

# Monthly Forecast

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## Overview

In September, the Republic of Korea (ROK) will hold the presidency of the Security Council.

The ROK plans to organise one signature event, a high-level open debate on [artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item. ROK President Lee Jae Myung is expected to chair the meeting, which will be held during the UN General Assembly’s high-level segment. Secretary-General António Guterres, as well as two other representatives, one from the industry and another from academia, are expected to brief.

In September, the Security Council will also hold an open debate on [peacekeeping reform](#) pursuant to resolution 2378 of 20 September 2017. The focus of the discussion will be the review of all forms of UN peace operations requested by the *Pact for the Future*, the outcome document of the 2024 Summit of the Future. The anticipated briefers are Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo; the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Rikklef Johannes Beutin (Germany); and Jenna Russo, the Director of Research and Head of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations at the International Peace Institute (IPI).

Additionally, Council members are expected to hold a high-level informal interactive dialogue (IID) with the Secretary-General of the [League of Arab States \(LAS\)](#), Ahmed Aboul Gheit, and members of the Arab Summit Troika—a group of three rotating countries that monitor the implementation of resolutions and commitments adopted by the LAS, which consists of the outgoing, current, and incoming Arab Summit chairs. The ROK’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cho Hyun, will chair the meeting, which is being convened in accordance with a 29 January 2021 Security Council presidential statement

(S/PRST/2021/2) that encouraged the holding of an informal meeting between Council members and LAS representatives on the margins of the General Assembly’s high-level segment.

Middle Eastern issues on the programme of work are:

- [Syria](#), meetings on the political, humanitarian, and chemical weapons tracks;
- [Yemen](#), monthly briefing and consultations; and
- “[The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question](#)”, the monthly meeting, with the possibility of additional meetings depending on developments.

African issues on the programme of work in September are:

- [Sudan](#), renewal of the Sudan sanctions regime; and
- [Democratic Republic of Congo \(DRC\)](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

There will also be a briefing and consultations on the UN Assistance Mission in [Afghanistan](#) (UNAMA), the one Asian issue expected to be discussed in September.

This month, the Security Council will consider reconfiguring the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in [Haiti](#), the mandate of which expires on 2 October, as well as the establishment of a related UN Support Office.

As in previous months, the Council may hold one or more meetings on [Ukraine](#) in September. It may also discuss developments related to [Iran](#) and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) after France, Germany, and the UK (the E3) initiated on 28 August the “snapback” mechanism to re-impose UN sanctions on Iran. Other issues could be raised during the month depending on developments.

**30 August 2025**

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# In Hindsight: The Security Council and the UN80 Initiative—What Lies Ahead?

## Introduction

In September, world leaders will converge in New York to mark the 80th anniversary of the founding of the UN. While this significant milestone is a moment of celebration, the prevailing mood seems to be sombre, as the organisation faces what many regard as an existential crisis. Rising geopolitical tensions among major powers have not allowed the Security Council to effectively address some of the most intractable conflicts of our time. Compounding the situation is a severe financial crisis that threatens to undermine the UN's ability to deliver on its core mandates—maintaining international peace and security, promoting human rights, and fostering international cooperation to address global challenges.

In March, Secretary-General António Guterres launched a major reform initiative aimed at overhauling the UN system to make it more “effective, cost-efficient, and responsive”. Connecting it to the organisation's 80th anniversary, this latest reform effort has been dubbed the UN80 Initiative. It is being pursued across three work streams: efficiencies and improvements, mandate implementation review, and structural changes and programme realignment.

This month's *In Hindsight* explores the potential effects of the various reform proposals of the UN80 Initiative on the work of the UN Security Council, as well as the responses to the initiative from member states.

## Where is the Council feeling the pinch?

The UN estimated that resources across the UN system shrank by 30 percent this year compared to 2023. The organisation's liquidity crisis—largely driven by member states' failure to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time—has forced it to operate in a resource-constrained environment, leading to hiring freezes and reduced services. Not surprisingly, efforts under the UN80 Initiative are focused on achieving efficiency gains and cost reductions by eliminating redundancies, streamlining processes and relocating services to low-cost locations, among others.

These efforts may, to some extent, affect the Security Council's ability to carry out its day-to-day work—such as limitations in securing meeting rooms or conference services beyond regular office hours. To date, however, Council members see the impact of these particular changes as marginal. In this regard, the Secretariat has also sought to ensure that direct support to the Council, as well as to other intergovernmental bodies in New York and Geneva, remains unaffected by cost-cutting and efficiency measures.<sup>1</sup> However, future budget cuts could mean fewer reports, slower publication of Council meeting records and possibly a reduced number of Council meeting webcasts. Cumulatively, this could result in less transparency of the work of the Council.

The liquidity crisis is expected to have an acute impact on UN peacekeeping operations—a vital instrument of the Security Council for maintaining international peace and security. In anticipation of potential funding shortfalls, the UN has apparently developed a

contingency plan involving deep budget cuts across all peacekeeping missions. Some missions have already proposed repatriating contingents to cope with financial constraints, raising concerns that such measures could compromise the ability of UN peacekeeping operations to fulfil their mandated responsibilities, particularly the protection of civilians. A peacekeeping budget, however, will be decided by the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, which could see member states fighting to keep funding for their particular situations of interest.

Most critically, funding cuts are already severely undermining the UN's humanitarian efforts to alleviate human suffering. Various UN agencies, funds, and programmes have been forced to scale back—or in some cases, halt—life-saving operations due to acute funding shortfalls, with dire consequences for millions in urgent need of assistance. This appears to be the case across many humanitarian emergencies on the Council's agenda, including in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan, among others.

## ‘Christmas Tree’ Mandates: A thing of the past?

In early August, the Secretary-General submitted his report to member states on the mandate implementation review which highlights that since 1946, three of the UN's six principal organs (that is, the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council) have issued mandates through more than 40,000 resolutions, decisions, and presidential statements, resulting in a complex and bloated mandate delivery system. In his 1 August briefing to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General outlined several challenges related to mandate implementation, including burdensome processes, overlapping mandates, duplicative structures, and a growing gap between mandates and available resources.

Regarding the Security Council, the Secretary-General noted that its resolutions are now three times longer than they were 30 years ago, expressing particular concern over the growing use of the phrase “within existing resources” in Council resolutions—language often used by Council members to avoid additional budgetary implications when making specific requests to the Secretariat. This practice has placed increasing strain on the Secretariat's capacity, further stretching already limited resources, the Secretary-General stated.

Most of these issues were first identified during the 2006 mandate implementation review process, but efforts to address them have remained limited. The Security Council has been working to prioritise and sequence mandates in an effort to move away from “Christmas tree” mandates—a term used in the 2015 report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) to describe peacekeeping missions burdened with too many tasks—in favour of more streamlined and focused mandates. Council members are increasingly focused on identifying missions' priority tasks and distinguishing between core mandates and other tasks.<sup>2</sup> Despite these efforts, the report on mandate implementation review shows

1. Chef de Cabinet, “Functional Review for Cost Reduction and Efficiencies”, internal memorandum, United Nations, April 25, 2025.

2. For more, see a summary of the workshop jointly organized by the International Peace Institute, the Stimson Center and Security Council Report on 14 May 2024 on “Prioritizing, Sequencing, and Streamlining UN Security Council Mandates: Taking Stock of Lessons Learned and Pathways Forward”.)

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that there is still a lot of room for improvement. Recently, there have been efforts to streamline mandate and reporting cycles to enable the Council to focus more effectively on the most pressing peace and security issues. China and the UK have apparently taken the lead in these discussions; however, they were unable to build the necessary consensus for substantial changes, resulting instead in only minor adjustments. The mandate implementation review might lead to a renewed effort from some Council members to explore how to produce shorter, more focused mandates in the current political context.

Members have also questioned the utility of assessments, strategic reviews, or independent reviews conducted by the Secretary-General at the request of the Council. While the first two are typically conducted in-house by the Secretariat, the latter is led by external experts with Secretariat support. While these reviews are intended to inform the Council's decisions on mandate renewals, adjustments, reconfigurations, or terminations, Council members have at times expressed frustration with the outcomes of these processes, particularly when the recommendations fail to present realistic or actionable options to guide decision-making. There have also been instances where the Security Council has chosen not to consider the findings of an independent strategic review when renewing mission mandates. A recent example is the strategic review of the UN Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The host government apparently opposed the consideration of the review's recommendations, while Council members themselves appeared dissatisfied with the review's findings.

## Restructuring and Realignment?

The next step in the ongoing reform efforts in line with the third work stream may be structural changes and programmatic alignment, including proposals to streamline the UN's field presence. In his 12 May briefing to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General indicated his intention to review “the present structure of Regional Offices, Special Representatives and Envoys, aiming at a consolidation of the system—with increased functionality and meaningful savings”. A leaked internal memo revealed that there are proposals to eliminate overlaps, for example, between the mandate of the UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and those of MINUSCA and the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), as well as the overlapping responsibilities of the Special Representative for the Horn of Africa and the Special Representative for the Great Lakes. The memo suggests exploring the possibility of merging the UN Office to the African Union (UNOAU) with the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes. Merging these offices could, in some cases, potentially help in removing duplications, while in other cases, it may affect the quality of information flowing to the Council and the depth of mediation with conflict parties to the detriment of peace and security.

In his May briefing, Guterres also mentioned a plan to streamline the civilian components of peacekeeping. Additionally, he flagged the possibility of restructuring the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) by “merging units, eliminating functional and structural

duplications, and getting rid of functions that are also exercised in other parts of the system”. The two departments are currently conducting a comprehensive review of UN peace operations as requested by the *Pact for the Future*, the outcome document of the 2024 Summit of the Future. In his 24 March briefing to the Security Council, the Secretary-General expressed hope that this review will help inform efforts under the UN80 Initiative by finding efficiencies and improvements.

## Responses to the UN80 Initiative

Member States appear broadly supportive of the UN80 Initiative, while awaiting detailed analysis and concrete recommendations on how to implement the proposed reforms in order to make the organisation fit for present and future challenges. However, there seems to be significant anxiety within the UN system, with staff members worrying about job security and potential relocations, and UN staff unions expressing concern about the lack of transparency and consultation in the process.

Although the Council has not held a formal meeting to discuss UN80, its members have shared their views and perspectives in informal briefings by the Secretary-General to members of the General Assembly. The US has emerged as a key proponent of the UN80 Initiative, asserting that in an era of financial austerity, the UN must reduce costs and improve efficiency by eliminating duplication, consolidating functions, and refocusing on the effective delivery of priority mandates. In this context, the US maintains that the UN should return to its core purpose of maintaining international peace and security—particularly at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions. The administration of President Donald Trump has proposed significant cuts to the US contribution to the UN regular and peacekeeping budgets for the 2026 fiscal year. The US has accumulated arrears of \$1.5 billion and \$1.2 billion to the regular and peacekeeping budgets, respectively.<sup>3</sup> The US Congress has yet to approve the proposed budget.

European members have also expressed strong support for the UN80 Initiative, while emphasising that efforts to enhance efficiency and mandate implementation must not come at the expense of the UN's normative values. EU members appear particularly concerned about the call to go “back to the basics” and its potential implications in sidelining critical priorities such as human rights, gender equality, climate action, and sustainable development. The EU has stressed the importance of maintaining the balance among the UN Charter's three pillars—peace and security, development, and human rights—warning that privileging one over the others risks undermining the foundations of multilateralism. Furthermore, the EU views broadening the donor base—both through assessed and voluntary contributions—as essential to addressing the UN's financial difficulties.

China has expressed support for a leaner, more efficient, responsive UN, but underscored that the reform process must be transparent, inclusive, and based on broad consultation. At the same time, China cautioned that the reform initiative should not be used as a pretext for any member state to shirk its financial obligations—an apparent reference to the US, which has accumulated significant

3. Jonathan Landay and Humeysra Pamuk, “Trump Administration Proposes Scrapping UN Peacekeeping Funding,” *Reuters*, April 15, 2025.

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arrears. This position was echoed by the Group of 77 (G77), the largest coalition of developing countries at the UN, which noted that “one single Member State, which is also the only beneficiary of the maximum ceiling on the scale of assessments, continues to be responsible for more than 90 percent of arrears to the regular budget”. China—the UN’s second-largest financial contributor—has also fallen behind on its payments, with arrears totalling \$587 million for the 2025 fiscal year as of 9 May. (Currently, the assessments for the US and China constitute over 40 percent of the UN’s regular budget and nearly 50 percent of its peacekeeping budget.)

Like the European members, China also emphasised that the UN’s three pillars should be promoted as mutually reinforcing. It particularly stressed the importance of safeguarding the interests of developing countries and highlighted concerns that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is falling behind schedule. Similarly, the G77 underscored the need to preserve the UN’s multilateral and inclusive character, cautioning against austerity-driven reform models that could undermine the organisation’s effectiveness, particularly in implementing the wide range of mandates approved by member states.

Russia has noted that this is not the first time the UN has faced financial difficulties. It attributed the current challenges to a lack

of financial discipline and the disproportionate influence of major donors, including excessive reliance on voluntary contributions, a bloated bureaucracy, inefficient internal processes, a growing number of leadership positions, and insufficient geographical representation. Additionally, Russia has raised concerns about the Secretariat exceeding its mandate, compromising impartiality and eroding the organisation’s legitimacy. Russia has also emphasised that the reform process must be fully transparent and accountable to member states, stressing the need to avoid rushed decisions without broad consensus—a point it underscored through initiating a draft General Assembly resolution on the UN80 Initiative, which was adopted on 18 July.

While many members acknowledge that the UN could be more efficient, and there are areas that could be streamlined, only when they receive concrete recommendations from the Secretary-General will members’ positions on the restructuring become clear. These positions are likely to have considerable impact on the world body’s ability to promote peace and security, humanitarian relief, human rights, and development for the most vulnerable across the globe. The road to a leaner, more efficient UN is likely to be bumpy, but as the UN turns 80, its future may lie in being able to adapt to shifting global realities.

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## Status Update since our August Forecast

### Ukraine

On 1 August, the Security Council held an open briefing on Ukraine (S/PV.9971). The meeting was requested by Ukraine in a 31 July letter following large-scale Russian aerial attacks on Kyiv and other cities across Ukraine on that day. Council members Denmark, France, Greece, Slovenia, and the UK supported the meeting request. Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča briefed. Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine participated under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, while Daniel Beck, Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the EU to the UN, participated under rule 39.

On 5 August, Russia convened an Arria-formula meeting titled “The Armed Forces of Ukraine Military Debacle in the Kursk Region: Preliminary Assessment”. Maxim Grigoriev, a member of the Russian Civic Chamber and Chairman of the International Public Tribunal on Ukraine, which was established by the Russian Civic Chamber in March 2022, and local residents from Russia’s Kursk region briefed.

On 29 August, the Security Council held an emergency open briefing on Ukraine (S/PV.9990). Ukraine requested the meeting in a 28 August letter following large-scale Russian aerial attacks conducted overnight on Kyiv and other cities across Ukraine. 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 briefed. Ukraine and several regional states participated in the

meeting under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, while the European Union (EU) participated under rule 39.

### Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

On 5 August, the Security Council held an urgent briefing under the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (MEPQ) (S/PV.9972). Israel requested the meeting in a letter dated 2 August to discuss the situation of the hostages held in Gaza. The request was supported by France, the UK, and the US. The briefers were Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča and Eli David, brother of hostage Evyatar David. Argentina, Israel, and the Observer State of Palestine to the UN participated in the meeting.

On 10 August, the Security Council held an urgent briefing under the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question” (MEPQ) (S/PV.9975). The Council’s European members—Denmark, France, Greece, Slovenia, and the UK—requested the meeting after Israel’s security cabinet approved a plan on 7 August for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to take control of Gaza City. The meeting request was supported by all other Council members except the US. The briefers were Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča and Head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Geneva and Director of the Coordination Division Ramesh Rajasingham. Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Senegal, and the Observer State of Palestine to the UN participated in the meeting.



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## Status Update since our August Forecast

On 21 August, Security Council members discussed recent developments in Gaza under “any other business” (AOB) following closed consultations on Syria. Members convened at Algeria’s request to discuss Israel’s planned takeover of Gaza City and its humanitarian consequences.

On 27 August, the Security Council held its regular monthly open briefing on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (MEPQ) (S/PV.9987). The briefers were Deputy Special Coordinator and Resident Coordinator at the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) Ramiz Alakbarov, Joyce Msuya, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Save the Children Chief Executive Officer Inger Ashing, and Ilana Gritzewsky, an Israeli hostage who had been held captive by Hamas in Gaza. Israel and the Observer State of Palestine to the UN participated in the meeting. Closed consultations followed the open briefing.

### Non-Proliferation (1540 Committee)

On 6 August, Council members convened for a briefing on the activities of the 1540 Committee (S/PV.9973). Ambassador Eloy Alfaro de Alba (Panama) briefed the Council in his capacity as chair of the 1540 Committee. At the briefing, he discussed the latest developments since the Committee Chair’s previous report to the Council.

### West Africa and the Sahel

On 7 August, the Security Council held a briefing, followed by consultations, on West Africa and the Sahel (S/PV.9974). The briefers included: Special Representative and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) Leonardo Santos Simão, UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous, and Executive Director of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding Levinia Addae-Mensah. Closed consultations followed the open briefing.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 7 August, Council members held closed consultations on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Russia requested the meeting to discuss the 1 August appeals court verdict revoking the mandate of President Milorad Dodik of Republika Srpska. There was no briefer.

### Moldova

On 7 August, following the BiH consultations, Council members discussed Moldova under “any other business”. Russia requested the meeting following the 5 August sentencing of Evghenia Guțul, leader of Moldova’s Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, to seven years on charges of illegal party financing. There was no briefer.

### Maritime Security

On 11 August, the Security Council held a high-level open debate titled “Maritime Security: Prevention, Innovation, and International Cooperation to Address Emerging Challenges” under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item (S/PV.9977 and Resumption I). Panama, the Council president in August, convened the debate as one of its signature events. Panama’s President José Raúl Mulino chaired the meeting. The briefers included: the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization

(IMO), Arsenio Domínguez; the Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), Valdecy Urquiza; and the Chief Executive Officer of the Panama Canal Authority, Ricaurte Vásquez Morales.

### South Sudan

On 18 August, the Security Council held an open briefing on the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (S/PV.9980). Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee briefed on the Secretary-General’s latest 90-day report, dated 7 August, which covered developments from 1 April to 15 July (S/2025/504). Additional briefers included: Major General (Retired) George Aggrey Owinow, the Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC)—a body established to oversee implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)—and Murithi Mutiga, Programme Director for Africa at International Crisis Group. Closed consultations followed the open briefing.

Prior to the meeting, Council members that are supporters of the joint pledges related to climate, peace and security—Denmark, France, Greece, Guyana, Panama, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and the UK—held a stake-in focused on the security implications of climate change in South Sudan.

### Lebanon

On 18 August, Council members received a briefing in closed consultations on the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Mohamed Khaled Khiari briefed.

On 28 August, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2790, extending the mandate of UNIFIL for a final time until 31 December 2026. The resolution calls on the mission “to start an orderly and safe drawdown and withdrawal from 31 December 2026 and within one year”.

### Women, Peace and Security

On 19 August, the Security Council convened for its annual open debate on conflict-related sexual violence (S/PV.9981). The briefers were Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten, and Ikhlass Ahmed, the founder and coordinator of the civil society organisation Darfur Advocacy Group.

### Georgia

On 18 August, following the closed consultations on South Sudan, Council members discussed the situation in Georgia under “any other business”. The Council’s European members—Denmark, France, Greece, Slovenia, and the UK—requested the meeting to mark the 17th anniversary of the 2008 Russia-Georgia war. Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča briefed.

# Status Update since our August Forecast

## Counter-terrorism

On 20 August, the Security Council convened for a briefing on the Secretary-General's 21st biannual strategic-level report on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) (S/PV.9982). The briefers were Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism and Head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) Vladimir Voronkov, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) Natalia Gherman, and Financial Action Task Force (FATF) President Elisa de Anda Madrazo.

## Libya

On 21 August, Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Hanna Serwaa Tetteh briefed the Council (S/PV.9984) on recent political, security, and humanitarian developments in the country and the Secretary-General's latest report on UNSMIL (S/2025/509). Ambassador Mohamed Rabi Yusuf (Somalia), Chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, briefed on the work of the Committee.

## DPRK (North Korea)

On 25 August, Ambassador Ioannis Stamatekos, the Deputy

Permanent Representative of Greece, briefed Council members in consultations on the work of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee.

## The Nord Stream Incident

On 26 August, the Security Council convened for a briefing under the "Threats to international peace and security" agenda item (S/PV.9986). Russia requested the meeting to discuss recent developments in the investigation into the 26 September 2022 explosions that damaged the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea. Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas Miroslav Jenča briefed.

## Iran

On 29 August, Security Council members held closed consultations on Iran. The session was requested by France and the UK after the two countries—along with Germany—circulated a letter on 28 August notifying the Council that they believe Iran is in "significant non-performance" of its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme, thereby triggering the "snapback" mechanism to re-impose UN sanctions against the country (S/2025/538). There was no briefer at the meeting.

# Haiti

## Expected Council Action

In September, the US and Panama, the co-penholders on Haiti, may seek authorisation from the Security Council for a reconfigured multinational mission to combat armed gangs in Haiti, as well as a related UN Support Office to provide logistical and operational support to the mission. This force may succeed the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in Haiti, the authorisation of which expires on 2 October.

## Background and Key Recent Developments

After the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021, Haiti descended into a multidimensional crisis characterised by political deadlock, extreme violence, and dire humanitarian conditions. 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.

The Haitian National Police (HNP) and the MSS mission have struggled to make significant headway against the gangs, while repelling some attacks and re-establishing access to some areas.

In October 2022, the Haitian government appealed for the immediate deployment of an "international specialised force" to temporarily reinforce the efforts of the HNP to combat gangs. UN Secretary-General António Guterres endorsed the request, recommending that "[o]ne or several Member States, acting bilaterally at the invitation of

and in cooperation with the Government of Haiti, could deploy, as a matter of urgency, a rapid action force" to support the HNP. Nine months later, in July 2023, Kenya agreed to lead a multinational force in the country.

Although the UN would not administer the proposed mission, Kenya, Haiti, and other stakeholders sought Security Council authorisation for the deployment. On 2 October 2023, the Council adopted resolution 2699 authorising member states to form and deploy the MSS mission to Haiti for an initial period of 12 months. The resolution mandated the mission to help Haitian authorities re-establish security in the country and build conditions conducive to holding free and fair elections. It specified that the cost of the operation would be borne by voluntary contributions and support from individual countries and regional organisations. Subsequent assessments envisaged the deployment of 2,500 officers in phases, at an annual cost of approximately \$600 million.

The mission was initially scheduled to deploy in February 2024, but that timeline was repeatedly postponed for a number of reasons, including lack of funding, with the first contingent arriving in Haiti in June 2024.

In September 2024, the Council extended the authorisation of the MSS mission until 2 October 2025 through resolution 2751. Although this resolution encouraged the mission to accelerate its deployment and the international community to provide additional voluntary contributions, the mission has consistently faced funding uncertainty and a lack of adequate equipment. Deployment levels

**UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2785 (14 July 2024) renewed BINUH's mandate for six and a half months, until 31 January 2026. 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.

# Haiti

have remained far short of the 2,500 officers initially envisaged, with close to only 1,000 personnel on the ground at the time of writing.

Responding to a request of the Security Council, in February, the Secretary-General issued a letter containing recommendations on options for UN support for Haiti. The Secretary-General recommended, among other things, the establishment of a UN Support Office to provide logistic and operational support to the MSS mission, including accommodation, medical capability, and support for mobility and information technology.

After holding several inconclusive meetings on the letter, members of the Security Council have recently begun negotiations on a draft resolution that apparently provides options for security support for Haiti. During the 28 August Security Council open briefing on Haiti, the US announced that, together with Panama, it would share with Council members a draft resolution “to help address the growing violence by establishing a Gang Suppression Force and creating a UN Support Office to provide logistical support to efforts on the ground”.

On 14 July, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2785, renewing the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) for another six and a half months, until 31 January 2026. The resolution expressed the Council’s intention to consider the Secretary-General’s recommendations “without delay”. (For background, see our 11 July *What’s in Blue* story.)

The humanitarian situation remains dire. At the 28 August Council briefing on Haiti, which focused on children and humanitarian issues, Guterres said that the “humanitarian toll is staggering”, with 1.3 million people—half of whom are children—internally displaced, six million people in need of humanitarian assistance, growing levels of acute food insecurity, and humanitarian workers facing threats of violence, extortion and kidnapping. (For background, see our 27 August *What’s in Blue* story.)

On the political front, the future of the transition—including the holding of a constitutional referendum as well as legislative and presidential elections—remains unclear. On 7 August, Laurent Saint-Cyr replaced Fritz Alphonse Jean in the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) rotating presidency. He is expected to lead the TPC until the end of this body’s mandate in February 2026. (The TPC was created pursuant to a March 2024 agreement facilitated by the Caribbean Community 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. As established by a May 2024 Decree, the TPC’s mandate cannot be extended.)

According to media reports, Haitian authorities have been in negotiations to give foreign contractors expanded roles in combatting the gangs and tax collection. US private military contractors are already engaged in Haiti to support a task force operating drones targeted at gang members. The deployment of drones to curb violence in Haiti has raised concerns about the legality and effectiveness of their use.

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. During a 20 August meeting of the OAS Permanent

Council, the OAS Secretary-General presented a document titled “Towards a Haitian-led Roadmap for Stability and Peace”. The roadmap details a set of actions to address Haiti’s urgent needs and long-term challenges that are organised thematically around five pillars: “Security Stabilization and Peace Restoration”, “Political Consensus and Governance Support”, “Electoral Process and Institutional Legitimacy”, “Humanitarian Response” and “Sustainable Development and Economic Progress”. It estimates that \$2.6 billion would be needed for the implementation of all the proposed actions, with the largest portion of this budget (\$1.336 billion) to be allocated to “Security Stabilization and Peace Restoration”.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In an apparent response to recent announcements and measures on deportations of Haitian nationals from the US and the Dominican Republic, in a 4 July press statement, the UN Designated Expert on Human Rights in Haiti, William O’Neill, voiced alarm over the country’s human rights situation, characterising it as “catastrophic by any measure”. O’Neill recalled that the principle of non-refoulement entails an obligation on states not to return anyone from their territory or under their jurisdiction to a place where there are substantial grounds for believing that they would be at risk of persecution, torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearance or other irreparable harm. He echoed the calls by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to all states “not to forcibly return anyone to Haiti” and to consider legal stay arrangements with appropriate safeguards.

## Women, Peace and Security

According to the annual report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, attacks by gangs in 2024 “generally involved the use of widespread sexual violence”. Women and girls were “overwhelmingly affected”, including in informal displacement sites. BINUH verified 708 cases of sexual violence in 2024 (affecting 523 girls, 142 women, and 43 boys), while humanitarian service providers recorded 3,598 cases of gender-based violence. At the same time, the report notes that sexual violence in Haiti remains “chronically underreported”. The Secretary-General urged the international community to increase support for the Haitian authorities’ humanitarian and security efforts, prioritise protection, enable the MSS mission to assist the HNP to “enhance the protection of civilians”, and to support the authorities in delivering comprehensive assistance and justice for survivors.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

On 8 July, the 2653 Haiti Sanctions Committee approved the addition of the *Viv Ansanm* and *Gran Griif* gangs to its list of sanctioned entities. While the committee had previously designated the leaders of *Viv Ansanm* and *Gran Griif*, this was the first time that gangs in their entirety were listed under the Haiti sanctions regime.

On 15 July, the Council of the EU sanctioned three gang leaders for actions that threaten the peace, stability and security of Haiti.

## Key Issues and Options

The tasks for the Security Council in September are to decide on how to respond to the proposal advanced by the US and Panama for a reconfigured multinational mission to combat gangs in Haiti and on authorising a UN Support Office for the mission. Members’ deliberations on these issues will determine the future of the MSS mission ahead of the expiration of its authorisation on 2 October.

In considering the reshaped multinational mission, members may consider including provisions on compliance with international law. Resolution 2699, for instance, reaffirmed that the MSS mission rules of engagement and directives on the use of force should be “in strict compliance with international law, including, international human rights law”. That resolution also called on the MSS mission to “establish an oversight mechanism to prevent human rights

# Haiti

violations or abuses, in particular sexual exploitation and abuse”. Additionally, it recognised the importance of “dedicated expertise” within the mission on children and women’s protection.

Members could also stress the importance of full compliance with the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) for any support provided by the UN Support Office to the reconfigured mission.

More generally, members may consider strengthening the human rights oversight capabilities of the UN in Haiti to report on compliance with international human rights law of all operations tasked to re-establish security in Haiti, including the principle that lethal force should only be used when strictly necessary to protect life or prevent serious injury from an imminent threat.

An additional issue for the Security Council is how it should exercise oversight of the reshaped multinational mission, which while not being a UN operation, would potentially receive authorisation from the Security Council. One option would be for the Force Commander of the mission to regularly brief the Council, providing updates on the mission’s activities. The Council could also consider independent oversight of the mission to closely monitor developments.

According to the Secretary-General’s 24 February letter, the Support Office is to be funded by peacekeeping assessed contributions. Regarding the multinational mission, it appears unlikely that the Council will move away from the mission’s voluntary funding model.

Against the backdrop of the MSS mission’s persistent funding shortfall, the UN liquidity crisis, and the potential elimination of US funding for peacekeeping in 2026—a key issue for the Council,

as well as for the wider UN membership—is to determine how both the mission and the Support Office are to be reliably funded.

## 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, have expressed support for a timely response from the Council to the Secretary-General’s recommendations. Until recently, the US, which remains the principal provider of financial support to the MSS mission, did not have a clear position on the Secretary-General’s proposal, and it has only very recently announced that, together with Panama, it would seek the Council’s authorisation for the establishment of the UN Support Office and a reshaped multinational mission.

In 2024, China and Russia strongly opposed transforming the MSS mission into a peacekeeping operation, an option that the US and then-Council member and co-penholder Ecuador strongly supported. It seems that, during closed consultations on Haiti on 28 May, China expressed reservations on some aspects of the Secretary-General’s recommendations.

## UN Peacekeeping

### Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council will hold an open debate on peacekeeping reform pursuant to resolution 2378 of 20 September 2017. Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo; the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Ricklef Johannes Beutin (Germany); and Jenna Russo, the Director of Research and Head of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations at the International Peace Institute (IPI) are the anticipated briefers.

### 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 UN 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 has indicated 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 and the need to assess the organisation’s fitness for carrying out its goals efficiently. 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 peace operations 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

**UN DOCUMENTS ON UN PEACEKEEPING** Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9969 (29 July 2025) was a briefing on UN peace operations. 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 Peacekeeping

operations and Special Political Missions, respectively. Last year, DPO commissioned an independent study on: *Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities*, which was published in November 2024 and was intended 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. Lacroix and Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo also briefed member states on the review 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 formally requested member states to provide written inputs. So far, it seems that more than 30 countries have sent their written submissions to the Secretariat, with more anticipated to do so in the coming weeks.

This series of consultations is expected to inform 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 and the General Assembly.

On 29 July, the Security Council held a briefing under the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security” on the theme “Adapting Peace Operations for the Pursuit of Political Solutions – Priorities and Challenges.” The meeting, convened by Pakistan, aimed to contribute to the ongoing review of UN peace operations. Lacroix, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, and Ze’id Raad Al Hussein, President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Peace Institute (IPI), briefed the Council.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for Council members in September will be the ongoing review of UN peace operations. The open debate will offer another opportunity for Council members and the wider UN membership to share their views and perspectives on how to strengthen UN peace operations and make them fit for purpose to meet present and future peace and security challenges. A possible option is the adoption of a resolution later in the year based on the series of discussions on UN peace operations that took place over the course of 2025. The last thematic resolution on UN peacekeeping—resolution 2668 of 21 December 2022 on mental health and psychosocial support for

personnel of UN peace operations—was adopted three years ago.

Another major issue is the UN80 Initiative and how it relates to the ongoing review of peace operations. Security Council members appear eager to see how the two processes can mutually reinforce each other. In his 24 March briefing to the Security Council, the Secretary-General expressed hope that this review will help inform efforts under the UN80 Initiative by finding efficiencies and improvements.

A related concern is the UN’s liquidity crisis and the continued efforts to ensure cost-efficiency and effectiveness across the organisation, including within peace operations. The US contributes 25% of the peacekeeping budget, and the prospect of the US not paying their assessed contributions to peacekeeping this year would require deep budget cuts in many missions. Council members could consider holding a discussion with DPO in a closed Arria formula meeting, or other informal format, that focuses on key mandated tasks that should be preserved in specific peace operations, in light of envisioned budget cuts.

## Council Dynamics

Three elected members—Denmark, Pakistan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK)—are working together this year as part of a “Peacekeeping Trio Initiative”. ROK seems to have coordinated with Denmark and Pakistan in planning to convene the open debate in September. In addition to formal meetings, the Trio has been convening a series of informal discussions outside the Council, including most recently a policy forum held on 8 July at IPI, focused on the “Ten-Year Review of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) Report”. The Trio appears eager to closely follow developments around peacekeeping in the coming months, with the aim of proposing a Council product before the end of the year.

At the 29 July meeting, Council members highlighted a range of issues and priorities related to the ongoing review of peace operations. Several members reaffirmed that the primacy of politics must remain central to peace operations, with a greater emphasis on addressing the root causes of conflict. They also underscored the importance of setting realistic political objectives, establishing clear benchmarks, and ensuring sustained support and partnership with local and regional actors. Some members emphasised the responsibility of host states to fully respect Status of Forces Agreements and to provide a conducive operating environment for peace operations.

However, some members, such as Russia, expressed concern about the growing tendency to broaden mandates to include what they described as “secondary issues,” such as human rights, gender, and climate, arguing that this represents a departure from more traditional approaches. Others, meanwhile, stressed the need to ensure the inclusion of women and youth in peace processes to promote sustainable peace. A number of members noted that while peacekeepers can help create space for dialogue, they cannot substitute for genuine political solutions. These members further emphasised that peacekeeping is not a silver bullet but remains relevant despite the significant challenges it faces.

Some members called for reforms to enhance the accountability and adaptability of peace operations, stressing that mandates should not be renewed merely for continuity’s sake. At the same time, others cautioned that cost-effectiveness should not be equated with doing

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# UN Peacekeeping

less, underscoring that budgetary constraints must not diminish the international community's commitment or resolve. Several members, such as Greece and the Republic of Korea, also highlighted the

importance of leveraging technology—particularly artificial intelligence—to strengthen UN peace operations in areas such as training, logistics, landmine detection, surveillance, and monitoring.

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## Sudan

### Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council is expected to vote on a draft resolution to extend the Sudan sanctions regime, which expires on 12 September.

The mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee expires on 12 March 2026.

### Key Recent Developments

Fierce clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have continued, as both parties seek to consolidate territorial control. In recent months, the fighting has centred around North Darfur state and the Kordofan region, witnessing an alarming escalation in hostilities. Civilians have borne the brunt of the fighting, which has been marked by heavy use of drones, artillery, ground operations, and airstrikes, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis and raising concerns about widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

On 11 August, at least 57 civilians were killed when the RSF conducted a large-scale assault on El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, besieged by the RSF since May 2024, and the Abu Shouk IDP camp. On 16 August, Abu Shouk was hit by RSF artillery fire, killing at least 31 people, including seven children. These attacks follow months of intensified shelling, drone strikes, and blockade tactics that have cut off escape routes and trapped civilians inside the city. The other IDP camp adjoining El Fasher, Zamzam camp, was seized by the RSF in mid-April, resulting in hundreds of thousands of people fleeing to nearby areas, mostly to Tawila, a town in North Darfur state.

In late July, the RSF-led Sudan Founding Alliance (known as “Tasis”)—a coalition of armed and political groups—announced the formation of a parallel government in RSF-held areas. In a 13 August press statement, Council members rejected this announcement and expressed concern that it threatens Sudan's unity and risks further fragmentation. Members reiterated that priority should be given to resuming talks towards a lasting ceasefire and creating conditions for re-establishing a credible and inclusive political transition towards a democratically elected national government following a civilian-led transitional period, in line with the principles of national ownership.

The US appears to be trying to reinvigorate efforts to advance peace talks in Sudan, in coordination with regional and international partners. It had planned to host a foreign ministers' meeting of the Quad countries—Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—on 29 July, but according to media reports, the meeting has been indefinitely postponed. (For more information, see our 26 June

and 4 August *What's in Blue* stories.)

On 11 August, US Senior Advisor for Africa Massad Boulos met with the SAF's leader, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, in Zurich. This meeting, reportedly facilitated by Qatar, was the highest-level US-Sudan engagement since US President Donald Trump assumed office earlier this year. Media reports suggest that both sides discussed a peace plan proposed by the US for a comprehensive ceasefire and expanded humanitarian access. At the time of writing, neither side had issued any official readout of the meeting.

While humanitarian conditions in Sudan continue to deteriorate, access remains severely constrained in areas of active fighting, leaving civilians trapped in dire conditions and resorting to desperate coping strategies, including eating animal feed and food waste. According to the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), access remained particularly restricted in North Darfur state, Greater Kordofan, and the Nuba Mountains regions. In Kordofan, continued fighting along key supply routes has severely disrupted the delivery of essential goods and humanitarian assistance, aggravating economic hardship, driving displacement, and further worsening the humanitarian situation. In El Fasher, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been unable to deliver food by road for over a year, as all access routes remain blocked. On 20 August, a WFP convoy of 16 trucks carrying life-saving food was hit by a drone strike near Al Malit in North Darfur, destroying three trucks. This marked the second attack in three months on humanitarian convoys in the area, following the 2 June attack on a joint WFP-UNICEF convoy in Al Koma.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

Between 27 and 31 July, Radhouane Nouicer, the UN-designated expert on human rights in Sudan, visited Port Sudan, where he met with Sudanese officials, UN representatives, humanitarian partners, and civil society organisations to assess the human rights situation amid the ongoing conflict. In a press release issued following the visit, Nouicer expressed grave concern at the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights conditions, noting that escalating hostilities have made daily survival a constant struggle for civilians. He highlighted reports of extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, forced displacement, and arbitrary detention, and underlined the need for sustained commitments to justice, accountability, and inclusive governance. Nouicer urged the international community to enforce the arms embargo, support local peacebuilding initiatives, and ensure unhindered humanitarian access.

### Women, Peace and Security

On 19 August, Ikhlass Ahmed, founder and coordinator of the civil society organisation Darfur Advocacy Group, briefed the Council at the annual open debate on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). She underscored that CRSV has become a defining feature of the war in Sudan. While noting that CRSV is being perpetrated by all

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2772](#) (17 February 2025) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee until 12 March 2026. [S/RES/2750](#) (11 September 2024) renewed the 1591 Sudan sanctions regime—including targeted sanctions (assets freezes and travel bans) and an arms embargo—until 12 September 2025. [S/RES/2736](#) (13 June 2024) demanded that the Rapid Support Forces halt the siege of El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state, and called for an immediate halt to the fighting and for de-escalation in and around El Fasher. [Security Council Press Statement SC/16144](#) (13 August 2025) rejected the announcement of the establishment of a parallel governing authority in areas controlled by the Rapid Support Forces. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9947](#) (27 June 2025) was the 120-day briefing on the situation in Sudan. [S/PV.9860](#) (17 February 2025) was the meeting record of the adoption of the resolution 2772, which extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee until 12 March 2026.

# Sudan

parties to the conflict, Ahmed stressed that the RSF is “committing these violations in an organised, widespread and systematic manner”, particularly targeting women and girls based on their ethnicity. She also underscored that impunity has emboldened the SAF to commit sexual violence.

Ahmed noted that support for victims of CRSV in Sudan is “nowhere close to meeting the overwhelming needs” of survivors, amid a lack of emergency contraception, prophylaxis and safe abortion services. She also highlighted frequent attacks on health providers and facilities, including clinics providing reproductive health care and emergency response to survivors, as well as the deliberate obstruction of humanitarian access by warring parties.

Ahmed called on the Council to demand that all conflict parties fully comply with resolution 2736 of 13 June 2024, which called for an immediate halt to the fighting and demanded that the RSF halt the siege of El Fasher. In the absence of a ceasefire, she stressed the criticality of the protection of civilians and of ensuring unhindered humanitarian access. Ahmed also called on the Council to demand an immediate end to CRSV by all conflict parties and to condemn the targeting of women human rights defenders and frontline workers.

## Key Issues and Options

An immediate issue for the Council is the extension of the Sudan sanctions regime (targeted sanctions and the arms embargo). Ensuring strict compliance with the sanctions regime, amid reports of continuous supply and use of foreign weapons and mercenaries in the Darfur region, is a major issue in this regard. As well, ensuring accountability for violations of international humanitarian, human rights law, and other atrocities remains a paramount issue. One option for the Council members is to extend the sanctions regime for one year.

In light of apparent violations of the sanctions regime and the evolving political and security dynamics in Sudan and the wider region, Council members could consider requesting the Secretary-General to conduct an independent assessment to assess the underlying drivers of instability. Such an assessment could also identify how the Council’s existing tools might be better adapted to respond effectively to the situation.

Although the Council extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 12 March 2026 through resolution 2772 of 17 February, members have not been able to agree on its composition. In late February, the Secretary-General proposed five experts to serve on the Panel, but some Council members subsequently placed holds on the appointments. As a result, the Panel has not yet been constituted and is unable to carry out its work, including the submission of the interim report, due on 12 August, and the quarterly updates mandated by resolution 2772.

In this respect, one option for Council members is to convene an informal meeting of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee to discuss ways of breaking the impasse in appointing the Panel. Another option would be to address the matter at the Council level, rather than in a subsidiary body level, with members discussing it in either closed consultations or under “any other business”.

During the negotiations in September, some Council members may wish to have a substantive discussion about the sanctions measures, including, but not limited to, enlarging the geographical scope of the measures to the other parts of the country, expanding the designation criteria, and listing more individuals and entities under the current regime. As part of this discussion, some members may raise the issue of aligning the mandate of the sanctions regime with that of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

The overarching issue for the Council is how to bring an end to the ongoing fighting and support efforts towards a sustainable ceasefire across Sudan and a civilian-led political transition. The continued violence, insecurity, and targeted attacks against civilians, civilian and humanitarian infrastructure, remain a major concern for Council members. As well, with hostilities continuing, mediation efforts have consistently failed to achieve any meaningful breakthroughs. Council members could consider holding an informal interactive dialogue with key regional and international stakeholders—including representatives of regional and sub-regional organisations and states involved in mediation efforts—to explore ways to leverage their comparative advantages and harmonise their efforts in support of a coherent political strategy to the crisis.

## Council Dynamics

Council members recognise that external interference has fuelled conflict and instability in Sudan and have urged all states to refrain from such actions, support efforts for a durable peace, comply with their obligations under international law, and implement relevant Council resolutions on sanctions in Darfur. Members, however, have diverging views on the utility of the sanctions regime. Several have stressed the importance of maintaining the measures in light of ongoing violence in Darfur and the Panel of Experts’ role in monitoring the humanitarian and security situation and identifying violations. Russia has argued that sanctions have failed to stabilise the region, pointing to the continued flow of weapons into Darfur. In their explanation of vote on resolution 2772, the “A3 plus” members (Algeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Guyana) called for a “principled approach” that advances a resolution to the crisis, while ensuring that Council-imposed measures remain balanced and constructive.

Council members also have diverging views on how to adapt the Council’s tools to the evolving security situation in the country. Some, such as France, have advocated expanding the geographical scope of sanctions beyond Darfur to other conflict-affected parts of the country. Other members have also expressed support for the application of targeted measures against individuals responsible for atrocities and sanctions violations. However, the “A3 plus” members, China, and Russia, have opposed expanding the scope of the sanctions regime. Russia, in particular, has stated that it considers “unacceptable even any hint of extending the sanctions regime beyond Darfur”.

A recurrent issue in recent negotiations on the Sudan sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts has been the duration of the mandates. The “A3 plus” members, China, Pakistan, and Russia, have supported shorter renewals, arguing that aligning the duration of both mandates would avoid a situation where the Panel’s reporting period extends beyond that of the sanctions regime itself. These members argued that such an arrangement effectively pre-judges the extension of the regime, while noting that this alignment is consistent with the Council’s practice in other sanctions regimes. In their explanation of votes, following the adoption of resolution 2772, “A3 plus members” and China indicated that they anticipate a thorough discussion on this issue when the sanctions regime comes up for renewal in September. On the other hand, the penholder and like-minded members have favoured longer mandates to ensure



continuity and predictability in the panel's reporting.  
The UK is the penholder on Sudan, and the US is the penholder

on Sudan sanctions.

## Syria

### Expected Council Action

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

### Key Recent Developments

Following the escalation of violence in Suweida governorate in July, the security situation in Syria has been relatively calm. This sectarian violence, however, demonstrated the fragility of Syria's transition.

A ceasefire in Suweida, announced by the Syrian interim government on 19 July, has largely continued to hold, despite heightened tensions and sporadic clashes in the region. On 12 August, high-level officials from Syria, Jordan, and the US agreed to form a working group to support the ceasefire and to resolve the crisis in the governorate.

On 10 August, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement expressing concern over the violence in Suweida and condemning attacks on civilians. It called for adherence to the ceasefire and urged the Syrian interim authorities to ensure accountability and inclusive justice efforts. (For more information, see our 9 August *What's in Blue* story.)

On 26 August, an Israeli drone strike targeting a Syrian army unit in the Damascus countryside killed six soldiers and was strongly condemned by the Syrian interim government. Israel has also continued to carry out ground incursions into the southwest of the country, ostensibly aimed at ensuring its national security and supporting the Druze community. A 25 August Israeli incursion into rural Damascus prompted condemnation from Syrian foreign minister Asaad al-Shabani, who reportedly accused Israel of "expansionist and partition plans". On 19 August, the US reportedly brokered a high-level meeting between Israeli officials and Shaibani to further reduce tensions between the two countries, and on 25 August, Sharaa revealed that Syria is in advanced stages of security talks with Israel.

Syrian interim authorities continue to face challenges in fostering Syrian unity and in incorporating armed groups into the Ministry of Defence's forces. Secessionist and anti-government sentiment among the Druze community has apparently increased since July, with protests calling for independence reportedly taking place in Suweida city. Meanwhile, tensions are mounting between the Syrian interim authorities and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a Kurdish-led group which controls most of Syria's de facto autonomous northeastern territory. On 9 August, Syria's state news agency reported that, in reaction to an SDF-held conference calling for decentralisation, the interim authorities backed out of planned talks in Paris between the two parties, demonstrating that challenges remain in the implementation of the 10 March agreement to integrate the SDF and its associated civil and military structures into Syria's state institutions by the end of 2025. On 17 August, following a number of clashes between the interim government forces and the SDF, the Syrian interim president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, said that he

hoped for a peaceful resolution to the issue within "a few months", with the support of the US and Türkiye.

Terrorism remains a significant threat to Syria's security. The 24 July report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, covering the period from 14 December 2024 to 22 June, says that ISIL "remained determined to exploit the situation" in Syria, including divisions in the country. The report says that during the reporting period, ISIL carried out over 90 attacks in Syria, and further notes that it "also tried to incite sectarian tensions" and discredit Sharaa. According to media reports, on 20 August, the US-led coalition against ISIL conducted an operation west of Aleppo in which it captured a senior member of the terrorist group.

The interim government continues to take steps to advance Syria's political transition. On 20 August, Sharaa signed a decree which approved a temporary electoral system for the People's Assembly, stipulating that the parliament will have 210 seats, with two-thirds elected by electoral colleges formed in Syria's separate governorates and one-third to be appointed directly by the interim president. In July, the chairman of the Higher Committee for People's Assembly Elections reportedly said that the indirect elections would take place between 15 and 20 September, which would mark the first parliamentary elections to be held following the ouster of former president Bashar al-Assad. On 23 August, the Committee reportedly announced that it would be delaying the elections in Suweida governorate and in the partially Kurdish-controlled Hasaka and Raqqqa governorates due to security concerns, drawing criticism from Kurdish authorities.

Efforts also continue to advance Syria's postwar reconstruction and economic rehabilitation. On 6 August, the interim government signed 12 investment deals—including with Qatari and UAE-based corporations—worth a total of \$14 billion, which involve infrastructure, transportation, and real estate projects such as a new airport and subway system in Damascus.

In his 21 August briefing to the Security Council, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher stressed that investment in longer-term support for development and reconstruction was crucial to ensure that the "humanitarian mission" in Syria transitions to Syrian-led recovery and rebuilding. He emphasised that this is particularly important as the country grapples with a dire humanitarian crisis impacting over 16 million Syrians who need humanitarian support, and as severe funding shortages are curtailing efforts to sustain and expand aid delivery.

On 25 August, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) published its monthly report on the implementation of resolution 2118 of 27 September 2013, which required the verification and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. At an 11 July meeting of the OPCW, Damascus announced that it

**UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2254 (18 December 2015) focused exclusively on a political solution to the Syria crisis and was adopted unanimously. **Security Council Presidential Statements** S/PRST/2025/6 (10 August 2025) condemned violence against civilians in Suweida in July 2025, called for unhindered humanitarian access to the region, and called on the Syrian interim authorities to ensure accountability. 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.



# Syria

will launch internationally led working groups to “bring closure” to the legacy of Assad’s chemical weapons programme.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 14 August, the UN Syria Commission of Inquiry (COI) published a report on the outbreak of sectarian violence in Syria’s coastal areas. The violence, which primarily targeted Alawite communities and culminated in massacres in early March, included murder and inhumane acts related to the treatment of the dead, among other human rights abuses that were perpetrated by the interim government’s forces and individuals operating alongside them, as well as fighters associated with the deposed Assad government. Drawing from extensive investigations and over 200 interviews with witnesses and victims, the report found that such violations included acts that “likely amounted to war crimes” from both sides on the basis that “members of certain factions extrajudicially executed, tortured and ill-treated civilians in multiple Alawite majority villages and neighbourhoods in a manner that was both widespread and systematic”. In this regard, the Commission urged all parties to de-escalate tensions, engage in dialogue, and uphold the human rights of all individuals. Among other recommendations, the COI called on the interim authorities to continue to pursue accountability for all perpetrators, regardless of affiliation or rank.

## Women, Peace and Security

In a 23 July statement, several UN independent experts expressed grave concern over reports of targeted abductions, disappearances, and gender-based violence against women and girls in Syria, particularly targeting the Alawite community. The independent experts referenced the reported abductions of 38 Alawite women and girls across various governorates since early March, including Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs, Damascus, and Aleppo. The statement stressed that the pattern of violations, involving gender-based violence, forced marriage of minors, and a “glaring lack of effective response” by the Syrian interim government, suggests a targeted campaign against Alawite women and girls based on intersecting grounds. The statement also noted that these incidents “reflect a broader pattern of violence against different groups of women and girls”.

Noting that several cases reportedly involved actors affiliated with the interim government, the independent experts underscored that “[a]uthorities have an obligation under international law to protect all women and girls from violence, provide effective remedies, and ensure access to justice, protection and assistance, including psycho-social support”. They called on the interim government to carry out prompt, thorough, and impartial investigations; prosecute perpetrators; ensure the safety and rehabilitation of survivors; and establish measures such as instituting safe, gender-sensitive reporting channels.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is to ensure that Syria’s interim government pursues a credible, transparent, and inclusive political process while navigating an increasingly fraught security context compounded by sectarian violence, terrorism, and violations of Syria’s sovereignty. Council members will be closely monitoring the process and results of the upcoming parliamentary elections to consider whether it meets their calls for inclusivity, transparency, and aligns with the principles set out in resolution 2254 of 18 December 2025, which focused on a political solution to the crisis in Syria. Announced delays in holding elections in Suweida, Hasaka, and Raqqah governorates may have some Council members questioning the comprehensiveness and inclusivity of the process.

A related key issue is how the interim government advances transitional justice efforts, including accountability and reconciliation. Council members will be keen to learn more about the findings of the fact-finding committee tasked with investigating the violence in Latakia and Tartous in early March, which presented its findings to Sharaa on 22 July, although they have not been published. Members may also be interested in more information about the fact-finding committee established in August to investigate the violence in Suweida. Council

members will be closely monitoring steps taken by the interim government to ensure accountability for crimes, regardless of the fighters’ affiliation, in line with the Council’s 10 August presidential statement.

Another issue is that UN sanctions on Ha’yat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)—a terrorist group formerly affiliated with Al-Qaida and ISIL, which led to the ouster of Assad under Sharaa’s leadership—are impacting the interim government’s functions. HTS, Sharaa, and Syria’s interim interior minister Anas Khattab are all listed under the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, which imposes an asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo on listed individuals and entities. One option the Council could consider is delisting members of the interim government and applying a carve-out to facilitate economic engagement with the interim government. Various Council member states have taken steps to lift unilateral sanctions on Syria.

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 conducted an integrated strategic assessment of the changing situation in the country, which has been 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 members could request an informal briefing on the results of the integrated strategic assessment. They could also consider convening an Informal Interactive Dialogue (IID) with the participation of Syria and relevant UN departments to discuss the most viable options on future Council engagement with Syria.

## Council 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 agree that the Syrian interim government needs to pursue disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) efforts towards comprehensive security sector reform (SSR). Several Council members have also stressed that recurring escalations of violence cannot be addressed without advancing inclusive accountability measures and a credible political process in the country.

There is broad agreement among Council members that the new Syrian government requires international support to rebuild the country and its crippled economy, including through the easing of sanctions. Following a 31 July meeting with Shaibani in Moscow, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov reportedly said Russia was ready to provide Syria with “all possible assistance in post-conflict reconstruction”.

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 10 August presidential statement. 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. China has repeatedly expressed concern about the reported integration of FTFs into the Syrian army.

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 has predominantly seen its actions as defensive in nature or tied to ensuring its national security. The 10 August presidential statement fell short of condemning Israel's strikes and incursions in Syria. Instead,

it condemned "all forms of negative or destructive interference in Syria's political, security and economic transition", and called on all states to refrain from actions which may destabilise the country.

## Yemen

### Expected Council Action

In September, 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.

### Key Recent Developments

Yemen continues to face deepening humanitarian and economic crises amid a stalled political process. Regional factors compound the country's fragility.

In August, no further attacks by the Houthis—a Yemeni rebel group also known as Ansar Allah—on commercial vessels were reported in the Red Sea. In July, the group resumed targeting commercial vessels in the area for the first time since late 2024. These attacks are part of their offensive against Israel, which they claim is in solidarity with Palestinians, and have threatened to continue until Israel ends its military campaign in Gaza that followed the 7 October 2023 Hamas-led attacks. The Houthis have reportedly said that ships linked to Israel are a legitimate target.

In line with this campaign, the Houthis have continued to directly target Israel through ballistic missile and drone attacks, provoking retaliatory strikes from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Following reported Houthi ballistic missile and drone attacks on Israel on 5, 12, and 14 August—all of which fell short of their targets or were intercepted—the Israeli Navy launched strikes on a power plant outside Sanaa, the Houthi-controlled capital of Yemen, on 17 August, claiming that it was energy infrastructure being used by the Houthis. The rebel group retaliated with a ballistic missile attack targeting Israel's Ben Gurion airport on the same day, which was intercepted by the Israeli military. On 22 August, the Houthis launched attacks involving a drone and a missile, which, according to the Israeli military, was the first time a cluster bomb warhead was used by the group. On 24 August, the IDF launched heavy strikes on Sanaa, including on a military compound which contains the presidential palace, a fuel depot, and two power stations, which the Houthi-run Ministry of Health said killed at least ten people and wounded 92. The IDF struck Sanaa again on 28 August, reportedly to target senior Houthi officials. The Houthis have denied that senior leaders were targeted. According to the Israeli media, since Israel resumed its campaign in Gaza on 18 March, the Houthis have launched 72 ballistic missiles and at least 23 drones at Israel, most of which have fallen short or been intercepted.

The Houthis continue to hold several crew members from the MV Eternity C, a Liberian-flagged, Greek-operated ship, which they attacked and sank on 7 July, killing at least five other crew members. They also continue to arbitrarily detain UN, NGO, and diplomatic

staff, who have been held for over a year.

In his 12 August briefing to the Security Council, Grundberg warned that while the frontlines continue to be stable, a 25 July assault on the Aleb front, which resulted in several fatalities and injuries on both sides, and signs that the Houthis are fortifying positions, including around Hodeidah city, are concerning.

Grundberg reiterated three priorities to create a foundation for a lasting solution to the conflict in Yemen: de-escalation on the frontlines and working with the parties on the principles of a ceasefire; establishing a path for the parties to return to talks in line with commitments made in the December 2023 roadmap; and regional and international cooperation to stabilise and support Yemen, including through achieving security guarantees for the Red Sea.

On 20 August, during a visit to Riyadh, the Special Envoy held a meeting with the President of the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC), Rashad Al-Alimi, and discussed the need to improve living conditions for Yemenis and advance a political agreement that leads to sustainable peace in Yemen.

Throughout August, in response to the worsening economic crisis, the Central Bank of Yemen in Aden and the internationally recognised government took steps to address currency depreciation and to stabilise the prices of essential goods. Due to the reforms, the Yemeni rial reportedly appreciated by over 44 percent as of late July. In his Council briefing, Grundberg welcomed these steps and said he hoped that they "mark the start of a sustained recovery".

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is worsening as needs are soaring. In his briefing to the Council on 12 August, the OCHA Director of the Coordination Division, Ramesh Rajasingham, warned that "Yemen is now one of the most food insecure countries in the world", with more than 17 million people going hungry and with half of Yemeni children under the age of five suffering from acute malnutrition. He added that in internally displaced persons camps in the Abs District of Hajjah governorate, children are dying from starvation. Rajasingham called for urgent funding to scale up emergency food and nutrition support and for financial support for the Yemen Humanitarian Fund. As of 31 July, OCHA's 2025 Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan was only 13.6 per cent funded, with \$2.14 billion in unmet requirements.

### Women, Peace and Security

A 15 July update from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) highlighted the devastating consequences of funding cuts for women and girls in Yemen, where one woman dies of childbirth or pregnancy-related causes every two hours. The alert says that essential reproductive health services and protection for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) "are being dismantled due to funding cuts". UNFPA reports that lack of funding has already forced it to suspend support to nearly 50 health facilities and to close 16 safe spaces and a specialised mental health centre, leaving GBV survivors without essential support. Funding cuts have also led UNFPA to withdraw support from 14 mobile teams, which reached women, girls and midwives in some of the remotest parts

**UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2787](#) (15 July 2025) extended the Secretary-General's monthly reporting requirement on Houthi attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea until 15 January 2026. [S/RES/2786](#) (14 July 2025) renewed the mandate of UNMHA until 28 January 2026. [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.

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# Yemen

of the country. The update stresses that approximately 1.5 million women and girls have already lost access to life-saving services and that broader reductions could result in “nearly 7 million people denied access to life-saving care”. It also notes that UNFPA’s 2025 \$70 million appeal for Yemen is only 36 percent funded.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how to help mitigate the risk of an escalation of hostilities in Yemen and the Red Sea while advancing efforts to relaunch the stalled intra-Yemeni political process amid broader regional tensions. Houthi attacks against commercial vessels and global maritime supply chains in the Red Sea further complicate efforts to secure the UN’s roadmap for peace in Yemen.

One option for the Council would be to issue a presidential statement calling for de-escalation, stressing that there is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen, and demanding that the Yemeni parties resume concrete discussions on establishing a roadmap under UN auspices for inclusive peace in the country. Given the degradation of economic conditions in the country, members could also demand renewed economic and humanitarian initiatives, such as the implementation of the economic de-escalation agreement reached on 23 July 2024 between the Houthis and the Yemeni government.

The statement could also reiterate provisions from relevant resolutions on the situation in Yemen and the Red Sea, including demanding that the Houthis immediately cease all attacks against merchant and commercial vessels, underscoring the need to address the root causes of the attacks in the Red Sea, and calling on all member states to adhere to the arms embargo imposed by resolution 2216.

Given the increasingly fraught humanitarian context, Council members could also consider holding a public briefing, or a high level side-event during the UN’s annual General Assembly High-Level Week, focused specifically on Yemen’s humanitarian crisis—which could include a briefing from the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) or the World Food Programme (WFP) on the country’s rapidly worsening food security—providing member states 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 in the Red Sea. Three of the Council’s elected members—Denmark, Greece, and Panama—have suffered Houthi attacks on their commercial vessels. Advancing mediation efforts towards a resumption of dialogue and a peace process under UN auspices remains an overarching priority for members.

Nevertheless, members have divergent views on the reasons for the protracted political stalemate and insecurity in Yemen. The “A3 plus one” members (Algeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Guyana), 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. Russia and China have also criticised foreign military action in Yemen—Israel, the UK, and the US have all conducted strikes targeting Houthi infrastructure since the beginning of the Red Sea crisis—claiming that it only serves to degrade the country’s already dire humanitarian situation, exacerbate the situation in the Red Sea, and negatively impact the peace process.

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 repeatedly called for the Security Council to respond to Iranian defiance of the Council-mandated arms embargo and has underscored its support for Israel’s right to defend itself against 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. Greece and the US are the co-penholders on the Red Sea crisis.

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# Afghanistan

## Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council will convene for its quarterly open briefing on Afghanistan. Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Roza Otunbayeva and a representative of civil society are expected to brief. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk may also brief. Otunbayeva’s briefing will be her last to the Council before she finishes her term in September. Closed consultations are scheduled to follow the open briefing.

UNAMA’s mandate expires on 17 March 2026.

## Key Recent Developments

Afghanistan continues to face one of the world’s most severe humanitarian crises. According to figures published by OCHA, 22.9 million Afghans, more than half of the country’s population, are expected to

require humanitarian assistance this year. Food insecurity levels are especially high, with an estimated 12.6 million Afghans experiencing crisis or emergency levels of acute food insecurity between March and April 2025.

Despite the magnitude of the crisis, the humanitarian response in Afghanistan is critically underfunded, particularly following the US’ 4 April decision to suspend aid to the country. This shortfall is having a significant impact on the work of humanitarian actors. OCHA’s latest update says that funding cuts have led to a reduction in goods and services across several different sectors, including healthcare and food assistance, and also notes that humanitarian needs across Afghanistan will increase without renewed commitments from the international community. In remarks published by Radio Free Europe in mid-August, World Food Programme (WFP) Representative and Country Director for Afghanistan John Aylieff

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UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2777 (17 March 2025) extended UNAMA’s mandate until 17 March 2026.



# Afghanistan

said that “hundreds of thousands of people” have already been turned away from nutrition centres and warned that food assistance may stop “almost completely” by October.

On 13 August, the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction issued a report on aid diversion in Afghanistan. Among other matters, the report found that the Taliban “use every means at their disposal, including force” to ensure that aid goes where they want it to rather than where donors intend.

Efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan have also been complicated by the ongoing expulsion of Afghans from neighbouring countries. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), over 1.5 million Afghans have returned to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan in 2025 after both states launched separate campaigns targeting undocumented Afghan nationals. In a 15 July statement, UNAMA noted that the “pace and scale of returns are overwhelming already fragile support systems” and called for immediate international support for relief efforts. On 24 July, UNAMA published a report on the human rights risks faced by persons involuntarily returned to Afghanistan. Among other matters, the report concluded that members of groups that have been involuntarily returned are “at risk of persecution, torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment or other irreparable harm, in violation of the principle of non-refoulement”. On 18 July, another group of independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council condemned the mass returns of Afghan nationals from Iran and Pakistan, stressing that Afghanistan is unsafe for returnees. In a subsequent press briefing note, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk underscored that the surge in the number of Afghans involuntarily returned to Afghanistan is creating a multidimensional human rights crisis. Türk also called for an immediate halt to the forcible return of all Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly those at risk of persecution upon return.

The broader human rights situation in Afghanistan remains dire, particularly for women and girls. In a 21 July post on X, UNAMA expressed concern regarding the arrest of “numerous women and girls in Kabul” for “alleged non-compliance with the de facto authorities’ hijab instructions” and urged the Taliban to reverse its policies and practices that restrict the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls. UNAMA’s latest report on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, which was published on 10 August and covers the period spanning April to June, highlights specific examples of human rights violations perpetrated by the Taliban, including violations of the rights to work, freedom of expression, and education, as well as instances of gender-based violence against women and girls. The report also notes that dozens of Afghan women working for the UN received explicit death threats from unidentified individuals in May.

On 8 July, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Taliban Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and the Chief Justice of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Abdul Hakim Haqqani, having found that there is reason to believe that the pair have committed the crime against humanity of persecution on gender and political grounds.

On 11 August, UN Women issued a statement marking the fourth anniversary of the Taliban’s seizure of power in August 2021. The

statement notes that women are close to being erased from public life in Afghanistan and highlights some of the specific effects of the Taliban’s policies and practices on women and girls. It also refers to the findings of UN Women’s 2024 Afghanistan Gender Index, which concluded that Afghan women currently face the second-widest gender gap in the world.

Meanwhile, the Taliban has continued to seek closer ties with the international community. On 3 July, Russia accepted the credentials of the Taliban’s ambassador to Moscow and became the first state to formally recognise the Taliban government in Afghanistan. On 20 August, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi held a trilateral meeting in Kabul, where the trio reportedly committed to pursuing stronger counter-terrorism cooperation, boosting economic ties, and reaffirmed a previous agreement to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan, among other matters.

Clashes between Pakistani security forces and armed groups operating in Afghanistan have persisted in recent months. On 8 August, the Pakistani military announced that it had killed 33 militants attempting to cross from Afghanistan into Balochistan province in southwestern Pakistan. A similar incident took place in early July, when Pakistan’s military announced that it had killed 30 militants trying to enter Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in northwestern Pakistan. On 12 August, the Pakistani military launched an operation in the Bajaur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, a former stronghold of the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

On 27 June, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, with 116 votes in favour, two votes against (Israel and the US), and 12 abstentions (Belarus, Cameroon, China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Russia, and Zimbabwe). The resolution was the first adopted by the General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan since resolution 77/10 was adopted in November 2022.

At the time of writing, UNAMA, the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), and the participants in the Doha process are working on the roadmap for political engagement referred to in the report of the Afghanistan independent assessment requested by resolution 2679. Among other matters, the independent assessment outlined an “architecture for engagement” to guide political, humanitarian, and development activities in Afghanistan. (For background on the independent assessment and the Doha process, see our 27 November 2023, 8 December 2023, 28 December 2023, 25 February 2024, and 7 March 2025 *What’s in Blue* stories and our June 2024 and September 2024 *Monthly Forecasts*.) The working groups on counter-narcotics and the private sector, established as part of the Doha process, held meetings on 30 June and 1 July, respectively.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 14 August press release, a group of independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council called on the international community to reject the Taliban’s authoritarian rule and resist efforts towards normalising the de facto authorities’ regime.

On 16 June, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan Richard Bennett presented a report to the Human Rights Council. Drawing from a series of meetings and interviews with more than 110 Afghans, the report examines



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# Afghanistan

women and girls' access to justice and protection and assesses the impact of the Taliban's gender practices and policies. Among other matters, the report finds the Taliban have weaponised Afghanistan's legal and justice sectors to oppress women and girls and LGBTQ+ persons. It also urges the de facto authorities to fulfil their responsibilities under international human rights treaties ratified by Afghanistan, including by reversing policies and practices that violate these obligations.

In late June, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reviewed Afghanistan's compliance with its international human rights obligations. The Taliban did not take part in the review. In concluding observations issued on 10 July, the Committee urged the Taliban to revoke its decrees that restrict women and girls' access to education, employment, freedom of movement and participation in public and political life, among other matters.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

On 15 August, the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee held informal consultations to discuss recent requests for exemptions to the travel ban imposed by the 1988 Afghanistan sanctions regime. Prior to the consultations, the US blocked a travel ban exemption request that was submitted by Pakistan. In correspondence to the Committee regarding its decision, the US apparently indicated that it would scrutinise future travel ban exemption requests more closely, on a case-by-case basis. In 2024, the 1988 Afghanistan sanctions committee received 25 requests for travel ban exemptions, all of which were approved.

## Key Issues and Options

The Taliban's ongoing refusal to comply with many of Afghanistan's international obligations, particularly those relating to the rights of women and girls set out in international human rights treaties, is a major issue for the Council and directly contradicts the recommendations of the Afghanistan independent assessment.

Council members could ask for an informal meeting with representatives of DPPA and UNAMA to discuss steps the Council could take in response to the Taliban's actions. Members, especially those that are not part of the Doha process, could use this meeting to ask for an update on the roadmap for political engagement, next steps in the Doha process, and the activities of the working groups on counter-narcotics and the private sector.

Council members could also hold an informal meeting with representatives of UN Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan to discuss options for exerting pressure on the Taliban regarding their practices and policies that violate human rights and avoiding the normalisation of those policies.

Council members may wish to review the 1988 Afghanistan sanctions regime, which, apart from the humanitarian exception established by resolution 2615 in December 2021, has not been updated in the four years since the Taliban seized power. Such a review could analyse whether the regime is fit for purpose and consider options for updating it in light of current circumstances.

The humanitarian crisis is another major issue. During the June open briefing, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya called for strengthening the implementation of resolution 2615, increased investments in agriculture, health systems, and other vital services, and increased funding for humanitarian work.

Council members could hold an informal meeting with humanitarian actors to discuss possible steps that the Council could take in this regard.

The threat of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan remains an issue. The latest report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL/Da'esh notes that ISIL-Khorasan, ISIL's Afghan affiliate, represents the most serious threat regionally and internationally. Council members could hold an informal meeting with a counter-terrorism expert, which would give them a chance to discuss options for bolstering the Council's efforts to manage this threat.

## Council Dynamics

While Council members are generally united in their desire to see a prosperous, peaceful Afghanistan free from terrorism, ruled by an inclusive government, and in compliance with its international obligations, they are divided over how to achieve this goal. Some members, including the P3 (France, the UK, and the US) and other like-minded states, have previously argued that the Taliban must adhere to international norms in order to obtain international recognition and receive economic and development aid from the international community. Several of these members prefer maintaining pressure on the Taliban, particularly regarding its policies and practices that violate the rights of women and girls.

The US appears to be changing its position, however. During the June open briefing, the US representative indicated that its Afghanistan policy is currently under review and said that its focus has narrowed, noting that protecting US citizens, mitigating the terrorist threat, and securing the release of US hostages are its top priorities. The US' recent decision to block a request for an exemption to the travel ban imposed by the 1988 Afghanistan sanctions regime may be linked to this shift.

China and Russia, for their part, have contended that the international community should provide economic and development assistance to Afghanistan without linking it to other issues, such as the rights of women and girls, and favour engagement and dialogue without increased pressure. Both members have repeatedly called for the release of frozen assets belonging to Afghanistan's central bank, the bulk of which were seized by the US after the Taliban seized power in August 2021 and have also pushed for the reinstatement of the standing exemption to the travel ban that expired in August 2022. Pakistan has expressed similar views since joining the Council this year.

Council members have not been able to agree on the penholdership on the Afghanistan file since Japan, which held the pen with the United Arab Emirates in 2023, and on its own in 2024, ended its two-year Council term in December 2024. Two pairs of Council members have indicated that they are willing to work together as co-penholders: China and Pakistan on the one hand, and the Republic of Korea and the US on the other. (For more information, see our 15 March *What's in Blue* story.) At the time of writing, members have not been able to resolve the dispute regarding penholdership.

# Artificial Intelligence

## Expected Council Action

In September, the Republic of Korea (ROK) is planning to organise a high-level briefing on artificial intelligence (AI) as the signature event of its presidency.

## Background

The Security Council has only recently begun to explore the linkages between AI and international peace and security. The UK held the Council's first formal meeting on this topic during its July 2023 presidency. The US convened the second formal meeting in December 2024. Council members have also hosted Arria-formula meetings on topics related to AI. Albania and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) organised one in December 2023 on AI's impact on hate speech, disinformation, and misinformation. On 4 April, Greece, France, and the ROK organised an Arria-formula meeting on harnessing safe, inclusive, and trustworthy AI for maintaining international peace and security, co-sponsored by Armenia, Italy, and the Netherlands.

At the 4 April meeting, most participating members welcomed continued Council engagement on this theme. Several said AI advances could help the Council implement its mandate. They encouraged peacekeeping missions to adopt tools that strengthen early warning, promote information integrity, and counter efforts that undermine mandate implementation. One member noted that Council committees have at times been tasked with periodically reviewing developments related to the impacts and threats posed by new technologies, and with exploring measures to address them. This member suggested that such an approach could serve as a model for the Council as a whole. Another stressed respect for state sovereignty, including compliance with local laws and opposition to using AI to interfere in other states' internal affairs, social systems, or social order.

On 21 October 2024, the Security Council adopted a Swiss-authored presidential statement recognising that science, technology, and innovation have the potential to accelerate the realisation of the aspirations of the UN across all three pillars of its work. The statement also expressed the Council's commitment to more systematically consider scientific advances, particularly with regard to their impact on international peace and security. (For background information, see our 19 October 2024 *What's in Blue* story.) UN discussions on AI in the context of peace and security have taken place primarily within specialised forums such as the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), which was established in 2016 under the auspices of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The General Assembly has also been increasingly active in addressing AI-related issues. On 24 December 2024, it adopted a resolution, co-drafted by the Netherlands and ROK, titled "AI in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security". The text affirmed that international law—including the UN Charter, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law—remains fully applicable to the use of AI in military contexts. It underscored the need for responsible and human-centred use of AI in this domain. It also requested the

Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its 80th session, reflecting the views of member and observer states on the opportunities and challenges AI poses to international peace and security, with particular focus on areas beyond LAWS.

At the Summit of the Future held on 22 September 2024, member states adopted the *Pact for the Future* along with its annexes: the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and the Declaration on Future Generations. The Pact outlined the vision of member states for the future of multilateralism. In Chapter 2 on international peace and security, Action 27(d) committed member states to continue assessing existing and potential risks associated with the military applications of AI. The GDC also decided to establish a multidisciplinary Independent International Scientific Panel on AI (IISP-AI) and to initiate, within the UN, a Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

The General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/79/325) on 26 August, which set out the terms of reference and modalities for both initiatives. Under the terms of the resolution, the IISP-AI will present an annual report at the Global Dialogue, which will meet annually in the margins of existing relevant UN conferences and meetings, alternating between Geneva and New York. The panel will include 40 members, appointed in their personal capacity for three-year terms, with balanced geographical representation. In a statement issued on 26 August, Secretary-General spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric described the adoption as a major step in global efforts to harness the benefits of AI while managing its risks.

Perspectives on AI have also been shaped by multilateral discussions held outside the UN system. In February 2023, the Netherlands and ROK co-hosted the first Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM) Summit in The Hague, which resulted in a joint Call to Action. At that summit, the US also launched the Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of AI and Autonomy, outlining state-level measures for military AI governance. The second REAIM Summit, held in Seoul in September 2024 and co-hosted by Kenya, the Netherlands, the ROK, Singapore, and the UK, resulted in the REAIM Blueprint for Action.

Broader efforts toward AI safety include the Bletchley Declaration from the November 2023 AI Safety Summit held in the UK and the Seoul Declaration, adopted at the AI Seoul Summit in May 2024, both of which promote international collaboration on AI safety. In February 2025, France convened the AI Action Summit, adopting a joint statement on inclusive and sustainable AI and endorsing the Paris Declaration on Maintaining Human Control in AI-enabled Weapon Systems, reinforcing commitments to responsible military AI use, international law, and global cooperation.

## Council Dynamics

Although Council members are becoming more aware of the potential impact of AI in areas of peace and security, they have diverging views on the Security Council's role in addressing AI-related threats to international peace and security. Some members see the need for the Council, as the primary organ for maintaining international peace and security, to stay abreast of technological advancements in order to anticipate and prevent threats to global peace and security.

**UN DOCUMENTS ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2024/6 (21 October 2024) was a Swiss-authored presidential statement on science, technology and innovation. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.9821 (19 December 2024) was a high-level briefing on AI organised by the US. S/PV.9381 (18 July 2023) was a high-level briefing on AI organised by the UK.

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## Artificial Intelligence

Other members are more cautious about framing the issue narrowly within a security context, advocating for broader discussions in the General Assembly and specialised forums to avoid duplication. Russia, in particular, has expressed concerns about pre-empting outcomes from processes such as the OEWG on the security and use

of ICTs and the GGE on LAWS. There is also increasing interest in understanding the importance of leveraging AI technologies to enhance the UN's work and improve the Council's decision-making processes, which may become even more relevant in the context of potential reforms under the Secretary-General's UN80 initiative.

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## Democratic Republic of the Congo

### Expected Council Action

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

### Key Recent Developments

On 27 June, the DRC and Rwanda—which had been engaged in mutual accusations of supporting proxy armed groups in the conflict in eastern DRC—signed a peace agreement under US auspices in Washington. From 30 July to 1 August, Washington hosted meetings focused on implementing the security elements of the agreement. In this context, the first meeting of the Joint Oversight Committee, established based on the peace agreement to resolve any disputes arising between the parties during implementation, took place on 31 July. In addition to delegations from the DRC and Rwanda, representatives from the US, Qatar, Togo (as the African Union [AU] facilitator) and the AU Commission participated in the meeting. On 1 August, the delegations from the DRC and Rwanda also initialled the text of the Regional Economic Integration Framework in the context of the 27 June Peace Agreement to collaborate on a wide range of sectors.

On 7–8 August, the first meeting of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism was held in Addis Ababa. The Mechanism set up under the agreement is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the concept of operations for the harmonised plan to neutralise the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), an ethnic Hutu armed group active in eastern DRC that was implicated in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, and to facilitate the disengagement of forces and lifting of defensive measures by Rwanda, in line with the 27 June Peace Agreement. The meeting was attended by representatives from the US, Qatar, the AU mediator's representative, and the AU Commission. During the meeting, the DRC and Rwanda adopted the Mechanism's terms of reference and discussed next steps for implementing the Agreement.

Qatar has also played a mediation role, aimed at facilitating dialogue between the Congolese government and the *Mouvement du 23 Mars* (M23) rebel group. Following an initial direct meeting between representatives of both parties in Doha under Qatari facilitation, the Congolese government and the M23 issued a joint declaration on 23 April, reaffirming their commitment to an immediate cessation of

hostilities and their categorical rejection of hate speech and intimidation, and calling on local communities to uphold these commitments. Qatar has since proposed a separate draft peace agreement to be signed by the DRC and M23; however, the signing of the agreement on 18 August did not take place as anticipated.

On 25 July, Council members issued a press statement welcoming the signing of the peace agreement between the DRC and Rwanda and the Declaration of Principles in Doha between the DRC and M23. Council members expressed support for the conclusion of a comprehensive peace agreement and the implementation of a ceasefire, with the support of MONUSCO and regional mechanisms.

On 1 August, the Chairs of the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)—Kenya's President William Ruto and Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa, respectively—met in Nairobi with the Panel of Facilitators jointly appointed by the EAC and SADC. (For background, see our 11 April *What's in Blue* story.) Among other outcomes, the meeting agreed to merge the EAC-SADC and AU mediation efforts and called on other ongoing initiatives to align themselves with the consolidated African-led mediation process. This decision was endorsed by a joint EAC-SADC extraordinary summit held virtually on 13 August.

On 17 August, SADC held its ordinary summit in Antananarivo, Madagascar, with the country's president, Andry Rajoelina, taking over the rotating chairmanship from Mnangagwa. The summit welcomed the decision to consolidate the African-led mediation processes, and underscored the need to ensure complementarity and harmonisation between this process and other initiatives led by the US and Qatar.

On 6 August, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement condemning a deadly attack carried out by the M23, backed by the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF), between 9 and 21 July in four villages in Rutshuru territory, North Kivu Province. The attack resulted in the deaths of at least 319 civilians, including 48 women and 19 children. In a statement issued on 7 August, the M23 rejected the allegations, describing them as “unfounded and politically motivated.” Similarly, in an 11 August statement, Rwanda dismissed the High Commissioner's remarks as “false,” questioning the credibility and methodology of the findings. It also objected to the inclusion of the RDF in the allegations.

France, the penholder on the DRC, has circulated a draft press statement condemning the violence. The draft has been negotiated

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2773 (21 February 2025) was on the situation in the eastern DRC. S/RES/2765 (20 December 2024) renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 20 December 2025. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9948 (27 June 2025) was on the situation in the DRC. Security Council Press Statements SC/16139 (7 August 2025) was on the situation in the DRC. SC/16129 (25 July 2025) was on the situation in the DRC.

# Democratic Republic of the Congo

by Council members and was placed under silence until 20 August, but the US broke silence over the absence of a reference to the “Rwanda-backed M23.” It seems that the A3 Plus group (Algeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Guyana) opposed the inclusion of that reference. At the time of writing, the penholder was apparently consulting with Council members, and no revised draft had been circulated.

On 7 August, Security Council members issued a press statement condemning an attack carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)—an armed group affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh)—on the night of 26–27 July. The attack targeted a place of worship in Ituri Province, resulting in numerous civilian casualties and injuries, including among women and children.

On 22 August, the Security Council held an emergency meeting at the request of the US to discuss the August wave of violence. Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee briefed.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

Between 15 and 25 July, Siobhán Mullally, the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, completed a ten-day country visit to the DRC. Beginning and ending her visit in Kinshasa, with travel to North Kivu and Haut-Katanga, Mullally met with relevant stakeholders to assess the situation of child trafficking and trafficking in persons for purposes of sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, and forced criminality. In her findings, the Special Rapporteur noted that conflict-related trafficking of children by armed groups persists with impunity at alarming levels, with devastating consequences for children and the country’s future. In this regard, Mullally called for urgent measures to combat trafficking in persons and ensure access to justice for victims.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council in September remains the security situation in eastern DRC. Although fighting appears to have subsided following recent mediation efforts, members appear concerned that the July wave of violence may be repeated in the future. Members may wish to reiterate their demand in resolution 2773 for the M23 to cease hostilities and withdraw from all controlled areas.

A related issue is the implementation of the commitments agreed in Washington and Doha. Council members may reiterate their call on the parties to uphold these commitments, particularly the ceasefire. They may also take note of recent follow-up engagements in Washington and Addis Ababa, as well as ongoing efforts under Qatar’s auspices to facilitate the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement between the DRC and M23. Council members are likely to urge both sides to remain constructively engaged in pursuit of this objective. A possible option is to invite Qatar to brief the Council on the state of the ongoing mediation efforts in Doha.

How to harmonise and streamline the various diplomatic initiatives by regional and external actors on the situation in eastern DRC remains an ongoing issue. Council members may note the outcomes of the recent joint EAC-SADC summit to consolidate the African-led mediation process. The Council could invite an AU representative to brief about the outcome of the summit.

MONUSCO’s disengagement process and the way forward, considering the changed security dynamics, remain an ongoing issue for the Council. On 2 May, the Congolese government and MONUSCO submitted a joint note to the Security Council titled “On the Transition in South Kivu and the Disengagement of MONUSCO”, recommending that MONUSCO be entrusted with the responsibility of supervising a future ceasefire. While the 27 June peace agreement references support for and promotion of “the efforts of multilateral peacekeeping, inter-positional, and verification forces and mechanisms”, it does not explicitly request MONUSCO to oversee a ceasefire. The discussion under the Doha process will be closely watched in this regard. A related issue is how any cuts to peacekeeping in light of the US funding potentially being withdrawn would affect MONUSCO’s ability to provide such support. The Council may wish to discuss the possible alternatives if MONUSCO does not have the capacity to perform this task. Council members could also request the Secretary-General to present options for the mission’s future, taking into account the challenges it currently faces.

## Council Dynamics

Council members have welcomed recent breakthroughs in ongoing mediation efforts to resolve the situation in eastern DRC but acknowledge that meaningful progress will depend on the parties’ implementation of their commitments. At the 27 June Council meeting, several members also expressed alarm over reports of widespread sexual violence, the forced recruitment of minors, and the spread of hate speech based on physical appearance. They called on all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Council members remain concerned by the challenges facing MONUSCO, including restrictions on its freedom of movement, amid shifting security dynamics since early this year, with the M23 taking control of large parts of North Kivu province, including Goma, the provincial capital. In her briefing to the Council on 27 June, Keita noted the progress towards lifting restrictions on MONUSCO, following her visit to Goma in early June and her meeting with M23. MONUSCO’s inability to implement all aspects of its mandate in Goma and other M23-occupied areas of North Kivu has prompted some Council members to request the UN to come up with a proposal on the mission’s future.



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