

# Monthly Forecast

- 1 Letter from the Executive Director
- 2 Overview
- 3 In Hindsight: The Rise of the African Members of the Security Council
- 5 Status Update since our October Forecast
- 7 Conflict and Food Insecurity
- 9 Syria
- 11 Yemen
- 12 Sudan/South/Sudan
- 14 Climate, Peace and Security
- 16 Small Arms and Light Weapons
- 17 South Sudan
- 19 Central African Republic
- 21 Working Methods
- 23 Lebanon
- 25 Libya
- 26 DPRK (North Korea)
- 28 UNOWAS (West Africa and the Sahel)

## November 2005—November 2025: 20 Years of SCR

Our November 2005 *Monthly Forecast* launched SCR twenty years ago. Since then, we have published 240 *Monthly Forecasts* and expanded our products to include daily reporting through *What's in Blue*, in-depth research reports on key topics, capacity building for incoming members, briefings to key stakeholders and regular podcasts.

We started with two member states and two foundations; today, 21 member states—and two foundations—support our work. We would like to thank our funders, particularly those who have consistently supported us over the years. In these difficult financial times, we are aware that shifts in funding priorities can leave organisations like SCR at risk of reduced operations and impact. We urge all who have benefited from our work to help us ensure that we can continue to provide timely, dependable, and actionable information and analysis. SCR from the beginning was committed to making the Security Council more transparent, accountable, and effective. We have done this through providing independent, impartial, evidence-based reporting of the Security Council's work. Today, because of SCR, there is a better understanding of the inner workings of the Security Council.

We are proud to have contributed our part to promoting transparency and accessibility to the Council's activities through coverage of meetings, negotiations, and Council visiting missions. Our in-depth reports provide analysis of key issues and options for action. SCR's capacity building activities have helped elected members enter the Council better prepared to be effective members. Over the years, SCR has built up a body

of work—available for free on our website—that provides a historical perspective of developments in the Council over the last two decades. We thank the many member states over the years that have shared information with us and trusted us to use the information in a fair manner. We could not do the work we do without you. Similarly, we are grateful for our collaboration with UN officials, staff in other multilateral bodies, and our colleagues in civil society, whose many insights have enriched our analysis.

It is more difficult to assert that our goal of providing better information to make the Council perform better has been achieved. At a recent panel discussion commemorating SCR's 20 years, our founding Executive Director, Colin Keating, acknowledged this shortcoming but also noted that "If SCR were to disappear, the one thing you could be sure of is that over time the Council's performance would deteriorate even more."

At a time when the multilateral system—with the UN at its core—adapts to difficult realities, SCR's fact-based approach to covering the work of the Security Council is needed more than ever. As we move rapidly into a world where the line between fact and disinformation becomes increasingly blurred, all of us in SCR are committed to providing our readers with independent, reliable factual reporting of key developments in international peace and security.

Shamala Kandiah Thompson  
Executive Director

**3 November 2025**

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## Overview

In November, Sierra Leone will hold the presidency of the Security Council.

Sierra Leone plans to organise two signature events during the month. The first one will be an open debate on [Small Arms and Light Weapons \(SALW\)](#). Sierra Leone's President, Julius Maada Bio, will chair the meeting. Officer-in-Charge of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Adedeji Ebo, is the anticipated briefer.

The second signature event is a high-level open debate on [conflict-related food insecurity](#) under the "Threats to international peace and security" agenda item. Bio is expected to chair the meeting. UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher, and African Union Special Envoy on Food Systems Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki are expected to brief.

Additionally, Sierra Leone will convene a briefing on "[Climate and security](#)"—environmental impact of armed conflict and climate driven security risks" under the "Threats to international peace and security" agenda item. The anticipated briefers are Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Inger Andersen, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); Charles C. Jalloh, Professor of Law at the University of Miami and member of the International Law Commission; and a civil society representative.

In November, the Council will also hold its annual open debate on [working methods](#). Ambassador Christina Markus Lassen (Denmark), co-chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (IWG), will brief. Shamala Kandiah Thompson, Executive Director of Security Council Report, and Loraine Sievers, co-author of "The Procedure of the UN Security Council" (4th Edition), are also expected to brief.

African issues on the programme of work in November are:

- [Libya](#), the semi-annual briefing by the ICC concerning the Court's work in the country and reauthorisation of measures under resolution 2292 to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya;
- [Sudan/South Sudan](#), briefing and consultations and mandate renewal of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA);
- [South Sudan](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Mission in

South Sudan (UNMISS);

- [West Africa and the Sahel](#), briefing on the situation in the region; and
- [Central African Republic \(CAR\)](#), renewal of the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Middle Eastern issues include:
- [Syria](#), monthly meeting on political and humanitarian developments;
- [Yemen](#), monthly meeting on developments, briefing by the chair of the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee, and renewal of the 2140 Yemen sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee;
- [Lebanon](#), consultations on the implementation of resolution 1701, which was adopted in 2006 and called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel; and
- "[The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question](#)", the monthly meeting, with the possibility of additional meetings depending on developments.

On non-proliferation issues, consultations are scheduled on the work of the 1718 [Democratic People's Republic of Korea \(DPRK\)](#) Sanctions Committee.

[Counter-terrorism](#) issues also feature on the programme of work this month. The Council is expected to receive a briefing from the chairs of the three counter-terrorism-related committees: the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), and the 1540 Committee, which assists member states in preventing non-state actors from obtaining access to weapons of mass destruction.

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

The [15 current Council members](#) and the [incoming five](#)—Bahrain, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Latvia, and Liberia—will participate in the annual "[Hitting the Ground Running](#)" [workshop](#) organised by Finland on 6 and 7 November.

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

# In Hindsight: The Rise of the African Members of the Security Council

## Introduction

The three African members of the UN Security Council, known as the A3, have come of age as a cohesive and influential group, shaping both country-specific and thematic discussions within the UN Security Council. Over the years, they have steadily enhanced their coordination in pursuit of a common African position on the various items on the Council's agenda. While differences remain on some issues, their views coalesce on most files. This growing unity is most visibly reflected in their increasingly consistent practice of speaking with one voice—delivering joint statements and presenting unified positions during Council meetings. In addition, the A3 have in recent years organised themselves as a cohesive negotiating bloc with the ability to significantly shape Council outcomes. Both individually and collectively, the A3 have also played an increasingly active role in spearheading Council products on key African priorities, thus enhancing their influence in the Council.

This month's *In Hindsight* provides a preview of our upcoming research report on the burgeoning role of the A3 in the Security Council.

## The Origins of the African Trio in the Security Council

The 2011 Libyan crisis led to serious reflection in Africa about the role of the African members on the Security Council. The African Union (AU) had developed a roadmap that called for an immediate ceasefire and the launching of inclusive dialogue leading to a consensual transition as a means of resolving the conflict in Libya. However, the Security Council adopted resolution 1973 of 17 March 2011 authorising a no-fly zone and “all necessary measures” to protect civilians, carried out by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and other member states, which ultimately toppled the Libyan regime. This situation revealed a significant divergence between the approach of the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) to this conflict.

The AU was deeply disappointed that its views were not taken seriously, despite its active diplomatic efforts to promote a negotiated solution.<sup>1</sup> It came to the conclusion that the situation might have been different had Africa presented a stronger, more unified position within the Council in support of its position. This experience underscored the critical need for the A3 to coordinate more effectively to amplify Africa's voice in the Security Council's decision-making. It also strengthened the AU's belief that a unified A3 group could serve as a crucial bridge between the Security Council and the AUPSC, promoting greater recognition of AU mechanisms and the central role of African-led diplomatic solutions to conflicts and crises on the

continent.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent discussions at the AUPSC in 2012 and 2013 played a pivotal role in the formation of the A3 as a caucus within the Security Council.<sup>3</sup> In 2013, a High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa, hosted by Algeria in collaboration with the AU Commission, laid the groundwork by generating several ideas which became instrumental in the formation of the A3 as a group. This Seminar eventually became institutionalised as an annual meeting known as the Oran process and continues to be an important forum for discussing the A3.

## The “A3 Plus” Mechanism

The story of the A3's evolution includes the emergence of the “A3 Plus” mechanism, which has facilitated collaboration between A3 members and Caribbean countries in the Security Council. The first instance of this new grouping was when Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), a like-minded member of the UN Security Council from Latin America and the Caribbean region, joined the A3 group—then composed of Niger, South Africa, and Tunisia—as a “plus” member during its 2020–2021 term. Guyana's decision to join the A3 in 2024–2025 provided continuity to the A3 Plus mechanism, which has come to symbolise the stronger ties between Africa and the Caribbean, reinforcing the relationship between the AU and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). It has enabled the group to play an active role in the Security Council, not only on African files but also on other files such as Haiti and Colombia.<sup>4</sup>

The A3 has been exploring how this mechanism could be institutionalised going forward, including by securing the support of future Caribbean members of the Security Council.<sup>5</sup> With Guyana set to conclude its two-year term at the end of 2025, the next potential opportunity to implement the A3 Plus mechanism will arise when Trinidad and Tobago runs for a Council seat in 2027–2028. The A3 seems intent on limiting the “A3 Plus” mechanism only to Caribbean states, given the region's historic ties to the African continent. Nonetheless, the goal is to move beyond symbolism and build a partnership grounded in mutual interest and shared priorities. The second Africa–Caribbean Summit, which took place in Addis Ababa on 6–7 September 2025, resolved to further consolidate the cooperation between the A3 and their Caribbean counterparts towards the realisation of common objectives regarding the maintenance of international peace and security.<sup>6</sup>

## Speaking with One Voice

While the A3 initially delivered joint statements mainly during formal wrap-up sessions, this practice began to expand in 2018 as members

1 AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security, “The Oran Process and Africa's Global Peace Agenda”, 18 June 2024 <https://youtu.be/sbiwK03iRo?si=H8VrLt0MGnvPf-gl>

2 African Union, *AU-UN Partnership: Advancing Peace and Security in Africa*, 9 January 2012 [https://archives.au.int/bitstream/handle/123456789/8415/Par%20AU%20UN\\_E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://archives.au.int/bitstream/handle/123456789/8415/Par%20AU%20UN_E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

3 Peace and Security Council of the African Union, *Communiqué of the 309th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council (PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCIX))*, held 25 January 2012, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-309th-meeting-of-the-peace-and-security-council>. peaceau.org+1

African Union Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU)*, at its 397 Meeting on the Partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in the Area of Peace and Security, PSC/AHG/COMM/1.(CCCXCIII), New York, 23 September 2013, <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-peace-and-security-council-of-the-african-union-au-at-its-397th-meeting-on-the-partnership-between-the-african-union-and-the-united-nations-in-the-area-of-peace-and-security>

4 The A3 Plus delivered joint statements regularly on Haiti and Colombia.

5 African Union Commission, *Conclusions of the 11th High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa*, December 1–2, 2024, Oran, Algeria, PSC/HLS/11 (2024), Peace and Security Council, African Union Commission, <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/conclusions-for-the-11th-annual-hls-on-promotion-of-peace-and-security-on-africa-en.pdf>

6 Communiqué of the Second Africa–Caribbean Summit.

## In Hindsight: The Rise of the African Members of the Security Council

increasingly adopted joint positions on specific country and regional situations, and thematic issues. By 2019, the approach had become more structured, with the A3 delivering 16 joint statements in formal Council meetings that year. From 2020 onward, the delivery of joint statements became much more frequent, regular, and institutionalised, reflecting the group's deepening commitment to acting as a cohesive and coordinated voice within the Security Council.

In 2020, the A3 issued 35 joint statements covering both country- and region-specific matters as well as thematic topics. That year, the inclusion of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as a “Plus” member broadened the group's focus to include non-African issues, such as the situations in Haiti and Colombia. The “A3 Plus” further strengthened its unified voice, delivering 53 joint statements in 2021 and 63 in 2022—demonstrating growing coordination and engagement. This trend continued in 2023 and 2024, with the group delivering 93 and 105 joint statements, respectively. During this period, the scope of statements on non-African issues expanded considerably, accompanied by a notable increase in joint explanations of vote.

This unified approach has reinforced common African positions consistent with AU decisions, while enhancing the A3's visibility and credibility as a collective voice within the Security Council. The practice of delivering joint statements has now been institutionalised under the framework of the Guiding Principles for the A3 Plus Mechanism, a set of principles adopted by the group in November 2023, to help guide its joint work.<sup>7</sup>

### Negotiating as a Bloc

In recent years, the A3 has also evolved into a cohesive negotiating bloc, driven by more structured coordination and closer engagement among their political coordinators and experts. The introduction of a rotating lead negotiator further formalised this process, marking a key milestone in the A3's development as a unified force in Council negotiations.

In response, the P3 members (France, the UK, and the US), who traditionally serve as penholders on most country-specific files, have begun to actively seek A3 support and engage more closely with the group ahead of negotiations on Africa-related products. This emerging practice reflects a growing recognition of the importance of building consensus and ensuring A3 backing for Council outcomes on African matters. Whereas P3 penholders previously shared zero drafts only with the P2 members (China and Russia) before broader circulation, they now share these drafts with the A3 as well, allowing African perspectives to be incorporated earlier in the drafting process. Although the P2 members do not hold the pen on African files, they also coordinate with the A3 based on shared positions across a range of issues.

Reflecting its growing influence, the A3 is now actively pursuing penholding or co-penholding responsibilities for all African dossiers—and other issues of strategic importance to the continent—on the Council's agenda. To date, A3 members have primarily held such roles on files related to West Africa, the Sahel, and Central Africa. Expanding these responsibilities would significantly enhance the group's influence and position it as a more assertive and central actor in the Council's decision-making process.

The A3 has also strengthened its role in driving the adoption of Council outcomes on key African priorities, both individually and collectively, thereby raising its profile within the Council. The AU has increasingly called upon the A3 to champion specific African issues at the Security Council, and the group has responded by jointly proposing Council products—a clear sign of institutional maturity. The adoption of resolution 2457 on Silencing the Guns in Africa (27 February 2019) and resolution 2719 (21 December 2023) underscores the A3's emergence as a cohesive bloc effectively advancing African priorities.

### Observations

Despite its enhanced status within the Council, the A3 continues to face significant challenges in realising its full potential. These challenges stem from internal dynamics within the group, the inconsistent support and guidance provided by the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, and persistent external pressures. The group's effectiveness depends on members' commitment to uphold their obligations to the AU and advance collective African priorities, as well as on sustained political support and strategic guidance from the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. Key AU bodies—including its policy organs, the AU Commission, and the Permanent Observer Mission in New York—play distinct roles in supporting and backstopping the A3. While coordination between the AU and the A3 has improved, further strengthening this partnership remains necessary. The A3 also faces external pressures from powerful states, which at times complicate efforts to balance national interests with common African positions.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the A3 has the potential to play a unique role in building bridges and easing geopolitical tensions on African issues—provided it operates as a coherent unit. In an increasingly divided Council, the A3 bears a particular responsibility to act as a bridge-builder and foster consensus—a necessity, given that when the Council is paralysed by great power rivalry, Africa often bears the highest cost through delayed or inadequate responses to crises.

Strengthening the capacity of individual A3 members should therefore be a priority. Members can contribute meaningfully only if they possess the requisite knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities effectively. The AU may need to develop its own training capacity for aspiring Council members from the continent—potentially in partnership with others—to provide a programme tailored to the specific needs of A3 Council members.

Sustaining African priorities in the Council also requires continuity beyond the two-year terms of individual members. This depends on building institutional memory by documenting the work and achievements of former A3 members. The AU Permanent Observer Mission, which serves as the A3's secretariat and repository of institutional knowledge, is developing a database for this purpose but requires further support. Greater use should also be made of the experience of outgoing members.

Looking ahead, the A3 could evolve into an agenda-setter by shaping the Council's discourse on Africa, provided it engages strategically and constructively on continental crises. This will require leveraging its influence and building consensus to advance practical, action-oriented

<sup>7</sup> African Union, *Guiding Principles for the A3+ Mechanism*, accessed June 5, 2025, [https://fr.africanunion-un.org/\\_files/ugd/d682ab\\_1ea52873ef8946b59fd5284d4aedf109.pdf](https://fr.africanunion-un.org/_files/ugd/d682ab_1ea52873ef8946b59fd5284d4aedf109.pdf).



## In Hindsight: The Rise of the African Members of the Security Council

outcomes. Such leadership would be especially valuable as the Council continues to struggle with timely and effective responses to African conflicts. This challenge is compounded by the UN's deepening liquidity crisis, which threatens its field presence in Africa, and by funding shortfalls that have forced humanitarian actors to scale back life-saving operations. These circumstances underscore the need for a more proactive A3 in driving Council discussions and promoting durable solutions.

However, the A3's impact will remain limited without strong political backing and strategic guidance from the AU and its regional economic communities and mechanisms (RECs/RMs). Both appear to

be losing some agency, as the once-powerful mantra of "African solutions to African problems" wanes amid internal challenges and shifting geopolitical dynamics. Ongoing discussions on the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) are therefore critical to reinvigorating Africa's leadership in crisis response. Experience shows that when the AU and RECs/RMs act swiftly and coherently, they help generate aligned and constructive international support—including from the Security Council. Finally, while the A3 has come a long way in just over a decade—emerging as a unified African voice within the Security Council—sustained efforts to address its remaining challenges will be essential to fully realise its potential.

## Status Update since our October Forecast

### Sudan

On 1 October, Security Council members held closed consultations on Sudan. The meeting was requested by Denmark, France, Greece, Panama, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Slovenia, and the UK (the penholder on the file) to receive an update on the humanitarian and political situations in the country, specifically in light of the current escalation of violence in El Fasher in North Darfur state; ongoing efforts to secure a humanitarian pause; and recent diplomatic engagements on Sudan, including during the General Assembly's high-level week. Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan Ramtane Lamamra and Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya briefed.

On 30 October, the Security Council held an open briefing, followed by closed consultations, on Sudan (S/PV.10027), in keeping with resolution 2715 of 1 December 2023, which called for the Council to be briefed every 120 days on "UN efforts to support Sudan on its path towards peace and stability". The meeting had previously been scheduled for early November; however, the UK (the penholder on the file), Denmark, and the "A3 Plus" members (Algeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Guyana) requested that the date of the meeting be moved forward because of the dire situation in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher and Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO), Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, briefed in the open chamber. Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan Ramtane Lamamra briefed members via videoconference (VTC) in the closed consultations.

Council members also issued a press statement on 30 October expressing "grave concern over escalating violence in and around El Fasher", calling on all parties to the conflict "to allow and facilitate safe and unhindered humanitarian access in a manner consistent with international law", and calling for "the protection of civilians and for safe passage for those trying to flee the city" (SC/16204).

### Colombia

On 3 October, the Security Council held an open briefing on Colombia (S/PV.10010). Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for

Europe, Central Asia and the Americas and Special Representative and Head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia-designate, briefed on recent developments and the Secretary-General's latest 90-day report on the mission (S/2025/595).

On 31 October, the Council adopted resolution 2798, renewing the mandate of the verification mission for another year, until 31 October 2026. The text received 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (Russia and the US). It removed two of the mission's tasks related to the implementation of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the government of Colombia and the former rebel group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). These are: verifying compliance with the restorative sentences handed by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP)—the judicial component of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition established by the 2016 agreement—and monitoring implementation of the agreement's ethnic chapter.

In their explanations of vote, many Council members regretted the fact that consensus could not be reached on retaining the two tasks and expressed their continued support for Colombia in its efforts to fully implement the peace agreement.

### Women, Peace and Security

On 6 October, the Security Council held its annual open debate on women, peace and security (S/PV.10011), which resumed and ended on 7 October (Resumption I). UN Secretary-General António Guterres and UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous briefed. Human rights attorney Noura Erakat and Olga Uskova, President of Cognitive Technologies, also briefed.

### UN-AU Cooperation

On 7 October, the Council held its annual briefing on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations, focusing on the African Union (AU) (S/PV. 10012). Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU) Parfait Onanga-Anyanga briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's annual report on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU on issues of peace and

## Status Update since our October Forecast

security in Africa, including the work of the UNOAU published on 25 August (S/2025/532). Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, also briefed the Council, focusing on the implementation of resolution 2719 of 21 December 2023 on the financing of AU-led peace support operations. Additionally, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the UN, Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees, briefed.

### Somalia

On 8 October, the Security Council held a private meeting on Somalia (S/PV.10013). Special Representative for Somalia and Head of the UN Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS) James Swan briefed on the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2025/613) on the implementation of the mandates of UNTMIS and the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). Special Representative of the African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson (SRCC) for Somalia and Head of the AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), El Hadji Ibrahima Diene, also updated the Council on the implementation of the mission's mandate, in accordance with resolution 2767 of 27 December 2024. Additionally, the chair of the 2713 Al-Shabaab Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Eloy Alfaro de Alba (Panama), briefed on the committee's work.

### Western Sahara

On 10 October, Council members received a briefing in closed consultations on the Secretary-General's annual report on the situation in Western Sahara. The briefers were the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Staffan de Mistura, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), Alexander Ivanko.

On 28 October, Council members held closed consultations on MINURSO to discuss the negotiations on the mission's mandate renewal. The consultations were requested by Algeria.

On 31 October, the Council adopted resolution 2797 renewing MINURSO's mandate for one year (S/PV.10032). Twelve members voted in favour of the resolution and three (China, Pakistan and Russia) abstained. Algeria did not participate in the vote. After the resolution was adopted, Ambassador Amar Bendjama, Algeria's Permanent Representative to the UN, stated that the text does not "faithfully reflect...the UN doctrine with regard to decolonization".

### UNDOF (Golan)

On 3 October, Council members received a briefing in consultations on the work of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) from Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Khaled Khiari.

### Venezuela

On 10 October, the Security Council held an open briefing under the "Threats to international peace and security" agenda item to discuss developments related to Venezuela, including US strikes in the Caribbean Sea at alleged drug traffickers (S/PV.10015). Miroslav Jenča briefed in his capacity as Assistant Secretary-General for

Europe, Central Asia and the Americas. Venezuela requested the meeting in a 9 October letter (S/2025/633). China and Russia supported the meeting request.

### Great Lakes Region (DRC)

On 13 October, the Security Council held its biannual briefing on the Great Lakes (S/PV. 10016). Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region Huang Xia briefed on the Secretary-General's latest biannual report on the implementation of the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSC-F) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the region, which was circulated to Council members on 1 October and covers the period from 28 March to 15 September (S/2025/615). Closed consultations followed the open briefing.

### Haiti

On 17 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2794, renewing the 2653 Haiti sanctions regime for another year (S/PV.10018). The resolution added two individuals—Dimitri Herard and Kempes Sanon—to the 2653 sanctions list.

On 22 October, the Security Council held an open briefing followed by closed consultations on Haiti (S/PV.10022). Special Representative and Head of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) Carlos Ruiz Massieu briefed.

### Informal Joint Seminar and Joint Consultative Meeting in Addis Ababa

On 16 October, the 10th joint informal seminar between Security Council members and AUPSC members was held. Members of the two Councils exchanged views on the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda, the threat posed by terrorism in Africa, and the implementation of resolution 2719 on the financing of AU-led peace support operations.

On 17 October, Security Council members held their 19th annual joint consultative meeting with members of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. They discussed the issue of enhancing and supporting AU-led peace support operations (AUPSOs), with particular emphasis on the AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). They also exchanged views on pressing peace and security issues in Africa, with a focus on three regional situations—the situation in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin; the situation in the Horn of Africa, including Sudan and South Sudan; and the situation in the Great Lakes region, particularly the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This year, the meeting concluded without adopting a joint communiqué. Although Council experts and their AUPSC counterparts continued negotiations virtually on the draft until 24 October, they were not able to reach the necessary consensus.

On 30 October, members of the Security Council and the AUPSC issued a press statement that "recalled and reaffirmed all previous joint communiqués adopted during their annual joint consultative meetings". The press statement also briefly described the agendas of the joint informal seminar and the joint consultative meeting this year.

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## Status Update since our October Forecast

### Kosovo

On 21 October, the Security Council convened its second regular briefing this year on the situation in Kosovo (S/PV.10019). Deputy Special Representative and Officer-in-Charge of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Milbert Dongjoon Shin, briefed on the Secretary-General's latest report on UNMIK (S/2025/634), which was circulated to Council members on 10 October and covers developments from 16 March to 15 September. Serbia participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, while Kosovo and the European Union (EU) participated under rule 39.

### The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

On 23 October, the Security Council held its quarterly open debate on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" (S/PV.10023). Russia chose to designate the meeting as a signature event of its October Council presidency. The briefer was Ramiz Alakbarov, the Deputy Special Coordinator and Resident Coordinator at the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO). Over 70 speakers among the wider UN membership and regional organisations took the floor.

### The United Nations: Looking into the Future

On 24 October, the day the UN Charter entered into force 80 years ago, the Security Council held an open debate titled "The United

Nations Organization: Looking into the Future" under the "Maintenance of international peace and security" agenda item (S/PV.10024 and Resumption I). Secretary-General António Guterres briefed via VTC. Russia convened the open debate as the signature event of its October Council presidency.

A presidential statement authored by Russia, which was adopted during the meeting, reaffirmed the Security Council's commitment to the UN Charter and to multilateralism (S/PRST/2025/7).

### Annual Briefing by ICJ President

On 29 October, the Council held its annual private meeting with the president of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Judge Yuji Iwasawa.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 31 October, the Security Council held its semi-annual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) (S/PV.10028). There was no briefer. Željko Komšić, the Croat member of the rotating tripartite inter-ethnic Presidency of BiH and the incumbent Chairman of the Presidency, as well as representatives of Croatia and Serbia participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, while the EU took part under rule 39. During the meeting, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2795 renewing the authorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA) for an additional year.

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## Conflict and Food Insecurity

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold a high-level open debate on conflict-related food insecurity. This is a signature event of Sierra Leone's Council presidency and will be chaired by Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio. The expected briefers are UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher, African Union (AU) Special Envoy for Food Systems Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, and a civil society representative.

### Key Recent Developments

According to the World Food Programme's (WFP) 2025 Global Report on Food Crises, published in July and updated in September, more than 280 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity across 53 countries and territories in 2024—13.7 million more than in 2023 and the sixth consecutive annual increase. Conflict was the primary driver of acute food insecurity in 20 countries and territories, affecting nearly 140 million people, including in Colombia, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), South Sudan, and Sudan. In several of these contexts, hunger was compounded by interlinkages between conflict and other drivers of food insecurity, such as climate change and economic shocks.

Among situations of particular concern is Gaza, where food insecurity rose to devastating levels amidst the Israel-Hamas war and Israel's restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid into the enclave. In August, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) confirmed that famine was occurring in Gaza governorate—the metropolitan area that includes Gaza City—and was projected to spread to Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis governorates by the end of September. Since then, increased levels of humanitarian aid have started to enter the territory under the current ceasefire, but the situation remains dire.

Acute food insecurity also persists in Sudan as a result of the ongoing civil war, which has led to mass displacement and severely curtailed humanitarian access. In August 2024, the IPC confirmed famine conditions in parts of North Darfur, including the Zamzam displacement camp in El Fasher, which the monitoring group later said had expanded to Al Salam and Abu Shouk camps and the Western Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan state. Escalating hostilities in El Fasher in late October may further exacerbate the situation.

The Security Council has convened regularly to discuss conflict-related food insecurity in recent years. During its February 2024 presidency, Guyana organised a high-level open debate on the impact of climate change and food insecurity on the maintenance of international peace and security. During its May 2023 presidency, then-member Switzerland held the annual open debate on the

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON CONFLICT AND FOOD SECURITY** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2417 (24 May 2018) was a resolution on the link between armed conflict and food insecurity. It strongly condemned the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, as well as the unlawful denial of humanitarian access. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2023/4** (3 August 2023) was a presidential statement on conflict and hunger that highlighted the role of regional and subregional organisations in preventing famine and conflict-induced food insecurity and malnutrition. **Secretary-General Report S/2025/271** (15 May 2025) was the Secretary-General's annual report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. It included a section on food insecurity.

# Conflict and Food Insecurity

protection of civilians as a ministerial-level meeting on the intertwined challenges of conflict-induced food insecurity and the protection of critical civilian infrastructure and essential services in conflict. During the administration of former US President Joe Biden, the US convened high-level open debates on conflict-induced food insecurity during its March 2021, May 2022, and August 2023 presidencies. In connection with the latter meeting, the Security Council adopted a US-proposed presidential statement on the issue.

Additionally, Council members have convened on numerous occasions to discuss conflict-related food insecurity in relation to country-specific situations. These include meetings on Gaza in June 2025, November 2024, and February 2024; on Sudan in January 2025 and March 2024; and an interactive informal dialogue (IID) on Burkina Faso, the DRC, and Haiti in July 2023. Several of these sessions were in response to white notes that the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) submitted in accordance with resolution 2417 of 24 May 2018, which condemned the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council when “the risk of conflict-induced famine and wide-spread food insecurity” occurs.

## Key Issues and Options

November’s open debate will spotlight the current scale of conflict-driven food insecurity worldwide. A key issue for the Security Council is the persistent gap between early warning and early action in responding to this issue. Although resolution 2417 requires the Secretary-General to report “swiftly” on situations of conflict-induced famine, recent crises such as those in Gaza, Sudan, and Ethiopia illustrate that alerts often reach the Council after acute food insecurity has already emerged. Weak institutional follow-up mechanisms and the absence of a standing focal point within the UN system for implementing resolution 2417 continue to limit timely and coordinated responses.

Another challenge is achieving accountability for the war crime of starvation. While international humanitarian law (IHL) prohibits the starvation of civilians and the destruction of objects indispensable to survival, investigations and prosecutions remain rare. Recent charges brought by the International Criminal Court (ICC) concerning Israel’s prosecution of the war in Gaza may strengthen accountability norms in this regard, but the Security Council’s own mechanisms for addressing deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid remain underused. In numerous conflict situations, bureaucratic and security constraints continue to hinder humanitarian access and evidence collection, underscoring the need for consistent Council follow-up on white notes submitted under resolution 2417.

Council members could consider several options. One would be to request OCHA to submit white notes on a periodic rather than ad hoc basis, or the Secretary-General to include a separate section on food insecurity in relevant country-specific reporting, which could improve the flow of information to the Council. Another would be to request the Secretary-General to establish a dedicated focal point on conflict-induced hunger to consolidate early-warning data, coordinate with regional organisations, and track compliance with resolution 2417. The Council could also request periodic briefings from this focal point and relevant agencies, such as OCHA, WFP,

and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to ensure systematic use of existing white notes and early-warning mechanisms. Another option is to strengthen accountability by referring cases of deliberate starvation to appropriate international judicial bodies or more consistently applying targeted sanctions against individuals or entities obstructing humanitarian access. The Council could further promote early action by encouraging coordination between humanitarian, development, and climate-adaptation initiatives to address the structural drivers of food insecurity in conflict settings.

## Council Dynamics

Most Council members agree that conflict remains a primary driver of acute food insecurity and that compliance with IHL—particularly the prohibition of starvation as a method of warfare—is essential to addressing the problem. Members include France, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, the UK, and the US, who are part of the Group of Friends of Action on Conflict and Hunger.

Divisions persist, however, regarding the Council’s role in addressing conflict-induced hunger and in pursuing accountability for starvation crimes. For instance, the Council’s African members have expressed concern that the issue could create a pretext to bring to the Council’s attention countries that are not on its formal agenda. In 2023, African members were opposed to holding a Council meeting on OCHA’s white note on Burkina Faso, the DRC, and Haiti because Burkina Faso was not a formal Council agenda item; eventually, an IID was held instead. In 2021, African members objected to convening a formal meeting on OCHA’s white note about the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

Broader geopolitical tensions have also impacted the Council’s consideration of the issue. The US, for instance, convened two of its signature events on food insecurity in the aftermath of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, when global food prices rose in response to the conflict, as both Russia and Ukraine are major producers of agricultural commodities. The price increases posed a challenge for low-income countries—including conflict-affected ones—which are highly dependent on imports of Ukrainian and Russian foodstuffs. The US and its allies on the Council blamed the rising food prices on Russia’s invasion, which destroyed farmland in Ukraine and deprived the country of export access through the Black Sea, while Russia faulted Western sanctions for the trend.

Those dynamics appear to have shifted during the current administration of US President Donald Trump. At recent Council meetings on Gaza, the US—which is Israel’s closest ally—has disputed the IPC’s confirmation of famine and claimed that Hamas was responsible for food insecurity in the enclave by diverting aid. Notably, although the US is a member of the Group of Friends of Action on Conflict and Hunger, it seems that the country has not joined the group’s recent joint statements at Council meetings.

Views also diverge on the link between food insecurity and climate change. While many Council members believe that the body should pay more attention to climate change as a risk multiplier in situations of conflict-induced food insecurity, the current US administration has routinely opposed references to climate change in Council products, and Russia has blamed the transition to green energy for rising energy prices, which it in turn claims have raised



# Conflict and Food Insecurity

food prices.

Guyana and Slovenia are the Council's focal points on conflict and food security. Since the creation of this informal role in 2019,

the focal points have organised Council meetings on OCHA's white notes as well as convened members to consider the periodic reports on "hunger hotspots" issued by FAO and WFP.

## Syria

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council is expected to hold its monthly meeting on political and humanitarian developments in Syria. Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Najat Rochdi and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher are expected to brief.

### Key Recent Developments

Syria continues to grapple with a fragmented security landscape. On 6 October, tensions between the Syrian interim government and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—a Kurdish-led group which controls most of Syria's de facto autonomous northeast territory—escalated when clashes broke out between the interim government's forces and SDF forces in Aleppo, reportedly resulting in the deaths of at least one government soldier and one civilian. The next day, a ceasefire was agreed between the two parties, following talks which were reportedly brokered by the US and included Sharaa and the SDF's commander, Mazloum Abdi. In a 12 October interview, Abdi said that the two sides had reached a "preliminary agreement" on integrating the SDF into Syria's defence and interior ministries, a key element of the 10 March agreement between the two parties, which aimed to have the SDF integrate by the end of the year. A central issue is that the SDF has called for a secular and decentralised state and maintains that the 14 March transitional constitutional declaration does not represent Syria's diversity and concentrates too much authority with the interim president.

Meanwhile, Türkiye—which has become a key supporter of Syria's interim government—is reportedly pressuring the SDF to integrate by the end of the year. Türkiye opposes Kurdish autonomy in northeast Syria and considers the SDF as a threat due to its ties to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which it designates as a terrorist group.

The 18 July ceasefire in Suweida—a southern governorate in Syria, which saw deadly clashes between Druze militias and Bedouin tribes erupt on 13 July—has continued to hold. Despite the ceasefire and a roadmap aimed at resolving the crisis—agreed to by Syria's interim government, the US, and Jordan, but rejected by some Druze militias—tensions and volatility in southern Syria persist, and the humanitarian situation continues to degrade. According to the UN, as at 8 October, in Suweida, essential services were strained with disruptions in food, health, agriculture and education sectors. From July to September, OCHA facilitated humanitarian assistance to 420,000 people in the region each month.

On 10 October, Syrian interim Foreign Minister Assad al-Shibani and Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji held a meeting in Beirut in an attempt to rebuild relations, following decades of tensions

between the neighbours. The main issues discussed reportedly included border security, the status of Syrian prisoners in Lebanon and Lebanese missing persons in Syria, and the return of Syrian refugees.

Terrorism and the resurgence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) continue to pose a threat to Syria, exacerbated by the country's fragile security situation. On 16 October, a terrorist attack on a Ministry of Energy transport bus in Deir ez-Zor killed four people and injured nine others. At the time of writing, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. For its part, Syria's interim government has made commitments to counter terrorist threats and is cooperating with the US to counter ISIL, including through conducting joint operations. According to a 30 September report by Reuters, the US is scaling down its military presence in Iraq in order to refocus on combating ISIL in Syria.

On 5 October, Syria held elections for its new legislature, the People's Assembly. 119 representatives were elected indirectly through electoral colleges. Elections were postponed in three governorates—Suweida, which is currently held by the Druze minority, al-Hasakah, and Raqqa, which are held by the Kurdish-led SDF—due to security and political issues. On 23 October, supplementary elections took place to fill three seats from the al-Hasakah and Raqqa governorates, while, according to the Syrian state news agency SANA, the remaining seats in these governorates and in Suweida will stay vacant until "appropriate security and political conditions are met for by-election". The remaining one-third of the Assembly's seats are to be chosen directly by Sharaa. The majority of elected members are Sunni Muslim and male, with only 13 percent of representatives elected on 5 October having been won by women and minorities. The Higher Committee for People's Assembly Elections' spokesperson, Nawar Najmeh, acknowledged "shortcomings" of the process, highlighting the "unsatisfactory" representation for women and Christians.

In her 22 October briefing to the Council, Rochdi highlighted that among the 119 elected on 5 October, there was "one Christian, three Ismailis, three Alawites, four Kurds and no Druze". She also said that some Syrian interlocutors criticised the process for being "rushed", "with opaque decision-making, last-minute changes to legal procedures, and low public engagement". Rochdi urged the Syrian authorities and civil society to learn from the process and work towards inclusive future elections, offering the UN's support to that end.

A critical part of the political transition process is the effort to rehabilitate and bolster the Syrian economy, as Syrians grapple with the repercussions of years of war, repressive rule and sanctions. According to a 21 October World Bank report covering the period

**UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA** [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2254](#) (18 December 2015) focused on a political solution to the Syria crisis. [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

between 2011 and 2024, post-conflict reconstruction costs for Syria are estimated at \$216 billion. To help Syria rebuild, some countries have discussed enhancing economic cooperation or setting up investment projects, while others have continued processes to lift sanctions on the country.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 23 September, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, the Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, delivered an address to the UN Human Rights Council during its 60th session on Syria's human rights situation. Following a visit to Syria, Pinheiro highlighted that the country's human rights situation, while vastly different from that of the Assad era, is nonetheless dire. Among other recommendations, Pinheiro called on member states to take decisive action to support the Syrian people's legitimate aspirations and urged them to assist the interim Syrian authorities in building towards this future in the face of substantial challenges.

On 7 October, the Commission subsequently completed its first visit to communities affected by violence in Suweida. During its visit to the city and the governorate, it engaged with survivors and other affected community members and leaders, among other relevant stakeholders, to hear testimonies of suspected violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. It also expressed concerns over the sharing of misinformation regarding its visit and investigations in the region. Among other matters, the Commission emphasised that it would continue its investigations to address urgent human rights concerns, including through engagement with all impacted communities and relevant stakeholders.

## Women, Peace and Security

Briefing the Security Council at the 22 October Security Council meeting on Syria, Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Najat Rochdi said that an overwhelming sentiment among many Syrian women is that the processes and initial outcomes of the political transition have not met their expectations and the commitments made by the interim authorities. She noted that women's participation in the recent elections remained limited—with only six women elected to the People's Assembly out of 119 seats contested—and low representation across electoral bodies and candidates. Rochdi called for clearer measures and strategies to prevent women's exclusion from leadership roles, a stronger legal and political stance against discrimination, and "state action to ensure protection from harassment, threats and violence". She also underscored that Syrian women remain engaged in the transition process and demand that future electoral processes are designed to protect their right to participate.

## 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 a fraught security context compounded by intercommunal tensions, terrorism, and external interference. Central to this issue are Damascus' efforts in pursuing disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) efforts, and in fostering social cohesion and transitional justice, including accountability and reconciliation.

The UN's future 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 has considered 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 entities to discuss the most viable options for future Council engagement with Syria.

Council members could further consider negotiating a new resolution to update Security Council resolution 2254, which would reflect the current context and political transition. (Adopted in December 2015, resolution 2254 focused on a political solution to the Syrian crisis, and several of its principles are still viewed by the international community as benchmarks required for a successful Syrian political transition.)

Another issue is that UN sanctions on Ha'yat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)—a terrorist group, formerly affiliated with Al-Qaida and ISIL, whose military campaign under Sharaa's leadership led to the ouster of Assad—are impacting the interim government. HTS—referred to as an alias for the Al-Nusrah Front on the 1267/1989/2254 sanctions list—Sharaa, and Syria's interim interior minister Anas Khattab are all listed under the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions regime, which imposes an asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo on listed individuals and entities. The Council is currently negotiating a draft resolution that seeks to apply carve-outs to this sanctions regime, aimed at facilitating economic engagement for Syria. The US, the penholder on the file, authored the draft text.

## 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 broadly agree that the threat of intercommunal violence cannot be addressed without advancing inclusive accountability measures, DDR and security sector reform (SSR) efforts, together with a credible political process in the country. The US and Russia worked together on the 14 March presidential statement following violence perpetrated in Latakia and Tartous, while Denmark authored the 10 August presidential statement in response to violence in Suweida.

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 unilateral sanctions.

Since US President Donald Trump's decision to lift sanctions on Syria, the US has been engaged in efforts to stabilise the situation in the country. On 10 October, the US Senate voted to repeal the "Caesar Act"—Congressional sanctions which were imposed on Syria due to the crimes committed by Assad's government—bringing the legislation a step closer to being fully repealed. Furthermore, US mediation has played a key role in brokering the ceasefires with the SDF in the northeast and the Druze in the south. It is also mediating discussions to establish a security pact between the Syrian interim government and Israel.

Other Council members are also taking steps to build relations with the authorities in Damascus and facilitate the political transition. France has been engaged in mediation efforts between Damascus and the SDF. The UK announced on 21 October that it is removing HTS from its list of proscribed terrorist organisations to allow "closer engagement with the new Syrian government". And on 15 October, Sharaa held a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, where both parties acknowledged their historical ties and Putin called Syria's parliamentary elections "a great success" which "can help consolidate society".

# Syria

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) and ISIL (Da'esh). China has been particularly vocal in calling on Damascus to take a stronger stance on FTFs in the country, some of whom have reportedly been integrated into the Syrian armed forces. Several FTFs constitute part of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, which China considers a terrorist organisation and is also listed under the UN 1267

sanctions regime.

Israel's presence and military activities in Syria remain a point of contention for Council members. Most members believe Israel's actions are fostering instability in Syria and that it must comply with the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. In contrast, the US has predominantly seen Israel's actions as defensive in nature or tied to ensuring its national security.

# Yemen

## Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council is expected to renew the Yemen financial and travel ban sanctions measures, which expire on 15 November, and the mandate of the Yemen Panel of Experts (PoE), which expires on 15 December. (The targeted arms embargo on the Houthi rebel group established by resolution 2216 in April 2015 is open-ended.)

The Council will also hold its monthly meeting on Yemen and receive a briefing from the chair of the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Jihoon Cha (Republic of Korea).

## Background and Key Recent Developments

Yemen continues to suffer from pervasive insecurity, a deepening humanitarian crisis, and a stalled political settlement to the decade-long civil war. Intra-Yemeni tensions remain high between the Houthis—a Yemeni rebel group that has de facto control of the northwest of the country, including the capital Sana'a, which they seized in 2014—and the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC)—the internationally recognised government of Yemen.

Following the start of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza in October 2023, the Houthis maintained a campaign of attacks using drones and ballistic missiles against Israel and against shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, in what they said was a show of solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. Israel retaliated with several airstrikes on Houthi assets and members. On 1 October, the Houthis claimed responsibility for the attack on the Dutch-flagged MV *Minervagracht*, which resulted in the killing of one crew member and the wounding of another. On 7 October—the second anniversary of Hamas' attack on Israel, which started the Gaza war—the Houthis reportedly launched four drones at Israel, which were all successfully intercepted by the Israeli military.

Since the 8 October announcement of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, the group has not conducted any further attacks against Israel or vessels in the Red Sea. During the previous Gaza ceasefire, which lasted from January until March, the Houthis held back from such attacks. Some analysts have postulated, however, that the tenuous nature of the Gaza ceasefire and any violations of the agreement could lead the Houthis to resume attacks in the region,

given their support of Iran.

On 15 October, during a visit to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg told ambassadors from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the five permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US), that the Gaza ceasefire presents an opportunity to “reinforce regional stability, renew momentum toward peace in Yemen and create conditions that support sustained de-escalation and advance an inclusive political process”, through a coordinated approach. Grundberg also raised the issue of the Houthis' continued detention of UN, diplomatic and NGO personnel, calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

The Houthis have continued to arbitrarily detain UN personnel. On 6 October, the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General issued a statement condemning the detention of nine UN personnel. On 16 October, Houthi leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi accused UN staff and humanitarian agencies of spying for Israel and the US, an accusation which was categorically denied by the Secretary-General. On 18 October, the Houthis conducted a raid on a UN compound in Sana'a, detaining 20 staff and seizing UN assets. According to the UN, the staff were released on 20 October, after the Houthis vacated the compound. As at 30 October, the UN said that 59 UN personnel remain detained by the Houthis, a situation that, according to the Spokesperson, has prompted the UN to “reassess the way in which [it] work[s] in areas controlled by the Houthis”.

On 27 October, Grundberg and the newly appointed UN official tasked with leading the file on detainees Muin Shreim visited Muscat, Oman, to hold discussions with Omani officials and representatives of the Houthis on securing the release of UN detainees. They also discussed “ways to reach a negotiated political settlement to end the conflict in Yemen.”

The PLC is maintaining efforts to prevent shipments of weapons and military components to the Houthis, which they accuse Iran of supplying. On 23 October, a joint campaign led by PLC-aligned forces reportedly interdicted an Iranian vessel carrying a shipment of weapons, military and drone components bound for Houthi-controlled regions. The Houthis are also reportedly increasingly smuggling weapons through Sudan to avoid such interdictions targeting

**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. [S/RES/2758](#) (13 November 2024) renewed the 2140 Yemen sanctions regime until 15 November 2025. It also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts (PoE) supporting the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee until 15 December 2025. [S/RES/2140](#) (26 February 2014) expressed the Council's strong support for the next steps of Yemen's political transition and established sanctions against those threatening the peace, security or stability of Yemen. **Security Council Press Statements** [SC/16166](#) (12 September 2025) condemned the detention of at least 21 UN personnel, forced entry into UN premises, and seizure of UN property by the Houthis, while demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained. [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

smuggling routes in the Gulf of Aden.

## 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. A serious concern is that regional tensions in the Middle East, including the Israeli-Houthi cycle of violence, are drawing attention away from finding a peaceful resolution to the Yemeni civil war. Following the Gaza ceasefire, Council members may choose to concentrate on mobilising pressure for a resumption of Yemeni peace talks and advancing an inclusive political process.

An option for the Council would be to issue a presidential statement encouraging the Yemeni parties to revive concrete discussions towards establishing a political roadmap under UN auspices—commitments to this end were made by the parties in December 2023, but discussions fell through following the Houthis' escalatory reaction to the Gaza war. Council members could stress the need for the UN roadmap to include regional security guarantees—including regarding the Red Sea—to reflect the changed reality since 2023. Given the degradation of economic conditions in Yemen, members could also demand enhanced economic and humanitarian support for the country, such as assistance in implementing the agreement to reduce economic tensions between the Houthis and the Yemeni government on 23 July 2024.

A key priority for the Council in November is renewing the Yemen sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee. One option would be to pursue a straightforward renewal. Another would be to consider whether adjustments are needed, including any based on recommendations contained in the PoE's 2025 report to the Security Council, which was due on 15 October.

Another issue on the Council's agenda is the upcoming expiration of the mandate of the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement's (UNMHA). Resolution 2786, adopted on 14 July, decided to extend UNMHA's mandate until 28 January 2026. It also requested the Secretary-General to present to the Council, before 28 November, a review of UNMHA aimed at improving "efficiencies and structural coherence and coordination across United Nations Missions in Yemen and bearing in mind challenges that have directly impeded UNMHA's capacity to deliver on its mandate." The review may guide Council members' discussions on potential options regarding the future of the mission.

## Council Dynamics

Despite being critical of the Houthis, most Council members have maintained their support for an inclusive intra-Yemeni political process and continue to call for advancing mediation efforts between the conflict parties towards a resumption of dialogue and a peace process under UN auspices. The US, however, has adopted a hawkish position on the Houthis, sanctioning the group and accusing it of continuing to threaten—with the support of Iran—regional stability, maritime security, and the welfare of the Yemeni people.

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 war in Gaza. China and Russia have also criticised foreign military action in Yemen—claiming that such actions degrade the country's already dire humanitarian situation, exacerbate the situation in the Red Sea, and negatively impact the political process. In this regard, Israel, the UK, and the US have all conducted strikes targeting Houthi infrastructure since the beginning of the Red Sea crisis.

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.

The divergent views among Council members on Yemen have obstructed, or made difficult, the Security Council's attempts at producing Council products on this file, including on issues which are not contentious, such as the Houthis' crackdown on UN personnel.

Nonetheless, there is broad agreement among Council members on 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. At least three of the Council's elected members—Denmark, Greece, and Panama—have suffered Houthi attacks on their commercial vessels.

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 promote compliance with the arms embargo on 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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# Sudan/South Sudan

## Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold a briefing and consultations on the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

The Council is also expected to renew the mandate of UNISFA and extend the mission's support for the Joint Border Verification

and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), established in 2011 to conduct monitoring and verification activities along the Sudan-South Sudan border, before their expiration on 15 November.

## Key Recent Developments

According to the Secretary-General's 15 October UNISFA report,



## Sudan/South Sudan

which covered developments from 16 April to 1 October, no progress had been made in resolving the final status of Abyei—the disputed area along the Sudan-South Sudan border—amidst ongoing hostilities in Sudan and political uncertainty in South Sudan. The report said that no meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism and the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee—which is tasked with providing administrative and political oversight of Abyei and is co-chaired by a Sudanese official and a South Sudanese official—could take place.

The Secretary-General's report highlighted the persisting security challenges in Abyei and documented a total of 127 security incidents resulting in the deaths of 34 people, a notable increase from the previous reporting period, which witnessed 91 incidents resulting in 22 people killed. Moreover, reports of sporadic gunfire, including near UNISFA facilities, increased from 8 during the previous reporting period to 40 between 16 April and 15 September.

The increase in security incidents has been attributed to the presence of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a Sudanese paramilitary group, in northern Abyei. RSF elements were frequently observed in the Amiet market area and along the Amiet-Diffra road, in Abyei, where they reportedly operated checkpoints. In late May, the RSF took control of the community protection committee office in Dari, northern Abyei, and intermittently co-located with joint community peace committee members collecting tolls north of Amiet market. The group has also sought to strengthen its ties with Misseriya traditional authorities. UNISFA monitored reports indicating that RSF elements had arbitrarily arrested local officials appointed by Khartoum and transferred them to undisclosed locations outside Abyei. (For more information, see our 18 March *What's in Blue* story.)

The Secretary-General's report also noted the continued presence of South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and South Sudan National Police Service personnel in southern Abyei, where they have established checkpoints, which have restricted UNISFA's patrols and logistical movements and obstructed the establishment of a temporary base at Anthony Junction in southern Abyei. The SSPDF has also continued to occupy civilian structures in the area.

In early October, clashes erupted in southern Abyei between rival factions of the unified protection force, comprising the SSPDF and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO). Media reports suggested that the fighting resulted in 14 fatalities, eight from the SSPDF and six from the SPLA-IO. In a press briefing, the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, Stéphane Dujarric, said that UNISFA had evacuated more than 100 civilians, mostly women and children, from the village of Malual Aleu to its Kadhian base, while over 90 civilians sought protection at the mission's Rumamier base in southern Abyei.

The Secretary-General's report noted that Sudan's ongoing conflict continues to significantly affect the JBVMM's operations. The closure of Sudanese airspace has prevented aerial monitoring, while security concerns have deterred private contractors from resupplying the JBVMM site in Kadugli, Sudan. The Sector 1 headquarters in Gok Machar, South Sudan, along with its two team sites, remained non-operational. Despite these challenges, the JBVMM continued to implement its mandate through ground monitoring missions and situation assessment patrols. Due to the deteriorating

security situation, UNISFA began temporarily reducing its presence in Kadugli on 13 August, pending improvements in the security and operational environment.

Between June and September, UNISFA's leadership travelled to Juba five times and undertook one visit to Port Sudan to meet with senior officials and discuss evolving security challenges in Abyei and the JBVMM area. During these meetings, UNISFA urged both sides to resume discussions on Abyei and border issues, stressing that the presence of state and non-state forces violates the 2011 Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area and continues to hamper the mission's operations. The mission also raised concerns over arms proliferation and rising crime, underscoring the urgent need to deploy the three formed police units, authorised by the Council through resolution 2469 of 14 May 2019. It further discussed ongoing logistical challenges affecting resupply efforts and plans to reduce the JBVMM headquarters footprint in Kadugli, while emphasising the need for sustained support to ensure the safety of UNISFA air operations.

On 16 October, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix visited Abyei to discuss the impact of the ongoing UN liquidity crisis on the implementation of UNISFA's mandate with the local administration and Ngok Dinka traditional leaders. During his meetings with UNISFA leadership and personnel, Lacroix was briefed on the mission's contingency planning and its implications for the mission's operational effectiveness. A press release following the visit highlighted appeals from civil society representatives, who described UNISFA as “the only protection force” in the area and called for special consideration for Abyei, citing the unique security and humanitarian challenges facing the region.

### Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council in November is UNISFA's mandate renewal. A likely option for Council members is to adopt a resolution to renew the mission's mandate for one year and consider what changes to the mission's mandate, if any, are necessary. Council members are likely to be guided by the findings of the strategic review requested by resolution 2760 of 14 November 2024, which last extended UNISFA's mandate for one year.

On 18 August, the Secretary-General submitted the review, which underscored the need for UNISFA to adapt to maximise its ability to respond effectively to mandate implementation challenges across a spectrum of issues. Members may wish to discuss whether any of its recommendations require changes to UNISFA's mandate. Among other things, the report highlighted the need to reinvigorate UNISFA's political role; respond to operational necessity and reassess what the parties need from the JBVMM; prioritise support to security and safety in Amiet market; strengthen whole-of-mission protection efforts throughout Abyei; and achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in mission support.

The fundamental issue for the Council remains how to reinvigorate the political process to address the final status of Abyei and outstanding Sudan-South Sudan border issues amid the war in Sudan, which has stalled progress, and the fragile political situation in South Sudan. Securing a ceasefire in Sudan is seen as essential to mitigating the conflict's impact on the security, humanitarian, and

# Sudan/South Sudan

socioeconomic conditions in Abyei.

Also, an important issue for the Council is the presence of armed actors, including the RSF and South Sudanese forces in Abyei, in violation of the area's demilitarised status. The ongoing fighting in Sudan and shifting intercommunal dynamics in Abyei and South Sudan, particularly south of the boundary, have contributed to an increased presence and influence of armed groups in Abyei, leading to greater criminality and insecurity, and posing risks to the safety of peacekeepers. The proliferation of small arms in Abyei further risks exacerbating intercommunal tensions and undermining the overall security situation.

The operational difficulties that UNISFA and the JBVM face because of the presence of South Sudanese forces in Abyei, restrictions on the freedom of movement of the mission, and the conflict in Sudan are matters of concern for Council members. The fighting has forced UNISFA to change its supply routes, creating significant logistical and security constraints for both the mission and the JBVM. A persistent issue remains the lack of deployment of Council-authorised formed police units and the appointment of a civilian deputy head of mission, due to a lack of agreement from the Sudanese government.

In renewing UNISFA's mandate and its support for the JBVM, the Council could underscore the operational challenges facing the mission, including restrictions on freedom of movement, and urge the parties to cooperate fully with UNISFA to address these concerns. The Council could also use this opportunity to reaffirm its support for the mission and encourage efforts to address the underlying drivers of insecurity, notably the presence of armed groups and the proliferation of weapons. Furthermore, Council members could urge the parties to resolve outstanding issues, including the deployment of formed police units and the appointment of a civilian Deputy Head of Mission.

## Council Dynamics

At the outset, Council members agree on the important roles that UNISFA and the JBVM play in supporting peace, security, and stability in Abyei and the broader region. However, they have expressed concern about recurring intercommunal violence, the presence of armed actors in the area, attacks against peacekeepers, and the compounding effects of Sudan's conflict on the political, humanitarian, and security situation in Abyei, as well as the operational and logistical challenges facing the mission.

Since UNISFA's establishment in 2011, all Council resolutions renewing the mission's mandate have been adopted unanimously, with the exception of the last renewal resolution, which was adopted with all members voting in favour except Russia. In its explanation of vote, Russia argued that some elements of the resolution were "hardly related" to the immediate situation in Abyei and said that the text placed excessive focus on Sudan's internal conflict, describing this approach as counterproductive.

Traditionally, the US has emphasised UNISFA's role in protecting civilians, called for adequate resourcing of the mission, and underscored the importance of ensuring freedom of movement, removing obstacles to mandate implementation, and advancing the demilitarisation of Abyei. However, Washington's broader efforts to scale back its financial support to the UN may influence its approach to the mission's future mandate. At the time of writing, it remained unclear how the current US administration of President Donald Trump will approach the renewal of UNISFA's mandate. Several Council members are likely to prioritise ensuring that UNISFA retains sufficient capacity and flexibility to respond to the evolving security environment and preserve the fragile stability the mission has helped sustain in Abyei.

## Climate, Peace and Security

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to hold a briefing on "Climate and security—environmental impact of armed conflict and climate driven security risks" under the "Threats to international peace and security" agenda item.

The anticipated briefers are Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Inger Andersen, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); Charles C. Jalloh, Professor of Law at the University of Miami and member of the International Law Commission; and a civil society representative.

### Key Recent Developments

While this month's briefing will be the Council's first formal meeting on climate, peace and security in 2025, several Council members have highlighted this issue in informal ways throughout the year. Thus far in 2025, the Informal Expert Group on Climate, Peace

and Security (IEG)—which is co-chaired by Guyana, Panama, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Slovenia—has met to discuss the effects of climate change on peace and security in several country- and region-specific situations, often prior to formal council meetings or mandate renewals on the relevant files. These include meetings on Afghanistan (27 February); the Horn of Africa in the context of UN Peace Operations, focusing on Somalia and South Sudan (11 April); the Central Africa region (10 June); Haiti (14 July); West Africa and the Sahel (4 August); and Libya (23 October). (An IEG meeting is also planned for 3 November on the Central African Republic).

In 2025, Council members that are supporters of the joint pledges related to climate, peace and security—Denmark, France, Greece, Guyana, Panama, ROK, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and the UK—have held "stake-ins" prior to Council meetings on Yemen (6 March), the Great Lakes region (16 April), the Protection of civilians (22 May), Libya (24 June), South Sudan (18 August), and UN peace operations (9 September). During each of these stake-ins, the joint

UN DOCUMENT ON CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY Selected Presidential Statement S/PRST/2011/15 (20 July 2011) was a presidential statement on climate change.

# Climate, Peace and Security

pledgers—who have committed to systematically integrate climate change, peace and security into the Council’s work—deliver a statement describing the implications of climate change on the topic of the respective meetings.

On 23 May, Slovenia (together with Algeria, Panama, and Sierra Leone) convened an Arria-formula meeting titled “Freshwater Resources and Related Infrastructure under Attack: Protecting Water in Armed Conflict—Protecting Civilian Lives”. Several non-Council members—Costa Rica, Hungary, Indonesia, Jordan, Mozambique, the Philippines, Senegal, Switzerland, and Viet Nam—supported the meeting. Melita Gabrič, Slovenia’s Deputy Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, chaired the meeting. The briefers were: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director for Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations Ted Chaiban, and Regional Head of Programmes for Geneva Call in Africa Mehwash Ansari.

The briefers addressed the devastating effects of conflicts in Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine, among others, on the water infrastructure relied upon by civilian populations. Spoljaric Egger referenced ICRC guidance calling for incorporating legal norms related to water into military doctrine and training. Chaiban called on the Security Council to include, where relevant, water mediation in peace operation mandates and for the Secretary-General to include references to attacks on water infrastructure in his reports on a consistent basis. Ansari advocated sustained monitoring of violations of international humanitarian law related to water infrastructure.

On 23 July, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion on the “Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change”, which was requested by UN General Assembly resolution 77/276 of 29 March 2023. Vanuatu, responding to advocacy from Pacific Island youth, spearheaded the campaign, which culminated in the adoption of the resolution. The advisory opinion found that states have an obligation “to prevent significant harm to the environment by acting with due diligence and to use all means at their disposal to prevent activities carried out within their jurisdiction or control from causing significant harm to the climate system and other parts of the environment, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities”. UN Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed the opinion of the court, calling it a “victory for our planet, for climate justice and for the power of young people to make a difference”.

On 24 September, Guterres and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva convened the UN Climate Summit 2025 in New York on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly session. During the summit, nearly 100 member states signalled their commitment to finalising or implementing their climate targets ahead of the 30th UN climate conference (COP30), which will take place from 10–21 November in Belém, Brazil. It is expected to focus on the “efforts needed to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C, the presentation of new national action plans (NDCs) and the progress on the finance pledges made at COP29”.

## Women, Peace and Security

In a 28 October update, UN Women identified the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda as a comprehensive framework to address the cross-cutting challenges posed by climate change. The update notes that the effects of climate change “reach across all sectors of society, increasing the risk of security threats, conflicts, instability, and societal vulnerabilities”. It stresses the importance of understanding the gender dimension of climate-related security risks in order to avoid interventions that deepen existing inequalities but instead identify opportunities to advance gender equality, enhance climate resilience, and sustain peace. Among other recommendations, UN Women called for establishing protection mechanisms for women peacebuilders, environmental human rights defenders, and climate activists, and for integrating gender into climate risk assessments, policies and programmes.

## Key Issues and Options

Key issues for the Council on climate, peace and security include the importance of:

- developing synergies between the Council and other UN bodies in addressing the negative effects of climate change on international peace and security;
- supporting the efforts of UN peace operations (and other UN actors in the field) to address climate-related threats to peace and security in ways that sustain peace and build resilience; and
- promoting effective collaborations between the UN and regional and local actors in this regard.

Another key issue is how the UN’s liquidity crisis—and cost reductions associated with UN80, a reform initiative designed to make the UN system more “effective, cost-efficient, and responsive”—will affect the ability of the UN system to address the peace and security challenges related to climate change.

One option is for the Informal Expert Group on Climate, Peace and Security Council to organise a visiting mission to one or more regions on the Council’s agenda that focuses on the threats posed by climate change to peace and security and generates thinking about how the Council can best address these threats.

Another option would be for the joint pledgers on climate, peace and security to organise an informal meeting with the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), UNEP, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the Peacebuilding Commission, among other UN entities, to strategise on ways that different parts of the UN system can collaborate most effectively to address challenges related to climate, peace and security at a time of significant fiscal constraints.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council has been discussing the implications of climate change on peace and security since 2007. Most Council members have traditionally been supportive of the Council’s work on this issue, although a minority of the body’s members have consistently expressed scepticism. The difficult Council dynamics on climate change, peace and security have prevented the adoption of a thematic outcome on this issue in recent years; the sole product on climate, peace and security was a presidential statement in 2011.

At present, most of the elected members are supportive of Council engagement on climate, peace and security, as reflected by the fact that seven of them have joined the joint pledges. Many of these

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# Climate, Peace and Security

members have tried in recent years to strengthen the language on climate, peace and security in Council products, but have faced resistance from some of the permanent members.

Among the permanent members, although France and the UK support the Council's work on this issue, China, Russia, and the US have strong reservations. China and Russia have consistently maintained that climate change is primarily a development issue that does not generally fall within the Council's mandated responsibilities. In

his 23 September remarks to the General Assembly, US President Donald Trump called climate change "the greatest con job ever perpetrated on the world".

Notwithstanding such scepticism, many heads of state and government, especially from developing countries, explicitly referred to climate change as an existential threat in their statements to the General Assembly during high-level week in September.

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## Small Arms and Light Weapons

### Expected Council Action

In November, Sierra Leone will convene an open debate on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) as one of the signature events of its November Security Council presidency. Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio will chair the meeting. Officer-in-Charge of the Office of Disarmament Affairs and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Adedeji Ebo, is the anticipated briefer.

### Recent Developments

In recent years, several elected members have made SALW a priority during their Council terms. Kenya and Mexico, which both served in 2021–2022, facilitated various discussions on SALW and advocated the integration of SALW-related matters in the Council's country-specific and thematic work.

On 5 October 2021, Kenya convened a briefing on the threat posed by the illicit flow of SALW in peace operations as one of the signature events of its Council presidency. UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's 2021 biennial report on SALW, submitted pursuant to resolution 2220 of 22 May 2015. On 22 November 2021, Mexico convened a ministerial-level open debate to discuss "The impact of the diversion and trafficking of arms on peace and security". This open debate built on an Arria-formula meeting that Mexico convened virtually on 16 September 2021 on the threat to international peace and security posed by the illicit trade in SALW.

On 22 December 2021, the Council adopted resolution 2616, proposed by Mexico, which addressed the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation, and diversion of arms and related materials in violation of Council-mandated arms embargoes. The resolution expressed the Council's intention to consider whether and how the mandates of UN peace operations "could support relevant national authorities in combating the illicit transfer and diversion of arms in violation of the arms embargoes in their respective areas of operation". It also emphasised that when the Council evaluated the possible lifting of an arms embargo, it would consider the capacity of states under the arms embargo to prevent their existing arms and ammunition stockpiles from being diverted to the illicit market.

Ecuador, which served on the Council in 2023–2024, convened an open debate on SALW during its December 2023 Council Presidency, focusing on the theme: "Addressing the threat posed by diversion, illicit trafficking and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition to peace and security". The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the Secretary-General's 2023 biennial report on SALW.

Among current elected members, Sierra Leone has paid special attention to arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation due to its interest in and experience with these issues as a post-conflict country. On 4 April, Sierra Leone convened an Arria-formula meeting with a particular focus on "Small Arms Control and Weapons Management in UN Sanctions Regimes". The objective of the meeting was to facilitate a discussion on how to enhance the effectiveness of arms embargoes imposed by UN sanctions regimes to counter the illicit flow of SALW.

### Key Issues and Options

A key issue for Council members is likely to be how to enhance the effectiveness of arms embargoes imposed by UN sanctions regimes to counter the illicit flow of SALW. In convening this meeting, Sierra Leone is looking to build on the April Arria-formula meeting to have a formal discussion of this issue.

A possible option for Sierra Leone is to invite representatives from the African Union (AU) and its sub-regional mechanisms to highlight this challenge. In this regard, Sierra Leone, as well as other Council members, may want to promote the AU's Silencing the Guns initiative, which emphasises African-led efforts to end conflicts on the continent by curbing the flow of illicit weapons. Additionally, Sierra Leone may choose to particularly focus on the proliferation of SALW in West Africa and the Sahel, which have contributed to the worsening of peace and security in the region.

Another likely issue is how the Council can encourage implementation of the Secretary-General's biennial report on SALW, which is expected to be published in November. During the debate, members could choose to highlight specific relevant recommendations on how to address the trafficking and diversion of SALW and their impact

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SMALL ARMS** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2616 (22 December 2021) was on addressing the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation, and diversion of arms and related materials in violation of Council-mandated arms embargoes. S/RES/2220 (22 May 2015) contained provisions aimed at strengthening UN coordination and action on SALW, promoting effective implementation of UN arms embargoes, and supporting the ATT. S/RES/2117 (26 September 2013) was the first thematic resolution on SALW adopted by the Council, focusing on their illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation, and misuse. **Security Council Presidential Statement** S/PRST/2020/5 (11 March 2020) recognised the impact and challenges posed by the illicit trade in and diversion of SALW in Africa, enabling terrorist groups to considerably increase their armed capabilities. **Secretary-General's Report** S/2023/823 (1 November 2023) was the seventh biennial report on SALW. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.9509 (15 December 2023) was an open debate on SALW.



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## Small Arms and Light Weapons

on the implementation of arms embargoes.

Another option for the Council is to adopt a presidential statement on enhancing the effectiveness of arms embargoes to counter the illicit flow of SALW. The most recent presidential statement on SALW, which was adopted five years ago, recognised the impact and challenges posed by the illicit trade in and diversion of SALW in Africa, enabling terrorist groups to considerably increase their armed capabilities.

### Council Dynamics

SALW is a priority issue for Sierra Leone in the Council, given the challenges that it poses to its own region by fueling conflict and instability across West Africa and the Sahel. Several other members are supportive of the Council's deliberations on SALW, recognising the Council's responsibility to address the issue as a driver of conflict. They also support integrating SALW issues into the Council's consideration of country-specific situations and other thematic issues, including children and armed conflict; women, peace and security; climate change; and sustainable development.

On the other hand, other members tend to underscore the primary role and responsibility of national governments in handling the issue. Russia maintains that the General Assembly is the most appropriate place in the UN system for discussion of SALW issues and opposes attempts to link them to other thematic topics. It does, however, appear to be amenable to discussing SALW in relation to peacekeeping, arms embargoes, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the repeated call for all states to ratify and accede to the treaty are contentious issues. Among Council members, Algeria, Russia, Somalia, and the US (signed but not ratified) are not parties to the treaty, and several of these members tend to oppose references to the ATT in Council products.

Past negotiations on SALW have been controversial. Six Council members (Angola, Chad, China, Nigeria, Russia, and Venezuela) abstained on the adoption of resolution 2220 because the text did not include language critical of the transfer of SALW to non-state actors. Three Council members (China, India, and Russia) also abstained on the adoption of resolution 2616.

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## South Sudan

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold a briefing, followed by consultations, on the situation in South Sudan. Council members are expected to receive the Secretary-General's 90-day report on South Sudan and developments in the country by 4 November.

The mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) expires on 30 April 2026.

### Key Recent Developments

Recent months have been marked by rising political volatility and a worsening security environment, amid continued hostilities across multiple areas in the country between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the South Sudan Liberation Army-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO), alongside other opposition and allied groups. These clashes have involved aerial bombardments and ground operations. The ceasefire agreed to in the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) has effectively collapsed, while force unification has unravelled amid ongoing SSPDF offensives, as well as defections to and recruitment by the SSPDF. (For more information, see the brief on South Sudan in our August 2025 *Monthly Forecast* and 15 August *What's in Blue* story.)

South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit has continued to make unilateral appointments, replacing opposition officials with loyalists and reshuffling positions within his own faction, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). He promoted Benjamin Bol Mel to the rank of General in the National Security Service's Internal Bureau. Mel had previously been appointed Vice-President for the Economic Cluster in March and was later named the

SPLM's First Deputy Chairperson. Earlier in October, President Kiir removed Dau Aturjong Nyuol as Chief of Defence Forces and reinstated Paul Nang Majok, who had held the post until July.

On 11 September, South Sudan's government brought charges against First Vice-President Riek Machar, leader of the SPLA-IO, and seven of his allies for murder, treason, and crimes against humanity. Machar and these other individuals have been under house arrest or detention since March, while 13 additional suspects reportedly remain at large. Justice Minister Geng Akech accused Machar of orchestrating attacks in Nasir, during which the White Army (an armed youth militia from the Nuer community) overran an SSPDF garrison, killing more than 250 soldiers.

The trial commenced on 22 September before a Special Court in Juba. Machar has refuted the charges as a "witch-hunt" and asserted immunity as a sitting vice-president. His defence also challenged the court's jurisdiction, arguing that any such crimes should be tried by a hybrid court under the African Union (AU), in line with the 2018 Revitalised Peace Agreement. The court has rejected these objections, including those concerning the constitutionality of the proceedings.

A delegation of the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) members undertook a field mission to Juba from 10 to 12 August. According to a press release issued following the visit, the delegation met with President Salva Kiir Mayardit and held consultations with senior government officials; representatives of the Troika on South Sudan (Norway, the UK and the US), the European Union, UNMISS, the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); as well as civil society stakeholders. The AUPSC delegation urged full implementation of the revitalised agreement;

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## South Sudan

called for a permanent ceasefire and enhanced protection of civilians and humanitarian workers; expressed support for holding elections in December 2026; and advocated an inclusive, high-level political dialogue.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

On 16 September, the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan released a report examining the impact of corruption on the country's human rights situation. The report presented evidence of systematic theft and the misappropriation of substantial government revenues, which have severely undermined the state's capacity to uphold human rights, while fuelling armed violence and related atrocities. It observed that the transitional government has not been held accountable for widespread fiscal mismanagement and corruption, noting that individuals implicated in corrupt practices have been awarded government contracts, retained in public office, and, in some cases, promoted to senior state positions.

On 25 September, the UNMISS Human Rights Division (HRD) released its quarterly brief on violence affecting civilians, covering April to June. The brief documented 334 incidents of violence affecting 1,518 civilians. During this period, HRD documented 30 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, as well as 65 incidents of sexual- and gender-based violence across South Sudan. The brief noted that the HRD was unable to access areas affected by reported aerial bombardments since the resurgence of hostilities earlier this year; as a result, the number of documented cases has likely been underreported.

### Key Issues and Options

The main issue for the Council is how to prevent South Sudan from descending into another cycle of conflict, while addressing the structural factors that drive recurring violence and political instability. Analysts have noted that the current situation is the closest the country has come to renewed civil war since the signing of the 2018 revitalised agreement. Ensuring accountability for human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, and breaking the cycle of impunity, also remain key issues.

A related issue is how the Council and the broader international community can prevent the transition from collapsing amid increasing political fragmentation. The peace process has been undermined by deep mistrust among political leaders, unilateral actions by the government (including the consolidation of power over state institutions and the weakening of opposition and allied groups), and recurring clashes between parties to the agreement. Furthermore, the lack of financial resources and delays in legal and political decisions continue to stall key transition processes.

Another important issue for Council members is the difficult financial situation facing UN peacekeeping operations and what impact this will have on UNMISS. In a 10 October letter, Secretary-General António Guterres informed the Council that all peacekeeping missions have been instructed to implement contingency plans to reduce expenditures by 15 percent, affecting both uniformed and civilian components. As a result, 25 percent of uniformed personnel and their equipment will need to be repatriated in the coming months. Although it is unclear precisely what percentage of UNMISS personnel and equipment will need to be repatriated, the figure is expected to be significant and have a detrimental effect on the mission's operations. During a visit to South Sudan in October, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed South Sudanese leaders and the diplomatic community on the impact of the budget cuts, including the closure of some bases and a reduction in peacekeeping personnel.

Council members may want to seek further information on how the austerity measures recently announced by Guterres will affect UNMISS' operations. In this regard, they could consider inviting Lacroix to brief the Council.

The broader regional context continues to pose serious challenges to South Sudan's political and security situation, particularly through the spillover effects of the ongoing conflict in Sudan, which have had significant humanitarian, security, and socio-economic repercussions.

As the situation continues to evolve, the Council may need a more timely and adaptive approach to better align its response with developments on the ground. The fast-changing dynamics demand a more flexible and proactive engagement by the Council. Members could use the November briefing to firmly press the parties to uphold their commitments, return to the ceasefire, and take concrete steps to prevent any further deterioration of the political and security situation. Members might find value in organising informal briefings with expert analysts to keep informed of the developments on the ground.

Another option for Council members could be to consider a product addressing the underlying conditions perpetuating insecurity and uncertainty in South Sudan. Council members last adopted a press statement on 21 March responding to developments in the country.

Additionally, Council members could explore the possibility of undertaking a visiting mission to South Sudan to assess conditions first-hand and engage directly with parties to the R-ARCSS. (The last Council visiting mission to South Sudan took place in 2019.)

### Council Dynamics

Council members share similar concerns regarding delays in implementing the revitalised agreement, fighting among armed factions, ongoing sub-national and intercommunal violence, and the deepening economic and humanitarian crises.

During the Council's most recent briefing on South Sudan, held on 18 August, a majority of members expressed concern about the deteriorating political and security situation, including the intensification of violence and its devastating impact on civilians. Many members voiced alarm at the arrest and continued detention of First Vice-President Riek Machar and other political leaders and called for their release. Such actions, they said, have undermined the revitalised agreement and the fragile gains made toward peace and stability. Several members, including "A3 Plus" members, also underlined the need to invest political will and adequate resources to support the institutions responsible for delivering credible elections.

However, members hold differing views on the overall assessment of the situation and the degree to which the Council should exert pressure on the parties to commit to the implementation of the revitalised agreement. Some members, such as the US, have been more critical of what they view as the South Sudanese government's lack of political will to advance the peace process. During the 18 August meeting, the US said that "the actions of the South Sudanese leadership have signalled a de facto abandonment of the 2018 peace agreement" and leaders from all parties share responsibility for the failures to meet their commitments under the agreement. Russia, however, disagreed with what it described as "exceedingly alarmist assessments" of the situation in the country and called on Council

## South Sudan

members to support Juba's efforts to reinforce state institutions. China, as well, noted that the international community should maintain

the "necessary tolerance and patience", support regional mediation efforts, and "refrain from illegal and undue interference or pressure".

## Central African Republic

### Expected Council Action

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

The Central African Republic (CAR) sanctions regime expires on 31 July 2026, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2745 CAR Sanctions Committee expires on 31 August 2026.

### Key Recent Developments

On 28 October, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the CAR and Head of MINUSCA Valentine Rugwabiza briefed the Council about the mission's essential role in protecting civilians, supporting the expansion of state authority, assisting electoral processes and sustaining momentum in implementing the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR-RCA). (For more, see our 27 October *What's in Blue* story.)

The CAR is scheduled to hold presidential, parliamentary, and local elections on 28 December. These elections present significant financial, logistical, and security challenges for a country still emerging from conflict and grappling with fragile security conditions. Opposition parties and civil society organisations have raised concerns about the shrinking political space and the lack of inclusivity in the electoral process. On 2 September, CAR's Prime Minister convened a session between his government and the Bloc Républicain pour la Défense de la Constitution du 30 mars 2016 (BRDC), an opposition platform, in an effort to foster consensus, inclusive governance, and national cohesion. However, according to the latest report of the Secretary-General circulated to Council members on 13 October (S/2025/638), the dialogue remains stalled due to disagreements over the modalities of the talks.

MINUSCA is assisting the CAR authorities in organising the upcoming elections and, according to its spokesperson, has been facilitating the delivery of electoral lists and candidate forms from the capital, Bangui, to the various prefectures since 29 September. The CAR government has reportedly committed an additional US\$7.8 million in funding for the elections, following its previous disbursement of \$7.1 million in February. However, a funding gap of \$12.4 million remains, based on the estimated \$23.6 million needed to conduct the combined elections.

Persistent insecurity continues to affect several parts of the CAR, particularly the eastern and western regions. In the southeast, violence perpetrated by the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe—a militia group accused of serious human rights violations—remains a major concern, with reports of multiple attacks resulting in numerous deaths and the displacement of civilians. In the northeast, along the border with Sudan, the CAR faces recurring incursions by armed groups.

The spillover effects of the ongoing conflict in neighbouring Sudan have further exacerbated the country's already fragile security situation. In response, MINUSCA has reinforced its temporary bases in the affected border areas to address the insecurity and tension experienced by local populations.

By contrast, the security situation in other parts of the country has improved, with a noticeable decline in security incidents, according to the Secretary-General's report. This follows the April decision by two armed groups, Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation (3R) and Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique (UPC), whose leaders committed to ceasing hostilities and rejoining the APPR-RCA, as well as beginning the disarmament and demobilisation of their combatants. In line with its mandate, MINUSCA continues to provide technical, logistical, and security support for this process. On 10 July, the CAR government held a meeting in Bangui to mark the official return of 3R and UPC to the APPR-RCA. The event was attended by leaders of both armed groups and a high-level delegation from Chad, which had facilitated the April agreement between the government and the two groups.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 October, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted resolution 60/34 on technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the CAR. Among other recommendations, the resolution strongly condemns all human rights violations and abuses as well as international humanitarian law violations, and stresses that those responsible for such abuses must be held accountable and brought to justice.

On 25 August, Yao Agbetse, the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the CAR, submitted a report to the HRC on developments regarding the country's human rights situation. Covering the period between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, the report notes an encouraging but mixed trend concerning the prevalence of human rights abuses and violations in the country. It highlights that challenges remain in relation to the defence and security forces' compliance with basic rules for the protection of civilians, even though measures taken under the political agreement have contributed to fragile improvements in the country's human rights situation and institutions involved in governance and human rights. Among other matters, the report concludes by calling on the CAR government to strengthen the implementation of relevant peace agreements, and urging MINUSCA to continue building the capacity of state institutions whose mandate includes governance and human rights.

### Peacebuilding Commission Developments

On 3 October, the CAR country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) held an ambassadorial-level meeting ahead of the 30 October Council briefing and consultations on CAR. The meeting discussed the justice and rule of law sector, particularly the lack of adequate resources facing the Special Criminal Court (SCC), which hampers its ability to effectively deliver justice and ensure accountability. The SCC is a hybrid court composed of national and international judges, operational since 2018, and mandated to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate the most serious crimes committed in the CAR.

The PBC meeting also discussed the outcome of the high-level Investment Roundtable for the financing of the CAR National Development Plan 2024-2028, which was held on 14-15 September in Casablanca, Morocco. The meeting saw the participation

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# Central African Republic

of CAR's President Faustin Archange Touadéra and other high-level representatives from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, African Development Bank, and European Commission, among others.

## Key Issues and Options

The renewal of MINUSCA's mandate will be a key issue for Security Council members in November. A major concern will be how to sustain the progress achieved in the CAR with the continued support of the mission. As the mandate renewal comes ahead of the December elections, Council members are expected to focus on how best to assist the CAR in organising free, fair, and peaceful presidential, legislative, and local elections, while addressing the significant financial, technical, and logistical challenges involved. MINUSCA already has a mandate to support the CAR authorities in conducting these elections.

The most likely option for Council members is to extend MINUSCA's mandate for one year, as recommended by the Secretary-General. However, members may consider adjustments to the mission's mandate, priorities, and authorised troop levels. While MINUSCA's overall mandate remains relevant, certain components—particularly Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, and Repatriation (DDRR)—are expected to receive heightened attention, especially in light of the recent reintegration of two armed groups into the APPR-RCA. In addition, given the ongoing security challenges along CAR's borders, particularly with Sudan, Council members may also consider ways to strengthen the mission's capacity to assist the CAR government in addressing cross-border threats.

Like all UN peacekeeping operations, MINUSCA has been affected by the UN's ongoing liquidity crisis, which is constraining its operational capacity. With unpaid contributions to the mission's special account estimated at around \$500 million, MINUSCA—like other peacekeeping missions—is implementing contingency plans to reduce expenditures by 15 percent. In light of these financial constraints, members may want to discuss the impact of a potential reduction in the mission's authorised strength. Such a development could compel MINUSCA to adjust its posture in order to continue fulfilling its mandated tasks in a resource-constrained environment. Council members could ask the Secretariat to convene with Council members and troop- and police-contributing countries to explain the measures being implemented to address the liquidity crisis, as well as their likely implications for the upcoming mandate renewal.

The implementation of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) may also be an issue in the upcoming negotiations. During the Council's June briefing, the US expressed particular concern over

the CAR government's fuel import regulations, which it argued are hindering MINUSCA's operations. The US delegation noted that these regulations require the mission to rely on a government-designated monopoly importer and pay inflated fuel prices, thereby undermining its ability to carry out critical tasks.

## Council Dynamics

Compared with other UN peacekeeping operations facing significant challenges, MINUSCA is generally regarded as a relative success in discharging its mandated tasks. Last year, the Security Council renewed the mission's mandate unanimously for the first time in four years. However, concerns have emerged regarding the upcoming mandate renewal in November, particularly in the context of the UN's ongoing liquidity crisis. Some Council members may advocate for the mission to begin a gradual drawdown, citing the financial constraints facing the mission and the recent progress in the peace process.

Last year, following MINUSCA's 2024 strategic review, China called on the mission to adopt a transition mindset. It encouraged MINUSCA to begin discussions with the CAR authorities on a potential transition plan, ahead of 2026, to ensure that the mission would be prepared for a possible drawdown, should conditions permit or a formal request be made. However, this proposal was not accepted during negotiations, apparently because the CAR government did not want the Council to consider the recommendations contained in the review. Rugwabiza visited Beijing in July to discuss the implementation of MINUSCA's mandate with Chinese officials ahead of the mission's mandate renewal in November.

Council dynamics around the upcoming mandate renewal may be complicated by the US position on funding peacekeeping operations. On 29 August, US President Donald Trump approved a "pocket rescission" package, cancelling \$5 billion in foreign aid and funding to international organisations—including approximately \$800 million in contributions to UN peacekeeping. The package claims that "UN peacekeeping has been fraught with waste and abuse", citing, among other issues, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the CAR. It also asserts that "the Central African Republic mission has become fully aligned with Russia, which continues to extract the country's natural resources".

France is the penholder on the CAR, and Ambassador Amar Bendjama (Algeria) chairs the 2745 CAR Sanctions Committee.



# Working Methods

## Expected Council Action

In November, the Council will hold its annual open debate on working methods. Ambassador Christina Markus Lassen (Denmark) will brief as co-chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (IWG). Shamala Kandiah Thompson, Executive Director of Security Council Report, and Loraine Sievers, co-author of “The Procedure of the UN Security Council” (4th Edition), are also expected to brief. Ahead of the open debate, Denmark and Pakistan, the co-chairs of the IWG, are expected to circulate a concept note.

The open debate will be held under the agenda item “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2024/507)”, referring to the most recent version of the comprehensive compendium of Council working methods. Denmark and Pakistan do not plan on having a formal outcome but will produce an analytical summary of the proposals made at the open debate.

## Key Recent Developments

The Council held its last open debate on working methods on 11 and 14 March 2024, during Japan’s Council presidency. Then-Chair of the IWG Ambassador Kazuyuki Yamazaki (Japan) and former Executive Director of Security Council Report Karin Landgren briefed. In addition to Council members, 38 member states delivered statements. Among the areas covered were working methods relating to conflict prevention, penholderships, the veto, the balance between public and private meetings, reform, civil society briefers, the full equal, and meaningful participation of women, interaction between the Council and regional organisations, the use of sanctions, and the work of the Council’s subsidiary bodies.

On 13 December 2024, a presidential note (S/2024/507) containing the latest compendium of measures and practices of the Council’s working methods, which is referred to as “Note 507”, was issued. Japan, which led on previous updates to Note 507 in 2010 and 2017, was responsible for leading negotiations. The updated Note 507 incorporates and further develops 15 presidential notes that were adopted since the last update in 2017. It includes new provisions on arrangements for penholders and co-penholders; the value of briefers under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure and the need to ensure their full, safe and meaningful participation; the principle of full access to Council documentation for all Council members and the procedure for requesting access; collaboration between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, and the inclusion of special reports on the use of the veto in the Council’s annual report to the General Assembly.

The IWG held four meetings during 2024, as well as eight informal meetings. The informal meetings focused on the update to Note 507 led by Japan. Apart from the update to Note 507, there were no new presidential notes on working methods issued in 2024. The IWG issued its third annual report on 31 December 2024, summarising its activities and presenting indicators that track the implementation of Note 507. The indicators, which cover data related to the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of the Council, provide an overview of how the Council is performing in relation to its working methods.

On 30 May, the Council adopted its annual report to the General Assembly. Russia, which was the President of the Council in July 2024, drafted the introduction to the report. (The introductory portion of the report, which presents a factual overview of the Council’s work, is prepared under the coordination of the Council’s July presidency of the previous year. The body of the Annual Report, which lists the outcomes under different agenda items discussed, is prepared by the Secretariat.) Prior to the adoption, Sierra Leone disassociated from the section of the report concerning Western Sahara, saying that it should be revised due to “factual inaccuracy”. (Additional information can be found via the link in the Working Methods brief in our November *Monthly Forecast*.)

This year, the work of the IWG has been held up as a result of the delay in appointing chairs of the Council’s subsidiary bodies. (For more information on the delay, see the *In Hindsight* in our May *Monthly Forecast*.) This impasse, which was the longest delay in appointing subsidiary body chairs in the Council’s history, was formally resolved on 29 May when Council members adopted a presidential note setting out the appointments for 2025. At that time, Denmark and Pakistan became co-chairs of the IWG. This is the first time that two members have been appointed as co-chairs since the IWG was established in 2006.

Since Denmark and Pakistan were appointed, the IWG has held three meetings in July, September, and October. It appears that the IWG’s standing agenda item, “Strengthening and advancing the implementation of the Note by the President of 13 December 2024”, which allows members to brief on the implementation of their working methods commitments during their presidencies and gives penholders the opportunity to brief on their experiences in drafting and negotiating, was discussed during these meetings. The IWG also discussed its current programme of work, which apparently focuses on the selection of subsidiary body chairs and the application of rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, in addition to its usual activities.

Prior to the appointment of the co-chairs, China convened a meeting of the IWG in February in its capacity as President of the Council. This meeting apparently focused on the delay in appointing subsidiary body chairs and on penholdership. The focus on penholdership seems to be a consequence of a dispute among Council members regarding penholdership on the Afghanistan file. (For more information on this dispute, see our 15 March *What’s in Blue* story.)

Since the introduction of the “veto initiative” in April 2022, which calls for the General Assembly to meet within ten days whenever a veto is cast and for the Council to submit a special report on the use of the veto to the General Assembly on each occasion, 23 vetoes have been cast on 17 resolutions and 3 amendments. Each of these vetoes has been discussed by the General Assembly.

Regarding visiting missions, an important working method of the Council, only one formal visiting mission was conducted in 2024: to Colombia in February. In addition, Switzerland organised an informal visit of 14 Council members to Geneva in August 2024 to mark the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. The Council has conducted one formal visiting mission so far in 2025: to Addis Ababa for the annual UN Security Council-AU Peace and Security Council meeting in October. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the

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## Working Methods

Council regularly went on three to five visiting missions each year.

At the time of writing, Council members were negotiating the joint letter from the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Council regarding the appointment of the next Secretary-General, which was called for by General Assembly resolution 79/327. Although there are some areas that may be contentious, most members appear keen to issue the joint letter, which is expected to provide guidelines for the nomination of candidates and will mark the formal start of the selection process before the end of the year.

### Key Issues and Options

The implementation of Note 507 remains an overarching issue. The IWG may wish to consider identifying particular aspects of Note 507 that are not implemented regularly and encourage members to include these issues in their working methods commitments during their presidencies.

The delay in appointing subsidiary body chairs was a major issue for the Council that significantly hampered its work. Council members could therefore consider options for avoiding a similar situation in the future.

One option is to cease treating the allocation of subsidiary bodies as a package deal in circumstances where the Council has been unable to reach agreement by January in a given year, which would allow those bodies that are not contentious to continue their work, including those with chairs continuing from the year before. Although this could lead to fewer options for achieving compromise and might create the impression that some files are more important than others, it seems preferable to the situation that prevailed this year, which saw the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies largely grind to a halt.

Members could also consider allocating the chairs by adopting a resolution rather than issuing a presidential note when there is a delay in deciding on the appointments. However, it is unclear if such a resolution would be considered procedural and therefore not subject to the use of the veto. As such, this is likely to be a controversial option, but members may still wish to consider it in situations where there are long delays in appointing the chairs.

Another option is to have the penholders for country-specific issues, which are mostly permanent members, chair the subsidiary bodies of those files until an agreement is reached. Permanent members may resist this option, as they have been clear that they prefer elected members to chair subsidiary bodies. A more ambitious option might be to agree that the appointment of subsidiary body chairs should be left to the elected members without the need for sign-off from the permanent members, although this is likely to be strongly opposed by the P5.

Members may also wish to develop informal guidelines for the process of becoming a penholder or co-penholder, particularly following the dispute over the Afghanistan penholdership, which appears to have impeded the Council's work on that file. At present, there is no common understanding of the process or criteria that govern which members can act as a penholder. Note 507 recognises that members with expertise in particular files, regional perspectives, experience in chairing relevant subsidiary bodies, and specific interests can add value as a penholder. It also notes that Council

members agree to make enhanced use of the particular expertise and interests of Council members when determining who should serve as a penholder. A clearer process could help the implementation of this commitment.

A broader issue is that working methods have sometimes become politicised and served as an impediment to the smooth functioning of the Council, rather than improving its transparency and efficiency. Members often spend considerable time addressing working methods issues, such as which member states outside the Council should participate under rule 37, invitations to briefers under rule 39, and the timeframe for convening meetings. Informal guidelines on some of the more controversial issues may allow members to save time and focus on more substantive matters.

The use of the veto remains a major impediment to the Council's ability to take effective action on some of the most urgent issues on its agenda. Members could therefore choose to discuss ways of promoting greater accountability for the use of the veto. One such initiative is the 'Political Declaration on Suspension of Veto Powers in Cases of Mass Atrocity', which was launched by France with the support of Mexico in August 2015. The initiative aims to have the permanent members voluntarily pledge not to use the veto in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes on a large scale. As of 31 March, 107 member states had signed the declaration.

A long-standing issue is achieving an adequate balance between public and private meetings and between transparency and confidentiality. Since 2001, Council meetings have predominantly been held in public, including in 2024 when 285 public meetings were held compared to 20 private meetings and 124 closed consultations. Three-quarters into 2025, the number of formal meetings is lower than they were for the same period in 2024, while informal consultations are at about the same number. Consultations are most useful where there is a willingness to cooperate and have a free-flowing discussion, and, in this context, identifying issues that may benefit from such a discussion may be helpful.

With only two formal visiting missions since the beginning of 2024, Council members have mostly missed the opportunity to witness field settings first-hand and communicate with key stakeholders. Council members may wish to consider which situations would benefit from a visiting mission during the remainder of the year and in early 2026. Given current budgetary constraints, mini-missions that comprise a smaller group of Council members might be an option.

### Council Dynamics

The deep divisions among Council members have significantly hampered the Council's ability to manage many of the pressing crises on its agenda. In this context, working methods have sometimes been used by members as a means to further their political objectives.

The elected members, who have largely remained united on working methods and continue to have a strong interest in how they are utilised, have delivered a joint statement during the last seven working methods debates. In keeping with this practice, Pakistan, as the E10 coordinator in November, is expected to deliver an E10 joint statement at the open debate. Members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group (ACT), a cross-regional group of 27 small and mid-sized states that aims to improve the work of

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## Working Methods

the Council, are also expected to deliver a joint statement as they have in the past.

The need for a more equitable distribution of work and greater burden sharing, including regarding the chairing of subsidiary bodies and penholderships, has continued to be a common objective shared by elected members. The P3 appears to have accepted that it cannot maintain a quasi-monopoly over penholdership and has shown greater willingness to work with elected members as co-penholders. China and Russia have publicly supported expanding the penholder

system, while rarely opting to be penholders themselves. The African members (A3) are also showing more interest in being penholders on African issues, which could lead to some tensions with current African penholders.

Several members see working methods as a way of reforming the Council from within without amending the UN Charter. In this context, these members may be interested in exploring options for using working methods to make the Council more effective.

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## Lebanon

### Expected Council Action

In November, Security Council members expect to receive a briefing in consultations on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701. Adopted in 2006, resolution 1701 called for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert are the anticipated briefers.

### Key Recent Developments

On 28 August, the Security Council adopted resolution 2790 extending the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a final time until 31 December 2026 and directing the mission to begin an orderly drawdown and full withdrawal from that date, "and within one year". The resolution requested the UN Secretary-General to explore, by 1 June 2026, "options for the future of the implementation of resolution 1701" following the withdrawal of UNIFIL, including regarding "assistance in respect of security and monitoring of the Blue Line and the ways to enhance the support" to the redeployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) south of the Litani River through the UN's "tools". It also urged the international community to intensify its support, "including equipment, material and finance" to the LAF in order to ensure their effective and sustainable deployment and enhance their capacities to implement resolution 1701. (For more information, see our 28 August *What's in Blue* story on UNIFIL.)

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

The cessation-of-hostilities arrangement established that Israel

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

Since the arrangement, Israel has carried out near-daily airstrikes and shelling in Lebanese territory—particularly in southern Lebanon—saying that it is targeting members of Hezbollah and its facilities to prevent the group from rebuilding its capabilities. These include the 11 October airstrikes in southern Lebanon that killed one person and wounded seven. The most recent report of rocket launches from Lebanon towards Israel occurred in March.

On 30 October, the IDF carried out an armed incursion in the town of Blida in southern Lebanon, killing a person. In a statement issued on the same day, UNIFIL expressed deep concern at the incursion, stressing that it represented a "blatant violation" of resolution 1701 and Lebanon's sovereignty. Following the incident, Lebanese President Michel Aoun instructed the LAF to "confront any Israeli incursion" in southern Lebanon.

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

UNIFIL has continued to observe IDF military activities in the mission's area of operation and reported at least three incidents in which the IDF dropped grenades in proximity of peacekeepers during the month of October. One peacekeeper was lightly injured during one of these incidents. UNIFIL has also continued to detect unauthorised weapons and ammunition caches in its area of operations in southern Lebanon, a region where Hezbollah has historically maintained significant influence.

With the support of UNIFIL, the LAF has continued to redeploy

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2790 (28 August 2025) extended the mandate of UNIFIL for a final time until 31 December 2026 and established several functions that UNIFIL is authorised to fulfil during the drawdown and withdrawal period. It also requested the UN Secretary-General to explore, by 1 June 2026, "options for the future of the implementation of resolution 1701" following the withdrawal of UNIFIL. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) called for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. It also expanded UNIFIL's mandate. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, and the extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory.

# Lebanon

throughout southern Lebanon. According to a 16 October statement issued by the US Central Command following a meeting of the mechanism established by the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement to monitor and support enforcement of the cessation of hostilities, the LAF had up to that point removed approximately 10,000 rockets, 400 missiles, and over 205,000 unexploded ordnance fragments. (The mechanism is a reformulated version of the tripartite mechanism, which consisted of representatives of UNIFIL, the IDF, and the LAF, and was chaired by UNIFIL. Under the terms of the cessation of hostilities, the revised mechanism also includes France and the US, which now chairs the mechanism.)

On 5 September, the Lebanese cabinet welcomed a plan formulated by the LAF that lays out phased stages for the state to achieve the monopoly of arms across the country, an indirect reference to the process of disarmament of non-state groups in Lebanon, including Hezbollah. Although the plan has not been made public, according to media reports, the LAF will initially continue to focus on the area south of the Litani River. It will then concentrate on the region between the Litani and the Awali River, followed by Beirut and its surrounding areas, the Bekaa region, and finally the entirety of Lebanese territory. The plan also reportedly notes the need for the LAF to be adequately resourced, the “cessation of Israeli aggressions”, and Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanese territory as essential conditions for the full deployment of the army throughout Lebanon.

While the cabinet welcomed the LAF’s plan, it gave no clear timetable for its implementation, except for the plan’s first phase which, according to 9 September remarks by Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Youssef Rajji, is expected to be completed in three months. The timeline for the first phase of the plan was recently confirmed in a recent interview by Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, who stressed that Hezbollah must become “a normal political party without an armed wing”.

Five Shi’a ministers, including two from Hezbollah, walked out of the 5 September cabinet meeting in protest. Hezbollah representatives have stated several times that the group does not intend to disarm, arguing that Israeli strikes and occupied positions must be addressed first.

On 17 October, the members of the Security Council issued a press statement welcoming the efforts of the Lebanese government to exercise its sovereignty over the whole territory of Lebanon and urging the international community to intensify its support to the LAF. The statement called on all parties to comply with the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement and their obligations under international humanitarian law, including regarding the protection of civilians. It also expressed support for UNIFIL and stressed that “peacekeepers must never be targeted by attack”. Moreover, the statement welcomes Lebanon’s “willingness” to demarcate its border with Syria, a reference to recent rapprochement efforts between Lebanon and Syria, including regarding such issues as border control and the return of Syrian refugees.

Parliamentary elections are expected in May 2026. Recent political disputes over the electoral law, particularly regarding diaspora representation, have raised concerns about possible delays. Aoun has publicly emphasised that the vote must be held on schedule. Previous elections in Lebanon have been subject to delays due to political

deadlock and other challenges.

Lebanon’s economy remains fragile following the 2019 collapse and conflict in the region. While steps have been taken by the Lebanese authorities to improve the country’s economic situation, recent missions by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to Lebanon have urged “ambitious and comprehensive reforms to tackle the structural weaknesses that have been hampering Lebanon’s potential for years”.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 17 October press release, UN experts expressed grave concern over the “devastating impact” of Israeli air and drone strikes on civilians in Lebanon, including “a mounting toll of civilian deaths and injuries” and the destruction of vital infrastructure and the environment. Since the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) verified 108 civilian casualties in Lebanon, including 71 men, 21 women, and 16 children. In light of these reports, UN experts urged all parties to fully adhere to the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement and called for independent investigations and accountability for all violations of international law.

## Key Issues and Options

Supporting the full implementation of resolution 1701 and the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement between Israel and Lebanon remain key priorities for the Security Council. Capitalising on what appears to be a narrow window for a peaceful transition in Lebanon, while avoiding destabilisation risks, is a key issue for the Council, the country and the broader region.

An option would be for the Council to undertake a visiting mission before the end of the year to Lebanon to support momentum towards the implementation of the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement and resolution 1701. A visiting mission would allow Council members to assess the situation on the ground in light of recent developments such as the LAF’s deployment plan, the expected reduction in UNIFIL’s personnel in the context of the UN80 initiative, and the Council’s August decision on UNIFIL’s drawdown. It could also expose Council members first-hand to the extent of the reconstruction needs in southern Lebanon.

Should the Council decide to go on a visiting mission to Lebanon, members could adopt a presidential statement (PRST) with key messages to all parties. The 17 October press statement, which called on all sides to comply with their commitments under the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement and urged the implementation of resolutions 1701 and 1559, could serve as a basis for the PRST. In addition to the messages contained in the press statement, the PRST could also:

- express deep concern at the continuing violations of the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement, including the 30 October armed incursion in Lebanese territory by the IDF as well as air and drone strikes, and call for all violations to stop;
- call on the Lebanese authorities to continue their efforts towards exercising full sovereignty over the whole of Lebanon’s territory;
- urge Israel to withdraw from the positions it occupies north of the Blue Line;
- call on the LAF, with UNIFIL’s support, to deploy to these positions.

## Council Dynamics

Council members agree that the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement



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# Lebanon

between Israel and Lebanon needs to hold. There is also broad consensus among Council members in support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security.

While Council members regularly express their support for UNIFIL—most recently through the 17 October press statement—during the negotiations of resolution 2790, the US demanded a clear date for the mission's termination and signalled its readiness to veto the mandate renewal if it did not contain such a date. On the other hand, none of the other 14 members had approached the negotiations seeking the termination of UNIFIL. The result was a compromise that tempered US insistence on a set date for the mission's exit, with a final, longer-than-usual mandate renewal (16 months) reflecting the other members' concern that an accelerated draw-down could have undermined the process of Lebanon achieving full

control over its territory.

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

France is the penholder on Lebanon. At the same time, since the cessation-of-hostilities arrangement, the US has assumed a more active role in Lebanon, exerting pressure on Lebanese authorities for the timely implementation of commitments to disarm non-state actors, particularly Hezbollah.

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## Libya

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council is expected to vote on a resolution renewing the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya, bound to or from Libya, that they have reasonable grounds to believe are violating the arms embargo. The current authorisation expires on 28 November 2025.

During November, the Council is also expected to receive the semi-annual briefing on the International Criminal Court's (ICC) activities related to the situation in Libya.

### Key Recent Developments

The Security Council last renewed the authorisation for maritime inspections through resolution 2780 on 29 May for a period of six months. This was a departure from the established practice of renewing the authorisation annually. The European Union (EU) naval operation EUNAVFOR Med IRINI (Operation IRINI) remains the only regional arrangement to inspect vessels under this authorisation. The resolution requests the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the measures within five months of the resolution's adoption. Among others, this report is expected to contain information about the activities of Operation IRINI, such as the number of hailings (making contact with other vessels), friendly approaches (consensual visits to vessels that can be carried out without flag state approval and without the use of enforcement measures), and vessel inspections related to the arms embargo. At the time of this writing, the report had not yet been published.

During her 14 October briefing, Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Hanna Tetteh updated the Council on the progress on the political roadmap for Libya, which is aimed at unifying state institutions and holding national elections. Citing a lack of progress in meeting major milestones on the political roadmap, she urged Libyan leaders to engage constructively in efforts to resolve outstanding issues and make progress on key steps towards the national elections. At the meeting, EU

members of the Council (France, Greece, and Slovenia) expressed support for the reauthorisation of Operation IRINI.

On 31 October, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2796, which extended the mandate of UNSMIL for another year.

The Council is expected to receive a briefing this month from one of the Deputy Prosecutors on ICC's Libya-related activities. ICC Prosecutor Karim Ahmad Khan has been on administrative leave since May.

In February 2011, the Council referred the situation in Libya to the ICC through resolution 1970, which requested biannual updates from the prosecutor. The court has jurisdiction over crimes listed in the Rome Statute committed on Libya's territory or by its nationals from 15 February 2011 onward. The ICC opened investigations in March 2011 related to alleged crimes against humanity (including murder, imprisonment, torture, persecution, and other inhumane acts) and war crimes (including murder, torture, cruel treatment, and outrages upon personal dignity). There is currently one open case before the court, centred on Saif al-Islam Qaddafi, the son of deposed Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi. On 27 June 2011, the court charged Qaddafi with two counts of alleged crimes against humanity and issued a warrant for his arrest. He remains at large.

On 16 July, German authorities arrested Khaled Mohamed Ali El Hishri pursuant to an arrest warrant issued by the ICC. El Hishri was a senior official in the Special Deterrence Forces (SDF), an armed group in Tripoli, and one of the top officials at Mitiga Prison. The ICC Prosecutor's Office alleges that he is responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in and around Mitiga Prison in Tripoli between February 2015 and early 2020. El Hishri remains in German custody, pending legal proceedings and possible transfer to the ICC in The Hague.

On 18 January, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Osama Elmasry Njeem, suspected of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Libya from February 2015 onward. Njeem allegedly oversaw Tripoli prison facilities, where thousands were murdered, tortured, raped, and subjected to sexual violence. On 19 January,

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA** Security Council Resolutions [S/RES/2780](#) (29 May 2025) extended the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya, bound to or from Libya, that they have reasonable grounds to believe are violating the arms embargo. [S/RES/2755](#) (31 October 2024) extended UNSMIL's mandate for three months, until 31 January 2025, with a "further automatic extension" of an additional nine months, until 31 October 2025, if a new Special Representative and Head of UNSMIL has been appointed by 31 January 2025.

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# Libya

Italian authorities arrested Njeem in Turin, Italy. However, on 21 January, the Rome Court of Appeal (that is, an Italian appellate court) ordered his release due to a procedural error. That same day, Italy returned Njeem to Libya, citing security concerns. The ICC claims Italian authorities failed to notify them of any warrant issues. The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber invited Italy to submit an explanation, which Italy eventually submitted on 6 May. In it, Italy argued that it did not surrender Njeem due to procedural flaws in his arrest, competing extradition requests from Libya, and a national security expulsion order allowing his return to Libya, among others.

On 17 October, the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber found that Italy did not comply, did not act with due diligence and did not use all reasonable means at its disposal to comply with the request for cooperation. Pursuant to Article 87(7) of the Rome Statute, the ICC Pre-Trial will now consider whether to refer the matter to the Security Council.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 October, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted resolution 60/32 on technical assistance and capacity-building in Libya. Among other recommendations, the resolution calls on the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue providing technical assistance and capacity-building to Libya as provided in relevant HRC resolutions and to present at the Council's sixty-fourth session a report on the present resolution's implementation, to be followed by an interactive dialogue.

In a 2 October press statement on Libya's human rights situation, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada Al-Nashif emphasised that a long, enduring legacy of serious human rights violations and abuses challenges Libya's political transition. She expressed concerns over the lack of credible progress made by Libyan authorities in holding alleged perpetrators of atrocity crimes accountable. Although positive steps have been taken to improve the situation, the Deputy High Commissioner noted that key legislative reforms still face setbacks owing to political fragmentation and a lack of institutional commitment. In light of these findings, she stressed that any sustainable political settlement for Libya must be anchored in justice and human rights. Among other recommendations, Al-Nashif called for sustained technical assistance in Libya to promote and protect human rights and establish a rights-based transition under the political roadmap.

## Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council in November is to renew the authorisation for maritime inspections off the coast of Libya. Council members could continue the regular practice of convening an informal interactive dialogue to discuss its implementation with an EU representative. A possible option for the co-penholders (France and Greece) is to propose a reauthorisation of maritime inspections for one year with no significant changes, as it was the norm prior to this May. Should the Council face opposition to a one-year renewal of

authorisation, it could revert to a six-month renewal as was the case in May.

A key issue relevant to the ICC is how to promote accountability for the crimes committed in Libya in recent years. An option would be for Council members who are parties to the ICC to hold a joint press stakeout in connection with the meeting to assert their support for the court's work in Libya and encourage the Libyan authorities to cooperate closely with the ICC.

## Council Dynamics

Until 2022, the Council unanimously renewed the maritime inspection authorisation every year. Since then, Russia has abstained on the vote, questioning the viability of the authorisation. It has noted that Operation IRINI has failed to uncover significant arms supply channels and has alleged that the operation conducts its inspections in a selective and non-transparent manner.

In May this year, the Council renewed authorisation for six months, departing from the established practice of one-year renewals. During the consultations with the co-penholders prior to the circulation of a draft resolution, it seems that Libya was opposed to the renewal of the authorisation. As a compromise solution, it seems that the co-penholders and Libya agreed on a six-month extension. China and Russia abstained during the vote on this resolution. The US and European members of the Council have traditionally been very supportive of Operation IRINI.

Regarding the ICC, Russia has consistently accused the court of inefficiency and pro-Western bias. During the May briefing by ICC Prosecutor Khan, Russia argued that the ICC has failed to make any progress on the Libyan file in the more than 14 years since the Council's referral. It also said that ICC's interference in Libyan political processes has undermined the country's sovereign efforts towards reconciliation.

While not as forceful in their criticisms, some other Council members have also expressed reservations about the court's work. China has described it as a violation of the principle of national sovereignty, while African members have long expressed concerns about the court's perceived disproportionate focus on their continent.

Those Council members that are state parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC—currently Denmark, France, Greece, Guyana, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and the UK—are generally supportive of the court's work.

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# DPRK (North Korea)

## Expected Council Action

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

## Key Recent Developments

Tensions on the Korean peninsula have continued to simmer in recent months. Republic of Korea (ROK) President Lee Jae-myung, who was inaugurated in early June and is considered more open to engagement with the DPRK than his predecessor, has made several overtures to try and improve relations. In early August, ROK authorities removed loudspeakers broadcasting anti-DPRK messages across

## DPRK (North Korea)

the border, describing the move as a “practical measure to help ease tensions between the [ROK] and the [DPRK]”. On 15 August, Lee announced that the ROK intends to take “proactive, gradual steps” to restore the Comprehensive Military Agreement (CMA), a September 2018 pact designed to reduce tensions and build confidence between the DPRK and the ROK, including by suspending some military activity along the border. Previous ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol, who was impeached after attempting to declare martial law, suspended the CMA in June 2024, a move that followed the DPRK announcing its own suspension of the agreement in November 2023.

The DPRK has shown little willingness to reciprocate. In remarks reported by state media on 20 August, Kim Yo-jong, DPRK leader Kim Jong-un’s sister, strongly criticised Lee and described the ROK’s overtures as “fancy and a pipe dream”, while accusing the ROK of continuing “to speak rambling pretence about peace and improving relations in order to lay the blame on us for inter-Korean relations never returning again”.

The DPRK has also continued to ramp up its rhetoric regarding its nuclear programme. On 27 September, state media reported that Kim Jong-un had directed DPRK officials to use all resources to “sharpen the nuclear shield and sword” and described the development of a nuclear response posture as “an essential top priority” for the country. Days later, DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Song-gyong told the General Assembly that the DPRK would never give up its nuclear weapons programme, saying that calls for denuclearisation are tantamount to demanding that the DPRK surrender both its sovereignty and its right to exist. Kim Song-gyong’s speech was the first delivered to the General Assembly by a DPRK official during high-level week since 2018.

Against this backdrop, US officials reportedly discussed the possibility of a meeting between US President Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un during Trump’s recent visit to Asia. The meeting was suggested by Lee in late August when he met Trump at the White House. ROK Foreign Minister Cho Hyun has since said that Lee asked Trump to “become a peacemaker” and noted that the ROK wants Trump to “exercise his leadership to pull [the DPRK] to [the] dialogue table”. In late September, Kim Jong-un indicated that he would be willing to meet Trump if the US drops its demand for denuclearisation. At various junctures during his trip to Asia, Trump indicated that he would be willing to meet with Kim Jong-un, including during a 29 October meeting with Lee. Despite Trump’s interest in the meeting, it did not take place.

On 22 October, three days before Trump was scheduled to arrive in Asia, the DPRK conducted its first ballistic missile tests in five months. ROK military officials said that the DPRK fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles towards the northeast from an area just south of Pyongyang. The DPRK later claimed that it had tested a new hypersonic system and said that the missiles struck a target on land in the northern part of the country. On 28 October, the day before Trump arrived in the ROK, the DPRK conducted cruise missile tests. According to state media, the missiles were sea-to-surface weapons designed to carry nuclear warheads.

Following his 29 October meeting with Lee, Trump announced that the US would share nuclear submarine technology with the ROK.

Meanwhile, the DPRK has continued to seek improved ties with China and Russia. On 4 September, Kim Jong-un met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on the sidelines of a military parade held to commemorate the end of the Second World War. According to media reports, Xi called for closer coordination between China and the DPRK and noted that China’s position on developing ties with the DPRK would remain the same “no matter how the international situation evolves”. Kim Jong-un also met with Russian President Vladimir Putin while in Beijing and reportedly pledged to provide further assistance to Moscow, while Putin praised the DPRK for deploying troops to Russia’s Kursk region to assist with fighting the counter-offensive launched by Ukraine in August 2024. The DPRK has also held other meetings with Chinese and Russian officials in recent months, including a meeting between DPRK Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui and Chinese Premier Li Qiang. Choe also met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow on 27 October, and DPRK state media later reported that the pair had pledged to “accelerate the multifaceted development of bilateral relations”.

In addition, the DPRK appears to be seeking closer ties with member states in Southeast Asia. In mid-October, Kim Jong-un held separate meetings with General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Tô Lâm, Laotian President Thongloun Sisoulith, and Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono in Pyongyang. Following the meeting with Lâm, state media announced that the DPRK and Vietnam had signed agreements in several fields, including defence and health. Indonesia and the DPRK also signed a memorandum of understanding during Sugiono’s visit.

These meetings were held on the sidelines of a 10 October military parade in Pyongyang marking the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Workers’ Party of Korea. State media reported that the parade featured a new intercontinental ballistic missile known as the “Hwasong-20”, describing it as the DPRK’s “most powerful nuclear strategic weapon system”. During a 14 October parliamentary hearing, an ROK official said that Russian technology may have contributed to the development of the new missile. ROK officials have also noted that the DPRK is likely to have received assistance from Russia with submarine development.

On 22 October, the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT) released a report titled “The DPRK’s Violation and Evasion of UN Sanctions through Cyber and Information Technology Worker Activities”. (The MSMT was established in October 2024 by Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the ROK, the UK, and the US after the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee expired following a Russian veto. Its aim is to monitor and report on violations and evasion of the measures imposed by the 1718 DPRK sanctions regime.) In a 22 October press release, the MSMT’s participating states said that the report “details the deep connections between UN-designated DPRK entities and the DPRK’s malicious cyber activities, including cryptocurrency theft, fraudulent IT work, and cyber espionage”.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

On 4 September, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk issued a report on the situation of human rights in the DPRK. The report covers the period

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## DPRK (North Korea)

from 1 January 2014 to 31 May 2025 and provides an update on human rights in the DPRK since the landmark Commission of Inquiry established by the UN Human Rights Council issued its final report. Among other matters, the report concludes that the human rights situation in the DPRK has become markedly worse in several areas and notes that the majority of the 19 recommendations made by the Commission have not been implemented.

### Sanctions-Related Developments

Since February, the US has apparently put a hold on all requests from UN agencies for humanitarian exemptions to the 1718 DPRK sanctions regime. It seems that this represents a departure from the US' approach during the Biden administration. The US apparently indicated that it has blocked the requests because it is reviewing its policy on the DPRK.

### Key Issues and Options

The Council is grappling with several issues related to the DPRK. The DPRK's ongoing development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, which violates many Council resolutions, is a major concern for the Council. Sanctions evasion is another key issue, as is the overall effectiveness of the sanctions regime, particularly given that the DPRK is widely believed to have increased its nuclear arsenal since the sanctions regime was first introduced. The DPRK's ongoing refusal to participate in denuclearisation dialogue without conditions and the humanitarian and human rights situations are also challenges for the Council.

In light of these issues, Council members could consider introducing a resolution that condemns the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, urges member states to comply with existing resolutions, and calls on the DPRK to return to the negotiating table. It could also update and strengthen the 1718 DPRK sanctions regime with a view to exerting greater pressure on the DPRK and other actors involved in sanctions evasion.

The lack of a panel of experts assisting the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee is another major issue. Council members may wish to explore how the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT), which was first established in October 2024, might be able to fill this gap. Given that several members feel that the MSMT lacks the perceived legitimacy of a Council-mandated entity, members who are also part of the MSMT may wish to consider options for enhancing

its credibility, such as expanding its membership and providing more information about its working methods. Members could also hold an informal meeting to discuss how the MSMT could work with the Council and the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee.

Members could also consider requesting an open briefing from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the human rights situation in the DPRK. Such meetings were held in 2024 and 2023. (For more information, see our 11 June 2024 What's in Blue story.)

### Council Dynamics

The Council has been sharply divided over the DPRK for some time, and this dynamic has worsened notably as the DPRK and Russia have grown closer. The P3 (France, the UK, and the US) and other like-minded Council members, including the ROK, generally favour using sanctions to help manage the threat posed by the DPRK and regularly call on Council members to comply with existing Council resolutions. Many of these members have urged the country to engage in dialogue and abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes while emphasising that it is responsible for escalating tensions. Some have also called for the Council to show unity and respond to the DPRK's weapons tests and argue that China and Russia have emboldened the DPRK by blocking Council action on the file. Several of these members have strongly criticised the growing cooperation between the DPRK and Russia, including by highlighting evidence of arms transfers from the DPRK to Russia and noting that these transfers violate Council resolutions.

China and Russia, on the other hand, blame the US and its allies for heightening tensions, including by holding joint military exercises in the region, and have accused the US of not doing enough to incentivise the DPRK to participate in denuclearisation talks. Both have also argued that sanctions should be eased because of their impact on the humanitarian situation in the country and have repeatedly blocked attempts to issue a Council product responding to missile launches carried out by the DPRK in recent years.

The US is the penholder on the DPRK.

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## West Africa and the Sahel

### Expected Council Action

In November, the Security Council will hold an open briefing under the agenda item "Peace Consolidation in West Africa". Julius Maada Bio, Sierra Leone's President and Chairperson of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), is expected to chair the meeting, which is likely to focus on countering terrorism in the region. The expected briefers are the Special Representative and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Leonardo Santos Simão and....

### Key Recent Developments

The West Africa and Sahel region remains a hotspot for extremist groups, which tend to exploit weak governance, intercommunal tensions, and economic hardships to expand their influence and destabilise local communities. There has been a sharp increase in the terrorist threat in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, which formed the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) in 2023, a collective defence arrangement. These countries, which are led by military juntas that came to power through coups d'état, concluded a year-long withdrawal process from ECOWAS on 29 January. At its 22 June summit in Abuja, ECOWAS endorsed the appointment of a Chief Negotiator to engage with AES members and called for urgent consultations for

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UN DOCUMENTS ON WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9974 (7 August 2025) was a meeting on "Peace Consolidation in West Africa". [Sanctions Committee Document S/2025/482](#) (21 July 2025) transmitted the 36th report of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee's Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.



## West Africa and the Sahel

enhanced cooperation on counter-terrorism. The summit also raised concerns over delays in activating the ECOWAS Standby Force. Despite prior discussions on deploying a regional counter-terrorism force and mobilising resources, progress has been slow. On 15 September, at a meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Finance and Defence in Abuja, Nigeria, the ECOWAS Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Abdel Fatau Musah, announced that 1,650 personnel would be deployed in 2026 as a Rapid Deployment Force.

The latest report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team assisting the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL/Da'esh Sanctions Committee noted an overall expansion of the operational area of Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), and a resurgence of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), particularly along the Niger-Nigeria border, where the group is seeking to consolidate its presence. ISGS' continued existence has been facilitated by an implicit truce with JNIM, underpinned by their shared objective of targeting Sahelian security forces.

The report also highlighted that the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) remains active in the Lake Chad Basin, with its operational capacity growing as the number of its fighters increases. It further noted that Boko Haram factions operating in Nigeria have been unable to expand their activities beyond their established areas of control.

The report stated that JNIM has reached a new level of operational capability, enabling it to conduct complex attacks involving drones, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and large numbers of fighters against well-defended military installations. The group has adjusted its strategy towards greater political entrenchment, increasingly positioning itself as a governing actor by seeking to control territory, establish rudimentary governance structures, and cultivate local support. While the report highlighted JNIM's operations in the AES countries, it noted that the group is poised to expand into northern Togo, Benin, and Nigeria's Sokoto region, which have witnessed deadly attacks in recent years. (For more information, see the brief on West Africa and the Sahel in our April 2025 *Monthly Forecast*.)

Reports indicate that JNIM has increased operations in western and southern Mali over the past year, despite its traditional focus on the north and centre. This is being seen as a strategy to cut off the main transportation and economic supply lines to urban centres elsewhere in the country. In early September, the group declared a blockade on the towns of Kayes and Niore in the south-west and banned fuel imports from Senegal, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mauritania, which have contributed to fuel shortages, rising prices, and wider economic disruption. JNIM has intensified attacks on fuel tankers and foreign-run mining and industrial facilities, alongside kidnappings. Media reports indicate that local leaders in the Mopti region have established contact with JNIM to negotiate lifting of the blockade, under the auspices of the Malian intelligence services. (For more information, see the brief on West Africa and the Sahel in our August 2025 *Monthly Forecast*.)

On 15 July, Council members held an informal interactive dialogue (IID), with participation from AES countries, to exchange views on strengthening regional counter-terrorism responses in West Africa and the Sahel. On 7 August, the Council convened for an open briefing, followed by closed consultations, to discuss the latest

developments in the sub-region and the activities of UNOWAS. (For more information, see our 14 July 2025 *What's in Blue* story.)

On 30 September, the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) held a ministerial-level meeting on the situation in the Sahel. In a communiqué issued following the meeting, AUPSC members called for enhanced collective security approaches among stakeholders in the region, including intelligence sharing, joint operations, and strengthened border management, to effectively combat terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel. They decided to establish a "Task Force" to support Sahelian countries in countering terrorism and addressing broader security, socio-economic, and humanitarian challenges.

At the 10th informal joint seminar held on 16 October between members of the UN Security Council and the AUPSC, participants discussed AU-UN joint efforts to address terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. The following day (17 October), at the joint consultative meeting, members exchanged views on the situations in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, including providing technical assistance to Gulf of Guinea countries in countering maritime security challenges.

### Key Issues and Options

The expanding threat of terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel region, particularly in the AES countries, is a major concern for Council members. The uptick in attacks by militant groups, including through the use of drones and IEDs, underscores the limited effectiveness of current security arrangements in the region and the growing capabilities of militant groups. Meanwhile, the terrorist threat has continued to spread southward toward coastal states, raising alarm about potential spillover into previously unaffected regions.

A related security concern is the deepening nexus between terrorism and organised crime in the Sahel, with criminal networks financing terrorist groups through money laundering; arms, drug, and human trafficking; and the illicit trade in gold and other natural resources. Members could consider inviting the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Ghada Fathi Waly, to brief the Council in this regard.

Addressing underlying structural problems in the Sahel—such as weak governance, underdevelopment, climate change, and limited economic opportunities—remains a key challenge in promoting regional security and sustainable economic development. One option would be for the Council to strengthen its collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission to support locally led initiatives that promote good governance and enhance regional and cross-border cooperation, including within the framework of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

Another key issue for the Council is how to support regional counter-terrorism efforts effectively in the context of constrained financial resources. Regional mechanisms grapple with formidable challenges, including political instability, fragmented security coordination, and persistent funding challenges. The AES countries' withdrawal from ECOWAS has strained their relations with other West African countries. Given the rising terrorist threat, the Council could encourage greater dialogue among the Sahelian countries in order to discuss possible counter-terrorism cooperation.

Regional member states and Special Representative Simão have

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## West Africa and the Sahel

expressed support for the use of resolution 2719 of 21 December 2023 to enable a regional force to access UN-assessed contributions in line with the framework for financing AU-led peace support operations. However, key questions remain regarding the practical implementation of this resolution, given that AES countries currently remain outside existing regional security cooperation frameworks.

One option for the Council could be to request a briefing from the Secretary-General on how the UN and the international community at large can better support regional efforts to enhance security and governance in the Sahel, while drawing lessons from past shortcomings and adapting to current realities. In addition, members may choose to organise informal briefings with experts on the Sahel to discuss emerging trends in the region.

Members could also consider convening an informal interactive dialogue with regional member states, ECOWAS, and relevant interlocutors to continue deliberations on harmonising approaches and strategies to address the growing threat of terrorism.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

There is broad concern in the Council about the growing terrorist threat, including its expansion into previously unaffected areas, the use of increasingly sophisticated weaponry by some groups, and the dire humanitarian situation in West Africa and the Sahel. Members have underscored the importance of a coordinated regional response strategy to combat terrorism and address its underlying drivers. Sierra Leone, along with several other members, has emphasised the need for the Council to pay close attention to the region, including by exploring ways to support regional efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

However, differences among Council members persist regarding the broader security context, their strategies for engaging with the region, and their respective interests. The US and European members have voiced concern over Russia's expanding influence and its

engagement with military juntas, while Russia has argued that the current security challenges are rooted in Western interference in the region and has called for collective international support to the AES countries.

Moscow has expanded its footprint in the region through bilateral defence agreements and the deployment of personnel from the Africa Corps, a group that is the successor to the Wagner Group and reportedly operates under the direct oversight of the Russian Ministry of Defence. However, Russian forces deployed in the region have increasingly come under attack, underscoring the volatility of the operating environment.

The US seems to be re-engaging with the military governments in the sub-region after a period of strained relations, seeking to re-establish security cooperation and maintain its strategic presence in the Sahel. In July, the Principal Deputy Director for Counterterrorism at the US National Security Council, Rudy Atallah, visited Bamako, which was the first high-level US visit to Mali since 2022. Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the US State Department, William Stevens, has also visited the AES countries recently. A 15 September Washington Post article reported that the US has, in recent months, ramped up intelligence sharing with Mali's government, which has been useful in repelling Islamist extremists. Analysts have suggested that this reset in US relations with these countries is partly driven by strategic interests in accessing critical minerals and expanding economic engagement.

Meanwhile, relations between France and Mali have further deteriorated. Both sides have suspended counter-terrorism cooperation and declared certain embassy staff *persona non grata* in their respective capitals. Tensions escalated after Malian authorities arrested French national Yann Vezilier on espionage charges; France has rejected the allegation, noting that Vezilier is a member of its embassy in Bamako.

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