

# Monthly Forecast

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## Overview

In June, Colombia holds the presidency of the Security Council.

Colombia is expected to convene a high-level open debate titled “[Advancing Peace in the Middle East: Mediation and Dialogue for a Lasting Peace](#)” under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item. Colombian President Gustavo Petro Urrego is expected to chair the meeting, which is a signature event of Colombia’s June presidency. Secretary-General António Guterres is the anticipated briefer.

Another signature event organized by Colombia is an open debate on [women, peace and security \(WPS\)](#) titled “Peace is Decided with Women: Emerging from conflict by enhancing their participation”. Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio is expected to chair the meeting, which intends to stress the importance of women’s active participation in peace processes. UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous and one or more civil society representatives are the anticipated briefers.

The annual open debate on [children and armed conflict](#) will also take place in June. The anticipated briefers are Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Vanessa Frazier, Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell, and one or more civil society representatives.

The Security Council is also expected to hold its semi-annual debate on the [International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals \(IRMCT\)](#). The President of the IRMCT, Judge Graciela Gatti Santana, and the Chief Prosecutor of the IRMCT, Serge Brammertz, are expected to brief during the debate and meet with the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals prior to that. Council members are also expected to negotiate a draft resolution extending Brammertz’s term as the IRMCT’s Chief Prosecutor, which expires on 30 June.

Several African issues are on the programme in June:

- [Central African region](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the implementation

of the UN’s regional strategy to combat the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA);

- [Somalia](#), private meeting on the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM);
- [Libya](#), briefing and consultations on the work of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL);
- [Central African Republic \(CAR\)](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA);
- [Sudan](#), briefing and consultations on the situation in the country pursuant to resolution 2715 of 1 December 2023 and on the work of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee; and
- [Democratic Republic of the Congo \(DRC\)](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and vote on a draft resolution renewing the mandate of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee and its Panel of Experts.

Middle Eastern issues on the programme this month are:

- [Syria](#), meetings on the political and humanitarian situations and on the chemical weapons track;
- [Yemen](#), the bi-monthly briefing and consultations on developments in the country;
- [Golan](#), consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and renewal of the mission’s mandate; and
- “[The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question](#)”, the monthly briefing and consultations, with the possibility of additional meetings depending on developments.

[Afghanistan](#) is the only Asian issue on the programme this month, with a briefing and consultations planned on the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The Council is also expected to vote on a draft resolution renewing the mission’s mandate ahead of its 17 June expiry.

Regarding [non-proliferation issues](#), a briefing is scheduled on the work of the 1737 Sanctions Committee concerning Iran. (At the time

### 1 June 2026

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## Overview

of writing, committee chairs had not been appointed, as Council members continue to negotiate this year's allocation of subsidiary body chairs. If the chairs are not appointed by the time the meeting is scheduled to take place, Colombia may brief in its capacity as Council president.)

As in previous months, there may be one or more meetings on [Ukraine](#) in June. Other issues, including those related to the situations in [Lebanon](#), [Iran](#), and [Sudan](#), could also be raised during the month, depending on developments.

Two meetings on emerging developments have already been scheduled for 1 June. The first is an urgent briefing under the "Threats to international peace and security" agenda item to discuss an alleged Russian drone incursion into Romanian airspace overnight between 28 and 29 May. The second is an emergency briefing

under "The Situation in the Middle East" agenda item to discuss Israel's expanded incursion into Lebanese territory.

The General Assembly is scheduled to vote on 3 June to elect five new members to the Security Council. [Trinidad and Tobago](#) and [Zimbabwe](#) are running unopposed for the available seats for the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) and the African Group, respectively. [Austria](#), [Germany](#), and [Portugal](#) are contesting the two seats of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG), while [Kyrgyzstan](#) and the [Philippines](#) are vying for the available seat reserved for the Asia-Pacific Group.

Council members are expected to start meeting candidates for the position of UN Secretary-General in June, having agreed to the modalities for the meetings on 29 May.

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## Security Council Elections

On 3 June, the 80th session of the UN General Assembly is scheduled to hold elections for membership of the Security Council. The five seats available for election in 2026, according to the regular distribution among regions, will be as follows:

- one seat for the African Group (currently held by Somalia);
- one seat for the Asia-Pacific Group (currently held by Pakistan);
- one seat for the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC, currently held by Panama); and
- two seats for the Western European and Others Group (WEOG, currently held by Denmark and Greece).

The Eastern European Group is not contesting any seats this year, as its seat, held by Latvia through 2027, comes up for election every other year. The five new members elected this year will take up their seats on 1 January 2027 and will serve until 31 December 2028.

### The 2026 Candidates

Seven member states—Austria, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Philippines, Portugal, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zimbabwe—are currently running for the five available seats. Austria, Germany, and Portugal are vying for two WEOG seats, while Kyrgyzstan and the Philippines are competing for the single Asia-Pacific Group seat. Trinidad and Tobago and Zimbabwe are both running for uncontested seats. Six out of the seven candidates have served on the Council previously: Germany has served six times, the Philippines four times, Austria and Portugal three times, Zimbabwe twice, and Trinidad and Tobago once. Kyrgyzstan has never served on the Council.

### Potential Council Dynamics in 2027

Shifting global power dynamics and continued geopolitical uncertainty are expected to continue to shape the multilateral landscape and Security Council dynamics in 2027. The priorities advanced by candidates during their campaigns, together with their long-standing interests, offer valuable insight into how they may approach some of the key issues that may dominate the Council's agenda in the next year.

Entrenched divisions among permanent members are likely to continue affecting the Council's ability to respond effectively to several protracted conflicts in 2027. A clear manifestation of these divisions is the increasing use of the veto in recent years, as analysed in a 2026 SCR research report on the topic.<sup>1</sup>

These tensions are likely to persist in 2027, making it difficult for the Council to adopt meaningful outcomes on highly politicised crises. At the same time, the number of previously unscheduled Council meetings, which accounted for approximately 27 percent of the Council's meetings in 2025, is also expected to remain high in 2027, reflecting the increasingly reactive and unpredictable nature of the Council's work amid a growing number of emerging and unforeseen conflicts.<sup>2</sup> A significant proportion of these meetings in 2025 and during the first five months of 2026 focused on Ukraine; "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (MEPQ)"; Sudan; the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); and Iran-related and non-proliferation issues.

Although it is unclear what course the war in Ukraine will take in the future, the situation is likely to continue to occupy an important portion of the Council's agenda in 2027. Among the WEOG candidates, there is sustained interest in the situation in Ukraine. Together with Latvia, which will remain on the Council in 2027, the European members are likely to stay closely engaged on the file.

The positions of the 2027 candidates on Ukraine are likely to reflect differing regional and political perspectives. Kyrgyzstan and Zimbabwe abstained from the vote on the 24 February 2025 General Assembly resolution titled "Advancing a Comprehensive, Just and Lasting Peace in Ukraine", while the other candidate countries voted in favour. Kyrgyzstan's and Zimbabwe's abstentions reflect a growing reluctance among some Global South countries to take sides, which continued in 2026 and is likely to persist in 2027.

At the same time, the WEOG candidate countries have expanded their military preparedness, in line with a broader European trend since the beginning of the war in Ukraine and the growing uncertainty

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<sup>1</sup> Security Council Report, Living with the Veto, Research Report no.1. (23 March 2026), <[https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/Veto\\_report\\_2026\\_F.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/Veto_report_2026_F.pdf)>

<sup>2</sup> Previously unscheduled Council meetings are meetings that are added to the Council's programme of work after its adoption.

## Security Council Elections

surrounding the long-term US security commitment to Europe under the Trump administration. Divisions between members prioritising deterrence and military preparedness and those advocating de-escalation and negotiated solutions are therefore likely to persist in 2027.

The situation in the Middle East is likely to continue to feature prominently in the Council's work in 2027. The repeatedly violated ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, instability along the Israel-Lebanon border, and the wider regional escalation triggered by the joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran on 28 February 2026 and Iran's subsequent retaliation across the region risk extending well into 2027, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and other conflict-affected areas and a strained economic outlook across parts of the region.

In addition, tensions within the transatlantic alliance are likely to complicate coordination among the WEOG members on the Middle East in 2027, requiring them to strike a delicate balance between supporting collective security measures and avoiding deeper military entanglement in the region.

The Council's work on African files is likely to remain heavily focused on mandate renewals, sanctions regimes, and civilian protection concerns, particularly in relation to the DRC, Central African Republic, Libya, South Sudan, and Sudan. Insurgencies in the Sahel region may also be an important focus in the coming year.

The new group of African members (A3) will consist of the DRC, Liberia, and Zimbabwe. The fact that two of its members—the DRC and Zimbabwe—belong to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) could strengthen coordination on peace and security issues affecting the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa. More broadly, the A3 in 2027 is expected to continue to align closely with AU positions and to emphasise African ownership, sovereignty, and support for AU-led responses to conflict situations in Africa. Zimbabwe is likely to reinforce these positions, while favouring cautious approaches to sanctions and other externally driven pressure initiatives, reflecting its longstanding emphasis on dialogue, non-interference, and negotiated solutions.

It remains unclear if Trinidad and Tobago will join the African members of the Council as part of the "A3 Plus" grouping, similar to the role played by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines during its 2020–2021 Council term and by Guyana during its 2024–2025 tenure. Having an additional member from another region has benefited both the "A3" and the "plus" members in recent years and has come to symbolise the strengthening of Africa–Caribbean coordination at the UN. This growing cooperation was reinforced by a memorandum of understanding signed between the AU and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in 2024 to enhance collaboration between the two organisations and their peoples.

The outcome of the election for the Asia-Pacific seat may likewise influence the regional perspectives represented on the Council. A Kyrgyzstan victory would return a Central Asian voice to the Council for the first time since Kazakhstan's 2017–2018 term. This could bring additional attention to developments in Afghanistan and their implications for regional stability. The election of the Philippines, on the other hand, would restore Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) representation to the Council, absent since Viet Nam's 2020–2021 term, and could elevate attention to Southeast Asian perspectives on issues such as Myanmar, maritime security, and regional cooperation.

In 2027, elected members (including all the candidate countries) are likely to continue emphasising compliance with international humanitarian law, humanitarian access, accountability, and civilian protection across both thematic and country-specific files. However, translating these commitments into concrete Council action may remain difficult because of divisions among major powers, differing interpretations of sovereignty and humanitarian obligations, and broader disagreements over accountability and enforcement mechanisms.

Several candidates have indicated peacekeeping as a priority, with some emphasising the need to reform peace operations in order to make them more effective, adaptable, and fit for purpose in responding to evolving global challenges. These discussions are likely to unfold against the backdrop of continuing peacekeeping liquidity challenges, driven by persistent delays in the payment of assessed contributions. The resulting gap between approved budgets and available cash is expected to continue constraining peacekeeping operations in 2027 and may necessitate further expenditure reductions. Recommendations emerging from the ongoing review of peace operations by the UN Secretariat may also inform Council deliberations in 2027 on mandate renewals and the future of peacekeeping.

Additionally, all candidates have expressed interest in supporting UN peacebuilding efforts, with Austria also emphasising the links between peacebuilding and counter-terrorism efforts. Germany, which was the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2025, as well as other candidates who champion peacebuilding, are likely to advocate for stronger integration of peacebuilding considerations across the Council's work and closer engagement with the PBC. Such efforts, however, may face resistance amid growing scepticism among permanent members towards thematic and prevention-oriented agendas.

Most candidate countries have expressed an interest in advancing Women, Peace and Security (WPS) issues. Several may sign on to the Shared Commitments on WPS initiative, which started in late 2021. Divisions on WPS issues are likely to deepen, fuelled by growing US scepticism towards some aspects of the agenda alongside longstanding reservations expressed by Russia and China. At the March 2026 session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the agreed conclusions were adopted through a vote rather than by consensus for the first time in the Commission's history, following US efforts to alter and narrow the scope of gender-related language. Against this backdrop, Council dynamics on WPS in 2027 are likely to remain difficult, particularly regarding WPS outcomes and gender-related language.

Several candidate countries have identified artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies as important priorities, highlighting the need to better understand and address the implications of these technologies for international peace and security. As these technologies increasingly intersect with many of the crises already on the Council's agenda, 2027 may see growing efforts by the elected members of the Council to examine the security implications of AI and other emerging technologies for terrorism, disinformation, maritime security threats, autonomous weapons systems, and nuclear and non-proliferation risks, among other issues.

Trinidad and Tobago has indicated that it plans to place a particular focus on peace and security challenges facing small island developing states (SIDS). The last open debate specifically focused

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## Security Council Elections

on SIDS was held in 2015 under New Zealand's presidency of the Council. The fourth international conference on SIDS, held in 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda, highlighted interconnected challenges facing SIDS countries and territories, such as transnational crime and trafficking, climate change, economic vulnerability, food and energy insecurity, and uneven development. In 2027, Trinidad and Tobago may seek to draw the Council's attention to the security implications of some of these challenges.

One member of the Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency (ACT) Group—Denmark—will leave the Security Council at the end of 2026. Among the current candidates, Austria and Portugal are members of the group. The ACT member(s) are likely to seek improvements in Security Council working methods, including proposals advocated by the ACT Group. Among the candidate countries, only Kyrgyzstan and Zimbabwe have not signed the ACT Group's Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes, which calls on all

Council members to not vote against any credible draft resolution intended to prevent or halt mass atrocities. Among the permanent members of the Council, only France and the United Kingdom have signed the Code of Conduct.

In 2027, the Security Council will also begin working with a new Secretary-General amid heightened geopolitical tensions, financial constraints, and growing scepticism towards the current global governance structure. The relationship between the Council and the incoming Secretary-General is likely to be an important factor shaping UN peace and security efforts. All the current candidates for the Secretary-General position have emphasised the importance of diplomacy and the UN's peace and security functions, including conflict prevention, mediation, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, although the degree of emphasis has varied. A new Secretary-General who seeks to strengthen the UN's role in these areas could create opportunities for meaningful cooperation with the Council.

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## Status Update since our May Forecast

### Lebanon

On 5 May, Council members received a briefing in consultations on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1559. (Adopted in 2004, the resolution called for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon, the disarmament of all militias, and the extension of government control over the whole of Lebanese territory.) Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed.

### Middle East Crisis

On 6 May, Security Council members held closed consultations under "The situation in the Middle East" agenda item. Bahrain requested the meeting following Iran's 4 May attacks against the United Arab Emirates (UAE), describing them as serious threats to international peace and security, critical infrastructure, maritime security, and regional stability. Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed.

### Sudan/South Sudan

On 7 May, the Security Council convened a briefing on the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) (S/PV.10149). Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa Guang Cong briefed. Closed consultations followed the open briefing.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Security Council held its semi-annual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) on 12 May (S/PV.10150). High Representative for BiH Christian Schmidt briefed. Denis Bećirović, the Bosniak member of the rotating tripartite inter-ethnic Presidency of BiH and the incumbent Chairperson of the Presidency, participated under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. Croatia and

Serbia also participated under rule 37, while the European Union took part under rule 39.

At the meeting, Schmidt said that he had taken the personal decision to conclude his mandate as High Representative for BiH and noted that he had already placed the question of identifying a successor on the agenda of the next meeting of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, adding that the process of appointing his successor had begun. Schmidt said that he planned to leave the post in June and indicated that this was most likely his final briefing to the Security Council in his capacity as High Representative.

### Mali

On 15 May, Security Council members issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks in several locations across Mali on 25 April and in the days that followed, including 6 May (SC/16360). They reaffirmed that "terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security" and underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organisers, financiers, and sponsors of these acts of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice. The press statement was drafted by Denmark and Liberia (the co-penholders on the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel) and the US (the penholder on counter-terrorism).

### Ukraine

On 19 May, the Security Council held a briefing on Ukraine (S/PV.10152). The meeting was requested by Ukraine in a 13 May letter and supported by Council members Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia, and the UK. The briefers were: Director and Officer-in-charge for Europe, Central Asia and Americas at the UN Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Kayoko Gotoh, and Director of the Crisis Response Division at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Edem Wosornu. Estonia, Iceland, Poland, Romania, and

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## Status Update since our May Forecast

Ukraine participated under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, while Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the European Union Delegation to the UN, participated under rule 39.

On 22 May, at Russia’s request, the Council held a briefing under the “Threats to international peace and security” agenda item to discuss what it alleged was a Ukrainian drone attack that hit a dormitory in Starobilsk in Ukraine’s eastern Luhansk region, which is currently controlled by Russia (S/PV.10158). The briefers were: Wosornu; Vanessa Frazier, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; and Ted Chaiban, the Deputy Executive Director for Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations at UNICEF.

On 28 May, the Council convened another briefing on Ukraine (S/PV.10160). The meeting was requested by Ukraine in a 24 May letter and supported by the Council’s European members (Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia, and the UK). Secretary-General António Guterres delivered short remarks, after which Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific Mohamed Khaled Khiari briefed. Ukraine and several countries from the region participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure.

### Protection of Civilians

On 20 and 21 May, the Security Council held its annual open debate on the protection of civilians (PoC) in armed conflict (S/PV.10154, Resumption I and II). The briefers were Wosornu and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger. Over 85 member states and regional organisations participated in the debate.

### Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

On 21 May, the Security Council held its regular monthly open briefing on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (MEPQ) (S/PV.10155). The briefers were Deputy Special Coordinator and Resident Coordinator at the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) Ramiz Alakbarov, Board of Peace High Representative to Gaza Nickolay Mladenov, and Director of Humanitarian Projects in the Gaza Strip at the Palestinian Red Crescent Society Rami Hijjo.

### Implementation of Note 507

On 21 May, Council members held closed consultations under the agenda item “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2024/507)” to discuss the allocation of subsidiary body chairs.

### Adoption of the Security Council’s Annual Report to the General Assembly

On 22 May, the Security Council adopted its 2025 annual report to the General Assembly (S/PV.10156).

### Libya

On 22 May, Deputy Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Nazhat Shameem Khan briefed the Council on the Court’s work in Libya over the past six months (S/PV.10157).

### Counter-Terrorism

On 26 May, Council members issued a press statement condemning the 24 May terrorist attack on a train in Quetta, Pakistan, which led to the deaths of 14 Pakistani nationals and injuries to dozens of additional people. The Balochistan Liberation Army claimed that the Majeed Brigade was responsible for the attack (SC/16371).

### Upholding the UN Charter and Strengthening the UN-Centred International System

On 26 and 28 May, the Security Council held a high-level open debate on “Upholding the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter and Strengthening the UN-Centred International System” under the “Maintenance of international peace and security agenda item”. Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi chaired the meeting. UN Secretary-General António Guterres briefed (S/PV.10159, Resumption I and II).

### Attack on the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Nuclear Plant

On 26 May, Security Council members issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the drone attack on an electricity generator outside the inner perimeter of the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in Al Dhafra region in the UAE (SC/16370). They underscored that the attack constituted a violation of international law with grave risks for civilian lives, infrastructure, and the environment. The members demanded the immediate and permanent cessation of all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure in the UAE, including attacks and threats of attack against peaceful nuclear facilities. Members called on all states to adhere to the highest standards of nuclear safety, security, and safeguards and to refrain from any action that may endanger nuclear safety and security. The press statement was authored by Bahrain.

### South Sudan

On 29 May, the Security Council adopted resolution 2821, renewing sanctions measures on South Sudan—including targeted sanctions (asset freezes and travel bans) and an arms embargo—until 31 May 2027 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts (PoE) assisting the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee until 1 July 2027 (S/PV.10161). The resolution requested the Secretary-General, in close consultation with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the PoE, to conduct an assessment of progress achieved on the key benchmarks established pursuant to resolution 2577 of 28 May 2021, including recommendations on appropriate updates to the benchmarks and to submit them by 15 April 2027. The resolution was adopted with nine votes in favour and six abstentions (China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Pakistan, Russia, and Somalia).

### Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)

On 29 May, Council members convened in closed consultations to receive the 90-day briefing on the work of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee. Since Council members have not yet agreed on this year’s allocation of subsidiary body chairs, China briefed members in its capacity as Council president in May.

# Syria

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is expected to hold two meetings on Syria: the monthly meeting on political and humanitarian developments in Syria, and another on the chemical weapons track. Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Claudio Cordone, and a representative from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are expected to brief at the political and humanitarian meeting. High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu is expected to brief at the chemical weapons meeting.

## Key Recent Developments

On 9 May, Syrian interim president Ahmed al-Sharaa announced a reshuffle of several members forming the country's interim government—which was constituted in March 2025—and administrative officials. New officials were appointed to the positions of secretary-general for the presidency, information minister, agriculture minister, and governors in the Deir Ezzor, Homs, Latakia, and Quneitra governorates. The reshuffle followed reported criticism that some government roles were chosen through nepotism. Sharaa's brother Maher served as secretary-general for the presidency prior to the overhaul.

On 24 May, legislative elections for the People's Assembly took place in the formerly Kurdish-controlled areas of Hasakah governorate and Ain al-Arab district (Kobane) to fill 11 seats which, due to the government's lack of control over the northeast at the time, were left vacant following the September 2025 elections.

In his 15 May briefing to the Council, Cordone described Syria's tentative progress and persistent challenges. He highlighted accountability developments in recent weeks, including the trial which started on 10 May of Atef Najib, a high-level security official in former President Bashar al-Assad's government, and the arrests in April of suspects linked to the 2013 Tadamon massacre and Eastern Ghouta chemical attack, welcoming them as meaningful steps towards transitional justice.

Cordone visited Syria from 17 to 25 May, during which he met with interim Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani to discuss cooperation between the government and the Office of the Special Envoy. In the 15 May briefing, he informed the Council that he hoped to reach an agreement with the government on "broad areas of cooperation" for his office to support the transition, including the relocation of his team from Geneva to Damascus.

In the northeast, the implementation of the 29 January agreement to integrate the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) into government institutions continues to advance, but not without obstacles. Judicial issues have emerged as a point of contention, with protests erupting in Hasakah after Kurdish was removed from the Judicial Palace sign. SDF commander Mazloum Abdi subsequently reportedly announced an understanding with Damascus, including the acceptance of DAANES judges in government judicial institutions and a government pledge to restore bilingual Arabic-Kurdish signage in

Kurdish-majority cities. Abdi called on protestors to allow the understanding to be implemented and not disrupt the broader integration process.

Israel has continued its military activities in southern Syria, which it says are necessary for its national security. In May, these reportedly included incursions, shelling, and arrests in the governorate of Quneitra in southwestern Syria. (For more information, see the brief on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan in our June 2026 *Monthly Forecast*.)

Insecurity linked to terrorism remains a persistent issue. On 1 May, a Shia cleric was killed in the Sayyida Zeinab district of Damascus, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) later claimed responsibility for the attack. Later, on 19 May, a car bomb exploded near a defence ministry building in the Bab Sharqi area of Damascus, killing one soldier and wounding 23 people. Additionally, on 6 May, Syrian forces conducted raids in Idlib to arrest Uzbek militants who had held armed protests against the arrest of one of the militants. The incident renewed concerns regarding the presence of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) in Syria.

Syria has also continued its efforts to combat the threat posed by Hezbollah-affiliated cells. On 5 May, the Syrian interior ministry said that it had successfully conducted multiple security operations across several governorates to dismantle a cell affiliated with the Lebanese militia, which had infiltrated Syrian territory with the aim of planning assassinations of "high-ranking government figures". Sharaa has said that he supports Lebanon in disarming Hezbollah and will prevent the militia from operating in Syria.

In Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher's 15 May briefing to the Council, he warned that despite some progress, Syria's humanitarian situation remains critical and that delayed recovery would ultimately cost more lives. He noted that while large amounts of returnees are a positive development, they are placing mounting pressure on already strained services, with over 390,000 people having crossed from Lebanon since early March. Fletcher highlighted the ongoing closure of the Strait of Hormuz as an additional pressure point, driving up the cost of food and fuel with immediate consequences for Syrians. He cautioned that the 2026 humanitarian appeal is only 18 percent funded and that the World Food Programme (WFP) has had to cut food assistance by half. Fletcher also called on Council members to support sustained diplomatic engagement, scale up immediate funding, and invest in Syria's long-term recovery.

Syria continues to take steps to normalise its economy following the lifting of sanctions. On 11 May, the European Council reinstated the full application of the Cooperation Agreement between the European Union (EU) and Syria, which had been suspended in response to serious human rights violations by the Assad government. The Cooperation Agreement provides the framework for economic and trade relations between the parties, and its reinstatement facilitates Syria's socio-economic recovery while sending a political message underlining the EU's commitment

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA** [Security Council Presidential Statement 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. [Security Council Press Statement SC/16293](#) (12 February 2026) welcomed the comprehensive agreement between Syria and the SDF regarding the integration of northeast Syria, and Syria's commitment and actions to counter ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Qaida. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.10151](#) (15 May 2026) was a meeting on political and humanitarian developments in Syria. [S/PV.10117](#) (10 March 2026) was a meeting on the chemical weapons track in Syria. [Other S/2026/257](#) (31 March 2026) was a report of a visiting mission to Lebanon and Syria, which took place from 3 to 7 December 2025.

# Syria

to Syria's transition. In another development regarding the Syrian economy, on 4 May, the Central Bank announced that global payment networks such as Mastercard and Visa will be resuming operations in the country.

Regarding the chemical weapons track, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Adedeji Ebo noted in his 10 March briefing to the Council that engagement between the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Syrian government on eliminating remnants of Assad's chemical weapons programme was continuing. Ebo emphasised the OPCW's concerns regarding the potential existence of large quantities of undeclared or unverified chemical warfare agents and chemical munitions in Syria, including indications that more than 100 sites may have been involved in Assad's chemical weapons activities, aside from the 26 declared sites. He stressed the importance of the international community providing adequate support to assist Syria in closing the chemical weapons file. On 24 May, the OPCW published its monthly report by the Director-General on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

On 26 May, Syria's Permanent Mission to the OPCW said that, together with the OPCW Technical Secretariat, it conducted investigations in May that led to the identification of sites linked to Assad's chemical weapons programme and to the reported discovery of more than 70 rockets and aerial bombs, as well as raw ingredients used to produce sarin. Additionally, 18 suspects have been arrested for alleged involvement in the programme.

## Women, Peace and Security

On 30 April, the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) convened on the situation in Syria. Cordone briefed. Among other issues, the meeting apparently focused on women's participation in politics and public life, human rights concerns, women's economic empowerment, the drafting of a transitional justice law, and accountability for conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated before the fall of Assad's regime. The meeting also addressed patterns of violence since the fall of the regime, including abductions and violence targeting Alawite, Druze, and Bedouin women. Members were also apparently briefed on the humanitarian situation, including calls from women-led organisations for increased gender-responsive humanitarian assistance.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 28 April press briefing note, the Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Thameen Al-Kheetan, provided an update on Syria's human rights situation. He noted firsthand testimonies and accounts of past and present human rights violations and abuses following a visit to Hasakah governorate in the northeast of the country, including reports of significant numbers of killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, and deportation of detainees. He also cited "mounting protection concerns for civilians in southern Syria, where expanding operations by Israeli forces occupying these areas have placed lives at risk". Al-Kheetan underscored the need for accountability to extend to all parties that have committed serious violations and abuses in the country. He further echoed High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk's calls on the Israeli authorities to "bring an end to all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Syria".

In a 15 April press statement, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic voiced concern over the impact of regional hostilities on Syria's stability and the enjoyment of rights in the country. More than 277,000 people, including 234,000 Syrians who had previously been displaced, have fled Lebanon into Syria since 2 March due to recent shelling in Lebanon. Underscoring the importance of Syria's recovery and transition after decades of repression and war, the Commission urged all

parties to redouble their efforts to end hostilities and reiterated the need to ensure that the human rights of all peoples in the region are at the forefront of negotiation efforts.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is ensuring that Syria's interim government pursues a credible, transparent, and inclusive political transition while navigating a fraught security context compounded by intercommunal tensions, terrorism, and external interference. By maintaining a united position anchored in the principles of resolution 2254, Council members could consider linking enhanced political support for the Syrian government to concrete progress on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR); security sector reform (SSR); transitional justice; and social cohesion—including through accountability and reconciliation processes.

To address the many-faceted challenges facing Syria, the Council could consider adopting a presidential statement that:

- calls for full respect for Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, urges adherence to the 1974 agreement between Israel and Syria, and calls on both parties to engage constructively in US-facilitated talks on sustainable security arrangements;
- encourages progress on both the SDF integration agreement and the Suweida roadmap (agreed by Jordan, Syria, and the US to address the tensions in Suweida in September), while pressing the government to ensure the protection and rights of Druze and Kurdish civilians;
- highlights the importance of Damascus continuing its counter-terrorism efforts against a resurgent ISIL and FTFs in the region;
- urges Damascus to strengthen independent accountability mechanisms, including through their cooperation with existing international mechanisms on Syria, while also meaningfully engaging with victims and civil society on transitional justice and reconciliation; and
- calls for enhanced financial support to address humanitarian needs and long-term recovery and development.

The Council could also consider encouraging the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on the Syria file. The PBC's convening role and its capacity to mobilise sustained, coordinated international support for countries navigating fragile transitions could be of value at this juncture. Council members, in close collaboration with Syria, could consider the possibility of an advisory opinion from the PBC ahead of the Council meetings on how best to support the country's transition.

The UN's future role in Syria is another key issue. Cordone's office is actively negotiating its relocation to Damascus and areas of cooperation with the Syrian government. Council members could express support for an expedited agreement and early relocation, as a meaningful UN presence on the ground is essential to supporting Syria's political transition. Members could also continue pressing for progress on the appointment of a Special Envoy following Geir O. Pedersen's resignation in October 2025.

## Council Dynamics

Council members are broadly 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

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## Syria

addressed without progress on DDR, SSR, and transitional justice, alongside a credible political process. The Council's December 2025 visit to Damascus and its decisions to delist Sharaa, Syria's interior minister Anas Khattab, and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) from the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions list signaled unified support for Syria's interim government and the overall transition following years of deep divisions on the file.

Furthermore, several Council members have taken steps to normalise bilateral relations with Syria and to support its recovery. High-level officials of the Syrian government have visited all the capitals of the Council's five permanent members. The 11 May decision by the EU—which includes Council members France, Denmark, Greece, and Latvia—to fully resume its 1978 cooperation agreement with Syria and begin formal talks on strengthening economic and security ties demonstrates the bloc's shift towards increased support for the transition.

The regional escalation triggered by the US-Israeli strikes on Iran on 28 February, however, could potentially strain Council

dynamics on the Syria file. Members that have traditionally aligned themselves or expressed support for Iran—most notably Russia and China—are likely to take a more critical posture towards the US and its regional actions, potentially complicating the unified approach to Syria that has characterised the past year. While Council members have so far managed to keep Syria-specific discussions relatively insulated from these broader tensions—in part due to Syria's efforts to insulate itself from the escalation—a prolonged regional conflict risks eroding that separation.

Many Council members agree on the need for the Syrian interim government to take decisive measures to address the threat posed by 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 ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Qaida sanctions regime.

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## Afghanistan

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) ahead of its expiry on 17 June.

The Council is also scheduled to hold its quarterly open briefing on Afghanistan. Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Political) and Officer-in-Charge of UNAMA Georgette Gagnon is expected to brief. Closed consultations are scheduled to follow the open briefing.

### Key Recent Developments

In recent months, the security situation in Afghanistan has remained volatile, marked by escalating cross-border hostilities with Pakistan and ongoing internal security incidents.

Tensions between Pakistan and the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan have continued since October 2025, when cross-border frictions escalated markedly, culminating in large-scale clashes in February and March that resulted in significant civilian casualties and heightened regional tensions. Although the intensity of hostilities has decreased in recent weeks, intermittent clashes and cross-border exchanges of fire have persisted, including Pakistani airstrikes in Kunar province and reported drone activity over Kabul. The continued closure of key border crossings has disrupted trade and transit flows, constrained cross-border movement, and further aggravated economic and security conditions in border areas. (For background and more information, see the brief on Afghanistan in our March 2026 *Monthly Forecast* and our 6 March *What's in Blue* story.)

China brought Pakistan and the Taliban authorities together for informal talks from 1 to 7 April in Ürümqi, the capital of China's Xinjiang region. Media reports citing the Chinese Foreign Ministry

said that the sides had agreed to explore a “comprehensive solution to the issues in the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan” and had identified terrorism as the “core issue affecting the relationship”. Beijing also stated that the parties had committed not to undertake actions that would further escalate or complicate the situation.

From 10 to 16 May, China's Special Envoy on Afghan Affairs Yue Xiaoyong visited Afghanistan and Qatar. In Afghanistan, Xiaoyong held separate meetings with Taliban Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi and Senior Adviser to Interior Minister Anas Haqqani. In Qatar, he met with Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi. Separately, Taliban authorities have also continued bilateral engagements with Russia.

Internal security incidents remain another concern. According to UNAMA, on 10 April, “unidentified gunmen” opened fire on civilians near a Shia shrine located between Injil and Zinda Jan districts in Herat province, killing at least 11 people and injuring 11 others. Media reports indicated that the victims were Shia Muslims, a minority community in Afghanistan, and that the attack occurred in a predominantly Shia village.

The human rights situation in Afghanistan has also continued to deteriorate, particularly for women and girls. In a 21 May press release, UNAMA expressed grave concern about a decree promulgated by Taliban authorities on 14 May that codifies principles governing the separation of spouses. UNAMA noted that the decree contains provisions implying the permissibility of child marriage, including by allowing a girl's silence upon reaching puberty to be interpreted as consent to marriage. It stated that the decree represents the further erosion of the rights of Afghan women and girls and “entrenches systemic discrimination in law and practice”. More broadly, UNAMA noted that restrictions imposed since August 2021

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have systematically excluded women and girls from public life, curtailed economic participation, and exacerbated poverty, with significant long-term consequences for Afghanistan's development.

Afghanistan continues to face one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises. Nearly half of the country's population—21.9 million people—are projected to require humanitarian assistance this year, with millions suffering from acute and emergency levels of food insecurity as well as an exceptionally severe child malnutrition crisis. At the same time, humanitarian access constraints have continued to affect operations across the country. According to a humanitarian access snapshot issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on 24 May, 66 access-related incidents were recorded in April. Although this represented a 23 percent decrease compared with March, OCHA stated that the decline did not reflect an overall improvement in the access environment. Instead, it was largely attributed to the cessation of hostilities between Pakistan and Afghanistan, with fewer conflict-related impediments reported.

The large-scale returnees to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan have also compounded the humanitarian challenges. On 19 May, the UN, together with national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), launched the 2026 Response Plan for Afghan Returnees, which seeks \$529.2 million to support an estimated 2.7 million returnees projected to arrive between April and December.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 2 April press statement, Richard Bennett, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, expressed concern about the continued toll of explosive ordnance on Afghan civilians, particularly children. Despite efforts by the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan, the country remains among the most affected globally by landmines and explosive remnants of war. In 2025 alone, 471 civilian casualties were recorded, 67 percent of whom were children. Cuts in international funding have also forced the downscaling of mine action programmes across the country in recent years, leading to the suspension of clearance operations and a reduction in the number of demining teams. In light of these findings, Bennet urged the international community to increase and sustain funding for mine action programmes in the country.

On 12 May, UNAMA released an update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, covering the period from January to March, as well as a separate report on civilian casualties resulting from cross-border violence during the same period. According to UNAMA, more than 750 civilians were killed or injured from 1 January to 31 March as a result of cross-border armed violence involving Afghanistan's "de facto security forces" and Pakistani military forces, with the majority of casualties caused by airstrikes conducted in February and March. UNAMA reported that on 16 March, Pakistani military airstrikes struck the Omid Drug Rehabilitation Hospital in Kabul, killing at least 269 people and injuring a further 122. The overwhelming majority of the casualties were patients receiving treatment at the facility.

## Key Issues and Options

The renewal of UNAMA's mandate will be a key priority for the Security Council in June. One option for the Council would be to extend the mission's mandate for another year, while taking into account evolving political, security, human rights, and humanitarian developments in Afghanistan and their implications for the mission's operations and priorities. The Council has not undertaken a comprehensive review or substantial adjustment of the mission's mandate and priorities since 2022, shortly after the Taliban came to power.

During negotiations on resolution 2818 of 16 March, which most recently extended UNAMA's mandate, the US argued in favour of a

broader assessment of the mission's tasks and priorities, noting that UNAMA is among the UN's largest and most resource-intensive special political missions operating in a highly complex environment. It maintained that the Council should assess whether the mission's mandate remains realistic, appropriately prioritised, and fully implementable under current conditions, including whether aspects of the mandate could be streamlined and better aligned with developments on the ground. (For more information, see our 13 March *What's in Blue* story.)

As such, another option is the possibility of undertaking a strategic review of UNAMA, with a view to evaluating how the mission can most effectively implement its mandate and support the UN's engagement in Afghanistan under current conditions.

In light of the limited progress achieved through the Doha process in addressing foundational political and human rights issues in Afghanistan, Council members could consider convening an informal interactive dialogue (IID) to take stock of current engagement efforts and explore ways to strengthen a more coherent and inclusive political approach to these issues. The Council could invite regional stakeholders; UNAMA; civil society representatives, including Afghan women representatives; and international partners involved in the Doha process and broader diplomatic engagement on Afghanistan.

The Taliban's continuing refusal to adhere to many of Afghanistan's international obligations, especially those relating to women and girls, is a major issue. In light of the continued expansion of restrictions imposed by the Taliban, Council members could consider reaffirming these concerns during negotiations on UNAMA's mandate, including by reiterating resolution 2681, which called for the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women and girls in Afghanistan and urged the Taliban to reverse policies restricting their rights and fundamental freedoms. Ahead of the mandate renewal, Council members could hold an informal meeting with representatives of UNWomen, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and civil society to discuss ways for the Council to exert pressure on the Taliban regarding its practices and policies that restrict human rights. Such a meeting could also provide an opportunity to discuss how human rights and women, peace and security priorities could be better reflected in the context of UNAMA's mandate renewal.

The threat of terrorism coming from Afghanistan remains another issue. Members could consider convening informal meetings with regional counter-terrorism experts to assess emerging terrorism risks and discuss possible responses. Expert-level discussions could help monitor trends, including the activities of terrorist groups operating from or within Afghanistan, and enhance situational awareness.

## Council Dynamics

Council members have generally been united in their desire to see Afghanistan governed by inclusive leadership, complying with its international obligations, and free from terrorism, but they are divided over how to achieve this goal.

The US has stated that its top priorities in Afghanistan remain protecting US citizens, mitigating terrorist threats, and securing the release of US detainees. It has accused the Taliban of engaging in "hostage diplomacy" by using detainees as leverage in negotiations and has criticised what it views as insufficient progress on

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# Afghanistan

counter-terrorism commitments. The US has also signalled a shift in its approach toward international assistance and engagement in Afghanistan, stressing what it perceives as the limited results of past assistance efforts.

With regard to UNAMA's mandate, the US stated during its explanation of vote following the adoption of resolution 2818 that it intended to explore ways to streamline the mission's mandate, remove functions that duplicate other efforts or cannot be effectively implemented under current conditions, and ensure that UNAMA's activities contribute directly to advancing peace and security in Afghanistan and the broader region.

China and Russia, for their part, have contended that the international community should provide economic and development assistance to Afghanistan without linking it to other issues, such as the rights of women and girls, and favour engagement and dialogue without increased pressure. Both members have repeatedly called for the release of frozen assets belonging to Afghanistan's

central bank—the bulk of which were seized by the US after the Taliban became the de facto authorities in August 2021—and have also pushed for the reinstatement of the standing exemption to the travel ban that expired in August 2022. They have both also underlined the presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan as a destabilising factor in the country.

The language used to describe the Taliban and its administration has remained a sensitive issue among Council members. They have expressed differing views regarding the use of the term “de facto authorities”, a formulation regularly used in the Secretary-General's reports on Afghanistan. It appears that some Council members, including the US, are uncomfortable with the terminology, expressing concern that it could confer legitimacy on the Taliban or imply a degree of de facto recognition. China and Russia, however, reportedly reject this argument, maintaining that the term accurately reflects the realities on the ground in Afghanistan.

China is the penholder on UNAMA.

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## UNOCA (Central Africa)

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council will hold a briefing and consultations on the Secretary-General's semi-annual report on the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the implementation of the UN's regional strategy to combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Martha Ama Akyaa Pobe is expected to brief. UNOCA's mandate expires on 31 August 2027.

### Key Recent Developments

Following elections in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Cameroon last year, which returned incumbent presidents to office, the Central African region witnessed another major election this year in the Republic of Congo. Incumbent President Denis Sassou Nguesso was re-elected on 15 March with 94.82 percent of the vote, extending his nearly 42-year rule. Opposition parties reportedly decided not to field candidates, citing a lack of transparency in the electoral process. Another country in the region, São Tomé and Príncipe, is also expected to hold presidential and parliamentary elections later this year in July and September, respectively. The UN Peacebuilding Commission has been providing support to the country, including the reform of the justice and security sectors.

On 18 May, the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) received an update on the activities of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the Lake Chad Basin. The MNJTF is a regional security coalition comprising forces from Cameroon, Chad, and Nigeria, mandated to combat Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the Lake Chad Basin. The force has been instrumental in degrading the capacity of these groups in

the region but continues to face persistent capability gaps, including shortages of air assets, amphibious equipment, counter-drone systems, and improvised explosive device (IED) detection and disposal capabilities.

Additionally, the decision by Niger to withdraw from the MNJTF last year raised concerns about the weakening of the region's counter-terrorism framework and the potential creation of a security vacuum that could be exploited by terrorist groups. The situation has been further compounded by Chad's threat to scale back or withdraw its participation in the force, raising further questions about the effectiveness and cohesion of regional counter-terrorism efforts. In addition to the challenges it faces in the Lake Chad Basin, Chad is also confronting mounting pressure along its border with Sudan. Drone strikes and border incursions by armed groups have reportedly prompted the country to close its border with Sudan and deploy additional troops to secure the frontier.

Meanwhile, Boko Haram and ISWAP have intensified their attacks in the Lake Chad Basin. In one of the attacks attributed to Boko Haram in January, at least eight Nigerian soldiers were reportedly killed and 50 wounded in Borno State, Nigeria. In another attack in Nigeria's western state of Kwara, 75 Muslims who refused to join the group were also reportedly killed. The Nigerian government has reportedly deployed an army battalion to the affected area.

In early May, a Boko Haram attack on a military base near Lake Chad reportedly killed at least 24 Chadian soldiers and wounded several others. A few days later, the group staged another ambush in which two Chadian generals were killed. The incidents prompted the Chadian government to declare three days of national mourning. The deteriorating security situation also led authorities to declare a state of emergency and launch a counteroffensive against the group. However,

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UN DOCUMENTS ON UNOCA [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2024/7](#) (1 November 2024) expressed the Council's full support for UNOCA. [Secretary-General's Report S/2025/772](#) (28 November 2025) was the semi-annual report on UNOCA. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10060](#) (11 December 2025) was a meeting on the situation in Central Africa.

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## UNOCA (Central Africa)

air strikes carried out in the Lake Chad region as part of Chad's military operations reportedly killed at least 40 Nigerian fishermen, raising concerns about civilian casualties.

The activities of Boko Haram and its splinter groups have attracted significant attention in the US, with the Trump administration framing the conflict largely as an existential threat to Christians and criticising the Nigerian government's handling of the crisis. At the same time, the US and Nigeria have cooperated in efforts to combat Boko Haram and ISWAP, including through intelligence-sharing and joint operations. In May, Abu Bakr al-Mainuki, considered a key figure within ISWAP, was reportedly killed alongside other militants during a joint military operation conducted by Nigerian and US forces in the Lake Chad Basin.

In early May, the Trump administration released its counter-terrorism strategy identifying the Lake Chad Basin as one of the critical new fronts, warning that ISIS-linked fighters and allied extremist groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP are regrouping in the region following the collapse of their strongholds in Iraq and Syria.

### Key Issues and Options

The political and security situations in several parts of Central Africa continue to be key concerns for the Council. In June, Council members are likely to be interested in hearing Onanga's assessment of country-specific situations in the region, including the recent elections in the Republic of Congo and preparations for the upcoming elections in São Tomé and Príncipe.

The continued threat of terrorism in the Lake Chad basin remains a matter of serious concern that has been heightened by the intensified attacks of Boko Haram and ISWAP in recent months. Reports indicate that these groups have become increasingly adept in their tactics, conducting more complex attacks using drones and IEDs to target military camps, bases, and troop routes.

A related issue is how to address the root causes of the conflicts in the region. Council members continue to support the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery, and Resilience (RS-SRR) of the Boko Haram-affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin, developed by the Lake Chad Basin Commission in 2018 and updated last year.

The worsening humanitarian situation in the region is also a source of concern for Council members. According to OCHA, the surge in violence in the Lake Chad Basin has contributed to the displacement of approximately 3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and more than 325,000 refugees, while sharply increasing humanitarian needs across the region, where an estimated 8.2 million people require urgent humanitarian assistance.

Resource constraints remain a major concern for all UN peace operations, including special political missions such as UNOCA. During his 11 December 2025 briefing, former Special Representative of

the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA Abdou Abarry informed Council members of the challenges facing the mission in carrying out its good offices' role, noting that resource limitations had hindered its ability to travel to countries across the region.

The Council could consider adopting a presidential statement raising alarm at terrorist activity in the region and expressing support for the MNJTf in combating this threat. The statement could also call for expedited implementation of the RS-SRR and appeal for international support in this regard.

The Council's Informal Expert Group (IEG) on Climate, Peace and Security visited the Lake Chad Basin in early December 2025. Although this is an informal group, the co-chairs of the IEG could choose to brief interested Council members in an informal format following their visit.

### Council Dynamics

Council members support a holistic regional approach to addressing the peace and security challenges in Central Africa, based on cooperation between UNOCA and various regional mechanisms. Several members tend to underscore challenges in the region related to political transitions; humanitarian crises, including the rising number of refugees and IDPs; the threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism; and the adverse effects of climate change. However, some members remain opposed to Council engagement on climate change and peace and security in general, including in the Central Africa region, believing that climate change is primarily a development issue best handled in other fora.

Council members recognise the important role played by the MNJTf in fighting Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin. In this month's meeting, many of them will likely condemn the recent attack in the region and underscore the need to continue supporting the MNJTf in neutralising these groups. In its December 2025 meeting on the MNJTf, the AUPSC requested the AU Commission, in consultation with the UN, to consider the application of resolution 2719 of 21 December 2023 to address the force's financial and logistical challenges. This is a framework resolution on the funding of AU-led peace support operations through UN-assessed contributions on a case-by-case basis. However, there is no public indication that the possibility of the MNJTf benefitting from support under the framework of this resolution has been formally discussed between the UN and the AU.

Council members that have an interest in the situation in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon may draw particular attention to the country's political and security challenges in light of the violence following the October 2025 presidential elections.

The UK is the penholder on UNOCA.

# Iran

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is expected to hold the 90-day briefing on the work of the 1737 Sanctions Committee concerning Iran.

The Council will also receive the Secretary-General's biannual report on the implementation of resolution 2231 of 20 July 2015, which endorsed the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme.

## Background and Recent Developments

The 1737 Sanctions Committee was established by resolution 1737 of 23 December 2006, which required the Committee to report to the Council every 90 days on its activities. Prior to the agreement on the JCPOA and the adoption of resolution 2231, these briefings were held every three months under the "Non-Proliferation" agenda item.

Resolution 2231 suspended all prior sanctions resolutions on Iran, including resolution 1737, rendering defunct the 1737 Committee and its reporting requirement. Subsequently, the Council held biannual briefings on the implementation of resolution 2231, which also took place under the "Non-Proliferation" agenda item.

In August 2025, the "E3" parties to the JCPOA—France, Germany, and the UK—triggered the deal's "snapback" mechanism to reimpose UN sanctions on Iran that the JCPOA and resolution 2231 had suspended. China and Russia contested the E3's legal and procedural standing to do so and argued that all sanctions were permanently lifted on 18 October 2025, when the JCPOA and resolution 2231 were originally set to expire. On that date—absent an activation of the snapback—resolution 2231 stated that the Council would end its consideration of the Iranian nuclear file and "Non-Proliferation" would be removed from the list of matters of which the Council is seized. China and Russia—as well as Iran—contend that this has now happened.

By contrast, the E3 and like-minded Council members have argued that the triggering of the snapback mechanism was valid and therefore that only specific paragraphs of resolution 2231 related to the suspension of sanctions have expired. As such, they maintain that all previous UN sanctions measures on Iran have been re-activated and that the 1737 Sanctions Committee and its supporting Panel of Experts (PoE) have been restored.

In March, the US, in its capacity as Council president, included the 1737 Committee's 90-day briefing in that month's programme of work in an attempt to resume the Committee's reporting. Since the disagreement regarding the Committee has prevented the Council from agreeing on this year's allocation of subsidiary body chairs, the US, as Council president, also assumed the functions of Committee chair and proposed a draft report that it intended to deliver at the briefing. The Committee agrees on such reports by consensus.

Given their position that UN sanctions on Iran have expired and that the 1737 Committee no longer exists, China and Russia objected to the US proposal to include the briefing in the March programme of work. They therefore blocked the adoption of the programme at the beginning of the month. For the same reason, these two members also objected to the draft report on the Committee's activities that the US proposed to deliver.

The US still convened the briefing, however, which it sought to hold under the "Non-Proliferation" agenda item in accordance with past practice. At the beginning of the meeting, Russia requested a procedural vote on the agenda, reiterating its position that "Non-Proliferation" had been removed from the list of matters of which the Council is seized. The agenda was subsequently adopted with 11 votes in favour, two against (China and Russia), and two abstentions (Pakistan and Somalia). Following the meeting—which took place on 12 March—the Council adopted the monthly programme of work.

Similar dynamics have affected the Council's consideration of the Secretary-General's biannual reports on resolution 2231. The first such report following the snapback was due in December 2025. Slovenia, as Council president that month, did not include the regular meeting on its programme of work because of members' diverging positions, but the briefing was subsequently convened under the "Non-Proliferation" agenda item at the request of several members. China and Russia raised a point of order objecting to the agenda item but did not call for a procedural vote.

This month, it seems that Colombia—the Council president in June—is following the precedents set by the US presidency in March regarding the 90-day briefing of the 1737 Committee and by the Slovenian presidency in December 2025 regarding the biannual briefing on the implementation of resolution 2231.

Meanwhile, activity in the 1737 Committee itself remains blocked. In April, China and Russia apparently opposed a request by the US to update entries on the sanctions list and rejected candidates proposed by the Secretariat for the PoE. On 30 April, Council members convened in closed consultations requested by France and the UK to discuss the issue. Most members apparently reiterated their established positions in that session.

The gridlock has been exacerbated by the broader Middle East crisis triggered by the joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran that began in February and Iran's subsequent retaliation across the region. On 11 March, the Council adopted resolution 2817, drafted by Bahrain on behalf of the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Jordan, which condemned Iran's strikes against these countries and any actions or threats by Iran aimed at obstructing navigation through the Strait of Hormuz—the critical waterway that Iran has effectively closed during the conflict. The text was co-sponsored by 136

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAN** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2817](#) (11 March 2026) was a resolution authored by Bahrain on behalf of the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council – which comprises Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates – as well as Jordan. It condemns Iran's strikes against these countries; determines that these acts constitute a breach of international law and a serious threat to international peace and security; deplores that civilian objects have been targeted and that the attacks resulted in civilian casualties; and demands that Iran immediately halt the attacks against these countries and fully comply with its obligations under international law. The text also condemns any actions or threats by Iran aimed at closing or obstructing international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. [S/RES/2231](#) (20 July 2015) was a resolution that endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran. [Secretary-General's Report S/2025/814](#) (15 December 2025) was the Secretary-General's biannual report on the implementation of resolution 2231.

# Iran

UN member states and adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (China and Russia). A competing draft resolution penned by Russia, which did not mention individual countries but urged all parties to stop their military activities and return to diplomacy, failed to be adopted due to insufficient votes. It received four votes in favour (China, Russia, Pakistan, and Somalia), two votes against (Latvia and the US), and nine abstentions.

On 7 April, the US and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire, during which they attempted to negotiate a permanent end to the war that would include an agreement on Iran's nuclear programme and the sanctions issue. After those talks failed to achieve a breakthrough, Trump announced an indefinite extension of the ceasefire on 21 April to allow more time for negotiations. Although an Iranian official stated that the announcement "means nothing" as long as the US maintains its blockade of Iranian ports in the Strait of Hormuz, large-scale hostilities between the parties have not resumed. Negotiations on a permanent settlement still appear gridlocked, however, as the two sides have been unable to agree on terms for resuming talks and have rejected additional consultations in Pakistan, which mediated the initial ceasefire.

Council activity has continued alongside these developments. On 7 April, China and Russia vetoed a draft resolution proposed by Bahrain—again in coordination with several other member states of the GCC and Jordan—that encouraged states to coordinate efforts to protect commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. On 8 May, Bahrain and the US put in blue a draft resolution that they had co-penned on de-mining in the Strait. That text apparently had 137 co-sponsors at the time of writing, but it was also expected to face opposition from China and Russia, which have expressed concerns about its provisions. A vote on the text had not been scheduled at the time of writing.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 29 April press release, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk deplored Iranian authorities' crackdown on dissent, particularly through the use of national security-related charges. Since the onset of the US-Israeli strikes against Iran, at least nine people have been executed in connection with the domestic protests that took place in December 2025 and January 2026, ten for alleged membership in opposition groups, and two on espionage charges. In light of these developments, Türk called on the authorities to halt all further executions and fully ensure due process and fair trial guarantees, among other recommendations.

In response to the escalation of conflict in the Middle East, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFM), which the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) established in November 2022, called on all parties to the ongoing conflict to cease hostilities, end rhetoric that incites or justifies violence, and fully comply with international law.

On 25 March, the HRC adopted a resolution on the human rights implications of Iran's attacks against GCC countries and Jordan. Among other recommendations, the resolution demands Iran's full compliance with Security Council resolution 2817 and with its obligations under international law, and calls for its immediate, unconditional cessation of all unprovoked attacks, threats, and provocations against the aforementioned countries.

On 19 March, the FFM submitted a report to the HRC on human rights violations in the country, including during and after the June 2025 hostilities between Israel and Iran, as well as in the context of the domestic protests that began in December 2025. The report's findings detail Iranian authorities' use of similar repressive measures in both contexts to suppress dissent, including through large-scale arbitrary arrests and detention, unlawful use of lethal force by security forces, and an increase in executions, among other measures.

## Key Issues and Options

The key proximate issue for the Council is overcoming the procedural gridlock that has stymied its consideration of the Iranian nuclear file since the triggering of the snapback in August 2025. Members remain divided over the status of resolution 2231 and the "Non-Proliferation" agenda item and the validity of the 1737 sanctions regime, which has prevented the appointment of a Committee chair and hindered the operationalisation of the PoE. As a result, the Committee has been unable to exercise effective oversight over the sanctions regime.

A broader issue for the Council is the current Middle East crisis that began with the joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran in February. Important objectives in this regard include sustaining the fragile ceasefire and preventing a return to large-scale hostilities; restoring the verification and monitoring activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Iran; safeguarding freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz; and protecting civilians and civilian infrastructure across the region.

While Council members could continue to engage in informal consultations to identify common ground on the 1737 sanctions regime or pursue products addressing aspects of the broader crisis, the most effective and sustainable solution to both issues would be a political settlement agreed by Iran and the US, and endorsed by the Council, that ends the war and addresses Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for the re-lifting of UN sanctions.

## Council Dynamics

The Council remains deeply divided on the Iran file. France, the UK, the US, and most other members maintain that the snapback was valid, that the "Non-Proliferation" agenda item and key provisions of resolution 2231 remain in force, and that the 1737 Committee and its PoE have been reactivated. China and Russia reject these positions, arguing that resolution 2231 has expired in its entirety and that the Council has concluded its consideration of the Iranian nuclear issue. These divisions have had spillover effects across the Council's work, preventing the adoption of its monthly programme of work and blocking agreement on subsidiary body chairs. They have also polarised the Council's response to the ongoing Middle East crisis, influencing votes on resolution 2817 and the competing Russian-drafted text in March, as well as the Bahrain-led draft on the Strait of Hormuz that China and Russia vetoed in April.

# International Criminal Tribunals

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is scheduled to hold its semi-annual debate on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT). The President of the IRMCT, Judge Graciela Gatti Santana, and the Chief Prosecutor of the IRMCT, Serge Brammertz, are expected to brief during the debate and meet with the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals prior to that.

The Council is also expected to adopt a resolution on the IRMCT in June. The term of the Chief Prosecutor expires on 30 June.

## Background and Key Recent Developments

With branches in The Hague, the Netherlands, and Arusha, Tanzania, the IRMCT is mandated to complete the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which closed in December 2017 and December 2015, respectively. The IRMCT was established by resolution 1966 of 22 December 2010, which stated that “the Mechanism shall continue the jurisdiction, rights and obligations and essential functions of the ICTY and ICTR” and that it “should be a small, temporary and efficient structure, whose functions and size will diminish over time, with a small number of staff commensurate with its reduced functions”. The IRMCT has implemented its mandate through five main modalities: supervising the enforcement of sentences; protecting victims and witnesses; providing assistance to national jurisdictions; preserving and managing the archives of the Mechanism and the predecessor tribunals; and conducting other judicial activities within its jurisdiction, such as managing requests for review of judgments.

Pursuant to resolution 1966, the IRMCT was mandated to operate for an initial period of four years and for subsequent periods of two years unless the Council decides otherwise. The Council last reviewed the work of the IRMCT through resolution 2740 of 27 June 2024. Adopted with 14 votes in favour and one abstention (Russia), the resolution extended Brammertz’s term for an additional two years and recalled the Council’s request in resolution 2637 of 22 June 2022—its prior resolution on the IRMCT—for the Mechanism to produce “clear and focused projections of completion timelines” for its activities, taking note of the information that it had submitted to the Council’s Informal Working Group on International Tribunals in response to this request.

Resolution 2740 also requested two reports from the Secretary-General: one regarding “the administrative and budgetary aspects of the options for possible locations of the archives of the ICTY, the ICTR, and the [IRMCT]”; and another concerning options for transferring certain remaining functions of the IRMCT, including supervision of sentences and the provision of assistance to national jurisdictions. Both reports were issued on 1 December 2025.

Gatti Santana and Brammertz briefed the Council at its most recent semi-annual debate on the IRMCT, held on 10 December 2025. During her briefing, Gatti Santana updated Council members on the IRMCT’s work, noting that IRMCT judges had issued nearly

80 decisions and orders during the reporting period, approximately 90 percent of which pertained to the Mechanism’s judicial functions. She also welcomed the recommendations made in the Secretary-General’s reports. Regarding options for transferring the remaining functions of the IRMCT, Gatti Santana supported the Secretary-General’s proposal to transfer to the UN Secretariat the technical functions of the prosecution’s assistance to national jurisdictions and the management of the archives, which she said would materially decrease the Mechanism’s activities and resource requirements.

In his briefing to the Council, Brammertz highlighted his office’s work in assisting national authorities with pursuing accountability for crimes committed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. He emphasised that his office had increased the amount of evidence that it had shared with national prosecutors and prepared investigative dossiers for national authorities concerning suspects whom it had investigated but not indicted. Brammertz also provided an update on the case against Fulgence Kayishema, one of the last fugitives indicted in connection with the 1994 Rwandan genocide, who remains in South Africa more than three years after his arrest, despite an IRMCT order directing his transfer to its custody.

On 27 February, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) issued its evaluation report on the methods and work of the IRMCT. The report assessed “the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of the approach of the [IRMCT] to fulfilling ... its residual functions”, observing that the IRMCT’s mandate remained relevant and was adequately implemented through its five modalities and appropriate adaptations to evolving circumstances. At the same time, the report concluded that the Mechanism’s “current organizational architecture is no longer fit for purpose, and the absence of a clearly articulated, institution-wide completion strategy and transition plan risks extending its operations beyond what is justified and delaying its intended downward trajectory”. In light of these findings, the report recommended that the IRMCT should:

1. Develop a list of strategic priorities for digitisation and preservation from among the remaining archival work, with a focus on ensuring access for ongoing national investigative and prosecutorial processes; and
2. Pending the Security Council’s decision regarding the future of the Mechanism, develop a time-bound plan with resource implications for the various scenarios emanating from the options to transfer or complete its residual functions.

Typically, the Council adopts a biennial presidential statement that requests the IRMCT to submit a progress report, which is reviewed by the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals. The findings and recommendations of the Informal Working Group then inform the Council’s biennial resolution on the IRMCT. This year, however, the Council was unable to achieve consensus on the presidential statement. As a workaround apparently agreed upon by Council members, China, as the May Council president, requested the UN Secretariat to engage with the IRMCT to facilitate the provision of relevant information to the Council for the Mechanism’s

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS** [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2740](#) (27 June 2024) re-appointed Brammertz as Chief Prosecutor of the IRMCT for another two years, until 30 June 2026. The resolution was adopted with 14 votes in favour and 1 abstention (Russia). [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10059](#) (10 December 2025) was the semi-annual debate on the work of the IRMCT. [Secretary-General’s Reports S/2025/785](#) (1 December 2025) was the Secretary-General’s report on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the options for possible locations of the archives of the ICTR, the ICTY, and the IRMCT, requested by resolution 2740 of 27 June 2024. [S/2025/786](#) (1 December 2025) was the Secretary-General’s report on options for transferring certain remaining functions of the IRMCT, including supervision of sentences and the provision of assistance to national jurisdictions, requested by resolution 2740 of 27 June 2024.

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## International Criminal Tribunals

review. A progress report from the IRMCT was circulated to Council members in mid-May.

On 16 May, the IRMCT issued a statement confirming the passing of Félicien Kabuga, a Rwandan businessman who stood charged with six counts of genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, incitement to genocide, and crimes against humanity, including persecution, extermination, and murder, committed during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. An arrest warrant for Kabuga was issued by the ICTR on 29 April 2013, with his arrest in May 2020 and subsequent transfer to the Mechanism's Hague branch on 26 October 2020. On 20 May, the Trial Chamber of the IRMCT issued a decision formally terminating the proceedings in the case of *Prosecutor v. Félicien Kabuga*.

### Key Issues and Options

Appointing a Chief Prosecutor is an immediate issue for the Council, as Brammertz's term is set to expire on 30 June, pursuant to resolution 2740.

Continuing to monitor the work of the IRMCT and the implementation of its mandate is another key issue for the Council.

Members could use the closed format of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals to have a frank discussion with Gatti Santana and Brammertz regarding the IRMCT's completion timelines. Reflecting on the recommendations presented in the Secretary-General's December 2025 reports, as well as the OIOS and IRMCT progress reports, Council members could also use this format to seek the views of Gatti Santana and Brammertz regarding appropriate avenues for the possible transfer of certain functions of the IRMCT and locations for the archives. They could also consider related informal consultations to examine in greater detail the legal, operational, and budgetary implications of the options mapped out in the reports, with a view to identifying areas of convergence and fostering more constructive future negotiations on Council products concerning the IRMCT. Members might also ask how the Council can assist the IRMCT in completing its remaining work.

### Council Dynamics

Council members generally have a positive assessment of the IRMCT and the progress it has made, with the exception of Russia. During the December 2025 semi-annual debate, Russia strongly criticised the IRMCT, asserting that “the Mechanism's ongoing existence seems absurd when viewed against the backdrop of a completely empty judicial basket and the UN80 Initiative”. Russia therefore called for all residual functions, including judicial ones, to be

handed over to national authorities and UN entities. Other Council members expressed support for the IRMCT and its work and urged member states to cooperate with the Mechanism as it carries out its remaining functions.

Russia has also regularly criticised the appointment of Brammertz—who served as ICTY prosecutor from 2008 until its closure in 2017—abstaining on the resolution initially appointing him in 2016 and on each of the subsequent resolutions biennially extending his term.

The negotiations on resolution 2740, which most recently extended Brammertz's term, were lengthy, difficult, and contentious. Russia apparently objected to many aspects of the draft text, provided comments on almost every paragraph, reiterated long-held criticisms of the IRMCT, and strongly pushed for a concrete timeframe and deadline for the transfer of the Mechanism's remaining functions. While some of Russia's suggestions were supported by China, they were largely opposed by other Council members.

It seems that such dynamics also played a role in negotiations on the Council's most recent biennial presidential statement on the Mechanism, penned by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as the Council's penholder on the IRMCT. In accordance with past practice, the draft text—initially circulated to members in March—would have requested the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals to review by 15 May a progress report from the IRMCT, as well as the two Secretary-General reports and the OIOS evaluation report, with a view to identifying concrete options to address the Mechanism's remaining functions and the aim to conclude them.

Similar to resolution 2740, the negotiations on the draft presidential statement were arduous. During the negotiations, Russia apparently maintained its long-held criticisms of the IRMCT, objecting to several aspects of the draft text and reiterating its call for a concrete timeframe and deadline for transferring the Mechanism's residual functions. To facilitate consensus among Council members, the DRC circulated several revised drafts of the presidential statement and convened several informal consultations, including closed consultations held under “any other business” on 14 and 23 April and 7 May. Russia still expressed reservations about the text, however, and the penholder ultimately decided not to pursue the presidential statement further. The Council instead opted for the workaround solution involving the Secretariat, as described above.

These dynamics are likely to colour the negotiations in June on the IRMCT resolution.

# Somalia

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is expected to hold a private meeting on the African Union (AU) Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). Deputy Special Representative for Somalia and Officer in Charge of the UN Transition Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS) Raisedon Zenenga and Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson (SRCC) for Somalia and Head of AUSSOM El Hadji Ibrahima Diene are the anticipated briefers.

Resolution 2809 of 23 December 2025, which extended the authorisation for AUSSOM until 31 December, requested the Secretary-General to report by 31 May to the Council on, among other things, recommendations for appropriate adaptations to the support provided by the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) to AUSSOM and an update on the status of voluntary resource mobilisation towards AUSSOM's budget. This report (S/2026/446) was circulated to Council members on 29 May.

## Key Recent Developments

On 4 March, Somalia's bicameral Federal Parliament approved amendments to chapters five to 15 of the provisional constitution, covering federal relations and the branches of the federal government, as well as public finance, security, and transitional provisions. The amendments also extended the terms of the Federal Parliament and the Federal Government President from four to five years. Media reports quoted the Speaker of the House of the People, Sheikh Adan Mohamed Nur, as stating that the extension would apply to incumbent office holders, thereby extending the mandates of the Federal Parliament and the president by one year beyond their previously scheduled expiry dates of 14 April and 15 May, respectively, and postponing the next elections accordingly. On 8 March, Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud signed these amendments into law, completing the constitutional review process and finalising the constitution.

The amendments drew strong reactions from opposition leaders. The Somali Future Council—an opposition coalition comprising the leaders of Puntland and Jubaland, and other opposition figures—as well as former Presidents Sheikh Sharif Ahmed and Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo criticised the amendments, citing a lack of political consensus and warning that they risk further deepening political polarisation in Somalia's already fragile political environment.

Tensions also escalated between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the leadership of South-West state, one of the federal member states. Following the adoption of the constitutional amendments, South-West authorities suspended relations with Mogadishu, becoming the third federal member state to do so after Puntland and Jubaland. The move followed the regional parliament's re-election of President Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed (Laftagareen) under the state's constitutional framework, a process that the federal government refused to recognise. The dispute subsequently triggered armed clashes between federal and state forces, culminating in federal forces taking control of Baidoa, the administrative capital of South-West state. Laftagareen subsequently resigned, after which the FGS appointed Ahmed Mohamed Hussein, the state's former finance minister, as interim president.

These developments have plunged Somalia into a renewed political impasse, marked by disputes over constitutional legitimacy, institutional mandates, and the country's electoral trajectory. Mohamud has maintained that the latest constitutional amendments extend his mandate beyond 15 May, a position rejected by opposition leaders. Against this backdrop, high-level talks between the FGS and the Somali Future Council, facilitated by the US and the UK, were held in Mogadishu from 13 to 15 May but reportedly ended in a stalemate amid continued disagreements over the electoral model and the president's mandate. Media reports indicate, however, that international partners have continued to engage the parties to facilitate dialogue and break the political deadlock.

On 26 December 2025, Israel formally recognised Somaliland, becoming the first UN member state to do so since Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991. The move was condemned by Mogadishu and several regional actors, which reiterated their support for Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. On 18 May, Somaliland's first ambassador to Israel, Mohamed Hagi, presented his credentials to Israeli President Isaac Herzog, as Somaliland moved forward with plans to establish an embassy in Jerusalem.

Resolution 2809 also encouraged the AU to transmit to the Council, by 30 April, updated plans for AUSSOM's configuration and the size of its deployed force and requested the UN, jointly with the AU and FGS, to undertake regular, joint technical assessments of progress against the benchmarks outlined in the 26 November 2024 AU-UN joint report. This report was considered by the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) on 28 April. The Secretary-General transmitted the aforementioned report to the Council in a 22 May letter. Although the report is not public, it apparently indicated that AUSSOM continued to play a critical enabling role in sustaining joint operations and supporting Somali security institutions. While the mission currently maintains deployments across 49 locations—compared with the 23 locations envisaged under its Concept of Operations—the report noted that the existing footprint remains necessary to prevent security vacuums as Somali security forces continue to develop operational capacity. It seems that among its recommendations, the report called for accelerated force generation, capacity-building, and integrated operational planning between AUSSOM and Somali forces; the development of a benchmark-based framework for the phased transfer of security responsibilities to Somali authorities; and the establishment of a joint AU-FGS-UN monitoring mechanism to assess progress against agreed benchmarks and operational conditions.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 6 May, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and Somali Minister of Family and Human Rights Development Khadija Mohamed Al-Makhzoumi signed Somalia's first host country agreement, which will establish a comprehensive human rights mandate for the country's human rights office, including monitoring, reporting, technical assistance, and capacity-building activities.

At the 61st session of the HRC, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism Ben Saul submitted a report to the Council on his May 2025 visit to Somalia. In the report, Saul assessed the consistency of the country's

# Somalia

counter-terrorism laws, policies, and practices with international human rights law. The report highlighted ongoing concerns about the counter-terrorism strategy (which was not made available to the Special Rapporteur), reportedly observing that the suppression of terrorism falls short in adequately addressing human rights, oversight, and accountability. It further noted that the effectiveness of Somalia's counter-terrorism response is impeded by political and constitutional instability, clan divisions, and fragmentation between central and federal member state authorities.

## Key Issues and Options

One of the key considerations for the Council in June is the implementation of AUSSOM's mandate and the gradual transfer of security responsibilities to Somali security forces. In resolution 2809, the Council expressed its intention to adapt the support provided to AUSSOM to prioritise sustaining the mission's capacity to help consolidate the peace and security gains made so far in Somalia, before 30 June.

In this context, Council members are likely to be guided by the findings and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the future configuration of UNSOS support to AUSSOM and the status of voluntary resource mobilisation efforts, as well as the recent AU-UN-FGS assessment of force configuration and progress against agreed benchmarks.

An important issue for Council members remains how to ensure that the security transition in Somalia does not outpace the capacity of Somali security forces to assume responsibilities from AUSSOM without jeopardising hard-won gains against Al-Shabaab. The joint assessment apparently cautioned that Al-Shabaab continues to retain the capacity to conduct asymmetric attacks, including through improvised explosive devices, ambushes, and economic coercion, while warning that territorial gains remain vulnerable to reversal in the absence of stabilisation efforts, governance presence, and sustained logistical support. Another important issue for Council members is the impact of persistent funding shortfalls and reductions in logistical support on critical operational enablers, including aviation, engineering, and mobility capabilities, and the implications this may have for AUSSOM's operational effectiveness and the broader security transition process.

One option for the Council would be to encourage additional international support for AUSSOM, including through efforts to mobilise voluntary contributions to address the mission's funding shortfalls, such as the convening of a pledging conference. Another option would be to hold an Informal Interactive Dialogue (IID) with representatives of the AU, the FGS, troop-contributing countries, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the mission's operational challenges, progress against agreed benchmarks, and ways to sustain recent security gains.

Another important issue is how to continue supporting the Somali government in promoting political dialogue, institution-building, and the implementation of national priorities. Recent political disputes over constitutional and electoral arrangements have raised concerns about political stability, the legitimacy of state institutions, and the prospects for a consensual political process. These concerns are particularly relevant as UNTMIS continues its transition ahead of its planned departure on 31 October.

In this regard, Council members may wish to consider how the UN can sustain support for Somalia's political and state-building priorities during and beyond the mission's transition. While discussions on post-UNTMIS arrangements apparently remain ongoing, there appears to be little clarity thus far regarding the future framework for UN political engagement in Somalia. One option for the Council would be to consider the potential role of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa in supporting Somalia's political process following UNTMIS' departure.

## Council Dynamics

Council members support the Somali government's priorities and recognise the many challenges facing the country, including the persistent insecurity caused by the terrorist activities of Al-Shabaab. They also support ongoing efforts to fight the group. Some members, however, believe that a security approach will not be sufficient and underscore the need to make progress in governance, justice, and economic reforms.

The majority of Council members support addressing AUSSOM's funding challenges. However, the US remains strongly opposed to considering the issue within the framework of resolution 2719 of 21 December 2023, which authorises the use of UN-assessed contributions to finance AU-led peace support operations. In a 21 April press release, the European Union (EU) announced an additional €75 million in support for AUSSOM to cover troop allowances, non-lethal equipment, and related services for personnel deployed in Somalia.

In October 2025, the UK, the penholder on Somalia, reportedly explored the possibility of developing a Council product on post-UNTMIS arrangements, given the upcoming expiration of the mission's mandate. UNTMIS is currently implementing a two-year phased transition of its functions to the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Somalia. However, Somalia reportedly did not support the proposal, which appears to have been abandoned. Similarly, during negotiations on resolution 2809, Somalia opposed the inclusion of references to UNTMIS in the draft text. This position may reflect Somalia's reluctance to have the Council engage on Somalia's internal political developments.

# UNDOF (Golan)

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is expected to vote on a draft resolution renewing the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which expires on 30 June. In mid-June, an official from the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) is expected to brief Council members in closed consultations on the Secretary-General's latest 90-day report on UNDOF, due on 2 June, and the most recent developments.

## Background and Key Recent Developments

UNDOF was established following the conclusion of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement (the 1974 agreement) between Israel and Syria, which ended the Yom Kippur War. Its mandate is to maintain the ceasefire between the parties and supervise the disengagement of Israeli and Syrian forces, as well as the areas of separation (a demilitarised buffer zone) and limitation (where Israeli and Syrian troops and equipment are restricted) in the Golan.

Israel continues to maintain a presence in the area of separation—which it expanded into following the ouster of Bashar al-Assad's government in December 2024—and from where it also routinely conducts incursions across the ceasefire line, in violation of the 1974 agreement.

Israel has cited national security concerns as the basis for its continued violations and has said that it will occupy the buffer zone indefinitely to ensure the demilitarisation of the zone and mitigation of threats from southern Syria. Since July 2025, Israel has said that some of its operations have been aimed at protecting the Druze community in Syria's southern Suweida governorate from intercommunal violence.

Under its interim president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, Syria has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to the 1974 agreement, and despite strongly condemning Israeli attacks, it has not retaliated militarily. Sharaa has sharply criticised Israeli actions, warning that such demands could lead to “a dangerous place”, and he has called for Israel to withdraw its forces and respect the 1974 agreement. During the Council's 15 May meeting on Syria, the country's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Ibrahim Olabi, said that Israeli actions pose “the biggest hurdle in front of achieving stability in Syria”.

Since Sharaa took power, the US has adopted a policy of supporting Syria's progress towards stability and peace with its neighbours, including with Israel. On 6 January, Israel, Syria, and the US held discussions in Paris, following which they issued a joint statement affirming a commitment to achieving mutual security. The statement said that Israel and Syria agreed to establish a joint communication mechanism, which would be supervised by the US, to facilitate coordination on intelligence, military de-escalation, diplomacy, and commercial opportunities between the two sides. On 14 February, Syrian interim Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani reportedly clarified that the discussions were focused on Israel's withdrawal from Syrian territory occupied since December 2024 and excluded the issue of control over the Golan, which has existed since the 1973 war. The Golan remains occupied territory under international law.

The Secretary-General's most recent report on UNDOF's activities, dated 10 March and covering the period from 16 November 2025 to 13 February, reported continued violations of the 1974 agreement. The report said that these included the “continued presence ... of the Israel Defense Forces [IDF] on the Bravo side [the Syrian side of the buffer zone], firing into and across the area of separation, as well as across the ceasefire line, the presence of unauthorized equipment and personnel in the areas of separation and limitation, and crossings of the ceasefire line by [IDF] personnel, drones, aircraft and individuals from the Bravo side”. It reported that as at 13 February, the IDF “maintained and reinforced” 11 positions that it had established in both the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side, adding that UNDOF observed continued “engineering and construction activities” by the IDF in the area of separation. The report also said that the movement of UNDOF personnel was restricted 13 times, including through IDF roadblocks and constructed gates, adding that on two occasions IDF soldiers threatened United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) military observers.

More recent Israeli violations reportedly included incursions into Quneitra in which Syrian men were detained by the IDF. Furthermore, on 3 April, UNDOF reported that an Israeli tank fired across the ceasefire line. The incident coincided with reports of a civilian death caused by Israeli tank fire in the municipality of al-Rafid in Quneitra that was condemned by the Syrian government.

On 16 April, the Israeli government reportedly approved a five-year investment plan of \$334 million to expand settlement development in the Golan, with the goal of attracting thousands of new Israeli families to the region. The move has been criticised by Human Rights Watch as a statement of intent to commit war crimes and a violation of Article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer by an occupying power of its own nationals into occupied territory.

## Human Rights-Related Developments

On 2 February, the Secretary-General submitted a report to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan. The report was prepared pursuant to HRC resolution 58/26, which requested the Secretary-General to report on the matter at its 61st session. In preparing the report, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, on behalf of the Secretary-General, sought the views of member states in Geneva on the implementation of the resolution's relevant provisions. The report includes responses from Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Mexico denouncing measures taken by Israel to extend its laws, jurisdiction, and administration to the Golan and asserting that its actions are in direct violation of international law and relevant UN resolutions.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights presented the annual report on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. The report documented the expansion of Israeli settlement activity in the Syrian Golan, together with large-scale infrastructure projects, land confiscations, and ground incursions in strategic areas of the region, creating conditions that facilitate the expansion and entrenchment of settlements in the occupied territory.

On 31 March, the HRC adopted resolutions 61/31 and 61/32 on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan and Israeli settlements in the OPT, including East Jerusalem and the Golan, respectively. Among other

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UN DOCUMENTS ON UNDOF Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2811 (29 December 2025) renewed the mandate of UNDOF for six months, until 30 June 2026. S/RES/350 (31 May 1974) established UNDOF. Secretary-General's Report S/2026/157 (10 March 2026) was the Secretary-General's 90-day report on UNDOF, covering the period 16 November 2025 to 13 February 2026. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9840 (17 January 2025) was a meeting on UNIFIL and UNDOF.

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## UNDOF (Golan)

recommendations, resolution 61/31 calls upon Israel to cease changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure, and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan. Resolution 61/32 similarly demands that Israel immediately cease all settlement activities, without pre-conditions, in all the OPT, including East Jerusalem, and in the Golan, and in this regard calls for the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions.

### Key Issues and Options

A key priority for the Council in December is the renewal of UNDOF's mandate. Members could choose to make no changes to the mandate to avoid complicated negotiations during a period in which discussions are ongoing between the parties over establishing a security agreement. Members could also consider updating the renewal resolution considering the significant shift in security dynamics in the Golan, increased challenges for UNDOF in addressing ongoing violations of the 1974 agreement, and obstructions preventing the mission from carrying out its mandate and posing risks to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Another issue for the Council is that the significant Israeli presence in the buffer zone and repeated violations of the 1974 agreement could risk further destabilising internal security dynamics in Syria or lead to a significant escalation between the parties that could re-ignite the Israeli-Syrian conflict.

Members could consider adopting a presidential statement urging the parties to uphold international law and their obligations under the 1974 agreement, underscoring that there should be no military forces or activities in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF. The statement could also express concern over risks posed to local civilian populations by violations of the 1974 agreement and call upon the parties to ensure that UNDOF is accorded the ability to operate safely, securely, and freely in accordance with the agreement. The Council could further urge de-escalation and express support for diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a security agreement between Israel and Syria in such a statement.

### Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council remains united in its view that UNDOF plays an important role in regional stability. Despite historical divisions about who holds sovereignty over the Golan, Russia and the US have traditionally considered UNDOF as a separate issue on which they can agree, serving as co-penholders on the file.

During negotiations on the latest UNDOF mandate renewal in December 2025, the penholders chose to streamline the resolution to focus on the core issues, including the obligation of both parties to respect the 1974 agreement. The resolution also called on the parties to avoid any breaches of the ceasefire and the area of separation, and to regularly liaise with and support UNDOF. The mandate was renewed for the customary period of six months.

Apparently, China wanted to include language in the text that recalled Syria's counter-terrorism obligations; however, this was not included by the penholders. Since Sharaa's government established control of Syria, China has been particularly vocal in calling on Damascus to take a stronger stance on foreign terrorist fighters, some of whom have been integrated into the country's security forces and are members of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, which China considers a terrorist organisation and a threat to its security.

The IDF's recent actions and presence in the Golan have generated criticism from several Council members. Most Council members have consistently demanded Israel's full withdrawal from Syria, while calling on all parties to adhere to the 1974 agreement. One of the main contentious issues during negotiations on the Council's 10 August 2025 presidential statement on Syria—which contained a reference to the 1974 agreement and UNDOF's mandate—was over whether Israel's military actions in Syria should be explicitly referenced and condemned in the text, with the "A3 Plus" members at the time (Algeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Guyana) and Pakistan arguing for such language. Conversely, the US was unwilling to include a direct reference to Israel or its actions. (For more information, see our 9 August 2025 *What's in Blue* story.)

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## Yemen

### Expected Council Action

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

### Key Recent Developments

The escalation of tensions in the Gulf region, which started on 28 February following the US-Israeli strikes on Iran, has further complicated the complex situation in Yemen. On 28 March, the Houthis

resumed their missile and drone attacks on Israel, which they had paused following the Gaza ceasefire agreement in October 2025. The Houthis—a Yemeni rebel group that has de facto control of the northwest of the country, including the capital Sana'a—are considered to be part of a coalition of regional armed groups dubbed the "axis of resistance", which are supported by Iran. After launching several attacks against Israel, the group ceased further strikes following the 7 April announcement of a ceasefire between Iran and the US. Houthi leadership, however, have recently warned that the group is ready to resume its attacks in support of Iran if the US resumes hostilities against the country.

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN** Security Council Resolution S/RES/2812 (14 January 2026) extended the Secretary-General's monthly reporting requirement on Houthi attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea until 15 July. Security Council Press Statement SC/16265 (23 December 2025) called for de-escalation and underlined strong support towards a political settlement in Yemen and for the Presidential Leadership Council, while also reiterating condemnation of detentions by the Houthis and the demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10135 (14 April 2026) was a meeting on political and humanitarian developments in Yemen.

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The escalation in the region has also raised renewed concerns regarding the possibility of the Houthis restarting their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea, which could create another commercial shipping chokehold akin to Iran's strategy in the Strait of Hormuz. In April, the group had reportedly threatened to close the Bab el-Mandeb Strait—which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden—if any Gulf countries joined the US and Israeli strikes against Iran.

In a 14 May statement before a US Senate Committee, US Commander of Central Command (CENTCOM) Admiral Brad Cooper said that Iran is no longer capable of reliably arming or supplying its proxies, including the Houthis. He also said that the group nonetheless retains capabilities to threaten Red Sea security.

Following months of negotiations, which took place in Jordan, Switzerland, and Oman under UN auspices, on 14 May, Grundberg announced that the conflict parties in Yemen agreed to release over 1,600 conflict-related detainees. The negotiations were facilitated by the Supervisory Committee on the implementation of the detainee release agreement, which is co-chaired by the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and was established as part of the framework of the 2018 Stockholm Agreement. Grundberg said that the negotiated outcome was a “significant achievement”. He said that it represented the largest such release of detainees since the outbreak of the conflict in Yemen, showed that dialogue can achieve results, and brought hope and relief to thousands of families of the detainees. A 15 May statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General welcomed the deal, called for its swift implementation, and called on the government of Yemen and the Houthis to build on the positive development and pursue further engagement towards an inclusive political process for peace in Yemen.

In his 14 April briefing to the Council, Grundberg highlighted that Yemen's recently established government cabinet is prioritising steps to stabilise the strained economy. However, he cautioned that Yemen is particularly vulnerable to the economic repercussions of the regional escalation as it contends with import disruptions, higher fuel and food prices, and a growing risk of reduced support from Gulf countries—on which it depends—due to the impact the war is having on their own economies.

Yemen's humanitarian situation is especially dire, as the number of people in need of aid continues to rise. Briefing the Council in the 14 April meeting, OCHA's Crisis Response Division Director Edem Wosornu said that the situation worsens daily with over half of the population in need of humanitarian aid, more than 18 million facing severe hunger, and more than 19 million without access to healthcare as the health system collapses. A 21 May Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) snapshot report highlighted how one in two people in government-controlled areas are facing high levels of acute food insecurity and projected that the situation is likely to deteriorate during the June–September lean season. Wosornu urged funding of the humanitarian needs and response plan for Yemen, which is seeking \$2.16 billion for 2026 and is currently only 14 percent covered.

Wosornu added that the urgency of the situation is compounded further by the fact that the UN's access in Yemen is severely restricted due to the Houthis' actions, which have included the seizure of UN assets and the continued arbitrary detention of 73 UN staffers. On 18 May, a Houthi court reportedly sentenced 19 people to

death who had been detained on accusations of collaborating with the Saudi Arabia-led military coalition that had intervened against the Houthis at the height of the Yemeni civil war.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how to help mitigate the risk of renewed escalation in Yemen, including the possibility that the country could be drawn into the broader regional confrontation with Iran. While frontlines remain relatively static, rising regional tensions and the Houthis' willingness to militarily support Iran increase the risk of spillover, while instability in southern Yemen adds further volatility.

The 14 May detainee release agreement represents a rare and meaningful confidence-building measure and an opportunity the Council could seek to build upon. In this context, Council members could consider convening an informal interactive dialogue (IID) with the Special Envoy, regional stakeholders, and countries supporting the Yemen peace process to assess both how the momentum generated by the agreement can be translated into broader political progress and how to mitigate the risk of Yemen being drawn into the wider regional confrontation. The IID could provide a forum for members to encourage the parties to fulfil their commitments under the detainee agreement swiftly and in good faith, discuss ways to support Grundberg's efforts to resume a credible and inclusive political process, and explore how regional actors can help insulate Yemen from further escalation while aligning their efforts behind a renewed political framework that reflects current realities on the ground.

A further key issue is the continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation, compounded by severe access constraints. The detention of UN and other personnel by the Houthis, as well as increasing restrictions on humanitarian operations, have significantly curtailed the delivery of assistance.

In this regard, the Council could consider adopting a resolution or presidential statement demanding the immediate and unconditional release of detained personnel and calling for the cessation of interference in humanitarian operations. Members could also consider holding a dedicated meeting focused on the protection of humanitarian personnel in Yemen or inviting a senior OCHA official to brief specifically on access constraints and operational impacts.

## Council and Wider Dynamics

Despite being critical of the Houthis, most Council members continue to support an inclusive intra-Yemeni political process under UN auspices and emphasise the need to advance mediation efforts. Several Council members have expressed support for the newly formed government, which has faced challenges in legitimising its control over the southern part of the country.

Regional dynamics remain complex. Tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which escalated during the fighting in southern Yemen between December 2025 and January, highlight underlying differences in their approaches. At the same time, the escalation involving Iran, Israel, and the US has added a new layer of complexity, particularly in light of heightened tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. While Saudi Arabia has been a principal backer of the newly formed government, Iran continues to support the Houthis, underscoring the risk that Yemen could again become a more active arena for regional competition. These dynamics raise

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concerns in light of Yemen potentially being drawn further into the broader regional conflict, undermining recent de-escalation efforts.

The Council's five permanent members remain divided on how to approach the Houthis. France, the UK, and the US have argued that the Council needs to increase pressure on the group—whom they believe are obstructing a political process and fostering instability in Yemen—including by strengthening the Yemen sanctions regime. The US has adopted a particularly hawkish position on the Houthis, unilaterally sanctioning the group and accusing Iran of supporting it. Conversely, China and Russia have argued that expanding the Yemen sanctions regime would escalate tensions and undermine prospects for a negotiated settlement.

Differences also persist regarding the Council's engagement on maritime security in the Red Sea. China and Russia have expressed reservations about maintaining the issue prominently on the Council's agenda, particularly where it intersects with military action undertaken by some member states, which they argue risks exacerbating tensions and undermining the political track. Other members, including the UK and the US, continue to emphasise the importance of addressing threats to freedom of navigation.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen. Greece and the US are the co-penholders on the Red Sea crisis.

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## Women, Peace and Security

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council will hold an open debate on women, peace and security (WPS) titled “Peace is decided with women: Emerging from conflict by enhancing their participation”. Building on Colombia's national experience with conflict resolution, the open debate intends to stress the importance of women's active participation in peace processes. This is one of the signature events of Colombia's June presidency and will be held at ministerial level. UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous and one or more civil society representatives are the anticipated briefers. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio will chair the meeting.

### Key Recent Developments

The June open debate comes at a time of heightened concern for the WPS agenda and more broadly for women's rights, gender equality, and international law, with civil society organisations warning of a growing backlash against women's autonomy and devastating consequences for women and girls in situations of armed conflict. Women in many situations on the Council's agenda continue to face heightened levels of violence, displacement, and marginalisation, including in Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, Lebanon, Myanmar, the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen.

The most recent Secretary-General's annual report on WPS, which was issued in September 2025, stressed that—against a backdrop of rising authoritarianism, the proliferation of conflict, and militarisation—there has been a “stagnation and even regression” across many of the goals of the WPS agenda between 2020 and 2025. It adds that gender equality and women's rights are “under threat”, and that disputes “over long-established gender-related terminology” reflect a pushback that “undermines legal protections, opening the door to broader rollbacks in the rights and daily lives of women and girls everywhere”. While many of these trends predate the current US administration, recent US policy choices, the limited efforts by

other states to mitigate their effects, and recent international funding decisions have precipitated some of these issues.

The negative impact of sharp reductions in donor funding on women and girls in crisis situations and on gender equality issues more broadly remains a source of concern. A UN Women survey focused on civil society organisations working to end violence against women and girls found that funding cuts have led to programme suspension or termination among one-third (34.5 percent) of the responding organisations. A recent report by the Women's Refugee Commission on the impact of US foreign aid cuts on women and girls in humanitarian crises shows that, in addition to disrupting key programmes and services, cuts are “reshaping humanitarian responses in ways that deepen gender inequality and compound harm for women and girls over time”.

Women remain largely excluded or underrepresented in peace and political processes, including from diplomatic processes that seek to address major crises such as in Sudan, Gaza, and Ukraine. According to the Secretary-General's report, in 2024, women represented only 7 percent of peace process negotiators on average worldwide, and nearly 9 out of 10 negotiation tracks included no women negotiators at all. More broadly, according to data compiled by the Council on Foreign Relations, as at 19 March, only 26 out of 193 countries were headed by a woman head of state or government, and only 14 countries' national cabinets were composed of at least 50 percent women.

At the Security Council, language on WPS and gender has been scaled back or removed in several resolutions renewing the mandates of UN peace operations; particularly, but not exclusively, in texts penned by the US. Most references to gender in resolution 2802, which renewed the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in November 2025, were substituted with references to women and girls. For instance, language requesting that the mission ensures that risks of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are included in the mission's data collection, threat analysis, and early warning systems was revised to refer to “risks of violence

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY** Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015) expressed the Council's intention to invite women civil society briefers to Council meetings. S/RES/1325 (31 October 2000) was the first Security Council resolution on WPS. Secretary-General's Report S/2025/556 (5 September 2025) was the Secretary-General's annual report on WPS. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10011 (6 October 2025) was the annual open debate on WPS.

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against women and girls”. A previously agreed reference to the mission taking “fully into account gender considerations as a crosscutting issue throughout its mandate” was changed to “considerations of all women and girls”.

Similarly, resolution 2815, which in January renewed the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), substituted a reference to “taking fully into account gender considerations as a crosscutting issue” throughout the mission’s mandate with “women, peace and security considerations”. Language on including a “gender perspective” in a future settlement process was also changed to a “women, peace and security perspective”.

Resolution 2814, which in January renewed the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), eliminated substantive language that had been in resolution 2743, the mission’s prior mandate, including many WPS references. For instance, resolution 2814 omitted language recognising the link between gender violence and arms flows. It also removed language that embedded gender equality as a crosscutting issue in the mission’s mandate, linking it to supporting women’s political participation, attention to SGBV, the implementation of Haiti’s National Action Plan on WPS, and the inclusion of women’s civil society organisations in peacebuilding and humanitarian action.

Language on gender considerations as a crosscutting issue, which appeared in previous resolutions renewing the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), is no longer included in resolution 2820, which most recently extended the mission’s mandate. The resolution also excluded language requesting gender-sensitive risk assessments on the adverse effects of climate change, among other references.

Participation of women civil society briefers in Council meetings has markedly decreased. According to an analysis by the NGO Working Group on WPS, in 2025 the Security Council received briefings by 31 women civil society representatives. This represents a 44 per cent decrease compared to 2024 when 55 women civil society representatives briefed the Council and is the lowest since 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis says that the sharp decline in briefings by women civil society representatives in 2025 likely reflects the impact of travel restrictions to the US, concerns regarding the security of some civil society representatives, and difficult Security Council dynamics.

According to the Secretary-General’s annual report on WPS, seven women civil society briefers who briefed the Security Council in 2024 and responded to a UN Women survey reported having been subjected to reprisals.

Adopted in 2013, Security Council resolution 2122 requested regular information and analysis on WPS to be provided to the Council, including that UN senior officials, as part of their regular briefings, deliver updates on issues relevant to the WPS agenda. A review of all briefings delivered by UN officials during open meetings on country-situations in 2025 showed that most briefings did not sufficiently or consistently include WPS analysis, failing to accurately reflect the impact of conflict and crises on diverse women and girls or to provide clear recommendations on how to address these issues. In a joint statement delivered during the 2025 annual working methods open debate, the ten elected members of the Council (E10) encouraged UN briefers to “integrate WPS issues and gender analysis into their briefings to the Council”, among other issues.

Since January, the Informal Experts Group (IEG) on WPS has met four times, focusing on Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Lebanon.

### Key Issues and Options

The overarching challenge for the Security Council is the mounting pushback against women’s rights, gender equality, and international law. A key issue remains the full implementation of the WPS agenda and its impact on the ground.

An important issue for Council members supportive of the agenda is to continue to ensure the inclusion of robust WPS language in thematic and country-specific outcomes, as well as follow up on the implementation of these decisions, in line with resolution 2242 of 2015 in which the Council decided to integrate WPS concerns “across all country-specific situations on the Security Council’s agenda”. In this regard, the negotiations on the renewal of the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), following its three-month extension in March, will be closely watched.

To guide their work, Council members can use the recommendations put forward by UN Women as the IEG secretariat, as well as the recommendations presented by women civil society representatives who have briefed the Council. Council members could also ask UN briefers to provide substantive updates to the Council on specific WPS issues, such as women’s participation in peace processes.

The Council’s failure to address and facilitate a peaceful resolution to several conflict situations on its agenda has had devastating consequences for women in those contexts, with some Council members being directly involved in these conflicts or supporting the conflict parties.

Council members could lead by example and stop transferring arms when there is a risk that weapons will be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and acts of SGBV. The Council could also impose and enforce arms embargoes in these situations. If Council dynamics do not allow collective action on these measures, a group of Council members supportive of international law and the WPS agenda could issue a joint statement announcing their decision to stop arms transfers and specifying that the decision was taken in response to serious violations of IHL and acts of SGBV.

Against the backdrop of the UN80 initiative, a reform agenda aimed at streamlining the UN in response to funding constraints and expected to result in consolidation and austerity measures, Council members could continue to support the deployment of women’s protection advisers and gender advisers in peace operations, as well as in transition processes from peacekeeping operations to special political missions and country teams.

In the context of the Security Council informal dialogues with the candidates for the position of UN Secretary-General, which are expected to begin in June, the members of the Shared Commitments on WPS initiative (Colombia, Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia, Liberia, Panama, and the UK) could coordinate to ensure that all candidates are asked about their position on the future of the WPS agenda.

### Council Dynamics

The US regularly seeks the deletion of references to gender in Council products or their substitution with narrower references. It has also challenged references to civil society, women’s participation, women protection advisers, and gender advisers.

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This position has converged with Russia's long-held oppositional stance regarding the inclusion of WPS language in Council outcomes.

Several Shared Commitments members often advocate for the retention of WPS and gender language in Council resolutions and break silence over these issues. On some occasions, they have succeeded in retaining some of these references. For example, in the case of UNMISS, the US, the penholder on South Sudan, reinstated references to women protection advisers; gender advisers; and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women after having

deleted them and facing the possibility that these and several other contentious changes could prompt abstentions and prevent the resolution from securing the requisite number of votes for adoption.

The US, which had signed on to the Shared Commitments in 2023, withdrew from the initiative in December 2025.

The UK is the penholder on WPS, and the US is the penholder on conflict-related sexual violence. Colombia and Denmark are the co-chairs of the IEG on WPS. Panama is the coordinator of the Shared Commitments initiative.

## Libya

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is expected to hold its 60-day briefing on the situation in Libya. Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Hanna Serwaa Tetteh will brief on recent political, security, and humanitarian developments in the country.

### Background and Key Recent Developments

Libya remains mired in a political impasse between the UN-recognised Government of National Unity (GNU), based in Tripoli and led by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, with advisory support from the High State Council (HSC), and the eastern-based Government of National Stability (GNS), led by Prime Minister Osama Hamad and backed by the House of Representatives (HoR) and the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) under the command of General Khalifa Haftar. The parties remain deadlocked over draft legislation to hold national elections that would reconcile the country's divided government. A key point of contention is over the proposal to form a unified interim government to organise the elections—an arrangement favoured by the GNS and HoR but opposed by the GNU and some segments of the HSC. The prolonged stalemate between the rival governments has persisted since the indefinite postponement of the 2021 elections.

To help break the deadlock over the electoral framework and institutional fragmentation, UNSMIL presented in August 2025 a political roadmap comprising three core pillars: the adoption of a viable electoral framework for presidential and legislative elections; the unification of state institutions under a new government; and the launch of a structured dialogue on governance, economic, security, and reconciliation issues to pave the way for elections and address longer-term conflict drivers.

Since then, UNSMIL has continued its engagement to facilitate an inclusive political process, but no major breakthroughs have been achieved. Agreement remains elusive on key issues, including electoral laws and the formation of a unified government. In her April briefing to the Council, Tetteh described progress on the political roadmap as inadequate. In recent months, UNSMIL has sought to

advance the roadmap through a broader “Structured Dialogue” and targeted small-group diplomacy to resolve the political deadlock and pave the way for the holding of national elections.

On 27 April, the Structured Dialogue held its second plenary session virtually, bringing together participants from all tracks. The Structured Dialogue is envisioned as an inclusive, countrywide consultative mechanism to inform decisions on the design of elections, the mandate of the interim executive, and institutional unification. UNSMIL has indicated that the Structured Dialogue is not a decision-making body for selecting a new government; rather, its purpose is to develop concrete recommendations to support an enabling environment for elections and address immediate governance, economic, and security challenges. It is expected to conclude its work in June, when it will present a final report to Libyan political leaders and the public.

UNSMIL has also begun engaging a smaller group of Libyan stakeholders, comprising representatives from the two rival governments, to unblock the two election-related milestones in the political roadmap: the adoption of a viable electoral framework and the establishment of a unified government to support the electoral process. Tetteh has noted that this format is intended to identify practical steps that Libyan institutions can take to move the process forward. The first such meeting took place on 29 April in Rome under UNSMIL auspices. Participants agreed on reconstituting the Board of the High National Elections Commission and committed to maintaining ongoing UN-facilitated talks.

Over the past year, the US has maintained sustained diplomatic engagement in Libya through its Senior Advisor for Africa, Massad Boulos, and broader interagency efforts across political, security, and economic tracks. In April, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) held its annual special operations exercise in Sirte, bringing together military personnel from eastern and western Libya, as well as 11 other countries, to enhance coordination on counter-terrorism and border security. On the economic front, the US has supported efforts to facilitate agreement on Libya's first unified budget in over a decade, which was signed on 11 April. Boulos has said that the agreement is intended to help stabilise the economy and enable the National

**UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA** [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2804](#) (25 November 2025) renewed for six months 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/2796](#) (31 October 2025) extended UNSMIL's mandate for 12 months and encouraged the mission to implement the recommendations from the strategic review. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10142](#) (22 April 2026) was a briefing on Libya.

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## Libya

Oil Corporation to invest in increasing oil production. He has also reiterated US support for UNSMIL's ongoing efforts to advance the political roadmap, with the aim of holding national elections and promoting Libyan unity.

While the 2020 ceasefire continues to hold and there have been no major nationwide violations, the security situation in Libya remains fragile. On 8 May, Libya's largest oil refinery in Zawiya temporarily shut down operations following armed clashes between GNU-affiliated state security forces and local armed groups near the facility. The clashes involved the use of heavy weapons and indiscriminate shelling, with some projectiles striking surrounding civilian areas and the refinery grounds. The facility did not suffer major structural damage and resumed operations on 10 May. According to media reports, at least three civilians and one refinery security officer were killed, while several others were injured. In an 8 May statement, UNSMIL condemned the clashes and the use of heavy weapons and indiscriminate fire in densely populated residential neighbourhoods and called on national authorities to investigate the incident and protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

On 25 May, the authorisation established by resolution 2804 (2025) to inspect vessels bound to or from Libya, where there are reasonable grounds to believe they are carrying arms or related materiel in violation of the arms embargo, expired. The EU naval force in the Mediterranean (Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI) was the only regional organisation conducting such inspections under this authorisation. While Operation IRINI is expected to continue carrying out its core tasks of surveillance and capacity building, in the absence of renewed authorisation, it lacks a mandate to inspect vessels on the high seas off the Libyan coast suspected of violating the arms embargo.

### Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how to best support the roadmap for a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process presented by Tetteh in August 2025. Council members have emphasised the importance of fostering common political ground between Libya's rival authorities to reach agreement on an electoral framework, including modalities for a unified interim government to organise elections.

Council members have also issued two press statements in support of the ongoing process. In the absence of progress, it may consider further Council products, including a resolution to urge the

Libyan political stakeholders to narrow their differences and send a strong signal in support of advancing the political process through the UN roadmap.

Another concern for the Council is the fragile security situation, underscored by the recent escalation of violence in Zawiya. Although the violence has subsided, the UN has warned of the risk of broader destabilisation. The underlying drivers of the clashes highlight the need for sustained attention to Libya's political and security dynamics.

### Council Dynamics

Council members remain united on the need for a Libyan-led, inclusive political process leading to elections as the only way to restore political, security, and economic stability in the country. They are also broadly supportive of the UN's mediation role in pursuing this objective, and they share concerns about the volatile security situation.

During the 22 April briefing on Libya, several Council members such as the UK, Latvia, and Bahrain commended the US for its role in facilitating the signing of the unified national budget. France and Greece welcomed the US mediation role in efforts to support military integration in Libya.

China and Russia seem to have a more nuanced perspective. China has emphasised that all international efforts must strictly adhere to the "Libyan-led and Libyan-owned" principle, prioritising support for mediation facilitated by the UN. Russia views external proposals as mere recommendations rather than binding solutions, warning that "backroom deals" are unlikely to yield results and insisting that the process remains exclusively in the hands of Libyans.

Council members generally agree that the arms embargo is essential for Libya's stability and for preventing further military escalation. Members remain deeply divided on the effectiveness of its enforcement, however.

Operation IRINI was the only regional organisation that was inspecting vessels based on authorisation granted under resolution 2780. It seems that Libya was opposed to renewal of this authorisation in May, which appears to be one of the reasons why France and Greece (co-penholders) did not pursue renewal. The US and European members of the Council have traditionally been very supportive of Operation IRINI. On the other hand, China and Russia, which abstained during the vote on resolution 2804, described Operation IRINI as ineffective and lacking transparency. Similar views were expressed by A3 members and Pakistan as well.

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## Central African Republic

### Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council will hold a briefing and consultations on the Secretary-General's latest report on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Special Representative for the Central African Republic (CAR) and Head of MINUSCA Valentine Rugwabiza is expected to brief.

### Key Recent Developments

On 25 February, Rugwabiza briefed the Council, focusing on the combined presidential, legislative, and local elections held in the CAR in December 2025 and MINUSCA's support for the organisation of those elections in accordance with its mandate. The chair of the CAR configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Omar Hilale (Morocco), also briefed, noting that the CAR

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**UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolution S/RES/2800** (13 November 2025) renewed MINUSCA's mandate for one year until 15 November 2026. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10111** (25 February 2026) was on the situation in the CAR.

## Central African Republic

has entered “a decisive phase in terms of consolidation, confidence and national cohesion”. (For more information, see our 20 February *What’s in Blue* story.)

President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, who won a third term, was sworn in during an inauguration ceremony held in Bangui on 30 March in the presence of regional leaders. Under the country’s new constitution, which entered into effect in August 2023, the presidential term lasts seven years. On 16 May, Touadéra reportedly reappointed Félix Moloua as Prime Minister, and on 21 May, Moloua formed a new cabinet.

On 26 April, the second round of legislative and local elections was held in the CAR. MINUSCA provided support for the electoral process, including transporting electoral materials and personnel, conducting outreach activities, and helping to ensure security for the peaceful conduct of the elections in collaboration with the CAR security and defence forces. In a 27 April statement, Rugwabiza welcomed the holding of these elections throughout the country, including in areas where voting could not take place in December 2025 due to insecurity. She also noted that the mission had fully and successfully implemented its mandate in support of the electoral process.

Following the conclusion of the national electoral processes, MINUSCA is conducting a reconfiguration “to evolve gradually toward a phase of supporting the Central African authorities in order to consolidate the gains made in terms of security, peace, access, and State authority”, according to a 6 May briefing by the mission’s spokesperson. The mission has prioritised facilitating the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants from two armed groups—the Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation (3R) and l’Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC)—which last year decided to rejoin the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR-RCA). According to the Secretary-General’s February report, 1,202 former combatants have been disarmed and demobilised since July 2025, bringing the total number of demobilised ex-combatants to 6,000 since the APPR-RCA was signed.

Following the cessation of hostilities by the 3R and the UPC, there has been a noticeable decline in security incidents, particularly in the west and north-east. However, insecurity persists in other parts of the country, driven by armed group activities around mining sites and transhumance corridors, as well as cross-border incursions along the borders with Sudan and South Sudan. In the south-east, violence perpetrated by the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe (AAKG)—a predominantly ethnic Azande militia accused of committing serious human rights violations—remains a major concern.

### Key Issues and Options

A key issue for Council members is how to support the CAR in consolidating its political and security gains to ensure long-term peace and stability. In this regard, Council members are likely to emphasise the need for sustained support for ongoing efforts to implement security sector reform, DDR, and justice and rule of law reforms, as well as the promotion of economic recovery and development through support for the country’s 2024–2028 national development plan.

A possible option for the Colombian Security Council presidency in June would be to invite Hilale to brief the Council on his visit to Bangui from 30 March to 2 April and his series of engagements

with the CAR authorities and other relevant stakeholders aimed at consolidating the gains achieved.

Another issue likely to be a focus of Council members, following the conclusion of the electoral processes, would be the possible handover of certain MINUSCA tasks in a gradual, phased, and responsible manner to the CAR government or the UN country team. Pursuant to resolution 2800, the Secretary-General is requested to submit a report with detailed proposals and recommendations for such a transition by 15 September. In this context, there is particular interest in sunsetting the mission’s electoral division, and the Secretary-General is expected to include the mission’s plans in this regard in his report.

Despite improvements in the country’s overall peace and security situation, another important issue is the ongoing insecurity linked to armed group activity that persists in parts of the CAR. Council members remain particularly concerned about the security situation along the country’s borders, including the spillover effects of the conflict in Sudan. In this regard, they could consider a press statement reiterating their call for armed groups that are not signatories to the APPR-RCA to lay down their arms and engage in the political process through dialogue.

The UN’s liquidity crisis and its impact on the mission’s operational capacity remain an ongoing concern. In February, Rugwabiza explained the contingency measures implemented by the mission to enforce strict expenditure controls, which have affected the resources for implementing its mandated tasks, including the protection of civilians, support to the electoral process, and disarmament and demobilisation operations. She also elaborated on the Mission’s readjusted footprint, taking into account the reduction of uniformed personnel because of the liquidity crisis. Members may choose to discuss the impact of the liquidity crisis on the mission with Rugwabiza during the consultations.

### Council Dynamics

Council members support MINUSCA’s work and appreciate its contribution to stabilising the country. They also recognise that the CAR has entered a new phase of consolidation that requires building the country’s capacity to gradually assume security responsibilities. In this regard, they may continue to underscore the importance of ensuring that this process consolidates the gains made in recent years and avoids any possibility of reversal.

However, most members are concerned about the impact of the UN’s liquidity crisis on the mission’s work. During the February Council meeting, Pakistan, a major troop- and police-contributing country (TCC), drew attention to the financial burden on TCCs due to delayed reimbursement of personal costs.

At that meeting, the US—which abstained on the vote in November 2025 on a resolution renewing the mission’s mandate—maintained that MINUSCA should cease efforts that are not necessary and transfer responsibilities to the CAR authorities or other stakeholders where possible. During the negotiations, it had pushed for a larger reduction in troop levels given progress on the ground. For its part, China stressed the need for the Council to make a realistic assessment of the situation in the country in close consultation with the CAR government and consider optimising MINUSCA’s mandate and size at the appropriate time to steadily advance its transition.

France is the penholder on the CAR.

# Children and Armed Conflict

## Expected Council Action

In late June, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on children and armed conflict. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Vanessa Frazier is expected to present the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict, which is due in mid-June. Other speakers are likely to include Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell and one or more civil society briefers.

The open debate is expected to address trends relating to the six grave violations against children. (The six grave violations, as determined by the Security Council, are child recruitment and use; killing and maiming; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; abductions; and the denial of humanitarian access.) It seems that Colombia, the Council's president in June, has chosen to focus the meeting on the protection of educational settings and on the prevention of attacks against schools.

## Background and Key Recent Developments

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/77 of 12 December 1996, which established the children and armed conflict mandate. The Security Council has developed a robust normative framework in support of the mandate through the adoption of 14 resolutions and 13 presidential statements to date. Among the tools established by the Council are the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)—which collects and verifies information on grave violations committed against children—and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. Conclusions adopted by the Working Group, as well as the annexes in the Secretary-General's annual report—which list parties that have committed violations against children—have helped to promote accountability and to encourage conflict parties to take steps to protect children, such as signing and implementing action plans to end and prevent grave violations.

In a 23 December 2025 report to the Human Rights Council (HRC), Frazier noted that more than 220,000 children have been released from armed forces and groups since the establishment of the children and armed conflict mandate. Additionally, conflict parties have signed over 40 action plans to end and prevent grave violations. The report details progress made in 2025 in several contexts, including the release and reintegration of children from the ranks of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the South Sudanese government's re-issuance of military command orders to advance the implementation of the action plan it signed in 2020. Additionally, in Sudan, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) appointed a focal point to engage with the UN on the development of a new action plan.

Since her appointment on 3 October 2025 as the fifth Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Frazier has been actively engaging with relevant parties to facilitate the signing and implementation of commitments to protect children. To that end, she has travelled to Syria, Lebanon, Ukraine, Russia, and Haiti, as well as to Addis Ababa to discuss cooperation between her office and the African Union (AU). Frazier has also sought to increase engagement with the Security Council, including by briefing the Council on her visit to Syria during its 22 April meeting on the file.

Despite important progress in implementing the children and armed conflict agenda, there has been an increase in grave violations committed against children in the past several years, driven by the eruption of new crises and intensification of existing conflicts. The Secretary-General's last annual report on children and armed conflict, dated 17 June 2025, documented 41,370 UN-verified grave violations in 2024, representing a 25 percent increase compared with 2023. This marked the third consecutive year in which precipitous increases in violations were recorded. The report also documented 2,374 attacks on schools and hospitals in 2024, representing a 44 percent increase compared with the previous year.

In remarks concerning humanitarian priorities for children in 2026 delivered on 22 April, Russell reported that figures in 2025 reflect similar trends, demonstrating persistently high numbers of grave violations committed against children. According to the Secretary-General's most recent annual report on the protection of civilians (PoC), dated 7 May and covering developments in 2025, the killing and maiming of children increased last year, driven mainly by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, including in contexts such as Lebanon, Myanmar, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. Children were also harmed by explosive ordnance contamination, even in places where conflict has abated. In Syria, for instance, child casualties from mines and other explosive ordnance increased four-fold in 2025 compared with the previous year.

Decisions relating to the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict have traditionally attracted considerable attention. On 29 May, 17 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) sent an open letter to Secretary-General António Guterres, calling on him to ensure that the criteria for listing and de-listing perpetrators in the annexes to his report are consistently applied to all parties. In an April report titled "A Credible List", the NGO Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict provided several recommendations for the upcoming annual report, including on parties that should be listed or re-listed. It also recommended that the Secretary-General add the Israel-US conflict with Iran as a new "situation of concern" and further investigate which parties are responsible for committing grave violations in that context.

## Developments in the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

In 2025, Security Council members were unable to agree on the allocation of subsidiary body chairs until 29 May, at which point Greece was appointed as chair. With only half a year to negotiate conclusions on the Secretary-General's country reports in 2025, the Working Group was only able to adopt conclusions on one report, on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

A similar pattern has emerged in 2026, as this year's allocation of subsidiary body chairs has yet to be agreed at the time of writing. This delay is likely to have significant repercussions for the number of conclusions that the Working Group will be able to adopt this year. The Working Group had begun negotiations on its conclusions on two reports in 2025—on Burkina Faso and Mali—but was unable to reach agreement by the end of the year. In addition, there is a

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## Children and Armed Conflict

backlog of three country reports that have been published and are awaiting review, namely Myanmar, Syria, and Somalia.

### Key Issues and Options

The occasion of the 30th anniversary of the children and armed conflict mandate presents an opportunity to reflect both on its achievements and on ways to address the significant challenges it is facing. For instance, the Working Group's failure in recent years to adopt conclusions in a timely manner, due to both the late allocation of subsidiary body chairs and difficult dynamics among Council members, is a matter of serious concern as it hampers the Working Group's ability to respond to developments on the ground and to promote accountability.

Additionally, cuts by traditional donors to humanitarian funding and to the budgets of UN peace operations, as well as recent and impending drawdowns of some of these operations, have had negative effects on child protection and monitoring and reporting capacities in the field. The severe funding cuts affecting UN agencies and NGOs have also reduced critical services for children, including support for education and reintegration programmes for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups.

An option for Council members would be to hold informal exchanges with child protection actors in the field, who use the Working Group's conclusions to advocate with relevant parties, on how best to support their work. Such discussions could address ways to make the Working Group's conclusions more fit for purpose and to ensure that relevant Council products, such as mandate renewals of UN peace operations, incorporate language on child protection capacities.

There is also a need to increase the visibility of the children and armed conflict agenda, in order to encourage financial and political support from a cross-regional array of member states. Security Council Report's latest research report on children and armed conflict, published on 12 June 2025, recommended convening an international conference to promote this objective. Malta, which served as Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict during its 2023-2024 Council term, organised such a conference in Valletta on 5 and 6 May, with the participation of a range of member states, UN entities, and civil society organisations. Member states interested in promoting the agenda could consider organising follow-up conferences.

Threats to children's right to education are another major area of concern. In the past year, this issue has received more attention as Council members have organised several relevant meetings, including a 24 February Arria-formula meeting convened by Panama that highlighted the role of education in preventing child recruitment

and use and a 2 March Council briefing titled "Children, technology, and education in conflict" convened by the US. At the upcoming open debate in June, member states could highlight the importance of implementing relevant Council products, including resolution 2601 of 29 October 2021 on the protection of education, and call on states to ratify and implement non-UN political agreements, such as the Safe Schools Declaration. They could also encourage states to take concrete steps in this regard, including by restricting the military use of schools and ensuring accountability for attacks on education.

A new issue of concern is how to address threats posed to children by emerging technologies. The Secretary-General's most recent PoC report notes that "[t]he use of certain technologies, including drones and the use of artificial intelligence in identifying targets, was increasingly involved in incidents affecting children" in 2025. The report also warns that armed actors are increasingly using social media to influence, abduct, extort, and recruit and use children. Council members have recently shown interest in learning more about this issue, with Greece and Panama organising an informal expert-level briefing on the use of emerging technologies in the recruitment of children in armed conflict on 14 May. During this meeting, Greece apparently announced its intention to introduce a resolution that would address the protection of children in the digital environment, among other issues.

### Council Dynamics

The children and armed conflict agenda enjoys general support among Council members. However, political sensitivities have created difficulties in recent years, including with regard to the functioning of the Working Group.

In January, the US announced that it would withdraw from several international organisations and entities, including the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC). It is currently unclear how this will affect the US' participation in the Working Group once it begins operating. Additionally, it seems that the US has indicated that it would oppose language on the OSRSG-CAAC in Council products, which may complicate future negotiations. US opposition to language on gender was apparently a sticking point leading to protracted negotiations on some Working Group conclusions in 2025.

The Security Council's current composition includes three member states that are on the children and armed conflict agenda, namely Colombia, the DRC, and Somalia. This dynamic could present both challenges and opportunities, as these member states may be sensitive to being discussed in this context but could also share their experience gained from taking steps such as implementing action plans to end and prevent grave violations.

# Sudan

## Expected Council Action

In June, the Security Council is expected to receive the regular 120-day briefing on the situation in Sudan.

During the month, the Council is also scheduled to receive a briefing on the work of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee. At the time of writing, however, the Committee's chair had not yet been appointed, as Council members have yet to agree on the allocation of subsidiary bodies for the year.

## Key Recent Developments

As the conflict in Sudan has entered its fourth year, it increasingly resembles a war of attrition, sustained by continued external support to the parties and the steady flow of arms from multiple sources, contributing to regional spillover risks and proxy dynamics. While front lines have largely evolved into a de facto territorial division between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a Sudanese militia, hostilities have intensified across several theatres, particularly in Kordofan and Darfur, accompanied by the growing use of drones and other sophisticated weaponry. The conflict has further fragmented the country and weakened already fragile governance structures.

The RSF has continued to target SAF-held areas through long-range drone attacks, including strikes against strategic facilities in the Khartoum area. On 4 May, a series of drone attacks targeted Khartoum International Airport and several military installations in the capital, disrupting all flights. Additional drone strikes were reported in various parts of Khartoum and its twin city of Omdurman between 28 April and 5 May. Sudan accused Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) of facilitating recent drone attacks, which both countries have denied. Ethiopia, in return, accused the SAF of supporting the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a politico-military group that fought a two-year war against the Ethiopian government and its allies from November 2020 to November 2022.

Meanwhile, in recent weeks, the SAF intensified drone operations against RSF-held areas, particularly in Nyala, South Darfur, reportedly targeting several strategic sites, including Nyala International Airport, fuel depots, ammunition and missile storage facilities, and air defence systems.

At the same time, the conflict has raged across front lines in other parts of the country. Kordofan remained the principal theatre of military operations during the reporting period, with major escalations reported in and around El Obeid, Dilling, Kadugli, and Babanusa, as the SAF and RSF continued to contest strategic positions and key supply routes across the region. The security situation in Blue Nile State also remained volatile, with continued clashes between the SAF and an alliance of RSF and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) al-Hilu forces in Kurmuk, Geissan, and Bau localities.

Recent weeks have also witnessed the defection of several senior commanders from the RSF to the SAF, highlighting signs of growing internal strains within the group. Reports have attributed these developments, in part, to tensions in the RSF's decentralised and

transactional alliance structure, which appears to be coming under increasing pressure amid resource constraints and shifts in territorial control towards less economically lucrative areas. Against this backdrop, the RSF has reportedly undertaken a broad restructuring of its command leadership aimed at strengthening internal cohesion, tightening oversight, and preventing further defections. At the same time, the SAF has begun implementing plans to integrate allied armed groups and fighting forces into the state's security institutions.

Efforts by regional and international interlocutors to identify avenues for de-escalation and bring an end to the conflict have continued; however, prospects for a breakthrough remain remote at present. Following his appointment in February, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan, Pekka Haavisto, visited Khartoum, Addis Ababa, and Nairobi as part of a regional tour aimed at engaging with Sudanese stakeholders and regional actors on options for resolving the conflict. (For more information, see our 17 April *What's in Blue* story.)

From 4 to 11 May, Haavisto visited Doha, Abu Dhabi, and Riyadh, where he met with government officials, Sudanese civilian stakeholders, and members of the diplomatic community. At a 13 May press briefing, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General Farhan Haq said that Haavisto had underscored the urgent need for immediate de-escalation, including through confidence-building measures in support of ongoing peace efforts. He also called on relevant actors to use their influence to reduce violence, curb the flow of arms, and support a truce, while emphasising the importance of sustained coordination among key stakeholders in advancing a Sudanese-led political process.

Meanwhile, SAF leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan travelled to Jeddah on 20 April to meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman amid reports of renewed Saudi-US efforts to revive talks between the warring parties. According to media reports, discussions focused on proposals to establish humanitarian corridors, advance localised truces, and secure maritime corridors. On 21 April, Burhan visited Muscat, where he held discussions with Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. Subsequently, on 13 May, Burhan travelled to Manama and met Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, amid media reports of possible efforts to facilitate a rapprochement between Sudan and the UAE.

The humanitarian conditions in Sudan continue to deteriorate, with access severely constrained in areas of active fighting, leaving civilians trapped in dire conditions. According to the 14 May Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, approximately 19.5 million people are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity through May, including around 135,000 people in catastrophic conditions characterised by extreme food shortages, critical levels of acute malnutrition, and an elevated risk of death. The IPC warned that the situation remains precarious, with 14 areas across Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan at risk of famine. Meanwhile, humanitarian access remains severely constrained by insecurity, bureaucratic impediments, and logistical challenges, particularly in areas affected by active fighting.

# Sudan

## Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 4 May statement, two UN experts highlighted widespread attacks on medical facilities and personnel in Sudan, despite the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2286 of 3 May 2016, which addresses the protection of the wounded and sick, medical and humanitarian personnel, and hospitals and other medical facilities in armed conflict. The experts noted that, since the outbreak of hostilities in April 2023, hospitals, ambulances, patients, and health workers have repeatedly come under aerial attack, severely undermining civilians' access to healthcare. They urged the international community to take concrete action to end attacks on health care, protect medical personnel, and ensure accountability for violations of international law.

In an 11 May press release, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk strongly condemned the increasing use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles in Sudan and their devastating impact on civilians. He noted that the parties to the conflict have repeatedly used drones to strike civilian objects and critical infrastructure, exacerbating humanitarian conditions amid growing shortages of food and essential services. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), drone strikes accounted for at least 880 civilian deaths between January and April, more than 80 percent of all conflict-related civilian fatalities recorded during that period. Türk reiterated his call on all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL), protect civilians, and facilitate the safe movement of people fleeing areas of active hostilities.

## Women, Peace and Security

On 23 February, the Informal Experts Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) met on the situation in Sudan. UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan Denise Brown briefed. According to the summary of the meeting, issued on 10 April by Colombia and Denmark as the IEG co-chairs, together with the UK as the penholder on WPS, Council members discussed issues such as women's exclusion from diplomatic processes to end the war in Sudan, atrocities committed against women and girls, and UN-supported specialised services, including for the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. Most documented violations have been committed by the RSF. In 2023, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten engaged with the RSF's leadership, leading to the issuance by the RSF of a unilateral communiqué on conflict-related sexual violence. The summary notes, however, that these commitments have yet to produce concrete results. UN Women, as the IEG secretariat, recommended that Council members request member states, regional organisations, and the UN to report to the Council on steps taken to ensure women's inclusion in all diplomatic and peace initiatives and political dialogues. Among other recommendations, UN Women also called for expressing alarm at evidence of widespread and systematic sexual violence; obstruction of humanitarian aid; the use of starvation as a method of warfare; reproductive violence; and holding perpetrators accountable, including through sanctions and justice mechanisms.

## Key Issues and Options

The overarching issue for the Council remains how to help bring an end to the fighting, support efforts towards a sustainable ceasefire across Sudan, and advance a credible civilian-led political transition. The continued violence, insecurity, and attacks against civilians, as well as civilian and humanitarian infrastructure, remain a major concern for Council members. A related issue is the growing use of advanced weaponry, particularly drones, which has expanded the geographical scope of hostilities, contributed to rising civilian casualties, and further exacerbated humanitarian suffering.

Despite sustained engagement by regional and international actors, mediation efforts have thus far failed to generate meaningful momentum towards a negotiated settlement. As the conflict enters its fourth year, shifting front lines, growing fragmentation, and weakened governance structures continue to compound widespread civilian suffering, mass displacement, and acute food insecurity.

Another issue for Council members is how to promote justice and accountability for ongoing violations of IHL and international human rights law committed by the parties to the conflict.

Council members remain concerned about the regional implications of the conflict, including the risk of cross-border spillover. Reports of cross-border alliances and support networks, the movement of fighters, and the use of neighbouring countries as transit routes for weapons and supplies, as well as staging grounds for attacks into Sudan, have heightened concerns about broader regional destabilisation.

One option for the Council would be to adopt a presidential statement condemning the continued violence across Sudan, including attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and reiterating its call for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Another option would be to request the Secretary-General to provide more frequent reporting on Sudan than the current 120-day cycle, given the scale, severity, and rapidly evolving nature of the crisis.

Council members could also consider following up on the 16 December 2025 informal interactive dialogue (IID) organised by the UK and Denmark by convening a similar meeting with key regional and international stakeholders, including representatives of regional and sub-regional organisations and states involved in mediation efforts. Such a meeting could explore ways to better coordinate diplomatic initiatives, leverage comparative advantages, and support a coherent political strategy for resolving the conflict. It could also examine the regional implications of the conflict, including displacement dynamics, arms flows, and risks to regional peace and security. (For more information, see our 16 December 2025 *What's in Blue* story.)

During the June briefing, Council members could further consider inviting a civil society representative to provide perspectives on the human rights situation, civilian protection concerns, and evolving conflict dynamics across Sudan.

## Council Dynamics

Most Council members share similar concerns about the dire political, security, and humanitarian situations in Sudan and have emphasised the need for a ceasefire, unfettered humanitarian access, respect for IHL, and the importance of protecting civilians in the conflict.

However, critical divisions persist within the Council, shaped by differing priorities and approaches to key issues, including the protection of civilians, the implementation of ceasefire mechanisms, and addressing accountability for violations of IHL. Several Council members, such as China, Pakistan, and Russia, tend to be more sympathetic to the Burhan-led government, underscoring its sovereign authority and its efforts to protect civilians and coordinate the delivery of humanitarian aid. Other Council members, particularly the P3 (France, the UK, and the US), however, consider both the RSF and SAF to be responsible for the ongoing atrocities in Sudan and unfit to govern the country. Such differences in views have continued to hinder Council action on the situation in Sudan, including multiple attempts to issue press elements. (For more information, see our 17 April *What's in Blue* story.)

In recent months, Council members appear to have shown greater convergence regarding the use of sanctions designations under the 1591 Sudan sanctions regime, particularly in targeting the RSF and its affiliates. On 24 February, the Committee designated four

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## Sudan

RSF commanders, including the group's deputy commander, Abdul Rahim Hamdan Dagalo, following proposals submitted by the P3 members. At these members' proposal, on 28 April, the Council also

designated four individuals, including three Colombian nationals involved in facilitating RSF's military operations.

The UK is the penholder on Sudan.

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## Democratic Republic of the Congo

### Expected Council Action

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

During the month, the Security Council will vote to renew the mandates of the 1533 DRC sanctions regime, which expires on 1 July, and the Group of Experts assisting the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee, which expires on 1 August.

### Key Recent Developments

Since assuming his new role in April, Swan has met with President Félix Tshisekedi and the Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner. He also visited eastern DRC from 24 to 26 April to discuss the implementation of resolution 2773 of 21 February 2025, which called for all parties to conclude an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in North and South Kivu provinces, and resolution 2808 of 19 December 2025, which most recently renewed MONUSCO's mandate. His visit included North Kivu and Ituri provinces, where MONUSCO continues to operate, with stops in Beni, Bunia, and Goma. According to a 26 April MONUSCO press release, Swan focused in particular on the operationalisation of ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanisms, as well as concrete measures to advance ongoing mediation efforts.

From 13 to 18 April, representatives of the Congolese government and the *Mouvement du 23 Mars* (M23) rebel group met in Montreux, Switzerland, within the framework of the Doha process, a mediation effort facilitated by Qatar. The two sides reportedly made progress towards the signing of the Protocol on Humanitarian Access and Judicial Protection. They also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to facilitate the operationalisation of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism Plus, which is a key component of the Ceasefire and Oversight Mechanism agreed by the parties under the Doha Process.

The Joint Oversight Committee established under the Washington process, a US-led mediation initiative, met on 23 April to review implementation of the peace agreement signed between the DRC and Rwanda on 27 June 2025. According to a US Department of State press release, representatives of the two countries provided updates on efforts to de-escalate tensions, while Qatar briefed participants on the ongoing negotiations between the DRC and the *Alliance Fleuve Congo* (AFC)/M23.

On 30 April, the US imposed sanctions on former DRC President Joseph Kabila for his alleged support of the M23. Kabila returned from a self-imposed exile in 2025 and has been living in Goma, the capital of North Kivu, which is under the M23's control. The Congolese military prosecution requested that the High Military Court impose the death penalty on Kabila, accusing him of treason, participation in an insurrectionist movement, homicide, rape, torture, and other serious crimes linked to the conflict in eastern DRC. In September 2025, the court sentenced the former president to death in absentia.

In May, the M23 reportedly withdrew from several key positions in South Kivu province under military pressure from the Congolese government and diplomatic pressure from the US. The group's withdrawal from Uvira, a town in South Kivu located on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, was viewed as a significant military development. On 7 May, the leader of the AFC—a politico-military coalition of which the M23 is a major component—reportedly sent a letter to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio accusing the US of bias for imposing what it described as one-sided sanctions and for failing to pressure the Congolese government to honour its commitments under the Washington process.

Following the outbreak of the Ebola virus in eastern DRC and Uganda, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) determined on 16 May that the situation constituted a public health emergency of international concern. According to the WHO, as at 15 May, 80 suspected deaths due to the virus had been reported. The outbreak is affecting densely populated areas where mining activities, insecurity, and frequent cross-border movement increases the risk of further transmission and poses operational challenges for response efforts. Media reports indicate that four of the areas affected by the virus are in Ituri province, but an Ebola case was also identified in Goma. Additionally, another Ebola case was confirmed in South Kivu, in an area close to Bukavu, the provincial capital, under the rebel group's control.

### Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 25 March press statement, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada Al-Nashif expressed concern over the DRC's deteriorating human rights and security situations. Al-Nashif stressed that the country is trapped in a web of crises: the proliferation of armed groups, foreign interference, ethnic tensions, and fragile governance, amid fierce competition over natural resources. From October 2025 to February, the UN Human Rights Office documented 2,560 human rights violations affecting 6,760 victims, with the actual toll likely to be considerably higher.

December 2025 saw a sharp escalation of violence in South Kivu, where fighting intensified between the AFC/M23, supported by Rwanda, on one side and the Congolese army and Wazalendo groups on the other. Among

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# Democratic Republic of the Congo

other recommendations, the Deputy High Commissioner called on all parties to the conflict to immediately cease hostilities, protect civilians, and fully respect international law. She further urged the international community to apply maximum diplomatic pressure to ensure that commitments are translated into reality.

In a 26 February press release, a group of UN Special Procedures experts warned of extreme M23 violence targeting human rights defenders in the North and South Kivu provinces of eastern DRC. Between November 2025 and February, several human rights defenders operating in the region were reportedly targeted by members of M23 and their collaborators, in direct connection with their human rights work. The experts cited allegations of attempted killings, torture, sexual violence, and death threats at the hands of the armed group. Condemning the extreme violence committed against human rights defenders, the UN experts called on the Congolese authorities to ensure prompt, impartial investigations into all allegations and to take meaningful steps to guarantee that human rights defenders in eastern DRC can carry out their work safely and without fear.

## Sanctions-Related Developments

In its midterm report submitted in December 2025, the Group of Experts of the 1533 DRC sanctions regime described the M23's efforts "to position itself as an alternative governance authority to the Congolese State, establishing administrative, judicial, fiscal and security structures and assuming core State functions". The report also detailed joint operations conducted by the Congolese armed forces (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo [FARDC]) and allied groups to halt M23's advances and prevent further territorial losses. In this context, the Group referred to the continued operational support that the FARDC and allied groups have received from the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and FDLR-aligned groups.

It seems that the final report of the Group of Experts, due by 15 June, has already been circulated to Council members. At the time of writing, Council members had not met to discuss the report and its recommendations, as the chairs of Security Council subsidiary bodies had yet to be appointed. It seems that France, the UK, and the US have proposed to add the names of six individuals and two entities to the sanctions designation list. At the time of writing, the proposal had been circulated to members and was under the non-objections procedure.

## Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is the insecurity in eastern DRC and progress in the ongoing mediation efforts to find a lasting solution to the situation. In this regard, they might be interested in hearing from Swan about his recent visit to eastern DRC. They may also want to receive updates on the latest state of play with regard to the Doha and Washington processes, including efforts to operationalise the ceasefire.

The extension of the 1533 DRC sanctions regime and the renewal of the Group of Experts mandate assisting the 1533 DRC

Sanctions Committee will be another key issue in June. This year, the DRC—which has been pushing for punitive measures against the M23 and Rwanda—will be participating in the negotiations as an elected Council member. However, achieving the necessary consensus within the Council to take these measures is not likely to be easy. A more likely option for Council members would be to agree to a straightforward extension of the sanctions regime and renewal of the Group of Experts mandate for another year.

The Ebola outbreak and its impact on the situation in eastern DRC is another key issue for Council members. In addressing the issue, members could be guided by resolution 2439 of 30 October 2018, which focused on the security and humanitarian implications of the Ebola outbreak at that time. In this regard, one possible option would be to request a briefing from the WHO to gain a better understanding of how the security situation in eastern DRC could hamper response efforts and further exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in the region.

## Council Dynamics

Council members support MONUSCO's work in eastern DRC and the ongoing mediation efforts to address the conflict in the region. Differences have emerged, however, over a draft text proposed by France following closed consultations on the situation in eastern DRC on 17 March. The draft text aimed to address recent developments in eastern DRC and to respond to the Secretary-General's 27 February letter, submitted pursuant to resolution 2808 of 19 December 2025, which outlined the potential scope of MONUSCO's role in supporting the implementation of a permanent ceasefire in eastern DRC. It seems that Council members have been unable to reach agreement on the draft text. In particular, China and Russia apparently argued that the necessary conditions outlined in the Secretary-General's letter to enable MONUSCO to assume a ceasefire monitoring role are not yet in place, maintaining that the parties must meet these conditions before the Council can consider reviewing and adjusting the mission's posture and footprint.

The 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee approved requests by France, the UK, and the US for the designation of individuals from the M23, the FDLR, and other armed groups operating in eastern DRC on 27 September 2023 and 20 February 2024. The latest request by the three permanent members appears to stem from the final report of the Group of Experts, but it remains to be seen whether the request meets the approval of the committee.

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