issue by OCHA, submitted in accordance with resolution 2417 of 24 May 2018, which requested the Secretary-General to report swiftly when “the risk of conflict-induced famine and wide-spread food insecurity” occurs.

July’s debate will take place following further internationalisation of the Israel-Hamas war and an increasingly volatile regional situation. On 13 June, Israel launched a military offensive against Iran—a supporter of Hamas—that was aimed at dismantling the country’s nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. It comprised airstrikes

against nuclear sites, missile production facilities, government institutions, and other targets across the country. Iran retaliated with a series of ballistic missile and drone strikes against Israel. On 21 June, the US entered the conflict, launching strikes against three Iranian nuclear facilities. Two days later—following Iranian retaliation against a US military base in Qatar—US President Donald Trump announced that Iran and Israel had agreed to a ceasefire. IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir subsequently said in a 24 June statement that “[t]he focus now returns to Gaza, to bring home the hostages and topple Hamas’s rule”.

The UN High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution—which was mandated by the General Assembly in December 2024—was scheduled to take place from 17 to 20 June at UN Headquarters in New York. Following the outbreak of hostilities between Iran and Israel, however, France—which will co-chair the event with Saudi Arabia—announced that the conference would be postponed for logistical and security reasons. A new date had not yet been announced at the time of writing.

On 12 June, the General Assembly resumed its Tenth Emergency Special Session (ESS) on “Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, following the failure of the Security Council to adopt the 4 June draft resolution due to the US veto. During the ESS, the GA adopted a resolution introduced by Spain that demands that Israel immediately end the blockade in Gaza, open all border crossings, and ensure that aid reaches the Palestinian civilian population throughout Gaza immediately and at scale. The resolution was adopted with 149 votes in favour, 12 against, and 19 abstentions.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 2 and 4 April, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted three resolutions relating to the OPT, including East Jerusalem. The first resolution (58/2) concerns the human rights situation in the territory and calls on Israel to “end its unlawful presence” and to “immediately lift its blockade of the Gaza Strip as well as all other forms of collective punishment and siege”. The second resolution (58/27) concerns the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and urges all member states to adopt measures as required to promote the realisation of this right and to assist the UN in carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter regarding its implementation. The third resolution (58/28) reaffirms that Israeli settlements in the OPT are illegal under international law and calls on the country to immediately cease all settlement activities and to “put an end to all of the human rights violations linked to the presence of settlements, especially of the right to self-determination and non-discrimination”.

On 6 May, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel published a report finding that Israeli attacks on educational, religious, and cultural sites in the OPT amount to war crimes and the crime against humanity of extermination.

Key Issues and Options

The Council’s continued failure to expedite an end to the war in Gaza and its inability to safeguard the viability of the two-state solution remain fundamental issues undermining the Council’s credibility.

In the short term, the resumption of a ceasefire in Gaza, the return of hostages, and the restoration of full, safe, and unimpeded humanitarian access remain the Council’s most urgent priorities. Associated concerns are the growing risk of famine in the territory and the lack of accountability for apparent violations of international

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humanitarian law (IHL).

The US veto of the E10 draft resolution in June illustrates the polarised dynamics preventing the Council from fulfilling its responsibilities in this regard. As such, members are likely to struggle to agree on other measures that would require consensus or are subject to the veto, such as imposing sanctions against individuals involved in IHL violations, establishing an independent mechanism to investigate such violations, or imposing an arms embargo to prohibit the transfer of arms or munitions that have caused them.

Other options remain, however. To apply political pressure on Israel to fully restore humanitarian access, Council members could consider conducting another unofficial visiting mission to a Gaza border crossing—similar to the one that then-member United Arab Emirates (UAE) organised to the Rafah crossing in December 2023. Looking further ahead, members could invite a representative of the League of Arab States (LAS) to brief the Council on the status of preparations to implement the plan for Gaza’s long-term reconstruction and governance that the LAS endorsed in March. Additionally, they could take advantage of the additional time granted by the postponement of the high-level conference on the two-state solution to further engage in negotiations among the broader membership in support of an ambitious outcome document outlining concrete commitments toward the realisation of this goal.

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. Attempts at 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 Council, does not largely support.

In its 4 June explanation of vote on the E10’s draft resolution—the first veto cast by the US on the conflict since Trump returned to office—the US said that the draft was “unacceptable for what it does say...[and] for what it does not say”, citing in particular the text’s failure to condemn Hamas or express support for the GHF. It also criticised the negotiation process, describing the E10-led initiative as “performative” and “harmful” to ongoing ceasefire talks mediated by the US, Egypt, and Qatar.

All 14 other Council members voted in favour of the draft. Slovenia, which coordinated the negotiations on behalf of the E10, disputed the US’ characterisation of the text and said that it “reflects the consensus shared by all Council members” regarding the need to end the war, return the hostages, and restore humanitarian access. Several members also rejected the notion that the Council’s role should be subordinated to external diplomacy, with Algeria describing the outcome as a “moment of political abdication”. Similarly, Russia said that the draft represented “the bare minimum” for the Council, while China argued that the body’s inability to act had “extinguished the glimmer of hope for the people in Gaza”. Some members—including Denmark, France, and the UK—agreed with the US that the omission of a condemnation of Hamas was a shortcoming but nevertheless considered the resolution a necessary humanitarian measure.

UN-OIC Cooperation

Expected Council Action

In July, the Council is expected to hold a briefing under the agenda item “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”, focusing on the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Pakistan’s Deputy Prime Minister, Ishaq Dar, is expected to chair the meeting. OIC Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha and a UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) official are the anticipated briefers.

Background and Key Recent Developments

The OIC is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1969 following a meeting in Rabat, Morocco. It comprises 57 members from across the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas—all of which are UN member states except for Palestine. The organisation serves as a platform for cooperation on political, economic, cultural, and social issues affecting countries with significant Muslim populations. Headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, its mandate includes promoting coordination among member states, advocating for the rights of Muslim communities, and supporting peace, development, and humanitarian efforts. The OIC has held

permanent observer status at the UN General Assembly since 1975 and engages with various regional and international organisations, including the UN, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), and the League of Arab States (LAS).

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter envisions a role for “regional arrangements”. The Council has convened briefings on multiple occasions to discuss cooperation with regional and sub-regional organisations, consistent with its mandate to strengthen such partnerships. For instance, the Council has held annual briefings on EU-UN cooperation since 2010, except for the years 2012 and 2018. Council members have also held annual consultative meetings with the members of the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) since 2007. In addition, the Council has convened debates and briefings on cooperation with other organisations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the LAS, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

On 28 October 2013, Azerbaijan convened a high-level debate on cooperation between the UN and the OIC, during its Security Council presidency. This was the first Council meeting specifically dedicated to examining the UN’s relationship with the OIC. The session included briefings by then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

UN DOCUMENTS ON UN-OIC COOPERATION Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2013/16 (28 October 2013) recognised the importance of strengthening cooperation with the OIC in the maintenance of international peace and security. **General Assembly Document A/RES/79/9** (18 November 2024) was a resolution on cooperation between the UN and the OIC.

UN-OIC Cooperation

and then-OIC Secretary-General Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, among others. Following this meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement acknowledging the continuing dialogue between the UN and the OIC in the fields of peace-making, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. The statement also took note of the commitments of both organisations to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of tolerance and peace and called for enhanced cooperation to promote better understanding across countries, cultures and civilisations.

On 17 November 2016, during Senegal's presidency, the Council held a briefing on cooperation between the UN and the OIC, focused on enhancing the existing strategic partnership in countering extremist ideology. (For background and more information, see our 16 November 2016 *What's in Blue* story.)

Over the past several years, the OIC has expressed positions on various situations on the Council's agenda, particularly those relating to Muslim-majority countries. For instance, the OIC has long advocated for the establishment of a sovereign, independent, contiguous Palestinian state based upon the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Joint Arab-Islamic Extraordinary Summit on Gaza, held on 11 November 2023, formed a ministerial committee to advance efforts for an immediate ceasefire to the Israel-Hamas war, the delivery of humanitarian aid to all areas of the Gaza Strip, and the initiation of practical steps toward the implementation of the two-state solution. In addition to its engagement on Middle East-related issues, the OIC has also been active on a range of other country situations, including Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

The UN and the OIC have held biennial general meetings as part of a structured effort to strengthen institutional cooperation. The most recent meeting was held in July 2024 in Astana, Kazakhstan with a particular focus on enhancing political cooperation, advancing economic and scientific collaboration, and supporting cultural, social, and humanitarian initiatives relevant to OIC member states.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is how to strengthen cooperation between the UN and the OIC in addressing conflicts and advancing peace in regions with significant Muslim populations. Relevant situations in this context include Libya, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the recent hostilities between Iran and Israel.

During the briefing in July, Council members could take stock of the existing collaboration between the two organisations and explore avenues for deepening this cooperation, with a focus on preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. Members may encourage discussion on how the UN system could draw on the OIC's comparative advantages in these areas. The briefing could also provide a platform for both organisations to reaffirm their commitment to counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism and identify practical avenues for strengthening joint efforts. The Council may further consider how the OIC's institutions could contribute to advancing shared objectives in peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance, and the promotion of human rights.

One option for Council members could be to adopt a presidential statement reaffirming the importance of strengthening the cooperation between the UN and the OIC in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Council and Wider Dynamics

It appears that Council members are generally supportive of the initiative to hold a briefing on the UN's cooperation with the OIC. Members that are also part of the OIC—such as Algeria, Guyana, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, and Somalia—are particularly likely to underscore the importance of strengthening institutional cooperation and fostering partnerships in areas such as conflict prevention and mediation. Russia has maintained an observer status within the OIC since 2005.

Differences in political alignments and priorities among Council members may influence the substance of discussions on specific contexts. For instance, the OIC supports a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and has condemned Israel's military operations in the Gaza Strip following the 7 October 2023 attacks by Hamas. The US, on the other hand, is a key ally of Israel on the Council and has continued to extend its significant political and diplomatic support. In addition, the OIC condemned US attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities in June, while several European members supported them. Another area of divergence is the OIC's political backing for the Turkish Cypriot community, which has held observer status in the OIC under the name "Turkish Cypriot State". In contrast, the EU strongly supports the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of the Republic of Cyprus and opposes recognition or assistance to what it considers a "secessionist entity".

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council is expected to vote to extend the 2745 sanctions regime, which expires at the end of the month, and renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the 2745 Sanctions Committee, which expires on 31 August.

Key Recent Developments

On 26 June, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed the Security Council on recent political and security developments, as well as the efforts by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) to implement its mandate based on the Secretary-General's latest report on MINUSCA circulated to Council members on 13 June (S/2025/383). (For more information, see our 25 June *What's in Blue* story.)

The domestic political scene in the CAR has been dominated by the discussion of local and national elections expected to be held this year. MINUSCA is supporting the CAR authorities in organising local elections, which have been repeatedly postponed. Although these elections were scheduled to be held in August, the indications are that they might be further delayed due to a funding shortfall and issues related to voter registration. According to the Secretary-General's latest report, the National Electoral Authority has revised the electoral budget from \$19 million to \$21.8 million—\$12.4 million of which is managed by UNDP and \$9.4 million by the National Electoral Authority. The report mentions that there is a \$9 million funding gap.

Despite logistical and security constraints, the National Electoral Authority conducted voter registration in 11 of the 20 prefectures in the country in November and December 2024 and in the remaining nine prefectures in March. According to the Secretary-General's report, the National Electoral Authority addressed omissions of voters' names and other technical anomalies in May. Local elections will be held in the CAR for the first time in four decades; however, opposition and civil society groups have been calling for a boycott, citing concerns over the fairness and inclusivity of the process.

Following the 2023 constitutional referendum in the CAR, which removed presidential term limits, President Faustin-Archange Touadéra is widely expected to seek a third term, with the presidential majority (the ruling party and other parties that support Touadéra) and affiliated youth groups actively encouraging his candidacy. However, opposition parties have pushed back against this prospect, and in early April, they organised a protest in Bangui, the capital city, in which nearly 5,000 people participated. The Republican Bloc for the Defense of the Constitution (BRDC), a coalition of opposition parties, has called for dialogue with the President. While President Touadéra has agreed to a dialogue process led by his government—without his direct involvement—the BRDC has insisted on direct engagement with the President and requested that an African mediator facilitate the talks. This proposal was rejected by the government.

The security situation in the CAR remains volatile, particularly in the western and eastern parts of the country. Competition over natural resources and control of key road corridors continues to fuel instability. Civilians are disproportionately affected by the ongoing violence, with reported killings, increased sexual violence,

kidnappings, forced displacement, and extortion. The spillover effects of the conflict in neighbouring Sudan are an additional complication to the security landscape in the CAR. Touadéra reportedly sent a delegation led by the Director of the Central African Intelligence Services to Port Sudan in May to engage with the leadership of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

Touadéra has also sent a delegation to N'Djamena to meet with opposition leaders based in Chad in April. This appears to be part of an effort to revive the Luanda Roadmap, adopted in December 2021 by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in support of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR). According to the latest Secretary-General's report, following discussions in N'Djamena facilitated by Chadian authorities in April, the leaders of the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R) and the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) had committed to cease hostilities and rejoin the APPR.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 11 June, the 2475 Sanctions Committee met to consider the final report and recommendations of the Panel of Experts. The report apparently outlines the fragile security situation in the CAR, including the cross-border movement of armed groups. It also highlights ongoing tensions between farmers and herders along the borders with Cameroon and Chad. In addition, it seems that the report provides updates on the illegal exploitation of natural resources by armed groups and recent attacks against peacekeepers. At the time of writing, Council members were reviewing the Panel's recommendations.

Key Issues and Options

The most immediate issue for Council members in July is the renewal of the 2745 sanctions regime. Last year, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2745, lifting the arms embargo on the CAR government, while extending it on armed groups and associated individuals. The resolution also extended and strengthened other targeted sanctions measures against these groups and individuals. The negotiations in July are not expected to be contentious, and a possible option for Council members would be to renew the sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts for another twelve months with no changes.

With respect to the situation in the CAR, the upcoming local and national elections are a key issue for the Council. Members could consider issuing a press statement reiterating their call for the CAR authorities to create the necessary conditions for the holding of free, transparent and inclusive elections by opening up civic space for the participation of all sections of society, including women and youth.

Council members also remain concerned about the security situation in the CAR and its toll on the civilian population. At the meeting in July, they may welcome the decision by the 3R and the UPC to cease hostilities and reiterate their call on other armed groups to lay down their arms and join the political process through dialogue.

The humanitarian and human rights situation in the CAR remains a serious concern, marked by ongoing violations and abuses against civilians, including women and children. At the time of writing, Council members were awaiting the annual report on the human rights situation in the CAR, prepared by the Human Rights

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolution S/RES/2745 (30 July 2024) lifted the arms embargo on the CAR and renewed until 31 August 2025 the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, which will henceforth be known as the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2745 (2024). Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9964 (26 June 2025) was on the situation in the CAR.

Central African Republic

Division of MINUSCA, which is expected to be released in June.

Another major challenge facing MINUSCA is the lack of adequate resources to effectively implement its mandated tasks. This issue reflects a broader trend affecting all UN peace operations, driven by the organisation's ongoing liquidity crisis. This is a result of delays in the payment of assessed contributions by member states. According to the Secretary-General's latest report, unpaid contributions to the Special Account for MINUSCA amounted to \$410.7 million as of 1 June. In response, the UN is apparently developing contingency plans to address the situation.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council lifted the arms embargo against the CAR government last year following strong lobbying by the CAR authorities. Its appeal to the Security Council was backed by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the International Conference

on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), as well as the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC). Its position was also supported by China, Russia and the A3 Plus grouping (then Algeria, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Guyana).

Other Council members recognised that maintaining the embargo on the CAR government was untenable given its persistent calls for its complete lifting. France, the penholder on the CAR, supported lifting the embargo against the backdrop of its ongoing rapprochement with the CAR.

Council members continue to express concern over the illicit flow of arms, explosives, and combatants across CAR's porous borders—a situation further exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in neighbouring Sudan. As a result, Council members may continue to support maintaining sanctions measures against armed groups and associated individuals.

UN Peace Operations

Expected Council Action

In July, Pakistan plans to convene a briefing on UN peace operations. A senior UN official is expected to brief.

Key Recent Developments

At the Summit of the Future in September 2024, member states adopted the *Pact for the Future* which, among other things, requested the Secretary-General to “undertake a review of the future of all forms of United Nations peace operations, taking into account lessons learned from previous and ongoing reform processes, and provide strategic and action-oriented recommendations for the consideration of Member States on how the United Nations toolbox can be adapted to meet evolving needs, allowing for more agile, tailored responses to existing, emerging, and future challenges”.

In a 24 March open debate convened by the Danish Security Council presidency on “Advancing Adaptability in UN Peace Operations—Responding to New Realities”, Secretary-General António Guterres briefed Council members on plans to conduct extensive consultations as part of the comprehensive review of UN peace operations. According to the Secretary-General, these consultations will involve member states, host countries, troop- and police-contributing countries, financial contributors, regional organisations, civil society, and academia. The Secretary-General emphasised that the review will contribute to the broader UN80 initiative, which he announced on 12 March in response to persistent funding challenges facing the UN. The initiative is aimed at implementing “deeper, more structural changes and program alignment within the UN system”, including UN peacekeeping, to find efficiencies and improvements in its work.

The Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) are jointly conducting the review which is expected to build on *A New Agenda for Peace*—the Secretary-General's July 2023 report providing his

vision for the future of multilateral engagement on peace and security issues—and the comprehensive studies that the two departments have carried out on the future of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, respectively. Last year, DPO commissioned an independent study on *The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities*, which was published in November 2024 and was designed to inform the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial held in Berlin in May. DPPA has also been working on a comprehensive compendium of the history and evolution of Special Political Missions (SPMs) that is expected to be released soon.

The two departments have already conducted internal consultations across the UN system, gathering input from all Special Representatives and Envoys leading UN peace operations for the ongoing review. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo also briefed member states during an informal meeting of the General Assembly held on 27 May.

The two departments intend to convene a series of discussions with the other intergovernmental bodies, including the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34), the Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee), the Security Council, and the Peacebuilding Commission. They also plan to hold consultations with regional groups and to formally request member states to provide written inputs.

This series of consultations is expected to support the two departments in developing a coherent analysis and set of recommendations for the review, while ensuring sufficient space for dedicated discussions on issues specific to both peacekeeping operations and SPMs. The two departments plan to conduct another round of consultations on the draft recommendations before finalising the review in early 2026. The outcome will be presented in the form of a report by the Secretary-General, to be submitted to both the Security Council

UN DOCUMENTS ON UN PEACEKEEPING Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9892 (7 April 2025) was a briefing on UN peacekeeping operations. S/PV.9884 (24 March 2025) was an open debate on UN peace operations.

UN Peace Operations

and the General Assembly.

In May, Berlin hosted the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial, which focused on the future of peacekeeping and brought together representatives from 134 UN Member States, including 51 at the ministerial level. The meeting also included participation from the UN, regional organisations, civil society, academia, and think tanks. The Berlin Ministerial also offered member states an opportunity to reaffirm their political commitment to UN peacekeeping. During the meeting, 74 member states made pledges to help address critical capability gaps and support efforts to adapt UN peacekeeping operations to evolving challenges and new global realities. The meeting provided an opportunity for member states to show support for UN peacekeeping in the face of shifting geopolitics and the likelihood of cuts to the UN peacekeeping budget.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the role of regional peace support operations in conducting peace enforcement and counter-terrorism activities. The adoption of resolution 2719 on 21 December 2023, which addresses the financing of African Union-led Peace Support Operations (AUPSOs), has given renewed momentum to this emerging trend. Although implementation of the resolution recently faced a setback—when the Council failed to agree on its application in the case of Somalia to support the AU Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM)—there appears to be continued interest in identifying other potential cases for consideration under resolution 2719. (For more on the Somalia discussion, see our 10 May *What's In Blue* story.) At the time of writing, a delegation from the UN Secretariat was preparing to travel to Addis Ababa to meet with AU counterparts to discuss ideas for the resolution's implementation.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for Council members is how to reaffirm their commitment and show support to UN peacekeeping at a time when it is facing serious challenges. In this regard, as the convener of the meeting, Pakistan may wish to use this meeting to build on the outcome of the recent Berlin Peacekeeping Ministerial.

Another immediate issue is the impact of the UN liquidity crisis on UN peace operations. At the time of writing, the Fifth Committee was negotiating the proposed \$5.5 billion peacekeeping budget for the period of 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026. In a recent briefing to member states, Lacroix and Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support Atul Khare apparently said that there will be a 20 percent cut across UN peacekeeping operations in the context of the UN80 initiative. The Council could seek an informal briefing from DPPO to obtain a better understanding of their assessment of the

impact of these cuts on peace operations.

Council members may also be keen to receive updates on the ongoing review of peace operations. The July briefing could provide an opportunity for Council members to share their views and perspectives on the review. Drawing from previous experience, a possible option for Pakistan would be to propose a draft presidential statement reflecting the input from Council members to inform the review process.

A related issue is the 2025 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (PBAR). Some Council members, particularly those belonging to the peacebuilding caucus within the Security Council, might want to see enhanced synergy and complementarity between the PBAR and the peace operations review.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Three elected members—Denmark, Pakistan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK)—are working together this year as part of a “Peacekeeping Trio Initiative”. Pakistan seems to have coordinated with Denmark and the ROK in planning to convene the July briefing. Denmark, Pakistan and the ROK organised an informal roundtable on “Evolving Thinking Around the Future of UN Peace Operations” ahead of the 24 March open debate. ROK convened an informal dialogue between the Security Council and members of the Peacebuilding Commission on 27 March which, among other things, sought to emphasise the synergy between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, both of which are key priorities for the country. Pakistan also hosted a preparatory meeting in Islamabad on 15-16 April ahead of the Berlin Peacekeeping Ministerial.

The US, the largest financial contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget, currently has arrears amounting to approximately \$1.5 billion. For the 2025 fiscal year, the US Congress approved \$1.2 billion in funding for UN peacekeeping operations. However, the Trump administration has proposed eliminating this contribution entirely in the 2026 fiscal year, citing concerns about the high levels of assessment and the alleged failure of certain missions. The US Congress is yet to approve the proposed budget.

According to the UN Controller, as of 9 May, China had arrears amounting to \$587 million for the 2025 fiscal year. While Russia has attempted to pay its outstanding contributions—totalling \$123 million—it appears that there have been some issues with having the payment processed. The ongoing liquidity crisis, driven by unpaid contributions from member states, is apparently having a significant impact on UN peacekeeping missions, including by affecting their cash flow and hindering their operational effectiveness.

Colombia

Expected Council Action

In July, the Security Council is expected to receive a briefing from Special Representative and Head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia Carlos Ruiz Massieu on recent developments in Colombia and the Secretary-General's latest 90-day report on the mission, which was circulated to Council members on 26 June (S/2025/419).

The verification mission's mandate expires on 31 October.

Key Recent Developments

The Secretary-General's report, which covers the period from 27 March to 26 June, states that implementation of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the government of Colombia and the former rebel group *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) "remained uneven, with key challenges unaddressed across the different chapters". This highlights the need for "an overarching and strategic response, as well as the direct involvement of the signatory parties in oversight and coordination at the highest level". In this regard, the Secretary-General welcomed the convening on 8 May of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement (CSIVI), the main forum for dialogue between the parties on the accord's implementation. At this meeting, the first held in 2025, the parties jointly defined priorities for the implementation of each chapter of the peace agreement for the remainder of the year.

Violence remains a persistent challenge that affects all aspects of the implementation of the peace agreement. During the period covered by the Secretary-General's report, the verification mission verified the killing of nine former combatants, bringing to 469 the number of former combatants killed since the signing of the peace agreement. The report notes that such crimes are carried out by illegal armed groups, mostly in municipalities with illegal economies and limited presence of the state. Leading causes behind such attacks are stigmatisation and the targeting of former combatants who assume leadership roles, refuse to be recruited by armed groups, or take part in justice and truth processes.

High levels of violence persisted across several regions in the past months. The north-eastern region of Catatumbo in the Norte de Santander department—which saw in January what the UN described as "the gravest escalation of violence the country has experienced" since the signing of the 2016 agreement—continued to experience clashes between the armed groups the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) and the *Estado Mayor de Bloques y Frentes* (EMBF), which splintered from the general staff of the dissident group of the former FARC-EP that identifies itself as the *Estado Mayor Central Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (EMC). According to Colombia's Office of the Ombudsperson, 65,000 people were displaced between January and April 2025 due to the violence in Catatumbo, many of whom have yet to return to their homes.

On 10 June, the EMC launched 24 coordinated attacks in the southwestern departments of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, targeting police posts and municipal buildings, among other things. In a 17 June briefing, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General Farhan Haq noted that eight people were killed and more than 80 injured, including children, due to explosive devices, car and

motorcycle bombs, sniper fire, and drones. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) described 10 June as "the most violent day of the year" in Cauca and Valle del Cauca, noting that more than 471,000 people have been impacted by violence in these departments in the first half of the year, accounting for more than a third of the national total.

A 7 June assassination attempt against Senator Miguel Uribe Turbay during a rally in Bogotá raised concerns about a potential spike in political violence as Colombia prepares for congressional and presidential elections in March and May 2026, respectively. Uribe, an opposition politician from the right-wing *Centro Democrático* party, planned to run in the presidential elections (the official candidate registration period has yet to begin). He was one of the parliamentarians with whom the Council interacted in Bogotá during its 7-11 February 2024 visiting mission to Colombia. At the time of writing, Uribe remained in critical condition; a 15-year-old was charged in connection with the assassination attempt, but it was unclear who ordered the attack. UN Secretary-General António Guterres condemned the assault in a 9 June statement, calling it a "deplorable act of political violence" that must be fully investigated and for perpetrators to be held accountable. Political actors from across the political spectrum in Colombia condemned the attack, with some national and international interlocutors calling on all actors to adopt a "Commitment to a free and peaceful electoral process in Colombia".

The Secretary-General's report notes that the government has made efforts to accelerate policies for the implementation of security guarantees. However, progress has been lacking in some areas, such as the promotion of the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups and criminal organisations, which the National Commission on Security Guarantees (NCSG)—a body established by the agreement—presented in September 2023. According to the report, the NCSG has not been active for almost a year.

In a positive development, on 13 June, the government signed a decree establishing the Comprehensive Protection Programme for former combatants, which was stipulated in the 2016 agreement. This decree includes the creation of the Tripartite Protection and Security Authority as the programme's governing body at the territorial level, which will entail cooperation between the state and peace signatories, with support from the verification mission. On 10 June, following the assassination attempt against Uribe, Colombian President Gustavo Petro Urrego chaired for the first time during his administration a meeting of the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics (SISEP), a body created by the 2016 agreement.

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—also continued its work. The SJP scheduled public verification hearings for trials within Case 01 (on hostage-taking, other severe deprivations of liberty and concurrent crimes committed by the FARC-EP) and Case 03 (on killings and forced disappearances presented as combat casualties by state agents) in the Caribbean Coast. These hearings—which constitute the last procedural step before the issuance of restorative sentences—will allow the SJP to evaluate and verify the indictees' contributions to the truth and to assess the preparedness of state institutions to provide conditions for the implementation of

Colombia

sentences (such as security conditions and financial resources for restorative projects). The public hearings, which were initially scheduled for 9 and 10 July, were postponed to 31 July and 1 August, due to a request by indictees in Case 01. After the completion of these hearings, the issuance of the first restorative sentences by the SJP could be expected during the second half of 2025, according to the Secretary-General's report.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 30 April, the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) published findings from its 21 November–5 December 2024 visit to Colombia, outlining specific areas of concern and recommendations to assist the government in addressing the issue of enforced disappearances. In a press release, the CED noted that enforced disappearances have persisted after the signing of the 2016 peace agreement and “continue to occur daily, both within the context of armed conflicts and beyond”, estimating between 121,768 and 210,000 cases of disappeared persons in the country. It added that the phenomenon occurs particularly in regions under the control of non-state armed groups and criminal organisations and voiced strong concern about disappearances linked to forced recruitment by such groups and organisations, particularly those targeting children and adolescents. The CED called on Colombia to strengthen its search, investigation, and prosecution mechanisms and stressed the need for a comprehensive state policy to combat the causes of enforced disappearances, among other recommendations.

Following his 13–30 May visit to Colombia, the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Graeme Reid, acknowledged in a press release the positive steps that the country has taken to protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other gender-diverse (LGBT) persons and its progress in aligning laws, policies, and strategies with international human rights standards. He highlighted that, despite such positive developments, individuals from the LGBT community continue to face ongoing risks and vulnerabilities, including violence, stigma, and unequal socio-economic outcomes. In this regard, Reid underscored that Colombia “must match impressive strategies with resources and implementation” to effectively address discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Key Issues and Options

An overarching priority for the Council remains supporting the full implementation of the 2016 peace agreement. Members may wish to continue emphasising the importance of continued focus on that objective in the remainder of Petro's term, which ends in August 2026.

A key priority for the Council is supporting transitional justice efforts in the country, including the work of SJP. It seems that the SJP's president, Judge Alejandro Ramelli, is expected to visit New York in July. Council members may use the opportunity to interact with him informally, in order to learn more about the process of handing down restorative sentences and to discuss potential challenges as the Court commences this crucial—and potentially

polarising—stage. Members have previously hosted such interactions with SJP representatives at their permanent missions.

The effects of conflict on children in Colombia is another matter of concern. The involvement of a 15-year-old in the attempt on Uribe's life further highlighted long-standing concerns about the recruitment and use of children by armed groups. According to the Secretary-General's latest annual report on children and armed conflict, dated 17 June, 450 children were recruited and used in Colombia in 2024, an approximately 70 percent increase compared with 2023, including by former FARC-EP dissident groups (326), the ELN (56), and the *Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia* (AGC). The AGC, which recruited and used 39 children, was listed in the annexes to the Secretary-General's annual report for the first time for committing this grave violation against children.

At the meeting on Colombia in July, some Council members may choose to call on donors to enhance their support for humanitarian efforts in the country, both those focusing on children and for communities more broadly. Humanitarian actors have stressed that needs continue growing in the country while capacities and resources are diminishing. Haq noted in his 17 June briefing that OCHA's highly prioritised humanitarian response plan for Colombia was less than 16 percent funded, with just \$54 million received of the \$342 million required, adding that funding shortfalls may leave an estimated 1.4 million people without assistance this year.

Council Dynamics

Council members are generally united in their support for the peace process in Colombia and the verification mission's work.

It remains to be seen how the approach of the administration of US President Donald Trump to Colombia may affect Council dynamics on the file. A key priority for this administration is curtailing the drug trade from Colombia. A potential indicator of the US' approach to the country will be its decision, expected by 1 September, on whether to renew Colombia's certification as a country that has cooperated fully with the US in drug control efforts.

In June, Colombia was elected for a seat on the Security Council in 2026–2027. During its Council campaign, Colombia presented its own experience with inclusive and participatory peace processes as a successful model for countries coming out of conflict and emphasised the role of dialogue and trust-building in this regard.

The UK is the penholder on Colombia.

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