

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

In October, Greece will hold the presidency of the Security Council.

Greece plans to organise two signature events. The first is a high-level briefing on maritime security and emerging technologies under the “[Maintenance of international peace and security](#)” agenda item.

The second signature event is a briefing on [children and armed conflict \(CAAC\)](#) to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the CAAC mandate by the General Assembly. Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Giorgos Gerapetritis is expected to chair the meeting. Briefings are expected from Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Vanessa Frazier, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell, and a civil society representative.

The Security Council will hold its annual open debate on [women, peace and security \(WPS\)](#) in October. Secretary-General António Guterres, UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous, and a woman civil society representative are the anticipated briefers.

This month, the Security Council is scheduled to hold its annual briefing on [cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations](#), focusing on the [African Union \(AU\)](#). AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) members will travel to New York for the 20th annual joint consultative meeting between the Security Council and the AUPSC, to be held on 23 October. (The annual meeting rotates between New York and Addis Ababa, the home of the AU headquarters.) The joint consultative meeting will be preceded by the 11th informal joint seminar of Security Council members and the AUPSC on 22 October, which will be held in a retreat format at the Greentree Foundation in Manhasset, New York.

The Security Council is also scheduled to hold its [annual private meeting with the president of the International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#), Judge Yuji Iwasawa.

Additionally, Council members are expected to hold an informal interactive dialogue (IID) on the implementation of resolution 2744 of 19 July 2024, which strengthened the mandate of the

Focal Point for Delisting and re-established the Informal Working Group (IWG) of the Security Council on General UN Security Council Sanctions Issues. Yvonne Ching Ling Lee, the Focal Point for Delisting, is expected to brief at the meeting, which is being organised by Greece and Pakistan.

African issues on the programme of work in October are:

- [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, as well as vote on a draft resolution extending the 1591 Sudan sanctions regime;
 - [Western Sahara](#), consultations on the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and vote on the extension of the mission’s mandate;
 - [Great Lakes Region](#), the biannual briefing and consultations on the implementation of the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSC-F) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the region;
 - [Central African Republic \(CAR\)](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); and
 - [Libya](#), briefing and consultations on the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and vote on the extension of the mission’s mandate.
- Middle Eastern issues on the programme include:

- [Yemen](#), monthly briefing and consultations on developments;
- [Golan](#), quarterly consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF);
- [Lebanon](#), consultations on the Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of resolution 1559;
- [Syria](#), monthly meeting on political and humanitarian developments;
- [Iraq/Kuwait](#), briefing on the issue of missing persons and property based on the Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of resolution 2792 of 17 September 2025; and
- “[The situation in the Middle East, including](#)

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the Palestinian question”, the quarterly open debate.

Regarding European issues, the programme includes:

- **Kosovo**, briefing on the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK); and
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)**, semi-annual debate on BiH and reauthorisation of the European Union (EU)-led multinational stabilisation force in BiH (EUFOR ALTHEA).

Two issues in the Americas will be discussed in October:

- **Haiti**, briefing and consultations on developments in the country and the work of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) as well as renewal of the 2653 Haiti sanctions regime; and
- **Colombia**, quarterly meeting on developments in the country and renewal of the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in

Colombia.

Other issues, such as **Ukraine**, could be raised in October depending on developments. Council members will continue following closely the crisis in the Middle East and any spillover effects, such as the disruption to freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al-Mandab Strait. Members are also likely to continue considering possible arrangements after the termination of the **UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)**. Additionally, they are likely to continue monitoring developments in **Ethiopia**.

In October, Council members are expected to continue conducting “straw polls” to gauge support for candidates for the position of **UN Secretary-General**.

In Hindsight: UN-AU Cooperation: Reflections on the Past Decade and the Way Forward

Introduction

October will be an important month for United Nations (UN)-African Union (AU) cooperation. UN Security Council members will hold their annual briefing on this topic, based on the Secretary-General’s report on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU).¹ This will be Secretary-General António Guterres’ last report on the topic before he leaves office at the end of December. (For more, see our brief on UN-AU Cooperation.)

Security Council members will also receive an update on the implementation of resolution 2719 of 21 December 2023, on the financing of AU-led Peace Support Operations (AUPSOs). This is in line with paragraph 17 of the resolution which expresses the Council’s intention to review its implementation three years after its adoption.

In October, Security Council members will hold their annual consultations with the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) in New York. During the meeting, they are set to exchange views with their AUPSC counterparts on a range of country- and region-specific situations in Africa. They will also discuss a select number of thematic topics during their joint informal seminar with the AUPSC preceding the annual consultations, which this year will be held in a retreat format at Greentree. While in New York, AUPSC members are also expected to hold their annual meeting with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which was initiated in 2016 and has become a regular feature of UN-AU partnership.

This month’s In Hindsight will assess the progress and challenges of UN-AU cooperation in a fractured multilateral landscape. It will highlight ongoing reform efforts that could help strengthen the partnership and adapt it to the evolving times. It will also consider the

implications of the selection process of the next Secretary-General for the future of the UN-AU partnership.

Cooperation Frameworks and Mechanisms

Over the past decade, Guterres’ tenure has seen significant institutionalisation of the UN-AU partnership. During his first address to the 28th AU summit in Addis Ababa in January 2017, Guterres underscored the significance of the partnership and expressed his commitment to work with the AU to advance peace, security, and development in the continent.²

Under his leadership, the two organisations signed three overarching partnership frameworks aligned with the three pillars of UN-AU cooperation: peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights. Guterres also initiated the annual conference between the leadership of the two organisations to review the partnership, complementing existing mechanisms for desk-to-desk and departmental level engagements through the Joint Task Force meetings initiated in 2008 and 2010, respectively. This is the most extensive and institutionalised cooperation that the UN has developed with any other regional or sub-regional organisation in the spirit of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.³

In recent years, Guterres has started meeting with the three African members (A3) quarterly in recognition of their growing profile within the Security Council, particularly in advancing African priorities. His AU counterpart, Ali Mahmoud Youssouf, also recently initiated a similar engagement with diplomats in Addis Ababa from the Council’s A3.⁴

For their part, Security Council members have maintained their regular consultations with their AUPSC counterparts. The Security Council Ad-Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa (AWG) is the subsidiary body in charge of organising

¹ UN Secretary-General, Strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the UNOAU, S/2026/682 (17 August 2026), <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2026/682>.

² António Guterres, “Secretary-General’s Remarks to the African Union Summit”, United Nations, 30 January 2017, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statements/2017-01-30/secretary-generals-remarks-the-african-union-summit-delivered>.

³ Chapter VIII of the UN Charter focuses on how regional organisations cooperate with the UN in the maintenance of international peace and security.

⁴ AU Commission, “AUC Chairperson Hosted the Quarterly Working Luncheon with the Permanent Members of the Ambassadors of UN Security Council (P5) & the A3 Accredited to the AU”, 11 August 2026, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20260811/au-chairperson-hosted-quarterly-working-luncheon-UNSC-P5-and-A3>.

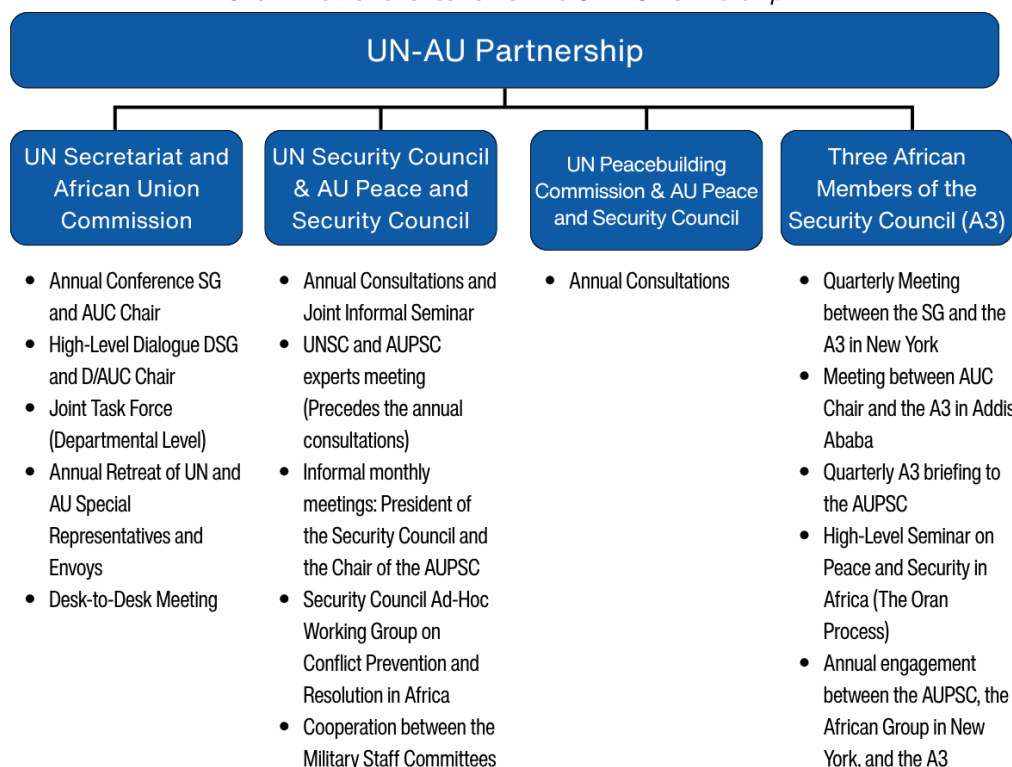
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these annual consultations in coordination with the AU side. The AWG's role is supported by the joint work of experts from the two Councils who meet in advance of the annual consultations to, among other things, negotiate the outcome document. Over the past decade, informal monthly meetings between the president of the Security Council and the chair of the AUPSC to align the programmes of work of the two Councils have been a regular feature of their engagements. According to the Secretary-General's report, ten such meetings have been held over the past year.

its regional mechanisms, and the UN.

Although Guterres spoke of a “wind of hope” blowing across the Horn of Africa, following the signing of a peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the normalisation of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea in 2018, that optimism was subsequently undermined by the outbreak of war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia in November 2020 and its devastating consequences. After a cessation of hostilities following the signing of the November 2022 Pretoria Agreement, renewed tensions now appear to threaten another conflict and draw neighbouring countries into a wider regional war.

Chart: Institutionalisation of the UN-AU Partnership



Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Early in his tenure, Guterres embraced “Silencing the Guns in Africa”,⁵ the AU’s flagship initiative aimed at eliminating conflicts and crises in the continent by 2020—a target that was subsequently extended to 2030. The initiative was later boosted by the Security Council’s formal endorsement through the adoption of resolution 2457 on 27 February 2019, spearheaded by the A3. Guterres called for a “surge of diplomacy for peace” as a central theme of his broader peacemaking efforts. In Africa, he sought to enhance collaboration with the AU and its regional mechanisms in addressing conflicts and crises.

These efforts, however, faced significant setbacks as the continent’s peace and security situation deteriorated, making the lofty goal of “silencing the guns in Africa” increasingly appear a distant prospect. At the same time, growing geopolitical tensions eroded the broad consensus that had once underpinned regional and multilateral approaches to conflict prevention and resolution through the AU,

Sudan likewise offered grounds for hope following the 2019 revolution that ended President Omar al-Bashir’s thirty-year rule, but this proved short-lived as the country descended into a devastating civil war. In South Sudan, the 2018 Revitalized Peace Agreement has also come under increasing strain, with the country once again teetering on the brink of another cycle of conflict and violence.

Furthermore, peace in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has remained elusive. The situation has worsened in recent years as fighting between the Congolese armed forces and the Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23) rebel group has intensified, exacerbating regional tensions in the Great Lakes. In West Africa and the Sahel, the threat of terrorism has not only surged in intensity but also expanded geographically, threatening to engulf coastal states. Libya, meanwhile, is still mired in a political crisis, with rival factions unable to overcome their differences and pave the way for national elections. The recent agreement reached by Libyan political stakeholders

⁵ AU Master Road Map of Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns in Africa, African Union, 31 March 2020, <https://au.int/en/documents/20200331/au-master-road-map-practical-steps-silencing-guns-africa>.

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under the UN auspices to work toward holding the elections within a period not exceeding 24 months brings a glimmer of hope to this situation.⁶ However, whether it will finally succeed in breaking the political impasse remains to be seen.

While the UN and the AU have sought to work together and coordinate their efforts across these different conflict and crisis situations, they have found themselves increasingly sidelined as other actors, including Qatar and the US, assume a leading role in mediation efforts.

Peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations

From the outset of his tenure, Guterres repeatedly called for a new generation of AUPSOs with guaranteed funding, including through UN assessed contributions, to address Africa's peace and security challenges. While he faced criticisms for shifting towards militarised approaches, he continued to express strong support for regional and sub-regional organisations undertaking peace enforcement operations, particularly in situations where there is effectively no peace to keep.⁷

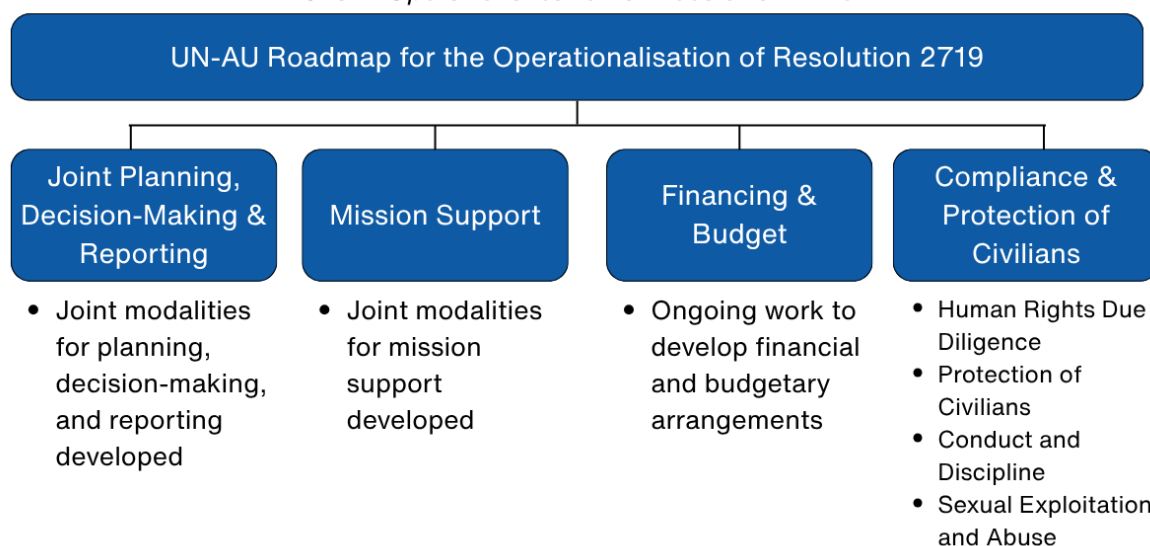
The need for adequate, predictable, and sustainable funding for AUPSOs has been the subject of UN-AU discussions for more than a decade. Guterres began his tenure following the submission of the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which made specific recommendations on providing financial support to AUPSOs through UN assessed contributions, to be authorised on a case-by-case basis. (For background, see our April 2023 research report *The Financing of AU Peace Support Operations: Prospects for Progress in the Security Council?*)

Since 2017, Guterres pushed for the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S) in West Africa and the Sahel, a regional counter-terrorism force comprised of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, to receive funding through UN assessed contributions. Nonetheless, the Security Council authorised only limited operational and logistical support through the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) when the joint force conducted operations on Malian territory.⁸ In December 2023, FC-G5S was dissolved following the formation of a new alliance by the military juntas of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger in September. MINUSMA's mandate was also terminated in June of that year after Mali withdrew its consent, leading to the mission's abrupt departure in December.

Despite this setback, Guterres presented a set of concrete proposals to the Security Council on the financing of AUPSOs, including his May 2023 report,⁹ which ultimately paved the way for the adoption of resolution 2719 on the financing of AUPSOs. Subsequently, Guterres, in close consultations with the AU, laid out options for applying the 2719 framework to the AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), which is facing serious funding constraints. However, these efforts ultimately failed to materialise due to opposition from the US, which was wary of using AUSSOM as a first test case for applying the 2719 framework and insisted on the fulfilment of several conditions, including a "one mission, one budget" model to provide support to AUPSOs.¹⁰

Notwithstanding the lack of consensus on this particular case, the UN and the AU have continued to work jointly in laying the groundwork for the resolution's operationalisation so that, when the

Chart: Operationalisation of Resolution 2719



⁶ UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), "UNSMIL Welcomes Agreement on Next Steps towards National Elections", 30 August 2026, <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/en/news/unsmil-welcomes-agreement-on-next-steps-towards-national-elections>.

⁷ "Put Peacemaking First as UN Missions Face Growing Threats, Secretary-General Urges Security Council", United Nations, 18 September 2026, <https://press.un.org/en/2026/sc16457.doc.htm>.

⁸ UN Security Council, Resolution 2391 (2017), S/RES/2391(2017) (8 December 2017), [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2391\(2017\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2391(2017)).

⁹ UN Secretary-General, Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2320 (2016) and 2378 (2017) and considerations related to the financing of African Union peace support operations mandated by the Security Council, S/2023/303 (1 May 2023), <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/110/15/pdf/n2311015.pdf>.

¹⁰ Ambassador Dorothy Shea, "Explanation of Vote Following the Adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution Renewing the Mandate of AUSSOM", US Mission to the UN, 27 December 2024, <https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-following-the-adoption-of-a-un-security-council-resolution-renewing-the-mandate-of-aussom/>.

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opportunity arises to apply it in a specific situation, the necessary institutional, financial, and operational arrangements will already be in place. In this regard, they have already developed joint modalities for planning, decision-making, and reporting processes to unpack paragraphs 2 and 3 of the resolution. They have also mapped out mission support modalities on logistics, operational readiness, and support structures required to sustain AUPSOs to be authorised under resolution 2719.

Additionally, there is ongoing work to develop other modalities for compliance and protection of civilians, as well as financing and budgeting arrangements, to ensure the necessary institutional and operational readiness. The Secretary-General's latest report notes "preparations for a scenario-based tabletop exercise to test and validate the joint modalities and for the development of guidance on joint strategic assessments".

Institutional Reform

Both the UN and the AU recognise the need to reform and adapt themselves to the evolving geopolitical and security landscape. In March 2025, Guterres launched the UN80 Initiative, a broad reform effort aimed at making the UN more efficient, agile, and fit for purpose. He also initiated a comprehensive review of the future of all forms of UN peace operations, as mandated by the Pact for the Future adopted at the 2024 Summit of the Future. The review, which was submitted to both the Security Council and the General Assembly in August, offered recommendations on ways to adapt UN peace operations to current and future threats and challenges.¹¹

The AU, for its part, is also undergoing institutional reform to strengthen its governance structures, streamline decision-making processes, and enhance the impact of its various organs. It is reviewing the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), its overarching framework of institutions and norms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution in the continent. Additionally, it is reviewing AUPSOs, including the African Standby Force, one of the key components of APSA. AU heads of government met in an extraordinary session in Luanda, Angola, in August to discuss the APSA review in the context of enhancing conflict prevention and resolution efforts in Africa.

These parallel reform processes are not without challenges, and their success will depend on the full buy-in of member states. At the same time, they also present an opportunity to strengthen complementarity between the two organisations and adapt their partnership to a rapidly changing multilateral and security landscape. At the informal seminar preceding the annual joint consultations between Security Council and AUPSC members in New York this month, the members of the two Councils are expected to exchange views on the respective reviews of UN peace operations and AUPSOs.

The next UN Secretary-General

The role of the next UN Secretary-General will be important in advancing the UN-AU partnership over the coming period in close coordination and collaboration with their AU counterpart. Several candidates vying for the position have actively engaged with the African group in New York to hear African views and perspectives.

Some travelled to Addis Ababa to hold meetings with the leadership of the AU Commission. Others went to the capitals of the Council's A3 members. In August, several candidates travelled to Luanda to engage with African leaders and participate in the discussions on strengthening conflict prevention and resolution in the continent.

Whoever is ultimately appointed will be expected to bring a fresh perspective to the UN-AU partnership, informed by the progress and difficulties of the past decade and the need to meet current and future peace and security challenges in Africa. Upon taking office in January, they will face the immediate responsibility of helping to find solutions to the continent's protracted and complex conflicts.

Expectations are especially high for the next Secretary-General to raise the UN's profile and visibility in peacemaking efforts by effectively leveraging the UN's good offices and convening power. This may require greater political engagement on the ground, including reinforcing the work of UN peace operations and Special Political Missions (SPMs), and coordinating more closely with the AU and its regional mechanisms.

The next Secretary-General is also expected to implement the recommendations emerging from the review on the future of all forms of UN peace operations. The review underscores the need for "global-regional partnerships for networked peace operations" and calls for the Security Council to be prepared to act proactively in considering and authorising support for AUPSOs under resolution 2719, on a case-by-case basis, drawing on contexts identified jointly by the UN and the AU. It further notes that such decisions should not only be guided by the primacy of politics, ensuring that any application of the resolution advances political solutions, but also on the comparative advantages of the two organisations.

Concluding Observations

While the UN-AU partnership has certainly come a long way, it needs to adapt itself to meet the needs and expectations of the time. The various mechanisms established over the years have provided the partnership with solid institutional foundations. However, it now faces significant challenges, as both organisations grapple with questions of relevance and effectiveness.

A major priority for the two organisations over the coming period should be to make greater use of their existing mechanisms to reinvigorate their peacemaking and conflict management efforts rather than create new structures. Realistically, they cannot be expected to work miracles in resolving the many intractable conflicts on the continent, given the multiple factors at play. However, the leadership of both organisations should maintain a visible presence on the ground, in addition to their Special Envoys and Representatives, working jointly to respond to conflicts and crises across the continent and coordinate their efforts.

One possible initiative could be for the two organisations to undertake joint high-level visits to some of the continent's most pressing conflict situations. Such visits could provide a visible demonstration of their shared commitment to addressing Africa's peace and security challenges and help change public perception of them. They could also revive joint visits at the level of Under-Secretaries-General and Commissioners which took place in the past but have

¹¹ UN Secretary-General, Review on the future of all forms of UN peace operations, A/80/798-S/2026/600 (22 July 2026), <https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/798>.

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not continued. For their part, the Security Council and the AUPSC could consider implementing joint field visits which were agreed in principle but never materialised.

With UN peacekeeping operations facing a significant liquidity crisis, the prospects for operationalising resolution 2719 over the coming period may appear slim. At the same time, however, the UN Support Office model envisaged in the resolution—whereby a UN presence provides logistical and operational support for robust military operations conducted by other actors—may continue to be of interest. This could include, but not be limited to, enforcement or counter-terrorism settings, as demonstrated by the authorisation of the Gang Suppression Force in Haiti. There therefore remains a possibility of applying the resolution provided that sufficient progress is made in meeting the conditions set out in the resolution and that a suitable test case commands the necessary consensus within the Security Council. The next Secretary-General will have an important role to play in creating the necessary conditions for operationalising the resolution, working closely with the AU's leadership. Council members could take advantage of the resolution's upcoming review to take stock of progress and chart a way forward. A possible option would be for the A3 to propose a draft presidential statement for adoption during Liberia's Security Council presidency in December.

The collective efforts of the two organisations could play a critical role in preventing post-conflict countries from relapsing into another cycle of conflict and violence and ensuring that other potential crisis

situations do not escalate into full-blown wars. Their ability to do so will depend on enhanced cooperation in early warning and response, underpinned by shared analysis and a common understanding of the dynamics and risks in these situations. Where the AU and its regional mechanisms are in a better position to respond quickly and effectively, the UN should provide the necessary support. However, this partnership should not become an excuse for inaction where the AU and its regional mechanisms are unable to respond effectively. In such circumstances, the UN Security Council in particular should be prepared to act, consistent with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Most importantly, the two organisations should go beyond visibility and take the lead in proposing concrete measures to de-escalate ongoing conflicts and facilitate cessations of hostilities, thereby creating space for the peaceful settlement of disputes. This requires that they draw the right lessons from past efforts, including why they have fallen short of delivering the desired results in particular cases. They should seize the opportunity presented by the institutional reform processes to address prevailing gaps in their peace and security cooperation and work towards strengthening existing tools. Neither organisation can afford to miss this chance to remain relevant and regain the trust and confidence of member states and, indeed, the wider public, in addressing the multitude of dire security crises facing Africa.

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Artificial Intelligence

On 2 September, Security Council members held an informal interactive dialogue (IID) on artificial intelligence (AI), titled “From Early Warning to Durable Peace: Leveraging AI in Conflict Resolution”. The meeting was organised by Bahrain, France, Greece, and Latvia. The briefers were Rodrigo Saad, Policy Analyst at Security Council Report (SCR); Giacomo Persi Paoli, Fellow at the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR); and Naomi Miyashita, Team Leader of the Information Integrity Unit in the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO).

On 23 September, the Council held a high-level briefing on AI and international security under the “Maintenance of international peace and security” agenda item (S/PV.10227 and Resumption I). France, the Council's president in September, convened the meeting which was chaired by French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noël Barrot. The briefers were Yoshua Bengio, Co-Chair of the UN's Independent International Scientific Panel on AI (IISPAI); OpenAI Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sam Altman; Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei; and Hugging Face CEO Clément Delangue.

Iran

On 10 September, the Security Council held an open briefing on the work of the 1737 Sanctions Committee concerning Iran under the “Non-proliferation” agenda item (S/PV.10218). Prior to the meeting,

Russia, supported by China, requested a procedural vote on the provisional agenda, reiterating its position that “Non-proliferation” had been removed from the list of matters of which the Council is seized. France—the Council president in September—subsequently put the agenda to a vote. It was adopted with 11 votes in favour, two against (China and Russia), and two abstentions (Pakistan and Somalia).

On 17 September, the Security Council held a meeting under the “Non-proliferation” agenda item (S/PV.10224) to vote on a draft resolution extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the 1737 Iran Sanctions Committee for another year, until September 2027. Prior to the meeting, Russia and China requested another procedural vote on the agenda, which was again adopted with 11 votes in favour, two against (China and Russia), and two abstentions (Pakistan and Somalia). The draft resolution was subsequently put to a vote and received the same result. The draft was therefore not adopted due to the negative votes of two permanent members. (The veto applies only to substantive decisions and cannot be used to block procedural votes.)

Counter-Terrorism

On 11 September, the Security Council held an open briefing under the “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts” agenda item (S/PV.10221). France, the Council's president in September, convened the meeting to mark the 25th anniversary of

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the 11 September 2001 attacks perpetrated by Al-Qaida against the US. The briefers were: the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), Natalia Gherman; the Director for Policy and Coordination at the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), Eihab Omaish; and the Executive Director of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIF-CT), Naureen Chowdhury Fink.

At the meeting the Security Council also adopted a French-authored presidential statement on counter-terrorism, its first thematic presidential statement on the issue since 2021. The statement reaffirmed the Council's unequivocal condemnation of the 9/11 attacks and of all acts of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever, and by whomever committed. It expressed concern about the misuse of new financial instruments, including virtual assets such as cryptocurrencies, for terrorist purposes. It also expressed the Council's intention to address both the risks posed by the misuse of emerging technologies and the opportunities they may offer for counter-terrorism efforts.

On 22 September, Council members issued a press statement condemning a terrorist attack at a mosque in Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan, on 18 September (SC/16459). More than 24 Pakistani nationals died in the attack, which was claimed by a terrorist group that included affiliates linked to the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Afghanistan

On 16 September, the Security Council held an open briefing on the situation in Afghanistan and the work of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (S/PV.10223). The briefers were Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Political) for Afghanistan Georgette Gagnon and former Afghan politician and founder of Equality for Peace and Democracy Nargis Nehan. Afghanistan, India, Iran, and Kazakhstan participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. The open briefing was followed by closed consultations.

Peacekeeping

On 18 September, the Security Council held a debate on peacekeeping reform pursuant to resolution 2378 of 20 September 2017 (S/PV.10226). UN Secretary-General António Guterres briefed. In addition to Council members, seven member states—Austria, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, and Portugal—took part in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. The African Union (AU) also participated under rule 39.

Ukraine

On 23 September, the Security Council held a high-level briefing on Ukraine, which was requested by the Council's five European members (Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia, and the UK) (S/PV.10227 and Resumption I). French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noël Barrot chaired the meeting, at which Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed. Finland, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and Ukraine participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, while President of the European Council António Costa participated under rule 39. Several Council members and other participants were represented by heads of government or foreign ministers, who were in New York for the high-level segment of the 81st session of the General Assembly.

Cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States

On 24 September, Security Council members held a high-level informal interactive dialogue (IID) on cooperation between the UN and the League of Arab States (LAS). Éléonore Caroit, France's Minister Delegate for Francophonie, International Partnerships and French Nationals Abroad, chaired the meeting. France circulated a concept note ahead of the meeting, framing the IID as an opportunity to reflect on how enhanced cooperation between the Council and the LAS can help forge peace and address multiple cross-cutting threats across the Arab region. LAS Assistant Secretary-General for International Political Affairs Khaled al-Manzalawi, on behalf of LAS Secretary-General Nabil Fahmy, and UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed. The foreign ministers of Bahrain, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, the current members of the Arab Summit Troika, participated in the meeting.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 29 September, the Security Council met for an open briefing on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), including the work of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (S/PV.10232). Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the DRC and Head of MONUSCO James Swan and President of the Coordination Bureau of Civil Society in South Kivu Néné Bintou Iragi briefed virtually.

Horn of Africa

At time of writing, Council members were expected to hold closed consultations on the Horn of Africa, in light of the deterioration of the situation in northern Ethiopia. An official from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs was expected to brief.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In October, Security Council members are expected to receive their semi-annual briefing in closed 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 Lebanese territory. Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo is the anticipated briefer.

Council members are also likely to continue considering options for possible arrangements after the termination of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to support the continued implementation of resolution 1701, which in 2006 called for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. This follows the Council's unanimous adoption in August 2025 of resolution 2790, which extended UNIFIL's mandate for a final time until 31 December and directed the mission to begin an orderly drawdown and full withdrawal from that date, "and within one year".

Key Recent Developments

On 26 June, Lebanon, Israel, and the US signed a Trilateral Framework intended to chart a way to end the latest escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, which began on 2 March shortly after the US-Israeli attacks on Iran on 28 February. During the hostilities, Israel deployed to an area of up to 10 kilometres in Lebanese territory. Despite the Trilateral Framework and subsequent follow-up negotiations, hostilities have continued in southern Lebanon.

In the Trilateral Framework, Israel and Lebanon committed to a process by which the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) will "restore effective sovereign authority over all Lebanese territory, pending the verified disarmament of non-state armed groups and dismantlement of associated infrastructure, enabling the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to progressively redeploy out of the Lebanese territory". According to the framework and its security annex, the LAF would gradually assume security responsibilities for "pilot zones" in southern Lebanon, following the verification by "a mutually agreed-upon third-party entity" of the absence of non-state armed groups and associated weapons and infrastructure in these areas. However, a decision on which entity, state, or states may assume this third-party function has yet to be reached.

The prospects of the US-mediated negotiations between Lebanon and Israel remain unclear. Following two rounds of talks in Rome over the summer, a further round anticipated for mid-September was postponed until October. The latest round of negotiations, which took place in August, reportedly ended without reaching agreement on key issues.

On 28 August, Council members held closed consultations on Lebanon at France's request in order to begin considering possible arrangements following the termination of UNIFIL. The consultations were also prompted by a deterioration in conditions on the ground. In a 3 September update, Spokesperson for

the Secretary-General Stéphane Dujarric said that while incidents decreased following the signing of the Framework Agreement, UNIFIL recorded an increase in violence in August, with the mission recording daily violations by Israel of Lebanese airspace, as well as airstrikes, ground activities, and naval operations, and extensive Israeli military presence north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 and of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He added that UNIFIL peacekeepers had reported the consolidation and fortification of Israeli positions, the construction of new infrastructure, and other engineering works, with the presence of individuals appearing to be Israeli civilian personnel carrying out demolition and engineering activities in support of the military operations. The update noted that peacekeepers last detected Hezbollah projectiles on 21 June.

IDF military operations in southern Lebanon have continued in September, including by taking "operational control" of the Ali al-Taher ridge, a strategic position near the city of Nabatiyeh, destroying tunnels used by Hezbollah inside the ridge, and through airstrikes and extensive demolitions affecting residential areas. In an 8 September statement, the Secretary-General condemned the "mounting civilian casualties, including women and children killed and injured in the intensifying attacks, the distress and displacement caused by the evacuation orders, and the scenes of massive destruction and devastation". The statement said that the Secretary-General was "particularly alarmed by reported Israeli strikes affecting hospitals, healthcare workers and public institutions, as well as restrictions on humanitarian access". Successive UN updates in September continued to report IDF activity in southern Lebanon, including the dropping of explosive-filled jerrycans within UNIFIL's area of operations and denials of freedom of movement.

Attention is increasingly turning to arrangements for the period following UNIFIL's termination. One possibility is the initiative for an "international coalition to support Lebanon" after the mission's closure, announced on 25 June by French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. While French and Italian authorities have stressed that the initiative would aim to reinforce Lebanon's sovereignty and help prevent a security vacuum in southern Lebanon, its precise contours are yet to be defined.

In parallel, the EU has advanced planning for a possible civilian-military mission aimed at advising and training the LAF and Lebanon's Internal Security Forces. According to media reports, the proposed mission, which is not expected to deploy to southern Lebanon or take over UNIFIL's tasks, may be established in mid-October and could focus on training and support in areas such as border and maritime security. On 1 September, Kaja Kallas, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said that more than ten EU member states had expressed willingness to contribute personnel or resources to the mission.

According to media reports, on 17 September, French, Jordanian, and Lebanese authorities, as well as officials from other states including Saudi Arabia, the UK, and the US, met in Paris for talks

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2790 (28 August 2025) extended the mandate of UNIFIL for a final time until 31 December 2026 and established several functions that UNIFIL is authorised to fulfil during the drawdown and withdrawal period. It also requested the UN Secretary-General to explore, by 1 June 2026, "options for the future of the implementation of resolution 1701" following the withdrawal of UNIFIL. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) called for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. It also expanded UNIFIL's mandate. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, and the extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory. Secretary-General's Report S/2026/566 (9 July 2026) was the most recent Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701.

Lebanon

hosted by France to assess the operational, capability, and financial requirements of the LAF ahead of a possible donor conference and to consider arrangements for the period following UNIFIL's draw-down. Discussions reportedly included both the Franco-Italian proposal for an international coalition and the possible EU-led mission focused on supporting the LAF.

Lebanon has shown openness both to a limited extension of UNIFIL's mandate and to the deployment of a successor international mission. Noting that the security context in Lebanon, across the Blue Line, and in the Middle East has shifted drastically since the adoption of resolution 2790, Lebanon said in a 26 August letter to the Secretary-General that UNIFIL's termination "requires a careful re-examination" to avoid a security vacuum. The letter adds that Lebanon believes that the options for post-UNIFIL arrangements identified in the Secretary-General's 1 June letter may no longer reflect the current realities, while extending "UNIFIL's current arrangement, for a limited period of time" appears as "the most practical option, in operational, logistical, and cost-efficient terms". (For background on the Secretary-General's options, see the brief on Lebanon in our July 2026 *Monthly Forecast*.)

In his 25 September address to the General Assembly's general debate, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam similarly stressed the importance of avoiding the vacuum that the withdrawal of UNIFIL would create in the absence of arrangements for a successor international force. While he did not directly address the possibility of an extension of UNIFIL's mandate, he stressed that a successor force "should ensure the continuation of monitoring, reporting and liaison functions, and its role should complement the requirements for implementing the tripartite framework".

On 25 September, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reportedly offered to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and resume talks on its nuclear program in seven days if the US lifted its naval blockade of Iranian ports, waived sanctions on Iranian oil sales, and observed a ceasefire that would include Lebanon. On 26 September, the US reportedly rejected Iran's proposal.

According to a 25 September statement posted on X by Salam, in a meeting between him and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the margins of the General Assembly's general debate, Salam stressed that Lebanon does not want to be the battleground for regional conflicts or an arena for the exchange of messages, and that relations between Lebanon and Iran are to be built on the basis of mutual respect for respective sovereignty, independence, and non-interference. He also indicated that Lebanon's priorities are Israel's complete withdrawal from Lebanese territory and the cessation of its aggressions, as well as moving forward with extending the Lebanese state's authority over its territory and ensuring the state's sole control over weapons.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 26 August, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed alarm at the increasing civilian toll, mass displacement, and widespread destruction as a result of Israeli military operations in Lebanon. These operations, which have intensified since 2 March, have included airstrikes, shelling, and the use of explosive weapons in heavily populated parts of the country, and have led to the deaths of 4,300 people. The committee also expressed deep alarm at public statements by "Israeli officials threatening to impose on Lebanon the same level of destruction as that inflicted in Gaza". CERD further referenced a statement by Israel's Minister

of Defence characterising Shia inhabitants in 24 villages in the south of Lebanon as "enemies in justifying the complete destruction of their homes". In addition, the committee's experts registered their deep concern over "rockets fired by Hezbollah into populated areas in Israel" that have resulted in civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure.

Key Issues and Options

Supporting the full implementation of resolutions 1559 and 1701 remains a key priority for the Security Council. The Council has been largely sidelined in discussions on how to facilitate an end to the crisis in Lebanon. The Trilateral Framework does not mention the Security Council, its resolutions, nor any role for UNIFIL or a successor UN uniformed presence. A key issue for the Council is to consider what role it will play in the future in supporting the implementation of resolutions 1559 and 1701 and in promoting peace and stability between Lebanon and Israel.

If a decision at the Security Council on post-UNIFIL arrangements continues to be delayed, the Council could consider adopting a resolution postponing, on an exceptional basis, UNIFIL's draw-down for six months. This would allow Council members to consider appropriate options and diplomatic and security developments while avoiding a security vacuum. Among other things, the resolution could also demand the immediate cessation of hostilities and call on all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including regarding the protection of civilians, and to fulfil their obligations under resolutions 1701 and 1559. This would include the withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanese territory; the LAF, with the support of UNIFIL, to deploy throughout southern Lebanon; the government of Lebanon to continue to extend control over all Lebanese territory; and the disarmament of all militias.

To focus the Council's attention on the need to agree on appropriate arrangements for a reconfigured presence in southern Lebanon, a group of Council members, such as the ten elected members of the Council (E10), could organise a closed Arria-formula meeting on the consequences for civilians of a security vacuum in southern Lebanon. Members could invite representatives of the humanitarian community, as well as of Lebanese civil society, to brief.

On 29 May, the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) convened on the situation in Lebanon. In their deliberations on post-UNIFIL arrangements, Council members could refer to the recommendations put forward by UN Women as the IEG Secretariat. Recalling resolution 2594 of 2021 on peace-keeping transition, UN Women recommended that Council members request that technical gender expertise, comprehensive gender analysis, the integration of gender perspectives, and consultations with women's organisations are central to all options for a future UN presence in Lebanon after the withdrawal of UNIFIL.

The Security Council undertook a visiting mission to Lebanon and Syria from 2 to 7 December 2025. If the security conditions allow, Council members could also consider a follow-up visiting mission to the UNIFIL area of operations in southern Lebanon to have a better understanding of the situation on the ground to inform their negotiations.

Council Dynamics

Despite the eventual unanimous adoption of resolution 2790, the negotiation process highlighted sharp divisions among Council

Lebanon

members. The US, Israel's key ally on the Council, signalled its readiness to veto the mandate renewal if it did not contain a clear date for the end of the mission, while the other 14 members—none of whom had approached the negotiations seeking the termination of UNIFIL—argued in favour of prioritising conditions on the ground in considering the mandate rather than a specific end date for the mission. The result was a compromise that tempered US insistence on a set date for the mission's exit, with a final, longer than usual renewal (16 months) reflecting the other members' concern that an accelerated end of the mission could undermine the process of Lebanon achieving full control over its territory.

Most Council members are of the view that developments since the adoption of resolution 2790 and the current situation on the ground require a sustained international presence after UNIFIL's

mandate ends in December. Many members would also apparently support a temporary extension of the mission's mandate. The US, however, seems unwilling to revisit its position on the mission's drawdown.

Differences persist in Security Council members' views of Hezbollah. Several Council members have accused Hezbollah of dragging Lebanon into a confrontation that the Lebanese population did not seek and expressed support for efforts by the Lebanese authorities to extend state authority over the whole Lebanese territory. On the other hand, Russia does not see Hezbollah as the primary problematic actor and has focused its criticism on Israel and on wider regional dynamics.

France is the penholder on Lebanon.

Children and Armed Conflict

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council will hold a briefing on children and armed conflict. The meeting—which Greece is organising as a signature event of its October Council presidency—will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the children and armed conflict mandate by the General Assembly. Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Giorgos Gerapetritis is expected to chair the meeting. The anticipated briefers are Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Vanessa Frazier, a UNICEF official, and a civil society representative.

Background and Key Recent Developments

The children and armed conflict agenda, which today is an integral part of the work of the Security Council, has its origins in the General Assembly. A 1996 report by Graça Machel (a former minister of education and culture in Mozambique), produced in line with a request made by the General Assembly in 1993, led to the creation of the post of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict through General Assembly resolution 51/77 of 12 December 1996. Among other things, the report called on the Security Council to be kept informed of child-specific concerns in its work.

The children and armed conflict agenda—which is one of the Security Council's most developed thematic issues—has been developed 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. (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.) Conclusions adopted by the Working Group, as well as the annexes in the Secretary-General's

annual report—which list parties that have committed certain violations against children—have helped to promote accountability and to encourage parties to take steps such as signing and implementing action plans to end and prevent grave violations.

The children and armed conflict mandate has produced tangible results in the past 30 years, including the release of more than 220,000 children from armed forces and groups. At the Security Council's latest annual open debate on children and armed conflict, held on 24 June, Frazier noted that, in 2025, parties to conflict in places such as Haiti and Syria made approximately 40 commitments, including concerning handover protocols, capacity-building initiatives, and other forms of engagement with the UN. Frazier reported that her office was negotiating action plans with several listed parties, including in Colombia, Myanmar, Sudan, and Syria. In total, 38 action plans have been signed since the establishment of the children and armed conflict mandate, 12 of which were fully implemented and led to the de-listing of the relevant parties.

At the 24 June open debate, the briefers and many member states lamented the fact that, despite this important progress, there has been a worrying increase in grave violations committed against children in the past several years. The Secretary-General's latest annual report on children and armed conflict, dated 16 June and covering 2025, recorded 38,558 grave violations that affected 24,174 children—representing the highest number of children affected by violations since the establishment of the mandate. (For more information, see our 23 June *What's in Blue* story.)

Many speakers argued that this situation stems not from the absence of norms or mechanisms to end and prevent grave violations against children, but rather from a lack of political will to fully implement them. In this regard, Frazier and UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell urged member states to use every tool at their disposal to compel conflict parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL).

UN DOCUMENTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT Secretary-General's Report S/2026/357 (16 June 2026) was the annual report on children and armed conflict. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10182 (24 June 2026) was the annual open debate on children and armed conflict.

Children and Armed Conflict

The briefers and several Council members—including Greece, Pakistan, and Somalia—also raised concerns about the effects on children of the rapidly changing nature of warfare, such as the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, the expanded use of uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), and the growing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into targeting processes. In this regard, there were calls for member states, the UN, and private companies to ensure that technological advances remain under human control and legal oversight.

In late June, Greece circulated to Council members a draft resolution on the impact of digital technologies on violations against children in armed conflict. Negotiations on the text were ongoing at the time of writing.

Developments in the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Almost ten months into the year, Council members have been unable to agree on the allocation of subsidiary body chairs in light of a dispute concerning the 1737 Iran Sanctions Committee. This has prevented the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict from carrying out its work, creating a significant backlog in the adoption of conclusions on the Secretary-General's country-specific reports 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. Given the condensed timeframe and difficult dynamics among Council members, the Working Group was only able to adopt conclusions on one report, on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The Working Group had begun negotiating 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 are six country reports that Council members have received but have yet to begin negotiating conclusions on, namely Myanmar, Yemen, South Sudan, Syria, Somalia, and Afghanistan.

Key Issues and Options

Next month's meeting marking 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. 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 Council's ability to respond to developments on the ground and to promote accountability for grave violations against children. Considering this unprecedented situation, member states wishing to preserve the mandate will need to undertake collaborative, creative approaches in the remainder of 2026 and beyond.

A matter of priority is resuming negotiations on conclusions. This year, although Council presidencies have convened meetings of some subsidiary bodies, in line with contingency measures outlined in a 2023 presidential note (S/2023/615), no presidency has organised a meeting of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. An option would be for Council presidents to convene informal meetings to conduct negotiations on the two sets of conclusions that members began discussing in 2025 (Burkina Faso and Mali).

A related issue is how to make conclusions more succinct and fit for purpose to allow for smoother negotiations. Council members could discuss this in an informal format, such as an informal interactive dialogue (IID), which would allow child protection actors to provide information on how they use the conclusions to engage with conflict parties on ending and preventing grave violations.

Over the years, the Working Group has been crucial in facilitating the integration of child protection considerations into the Council's broader work, including in its products and meetings. Members could consider ways to continue doing so. An option is to convene videoconference meetings with the relevant country task force on monitoring and reporting (CTFMR) ahead of negotiations on Council products, particularly mandate renewal resolutions—a practice that some Working Group chairs promoted in previous years.

Another key priority for the Council is monitoring the development and implementation by conflict parties of action plans to end and prevent grave violations against children. An option would be to organise informal sessions such as the May 2018 Arria-formula meeting, at which a number of African member states—Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, and Sudan—shared best practices on implementing action plans. The DRC, which currently serves as an elected Council member, shared some of its relevant experiences during the 24 June open debate.

The Working Group has also been unable to conduct visiting missions, which were helpful in generating momentum around the implementation of commitments by conflict parties. An option would be for Council members to organise an informal visit focused on children and armed conflict. Such a visit could prioritise encouraging parties to sign or implement action plans.

Another matter of concern is the cuts by traditional donors to humanitarian funding and to the budgets of UN peace operations and their negative effects on child protection and monitoring and reporting capacities. Increasing the visibility of the children and armed conflict agenda could encourage financial and political support from a cross-regional array of member states. In this regard, interested member states could choose to organise a follow-up to the conference on children and armed conflict that Malta organised in May, bringing together member states as well as UN and civil society representatives. (For more options, see our 12 June 2025 research report on children and armed conflict.)

Council and Wider Dynamics

The children and armed conflict agenda enjoys general support among Council members and the wider UN membership. However, political sensitivities have created difficulties in recent years, including in 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). At the 24 June open debate, the US criticised the fact that the Secretary-General's latest report references child casualties caused by US-authorised air strikes against Houthi targets, noting that this further reinforces Washington's decision to cease cooperation with the OSRSG-CAAC. It is currently unclear how this position will affect US participation in the Working Group once it is able to operate again.

It seems that the US has expressed opposition to the inclusion of language on the OSRSG-CAAC in Council products. Additionally, US objection to language on gender was apparently a sticking point leading to protracted negotiations on Working Group conclusions in 2025.

At the 24 June open debate, Israel and Russia reiterated their accusations that the Secretary-General's report is biased, maintaining

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that it fails to capture violations committed by Palestinian armed groups and Ukraine, respectively. Russia argued in this regard that “depolicitizing” the children and armed conflict agenda should be a priority for the next UN Secretary-General. Many other member

states used the meeting to reiterate their support for the OSRSG-CAAC and highlighted their conviction in the impartiality and rigour of its work.

UN-AU Cooperation

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold a briefing on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations, focusing on the African Union (AU). Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU) Parfait Onanga-Anyanga and AU Commissioner for Political Affairs and Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye are the anticipated briefers.

Onanga-Anyanga is expected to present the Secretary-General’s annual report on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the UNOAU during the meeting.

The 20th annual joint consultative meeting of the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) will also be held in October. The annual meeting rotates between New York and Addis Ababa; this year’s meeting will be held in New York on 23 October. The annual consultation is expected to be preceded on 22 October by the 11th informal joint seminar of the Security Council and the AUPSC, which has generally focused on thematic issues.

Key Recent Developments

The annual report, published on 17 August, describes the partnership between the UN and the AU in conflict prevention and peace-making, peacekeeping and peace support operations, peacebuilding and the rule of law, and countering terrorism and violent extremism. It highlights challenges and opportunities for peace and security in Africa and mentions the security situation in some countries, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan, and Somalia. It also refers to the return to constitutional order in Gabon and Guinea, while noting the unconstitutional changes of government in Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau in the reporting period.

Additionally, the Secretary-General’s report provides updates on the cooperation between the UN Secretariat and the AU Commission. The ninth and tenth UN-AU annual conferences, which brought together the senior leadership of both organisations—including Secretary-General António Guterres and AU Commission Chairperson Mahamoud Ali Youssouf—were held in November 2025 and May 2026 in New York and Addis Ababa, respectively. This annual meeting serves as a platform for reviewing progress in the implementation of the various cooperation frameworks signed by the two organisations. At the tenth meeting, the leadership of the two organisations signed a declaration reaffirming the principles underpinning their cooperation frameworks and institutionalising their commitment to the strategic partnership.

During the UN General Assembly High-Level Week in September, Guterres and Youssouf co-chaired a meeting which discussed, among other things, developments in the DRC, Libya, the Sahel, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. They also exchanged views on external shocks, including disruptions to global supply chains and maritime chokepoints, and their adverse effects for African economies and food security.

As they have done in recent years, the AU Committee of Experts will come to New York before the annual consultations to meet with their Security Council counterparts and negotiate the joint communiqué to be adopted at the end of the annual consultations. Security Council experts have also travelled to Addis Ababa twice so far in preparation for the annual consultations and met with their AUPSC counterparts.

While in New York, AUPSC members are expected to hold their annual consultations with the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on 22 October. Initiated in 2016, these annual consultations have since become a regular feature of the UN-AU partnership. African issues feature prominently on the PBC’s agenda, while post-conflict African countries account for a significant share of allocations from the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

Key Issues and Options

In October, Council members will have several opportunities to focus on UN-AU cooperation in light of the Secretary-General’s annual report on the topic and the visit of AUPSC members to New York for the annual consultations with Security Council members. A key issue is how to strengthen the partnership with the AUPSC across the peace continuum ranging from conflict prevention, mediation, and conflict resolution to peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction to provide a coherent and effective response to wars and other crisis situations in Africa.

A related issue for Council members is how it addresses the review processes undertaken by the two organisations. The UN has conducted a review on the future of all forms of UN peace operations, which the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council and the General Assembly in August. The AU has also conducted a review of the African Peace and Security Architecture, including AU Peace Support Operations (AUPSOs). Council members could explore the complementarity of these review processes, including at the annual consultations with the AUPSC, to advance the UN-AU partnership in addressing Africa’s peace and security challenges.

In relation to the annual consultations between the two Councils, a major issue is how to deepen the partnership with the AU and its

UN DOCUMENTS ON UN-AU COOPERATION Security Council Resolution S/RES/2719 (21 December 2023) was on the financing of AUPSOs. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10012** (7 October 2025) was a meeting on the cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations in maintaining international peace and security. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2026/682** (17 August 2026) was the annual report on the partnership between the UN and the AU.

UN-AU Cooperation

sub-regional mechanisms to address the most pressing peace and security situations in Africa. The members of the two Councils are expected to focus on several conflict and crisis situations in their annual consultations. This year, they are expected to discuss country- and region-specific situations, including the funding of the AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), eastern DRC, South Sudan, and Sudan. At the 11th informal joint seminar, the two Councils are expected to exchange views on a number of thematic topics, including the review of UN peace operations and AUPSOs and the implementation of resolution 2719; youth, peace and security; counter-terrorism in Africa; children and armed conflict; and possibly natural resource management as a factor that exacerbates armed conflict.

Negotiations on the outcome document of the annual consultations are often contentious. If the two Councils are unable to agree on a draft communiqué, as was the case last year (see Council dynamics below), a possible option would be to issue a short press statement covering the main issues discussed.

Another issue related to the annual meetings is how to encourage a more interactive exchange during the informal seminar preceding the annual consultations between the members of the Security Council and the AUPSC. Two years ago, this seminar was held as a retreat outside of New York City with an agenda aimed at fostering greater interactivity. This year, the Greek presidency also intends to follow a similar format to encourage a more informal and interactive discussion by organising a retreat in Greentree, including a fireside chat.

The future of resolution 2719, adopted on 21 December 2023 on the financing of AUPSOs, is another issue that Council members are expected to grapple with over the coming months. Pursuant to paragraph 17 of the resolution, the Security Council is expected to review its implementation three years after its adoption. In this regard, Council members are likely to receive an update during the October annual meeting on the work by the UN and the AU to lay the groundwork for the operationalisation of the resolution based on the joint roadmap agreed between the two organisations in October 2024.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members are generally supportive of the cooperation and partnership between the UN and the AU on peace and security. The

role of the three African members (A3) has been vital in this regard, although their influence has varied depending on the composition and priorities of its membership.

Next year, the A3 is likely to further institutionalise its “A3 plus one” arrangement with elected members from the Caribbean, with Trinidad and Tobago joining the Council as an elected member from the region. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Guyana previously worked closely with the A3 as “plus members”, making Trinidad and Tobago the third Caribbean country to participate in the arrangement. During the UN General Assembly High-Level Week, the A3 held its meeting and welcomed Zimbabwe and Trinidad and Tobago as the incoming members of the “A3 plus one”.

The Security Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa (AWG) is responsible for organising the annual consultations with AUPSC. This year, the chair of the AWG has yet to be appointed, pending the finalisation of the allocation of chairs of subsidiary bodies. In the interim, Greece, as Security Council president for October, facilitated agreement on the dates for the annual consultations, while Somalia, which chaired the AWG last year, is informally facilitating negotiations on the draft agenda items and programme of work.

Last year, the negotiations over the outcome document of the 19th annual consultations in Addis Ababa were contentious, with the two Councils unable to agree on a range of issues discussed at the meeting. They eventually opted to issue a short joint press statement, which described the country- and region-specific situations as well as thematic topics that were discussed during their annual consultations and the informal seminar.

At the time of writing, Council members had yet to begin negotiations on the draft outcome document of the 20th annual consultations, which New York, as this year's host, is drafting and is expected to share with Addis Ababa once Council members have finalized the draft agenda items. The proposed agenda item on natural resources, proposed by the AUPSC, appears to have become a point of contention within the Security Council. Russia apparently broke silence on the issue by proposing to reformulate the agenda item as “Root causes of conflict in Africa and the exploitation of natural resources”. The European Council members, however, seem to have opposed the proposed reformulation, arguing that it would alter the scope of the agenda item.

UNDOF (Golan)

Expected Council Action

In October, Council members will hold their quarterly consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan. Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) Mohamed

Khaled Khiari is expected to brief on the Secretary-General's latest 90-day report on UNDOF 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

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNDOF Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2824 (25 June 2026) renewed the mandate of UNDOF for six months, until 31 December 2026. S/RES/350 (31 May 1974) established UNDOF. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2026/756 (23 September 2026) was the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the UNDOF, covering the period from 15 May to 12 August 2026. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.10225 (17 September 2026) was a meeting on political and humanitarian developments in Syria. S/PV.9840 (17 January 2025) was a meeting on UNIFIL and UNDOF.

UNDOF (Golan)

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 Syria 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 territory indefinitely to ensure the demilitarisation of the buffer zone and mitigation of threats from southern Syria. Additionally, 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.

On 9 September, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited a military position on Mount Hermon, inside Syrian territory, accompanied by Defence Minister Israel Katz and senior military officials. Netanyahu said that Israel had established “absolute control” over the area stretching from the mountain’s summit south to the Yarmouk River and west to the Mediterranean Sea, while Katz indicated that Israeli forces would remain there, calling the area a “security zone”. Speaking at the Council’s monthly meeting on Syria on 17 September, Israel’s Permanent Representative to the UN Danny Danon said that the “security zone” was established to protect Syria from terrorist groups and an “October 7th-style cross-border attack from Syrian territory”. He also argued that Israel would not allow external actors—specifically mentioning Türkiye—to establish a military presence in Syria from which Israel could be threatened.

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. In his 23 September statement at the UN General Assembly, Sharaa called on Israel to withdraw from Syrian territory to the lines of 8 December 2024, and reaffirmed Damascus’ position that the Golan remains Syrian territory and its commitment to the 1974 agreement. He said that Israel has conducted “500 airstrikes, more than 1,200 incursions, and 300 detentions” since his government took power. On 11 September, Ambassador Ibrahim Olabi (Syria) was joined by representatives of a number of regional organisations and member states—including Council members Bahrain, China, Denmark, France, Pakistan, Russia, and Somalia—in a press stakeout reacting to Netanyahu’s visit to Mount Hermon and warning that such escalations could undermine recent progress made by the Syrian government.

Direct talks on security issues between Israel and Syria began—through mediation by the US—in 2025. Talks appear to have broken down, however, following Israeli airstrikes on Abu al-Duhur military airbase in Syria’s Idlib governorate on 18 August, after Israel claimed the Syrians violated security arrangements by agreeing to have Turkish troops deploy there. Both Türkiye and Syria denied these claims. On 23 September, Sharaa reportedly said that the talks had led to the parties reaching 90 percent agreement on a security framework, before Israel withdrew.

The Secretary-General’s most recent report on UNDOF’s activities, dated 23 September and covering the period from 15 May to 12 August, reported continued violations of the 1974 agreement. The report said that these included the continued presence and activities of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on the Syrian side of the buffer zone, which included detentions, searches of homes, movement restrictions, and damage to farmlands. Violations also included the IDF firing into and across the area of separation and across the ceasefire line. It reported that as at 12 August, the IDF “maintained and reinforced 11 positions” on the Syrian side, adding that UNDOF continued to observe “engineering and construction activities” by the IDF in the area. The report also said that on 8 July, an UNDOF patrol came under fire from an IDF position, with rounds coming close enough to force it to withdraw. According to the report, the IDF said that it had fired warning shots “after failing to identify an individual approaching”.

More recent Israeli violations reportedly included incursions and shelling into southern Syria’s Quneitra and Daraa governorates on 20 and 21 September, which followed a substantial increase in violations of Syrian sovereignty throughout August, according to independent observers.

Key Issues and Options

The shift in security dynamics in the Golan and ongoing violations of the 1974 agreement are key issues for the Council. Israel’s 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.

A related issue is the increased challenges UNDOF faces in implementing its mandate, including the safety of personnel and movement restrictions imposed on the mission due to Israeli activities in the area of operation.

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.

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

UNDOF (Golan)

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.)

Colombia's position on the Golan seems to have shifted after President Abelardo de la Espriella assumed office. On 10 August, the new government recognised Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan, a break from the previous government's approach and only the second such recognition globally following the US.

Western Sahara

Expected Council Action

In October, Security Council members will receive a briefing in consultations on the Secretary-General's annual report on the situation in Western Sahara. Special Representative for Western Sahara and Head of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) Alexander Ivanko and Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara Staffan de Mistura are the anticipated briefers.

The Council is also expected to vote on a resolution to renew the mandate of MINURSO, which expires on 31 October.

Key Recent Developments

Resolution 2797 of 31 October 2025, which extended MINURSO's mandate for another year, expressed the Council's full support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy in facilitating and conducting negotiations, taking Morocco's autonomy proposal as a basis, aimed at achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable resolution of the dispute. (The plan, which Morocco submitted to the UN in 2007, calls for integrating the territory into Morocco, with the Sahrawi people managing their internal affairs while being represented externally by Morocco.) The resolution also called on the parties to engage in discussions without preconditions, using the proposal as a basis, with a view to reaching a final and mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, and recognises that genuine autonomy could represent a feasible outcome. (For background and more information, see the brief on Western Sahara in our October 2025 *Monthly Forecast* and our 31 October 2025 *What's in Blue* story.)

In February, the US convened ministerial-level delegations from Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, and the Polisario Front for talks in Madrid. US Permanent Representative to the UN Mike Waltz and US Senior Advisor for Arab and African Affairs Massad Boulos participated in the meeting, alongside de Mistura. The meeting marked the first time since 2019 that representatives of all four stakeholders had met in person in this format. Following the Madrid meeting, the US hosted the four delegations in Washington, DC, for another round of talks on 23 and 24 February.

Despite those meetings, there has been no progress towards narrowing the parties' differences. Morocco continues to maintain that a settlement should be based on autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty, while the Polisario Front insists that any solution must guarantee the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination. (For

background and more information, see the brief on Western Sahara in our April 2026 *Monthly Forecast*.)

Resolution 2797 requested the Secretary-General to provide a strategic review of MINURSO's future mandate, taking into account the outcome of the negotiations between parties within six months (that is, by the end of April). During Council members' 23 April closed consultations on MINURSO, Asif Khan, Director of the Policy and Mediation Division in the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), briefed on the strategic review. Khan apparently provided an interim update, as the review had not yet been finalised. The update apparently outlined potential options for realigning MINURSO's tasks and priorities in the event of a political agreement.

The situation on the ground remains tense, characterised by ongoing hostilities between Morocco and the Polisario Front. On 5 May, three rockets struck near the city of Smara, in Moroccan-administered Western Sahara, reportedly landing in areas near the local prison and cemetery and injuring one civilian. The Polisario Front subsequently claimed responsibility for the attack.

The attack drew condemnation from several states and regional organisations, including the Council's P3 members (France, the UK, and the US), the European Union (EU), and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). MINURSO also expressed deep concern over incidents of firing in civilian areas. De Mistura echoed these concerns, urging the parties to avoid any action that could jeopardise the ongoing political process.

On 7 June, a reported Moroccan drone strike in the Mijek area, east of the berm, killed prominent Polisario figure Lahbib Mohamed Abdelaziz and two other Polisario members. (The berm, an approximately 1,700-mile-long earthen wall, separates the Moroccan-administered part of Western Sahara from territory controlled by the Polisario Front.) *Le Monde*, citing the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), reported that the UN had received information about a drone strike targeting a Polisario military vehicle in the area.

De Mistura continued his diplomatic efforts in a bid to advance the political process. On 7 and 8 June, he travelled to the Sahrawi refugee camps near Tindouf, Algeria, where he met Polisario Front Secretary-General Brahim Ghali and other senior Sahrawi leadership members, as well as representatives of Sahrawi women's, youth and human rights organisations. Discussions reportedly focused on the current state of the UN-sponsored political process and its prospects following the rounds of talks held earlier this year.

UN DOCUMENTS ON WESTERN SAHARA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2797 (31 October 2025) renewed the mandate of MINURSO until 31 October 2026.

Western Sahara

On 11 June, de Mistura met Boulos on the margins of the Oslo Forum. In a post on X, Boulos said that the discussions focused on advancing implementation of resolution 2797 and support the parties in reaching a “just, lasting and mutually acceptable” political solution. On 15 June, de Mistura met Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf in Algiers as part of his regional consultations. He subsequently travelled to Nouakchott, where he met Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani on 18 June.

Key Issues and Options

An immediate issue for the Council is the renewal of MINURSO’s mandate. With no progress in the negotiations since the rounds of talks held earlier this year, it remains unclear how the strategic review requested by resolution 2797 can be finalised and taken forward. Against this backdrop, there is also uncertainty over whether the review will be completed and submitted to the Council ahead of MINURSO’s mandate renewal.

One option would therefore be for the Council to renew MINURSO’s existing mandate for another year without making any changes, allowing additional time for the political process to make progress before reconsidering the mission’s tasks and configuration.

Alternatively, the Council could opt for a shorter renewal, such as six months, creating an earlier opportunity to assess whether the negotiations have advanced sufficiently to inform the strategic review and possible adjustments to the mission’s mandate.

Nevertheless, the underlying issue remains how to facilitate a viable and lasting resolution to the long-standing dispute over the status of Western Sahara. Council members continue to navigate the competing interests and positions of key stakeholders, which shape deliberations on this file.

Against this backdrop, MINURSO’s ability to implement its mandate remains constrained, while the operational environment remains tense. Hostilities have persisted at a low to medium intensity, falling short of large-scale confrontation, but the absence of progress in the political process continues to generate instability and the risk of further escalation.

One option for Council members could be to adopt a press statement following the October consultations. The statement could express support for the diplomatic efforts led by de Mistura and the US, urge the relevant parties to resume negotiations, and encourage

them to engage constructively and demonstrate flexibility with a view to overcoming the current impasse and making progress towards a political solution.

Council Dynamics

Council members continue to differ significantly in their national positions on Western Sahara. The US, the penholder on Western Sahara, recognised Moroccan sovereignty over the territory in December 2020 during President Donald Trump’s first administration and has maintained this position. The current administration has reiterated that it considers Morocco’s autonomy proposal the only basis for a just and lasting solution.

France supports the Moroccan autonomy plan as the “only basis” for achieving a political solution, while the UK describes the autonomy proposal as the “most credible, viable and pragmatic basis for a lasting resolution of the dispute”. Countries such as France and the US have also sought to make significant investments in projects in Western Sahara. Denmark views Morocco’s autonomy plan as “a good basis for an agreed solution between all parties”, while Greece considers it a “serious and credible” approach.

Among the other elected members, Bahrain, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Liberia support Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara and have opened consulates in the territory.

In a 6 December 2025 statement, Somalia called on the parties to engage in serious and direct negotiations aimed at reaching a mutually acceptable solution, while reaffirming its commitment to strengthening cooperation with Morocco and to mutual respect for each country’s national unity and sovereignty.

Latvia maintains cordial relations with both Algeria and Morocco but does not recognise the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) or endorse Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara. Meanwhile, Colombia shifted its position following the election of President Abelardo de la Espriella, recognising Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in August.

In November 2024, Panama suspended diplomatic relations with the SADR and subsequently described Morocco’s autonomy proposal as “the most serious, credible, and realistic basis” for a lasting solution.

Pakistan, by contrast, has emphasised the importance of self-determination and abstained on resolution 2797.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In October, 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 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are the anticipated briefers.

Key Recent Developments

In September, Yemen experienced a significant increase in hostilities, unravelling a UN-mediated truce agreed in 2022 between the Iran-backed Houthi rebel group—which controls most of northwestern Yemen—and the Saudi-led “Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen” (the Coalition). Tensions came to a head in July when Houthi grievances with Saudi Arabia resurfaced over a years-long

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10222 (15 September 2026) was an emergency meeting held in response to an advancing Houthi offensive along Yemen’s west coast. Security Council Press Statements SC/16458 (18 September 2026) condemned continued Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab, and the ongoing Houthi military escalation in Yemen. SC/16429 (7 August 2026) expressed members’ concerns at heightened tensions in Yemen and called on the Houthis to de-escalate and pursue dialogue.

Yemen

air and sea blockade imposed by the Coalition on Houthi territory, leading to reciprocal strikes and clashes between the Houthis on the one side and the Coalition and the Saudi-backed internationally recognised government of Yemen on the other. Subsequently, the Houthis declared a naval blockade against Saudi-linked shipping in the Red Sea and struck commercial vessels transiting the Bab al-Mandab Strait—a maritime corridor connecting the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. (Since November 2024, the Houthis have used a similar strategy to target Israel and Israeli-linked shipping in support of Palestinians in Gaza.)

On 8 September, the Houthis launched a series of missile and drone attacks targeting several locations in southern Saudi Arabia, reportedly injuring 73 people, and causing damage to energy facilities. The Houthis framed the attack as a retaliation to what they said was a Saudi strike on a prison in the Yemeni governorate of Al-Jawf that killed seven people, including one child.

On 10 September, the Houthis seized control of the port city of Mokha from forces aligned with Yemen's government. The next day the group captured Perim Island in the middle of the Bab al-Mandab Strait and gained control over Yemen's west coast, bordering the Red Sea. According to media reports, advisers from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) were present during the fighting and provided direct support during the rapid offensive.

Subsequent attacks by the Houthis on Saudi Arabia have included ballistic missile and drone strikes on military bases, energy infrastructure, and on Riyadh, causing a fire at King Khalid International Airport. On 16 September, Saudi Arabia said that its forces intercepted a Houthi-launched drone heading towards the holy city of Mecca. The Houthis rejected claims that the group would target the city or any other holy sites, and have reportedly accused the Saudis of conducting dozens of airstrikes across Yemen—including on Al-Jawf, Marib, Saada, and Taiz governorates—some of which they said killed civilians, including women and children.

Yemen's government forces have reportedly concentrated efforts on preventing the Houthis from expanding further east into the Kahboub mountains and surrounding highlands, from where the group could gain a defensive foothold over recently seized territory and increase pressure on government-controlled areas in Lahij and Taiz governorates. On 21 and 22 September, Yemeni armed forces reportedly said that they had retaken strategic positions in the highlands and in Taiz governorate from the Houthis. Fighting has continued to intensify around Taiz city—Yemen's third most populous city—which sits between Houthi-controlled areas in the north and government-controlled areas in the south.

In a 24 September statement, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk expressed alarm at the civilian toll of the expanding conflict in Yemen, reporting that at least 125 civilians have been killed and wounded and 125,000 people displaced since early August. He urged all parties to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian access and reiterated calls for the immediate release of 73 UN staff members who remain arbitrarily detained by the Houthis. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), around 3,000 people have crossed the Bab al-Mandab Strait to seek refuge in Djibouti, straining capacity in the country's already burdened refugee camps. UN aid agencies have also warned that the renewed fighting is deepening Yemen's hunger crisis, with mobile health clinics reporting severe malnutrition

among hundreds of displaced children.

The Council has held two emergency meetings to discuss the escalating developments. In response to Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, the Council held a meeting—requested by Bahrain and the UK (the penholder on Yemen)—on 10 September, during which Grundberg briefed. (For more information, see our 10 September *What's in Blue* story.) On 15 September, the Council convened again—following a request from Bahrain, Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia, and the UK—to discuss the Houthis' expanded control over Yemen's west coast. Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific Mohamed Khaled Khiari briefed the Council.

On 18 September, Council members issued a press statement (SC/16458) condemning continued Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, including on civilian and energy infrastructure, on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab, and the “ongoing Houthi military escalation in Yemen”. They demanded an end to the escalations, expressed concern over civilian casualties and displacement, and reaffirmed support for Yemen's government and a UN-led political process. This was the second press statement on Yemen that Council members issued in as many months, following one on 7 August (SC/16429) which had expressed members' concerns at heightened tensions in Yemen and called on the Houthis to de-escalate and pursue dialogue.

The most recent monthly Secretary-General's report, dated 10 September, on Houthi attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea confirmed that from 9 August to 9 September the Houthis attacked three commercial vessels, killing four seafarers in the 11 August attack on the Tanzania-flagged *Tihamah* cargo ship. This report was submitted in line with a Council-mandated reporting requirement, initially requested by resolution 2722 of 10 January 2024.

On 31 August, the Council's 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee held a meeting to receive briefings from the Panel of Experts (PoE) supporting the committee on the two PoE reports requested by resolution 2801 of 14 November 2025 and to discuss their findings. Since the Council has yet to agree on the allocation of subsidiary body chairs this year, the meeting was chaired by Ambassador Christina Markus Lassen, the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN, in her capacity as president of the Security Council for the month of August. One report concerns the flow of dual-use components and precursor chemicals to Yemen and the other concerns improving information sharing and flag state capacity to prevent vessels suspected of violating the sanctions regime from entering Yemen. The PoE seems to have reported to the Council that Houthi capabilities have increased in recent months, as more arms are being produced within Yemen, and as their supply chains have become more sophisticated, while stressing that the arms embargo has become insufficient to stop the flow of sanctioned materiel.

Women, Peace and Security

On 13 August, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Tawakkol Karman delivered remarks on the situation in Yemen at the Security Council press stakeout. Speaking ahead of Karman's intervention, Ambassador Sandra Jensen Landi, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN, explained that Denmark had planned to have Karman brief the Council as a civil society representative at the 13 August meeting on Yemen. She added, however, that due to “strong opposition”, Karman did not get to brief the Council. It seems

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that opposition from several Council members was communicated informally to Denmark ahead of the meeting.

In her remarks, Karman called on the Security Council to urge all parties to the conflict towards an immediate de-escalation and to end all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. She urged the Council to support an inclusive, Yemeni-led political process that restores Yemen's sovereignty and independent national decision-making, adding that such a process should rebuild state institutions; unify military and security institutions under state authority; disarm armed groups; and ensure justice, accountability, and redress for victims. Among other measures, Karman urged the Council to continue to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained or abducted persons, and to consider establishing a special international judicial mechanism for Yemen to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity. She stressed that "peace in Yemen cannot be sustainable without women" and called for women's participation in peace negotiations, state building, and decision-making processes, with at least 30 percent representation. Karman urged the Council to enforce its sanctions regime on Yemen and hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations and for undermining peace, as well as the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity of Yemen.

Key Issues and Options

An urgent issue for the Council is how to address the full resumption of hostilities in Yemen, which indicate that the 2022 UN-mediated truce has collapsed. The Houthis' rapid military offensive and increased strategic leverage over the Bab al-Mandab Strait represents a fundamental shift in the conflict's trajectory and poses severe risks to regional stability, the Yemeni civilian population, and international maritime security. Council members could use the upcoming meeting and any influence they have over the parties involved to press for de-escalation and demand that civilians be protected in line with conflict parties' obligations under international humanitarian law.

In this context, Council members could consider building on the two recent press statements issued and adopt a resolution or presidential statement demanding an immediate nationwide cessation of hostilities by all parties and calling for the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure and for unimpeded humanitarian access across Yemen. The text could also demand an end to Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia and on commercial shipping and could reaffirm Council support for Grundberg's mediation efforts towards a negotiated Yemeni-owned and Yemeni-led political settlement of the conflict.

Another issue is that recent developments have illustrated that Houthi military capabilities have continued to grow, raising serious questions about the effectiveness of the Yemen sanctions regime, including the arms embargo established through resolution 2216 of 14 April 2015. Council members could request a briefing from the PoE to the 2140 committee on the findings of the panel's final report to the Council, due on 15 October, and on Houthi capabilities and supply chains. This could help better inform Council negotiations on the upcoming renewal of the 2140 sanctions regime, which expires on 14 November.

The impact of renewed hostilities on the already dire humanitarian situation, compounded by severe access constraints, also remains

a priority. Members could consider inviting a senior OCHA official to brief specifically on access constraints and their operational impacts in a meeting focused specifically on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, including the protection of humanitarian personnel.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members agree in their support for an inclusive Yemeni-led political process under UN auspices and share similar concerns over the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the Houthis' continued detention of UN, non-governmental organisation (NGO), and diplomatic staff. However, the full resumption of hostilities and the Houthis' seizure of territory along the Red Sea coast have sharpened existing divisions over how to characterise events and what action the Council should take to respond.

At the 15 September meeting, several Council members condemned Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia and on civilian and energy infrastructure, expressed solidarity with Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni government, and called for the full enforcement of the Yemen sanctions regime under resolutions 2140 and 2216. Several members—including Bahrain, Denmark, Latvia, the UK, and the US—called on Iran to cease arming the Houthis. France, the UK, and the US continue to favour increased pressure on the Houthis and Iran, including through sanctions and PoE scrutiny, with the US in particular framing recent developments in Yemen within its broader confrontation with Iran.

Russia and China have adopted a more measured stance, calling on the Houthis to show restraint and refrain from threatening commercial shipping, but stopping short of attributing sole blame to the group, while urging a negotiated solution involving all relevant political forces in Yemen, including the Houthis.

Some Council members have also taken steps to militarily support Saudi Arabia in combating the Houthis and protecting its infrastructure. On 24 September, France said that it would provide "soldiers, radars and defense systems" to Saudi Arabia to help it defend energy sites along the Red Sea, which have been increasingly targeted by the Houthi forces. On 22 September, the UK announced that its military would provide air-to-air refuelling of Saudi planes. Saudi Arabia has also signed a defence pact with Council-member Pakistan and Türkiye, called the "Mecca Joint Defence Agreement".

Despite having approved a 5-billion-dollar potential weapons sale to Saudi Arabia, the US seems to have opted not to get directly involved in the conflict with the Houthis. According to the media reports, on 20 September, US President Donald Trump cancelled planned airstrikes against the Houthis amid reported concerns regarding the US military's existing strains in its war with Iran. Earlier in the month on 16 September, US officials reportedly met with the Houthis in Oman, where the rebel group said they would not target US or Israeli vessels or any commercial vessels other than those belonging to Saudi Arabia.

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

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold its quarterly meeting on Colombia. Special Representative and Head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia Miroslav Jenča will brief on recent developments and the Secretary-General's latest 90-day report on the mission (S/2026/759), which was circulated to Council members on 25 September and covers developments since 27 June.

The Council is also expected to vote on a draft resolution renewing the verification mission's mandate ahead of its 31 October expiry.

Key Recent Developments

The reporting period witnessed several major developments in Colombia. On 7 August, Abelardo Gabriel de la Espriella began his four-year presidential term. Three days later, on 10 August, the country was hit by a magnitude 7.4 earthquake that affected more than 487,000 people, including 335 fatalities, 4,516 injuries, and 105 people reported missing, according to official figures cited by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The new administration took office shortly before the tenth anniversary of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the government of Colombia and the former rebel group *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)*, which was signed on 24 November 2016. During his campaign, de la Espriella criticised some aspects of the 2016 peace agreement, particularly denouncing the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), the judicial component of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition established by the accord.

The Secretary-General's report notes that while the new administration has "[stated] its intention to comply with the constitution and legal obligations arising from the Peace Agreement, the Government has yet to fully outline its approach to the implementation of the Agreement". In a 24 September interview, José Mauricio Gaona Bejarano, Colombia's newly appointed Permanent Representative to the UN, noted that the government will conduct an "objective, data-driven review of what functions and what fails" in the peace agreement and will convey its position at the Security Council's upcoming quarterly meeting on Colombia, which is scheduled for 12 October.

On 27 August, the government presented to the Colombian Congress its proposed national budget for 2027, which will need to be approved by 20 October. The Secretary-General's report noted that the proposed allocations "suggest greater emphasis on security, with notable reductions for some entities involved in the implementation of the Agreement, including in areas related to rural development, land distribution and reintegration". Notably, members of the Comunes political organisation, which is composed of former FARC-EP members, raised concerns about budget cuts for the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization (ARN), which coordinates public policy and programmes for the reintegration and reincorporation of former combatants.

Regarding the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition, the Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing was allocated roughly \$15 million less than the funds it requested to carry out its work. The Unit has warned that

this will force the closure of at least half of the six Comprehensive Forensic Approach and Identification Centers that it operates, which would hinder its search and identification of the over 10,000 missing people in Colombia. Additionally, the Congress' economic commissions supported a budget that would leave the SJP with roughly \$87.8 million less than it requested. This proposal will go through two additional processes, in the Senate and House of Representatives, before final approval.

The SJP's President, Judge Alejandro Ramelli, has warned that the cuts would compromise "essential components for the functioning of transitional justice", including the protection of victims, witnesses, individuals appearing before the Court, and judicial personnel. He has also expressed concern about a bill proposed by the right-wing party Centro Democrático stipulating that the High Military and Police Court will automatically review decisions adopted by the SJP regarding former members of the security forces. (The bill would require a more complicated process of a constitutional reform, while the budget cuts would be easier to approve.)

On 18 September, Ramelli sent a letter to the International Criminal Court (ICC), arguing that the proposed bill and budget cuts "weaken the material, legal, and institutional conditions essential for the functioning" of the Court and are incompatible with the Colombian government's commitments under the cooperation agreement signed with the ICC in 2021. Ramelli has also noted that he will bring the issue to the attention of other international interlocutors, including the Security Council and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). De la Espriella has rejected Ramelli's claims, arguing that "the budget of a public entity is not set solely based on what that entity requests", but rather the needs of the state and its people.

The controversy surrounding the SJP comes during a historic milestone in the Court's work. On 21 September, former FARC-EP commanders and army officers who acknowledged their responsibility for crimes committed during the conflict began carrying out restorative sentences that were handed down by the SJP a year ago, including by supporting excavation efforts to locate the remains of persons deemed as missing. In a 28 September statement, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said that "Colombia's landmark restorative measures...are a global achievement for transitional justice" and emphasised the need for the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition to receive sufficient funding to fully implement its mandate.

Regarding the new administration's security policy, de la Espriella ended the "total peace" policy of former president Gustavo Petro Urrego, which involved dialogue efforts with armed groups operating in the country. He rejected the distinction made by Petro between groups with a political or criminal nature, characterising all armed groups as terrorists. The Secretary-General's report notes that the new administration has intensified military action against armed groups, carrying out multiple operations in several regions. For instance, two separate airstrikes against two armed groups in late August in the Guaviare department reportedly killed over 30 people, including five children aged 15 to 16 years old. According to the Secretary-General's report, attacks by armed groups against public

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security forces also increased, including a 31 August car bomb attack on a police station that killed one civilian and injured 11 others.

Some analysts and civil society organisations have warned that a heavy-handed security approach could lead to an uptick in violence by armed groups and could increase civilian harm. They have advocated for combining a military strategy with dialogue and efforts to bring state institutions and better services, such as electricity connectivity and roads, to remote areas.

The latest annual report of the non-governmental organisation Global Witness, dated 16 September, noted that, for the fourth year in a row, Colombia ranked as the country with the highest number of killings of land and environmental activists, with 39 such cases documented in 2025. The report calls on the government to implement the Public Policy for Security Guarantees for Human Rights Defenders, which Petro established by decree on 5 August. OHCHR has offered the new administration technical support to implement the policy.

Key Issues and Options

A key task for the Council in October is to renew the verification mission's mandate. Members could choose to adopt a straightforward renewal, without altering the mission's tasks. They could also consider whether any adjustments are needed.

Supporting the comprehensive implementation of the 2016 peace agreement, including its provisions on transitional justice, is a key priority for many Council members. In a statement ahead of the tenth anniversary of the accord, Comunes members highlighted the important role of the international community in supporting the implementation of the peace agreement and called on it to continue doing so, particularly in this time of institutional transition. Council members can choose to mark the tenth anniversary of the peace agreement and encourage Colombian actors to persist in its implementation. Options in this regard include a visiting mission to the country (the last such visit took place in February 2024); the issuance of a press statement; and the convening of an informal event in New York, such as an Arria-formula meeting.

Council members could also seek the views of relevant Colombian actors—such as SJP representatives and victims' organisations—on how the international community can support transitional justice processes in the country. An option would be to hold such a discussion in an informal interactive dialogue (IID), a closed informal meeting format that could allow for a frank exchange of ideas.

At next month's meeting on Colombia, some members could choose to call on donors to enhance their support for humanitarian

efforts in the country. OCHA has noted that the August earthquake hit communities that were already suffering from the effects of armed conflict, which has increased their vulnerability. It has further warned that the potential onset of a severe El Niño event during the final quarter of 2026 could further exacerbate humanitarian and recovery needs, while funding gaps to address such needs persist.

Council Dynamics

For many years, Colombia had been considered a file that enjoyed Council consensus. However, strains in the bilateral relationship between Colombia and the US, stemming from disagreements between Petro and US President Donald Trump, created significant challenges in the Council's engagement on the file in 2025. This was evident in the contentious negotiations on resolution 2798 of 31 October 2025, which last renewed the verification mission's mandate. Council members have also not adopted any press statements on Colombia since October 2024, although it had previously been the practice to do so after every quarterly meeting.

Resolution 2798 removed two tasks from the mission's mandate: verification of implementation of the ethnic chapter of the 2016 agreement and compliance with sentences handed down by the SJP. The US insisted that these tasks be removed, while most other Council members strongly advocated for their retention. Considering the position of Colombia's new administration, it is unlikely that these two tasks will be reinstated in the upcoming negotiations on the verification mission's mandate.

De la Espriella has made cooperation with the US, including on curbing the drug trade from the country, a key pillar of his policy. It is therefore likely that Colombia's positions will now be more closely aligned with those of the US, both on its own file and in its engagement on other files as an elected Council member. At the Council's latest meeting on Colombia, held on 15 July, the US urged the Colombian government to "prioritize the comprehensive and expeditious implementation of its commitments under the peace accord, especially those related to security and infrastructure investment, as part of the permanent solution to Colombian narcoterrorism and insecurity". Regarding other files, the new administration has severed diplomatic ties with Iran and restored diplomatic relations with Israel, which had been cut under Petro. Colombia has decided to recognise Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights—joining the US as the only other country to do so—and to move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

The UK is the penholder on Colombia.

Great Lakes Region (DRC)

Expected Council Action

In October, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Huang Xia, is expected to provide the biannual briefing to the Council on the implementation of the 2013 Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework (PSC-F) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes region.

Key Recent Developments

Fighting between the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) and the *Mouvement du 23 Mars* (M23) rebel group has continued unabated in eastern DRC, with persistent clashes reported in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces despite the ceasefires agreed under various mediation initiatives. (For more, see the brief on the DRC in our September 2026 *Monthly Forecast*.) It appears that the FARDC has intensified its aerial operations against the M23, but the rebel group continues to consolidate and expand its territory across these two provinces.

The deteriorating security situation is also increasing regional tensions in the Great Lakes. Burundi, whose forces operate in South Kivu under a bilateral arrangement with the Congolese government, is supportive of Kinshasa, while Rwanda is accused of backing the M23. Burundi and Rwanda have been trading these accusations amid the escalating situation in eastern DRC. Burundi's President Évariste Ndayishimiye has visited DRC twice in June and August against the backdrop of these security developments.

From 17 to 21 August, representatives from the Congolese government and the M23 met in Switzerland under the Doha Peace Process, a mediation initiative spearheaded by Qatar. The meeting was attended by representatives from Qatar, Switzerland, Togo (as the African Union [AU] mediator), the US, and the AU Commission. According to the communiqué released after the meeting, the parties assessed the progress and challenges encountered in implementing their commitments under the Doha process and agreed to establish a mechanism tasked with reviewing progress and addressing challenges in this regard. They also developed a roadmap with sequenced steps and timelines for negotiations on the remaining protocols under the Doha Framework for a Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed between the two parties in November 2025.

So far, the parties have signed two of the eight protocols outlined in the Doha Framework: the Ceasefire Oversight and Verification Mechanism (COVM) and the Mechanism for the Liberation of Detainees. Progress on the remaining six protocols—which focus on, among other issues, humanitarian access and judicial protection; the restoration of state authority; interim security arrangements; return of internally displaced persons and refugees; economic and society recovery; and justice, truth and reconciliation—is still needed to advance the peace process.

At their meeting in Switzerland, the parties welcomed continued progress on the operationalisation of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism Plus (EJVM+), which is part of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and is considered a key component of the COVM. This included the establishment of its Secretariat and the conduct of a reconnaissance mission to

Minembwe and Masisi, two areas in South Kivu and North Kivu, respectively, that have experienced intense fighting recently. This mission was conducted with support from the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) ahead of the mechanism's first ceasefire verification mission in the town, which commenced on 24 August.

In resolution 2808 of 19 December 2025, which last renewed MONUSCO's mandate, the Security Council requested the mission to notify it of ceasefire monitoring and verification activities in South Kivu, given that the province is no longer within the mission's area of operation. Accordingly, it seems that the Secretariat has sent a 25 August white note to update the Security Council of the above-mentioned development. On 22 September, MONUSCO announced the completion of this first verification mission, which it described as an important step towards operationalising the COVM agreed under the Doha process.

Meanwhile, the seventh meeting of the Joint Security Coordination Mechanism (JSCM), one of the structures set up under the Washington Accords—another mediation initiative held under US auspices, was held in Geneva on 16 and 17 September. The meeting reportedly addressed several outstanding commitments under the agreement, including:

- the neutralisation of the *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), an ethnic Hutu armed group active in eastern DRC that was implicated in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda;
- the lifting of Rwanda's defensive measures (a reference used to call Rwanda to withdraw its forces from the DRC);
- monitoring and verification of the parties' commitment under the agreement; and
- implementation of DRC's plan for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of FDLR combatants, which was presented at the last JSCM meeting in August.

At the time of writing, no formal communiqué had been issued. According to the communiqué of their last meeting in August, however, the DRC and Rwanda are expected to hold a trilateral planning conference with the US in October.

Despite the JSCM meeting, tensions between the DRC and Rwanda persist, with both sides alleging violations of commitments made under the Washington Accords. On 24 August, the DRC sent a letter to the president of the Council detailing "serious violations committed during the months of June and July 2026, including summary executions, massacres and bombings that resulted in the deaths of more than 300 people, as well as numerous cases of sexual violence, torture, kidnapping, forced recruitment, arson of homes and looting". On 8 September, Rwanda sent a letter to the president of the Council in response, rejecting the allegations contained in the DRC letter and disputing the characterisation of the situation in the eastern DRC.

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE GREAT LAKES Security Council Resolution S/RES/2773 (21 February 2025) was on the situation in eastern DRC. Secretary-General's Report S/2026/256 (31 March 2026) was on the implementation of the PSC-F. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10136 (15 April 2026) was a briefing on the situation in the Great Lakes region.

Great Lakes Region (DRC)

Women, Peace and Security

On 21 September, the Office of the Special Envoy, in collaboration with the AU and the European Union (EU), organised a high-level event on advancing the women, peace and security agenda in peace efforts for the Great Lakes region. The meeting brought together member states, partners, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss ways to strengthen women's participation and inclusion in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and sustainable development.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for Council members in October remains the security situation in eastern DRC, which continues to be a source of tension among countries of the Great Lakes region. The full and effective implementation of the ceasefire is a related issue, with Council members likely to be interested in receiving updates on steps taken to fully operationalise the EJV+. One possible option would be for Greece, as the October Security Council president, to invite the ICGLR Executive Secretary Mubita Luwabelwa to brief.

The need to ensure greater coordination among the various mediation initiatives in the Great Lakes region has been an ongoing issue for Council members. Since the start of the new year, the African-led mediation effort has once again become more active and apparently developed a political roadmap outlining core objectives and key priorities in support of finding a negotiated solution to the crisis in eastern DRC. During the meeting in October, Xia may brief Council members about his series of engagements with regional leaders, mediators, and facilitators as part of his good offices mandate to support ongoing mediation processes, including his attendance at the semi-annual assessment meeting of the AU mediator and facilitators on the situation in eastern DRC that took place in Lome, Togo in June. A possible option for Council members will be to hold an informal interactive dialogue (IID) with those involved in mediation efforts to gain a better understanding of the various mediation processes and encourage greater coordination and harmonisation among these efforts.

The illegal exploitation of natural resources in the DRC and the Great Lakes region remains a major issue, drawing renewed attention amid growing interest in the region's vast reserves of critical minerals. Xia may speak about the issue in the context of his office's ongoing efforts in promoting sustainable and transparent natural resource management. Council members could continue to stress

the need for responsible mineral sourcing in their statements. A possible option for interested Council members such as DRC is to pursue a Council product in due course, building on previous resolutions and presidential statements as well as Council discussions on the nexus between natural resources and security.

Another ongoing concern is the dire humanitarian situation, which has been exacerbated by the Ebola outbreak in the DRC and the Great Lakes region. Uganda has successfully contained the outbreak, recording 42 consecutive days without a new confirmed case, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. In contrast, the DRC continues to struggle to contain the spread of the virus, which has affected 61 health zones across six provinces, including Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu, with 6,757 confirmed cases and 3,267 deaths.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members have welcomed the progress in the ongoing mediation efforts to address the situation in eastern DRC, which has been the source of tension in the Great Lakes region. However, they remain concerned that the various agreements signed last year have not translated into reduced hostilities on the ground or eased tensions in the region. Therefore, they may reiterate their call on the parties to uphold their commitments under these agreements.

Council members appear to be supportive of MONUSCO's role in ceasefire monitoring. However, China and Russia maintain that any potential deployment in South Kivu would require prior authorisation by the Security Council. At the time of writing, Council members were negotiating a draft presidential statement following the 29 September briefing on the situation in the DRC. (For more, see our 28 September What's in Blue story.)

DRC, an elected Security Council member for the 2026-2027 term, has highlighted the illegal exploitation of natural resources as a major priority during its term. During its July Security Council presidency, it convened an Arria-formula meeting and a high-level open debate on the topic on 13 and 22 July, respectively. DRC also organised a side event on natural resources, artificial intelligence, and the geopolitics of peace and security on 23 September during the UN General Assembly High-Level Week.

Libya

Expected Council Action

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

Additionally, the Security Council is expected to renew the mandate of UNSMIL, which expires on 31 October.

Key Recent Developments

Since Libya's national elections scheduled for December 2021 were indefinitely postponed, UNSMIL has been involved in efforts to address the deadlock among Libyan political stakeholders over the electoral framework and institutional fragmentation in Libya. The mission presented a political roadmap in August 2025 centred on three pillars: establishing a viable framework for presidential and

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2796 (31 October 2025) extended the mandate of UNSMIL for 12 months and encouraged the mission to implement the recommendations from the strategic review. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10209 (18 August 2026) was an open briefing on the situation in Libya and the work of UNSMIL.

legislative elections; unifying state institutions under a new government; and launching a structured dialogue on governance, economic, security, and reconciliation issues. The Structured Dialogue, which UNSMIL launched in December 2025, concluded its work on 7 June, generating nearly 600 recommendations aimed at addressing Libya's structural challenges, strengthening and unifying state institutions, and creating conditions conducive to national elections and longer-term stability. (For background, see the brief on Libya in our August 2026 *Monthly Forecast*.)

As part of efforts to overcome outstanding obstacles in the electoral track, UNSMIL launched the “Smaller Convening”, a mechanism bringing together a small group of Libyan stakeholders, with its first meeting held on 29 April in Rome. The convening, also known as the “4+4”, comprises two representatives from each of Libya's four main institutions: the Government of National Unity (GNU), the High Council of State (HCS), the House of Representatives (HoR), and the Libyan National Army (LNA).

On 30 August, participants of the Smaller Convening reached an agreement addressing two key milestones outlined in UNSMIL's political roadmap: the reconstitution of the Board of Commissioners of the High National Elections Commission (HNEC) and the resolution of outstanding issues in the constitutional and legal framework governing presidential and legislative elections. The agreement also provides for adjustments to the electoral framework, including arrangements for holding presidential and legislative elections under a single executive authority, and commits the parties to work towards elections within a period not exceeding 24 months. In an 8 September press statement, Council members welcomed the 30 August agreement reached through the Smaller Convening.

On 20 September, members of the Smaller Convening held their ninth meeting, chaired by Tetteh, to follow up on implementation of the agreement they signed in Tripoli on 30 August.

In accordance with the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), the HoR and the HCS are required to agree on amendments to the constitutional framework and appointments to the leadership of the electoral commission. On 14 September, the HoR endorsed the 30 August Smaller Convening agreement during a session in Benghazi chaired by Speaker Aguila Saleh. By contrast, the HSC reportedly has rejected the agreement's outcomes, arguing that changes to the electoral framework and HNEC should be agreed through Libya's established constitutional and institutional mechanisms. It has also expressed concern that the agreement bypassed previous HoR-HCS understandings, including those reached through the joint 6+6 Committee. (The committee was established in 2023 by the HoR and HCS to draft electoral laws to enable elections and comprises six representatives from each body.)

On 10 September, Saleh and HCS President Mohamed Takala met Turkish intelligence chief İbrahim Kalın in Ankara, where discussions focused on advancing political consensus and reviving coordination between the two institutions, including through the 6+6 Committee. The meeting also included a discussion of ways to strengthen cooperation between Türkiye and Libya.

The security situation has remained fragile, particularly in western Libya. On 3 August, armed confrontations broke out between rival groups in Zawiya and Sorman and continued into the following day. The fighting involved heavy weapons, disrupted movement

along the western coastal corridor, damaged infrastructure, and resulted in civilian deaths and injuries.

The violence was followed by a series of drone attacks in the subsequent days targeting oil and electricity infrastructure in and around Zawiya, including the Zawiya oil complex and power facilities. The attacks occurred amid intensifying competition among armed groups in the city over territorial control and access to illicit economic activities, including fuel smuggling.

On 21 September, an armed group closed a valve on the Sharara-Zawiya crude oil pipeline, sharply reducing production at the Sharara field and preventing technical teams from accessing the area around the affected valves. The following day, personnel from the Petroleum Facilities Guard blocked the gates of the Zawiya refinery and other oil facilities, preventing employees and technicians from entering and disrupting ongoing operations.

In a 26 September statement, UNSMIL expressed concern over the closure of the Sharara-Zawiya oil pipeline and called on all concerned parties to safeguard Libya's oil and energy facilities. The mission also warned that attacks against, or actions undermining, such infrastructure could constitute grounds for punitive measures under relevant Council resolutions, including resolution 2213 of 27 March 2015, which provides for sanctions against individuals and entities threatening Libya's peace, stability, or political transition, including through attacks on state institutions or oil facilities.

Key Issues and Options

The most immediate issue for the Council in October is the renewal of UNSMIL's mandate, which expires on 31 October. One option would be to renew the mandate for another year while retaining the mission's core tasks and updating the text to reflect recent political and security developments. Council members could also reinforce UNSMIL's role in supporting implementation of its political roadmap, including progress towards national elections and a unified executive authority, and request periodic updates on implementation.

A related issue is how the Council can help sustain momentum in the political process while avoiding competing or parallel tracks that could undermine UNSMIL's mediation. One option for Council members would be to use the briefing to reiterate support for the 30 August agreement and urge the HoR, the HCS, and other relevant stakeholders to engage constructively with UNSMIL to resolve outstanding disagreements and advance the roadmap. Council members could also encourage international and regional initiatives to complement, rather than compete with, the UN-led process.

Another key issue is the fragile security environment and its potential to undermine political progress. Recent armed clashes in western Libya, drone attacks on critical infrastructure, and interference with oil facilities underscore continued armed-group competition and the vulnerability of Libya's economic assets. One option would be to reinforce calls for the cessation of violence, progress towards the unification of military and security institutions, and the protection of oil and other critical infrastructure from political and security disputes.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain united on the need for a Libyan-led, inclusive political process resulting in elections that will help to restore

Libya

political, security, and economic stability to the country. They also remain broadly supportive of the UN's mediation role towards this end. Council members also share concerns about the fragile security situation in the country.

In the 8 September press statement, Council members described the 30 August agreement as an important step towards holding free, fair, transparent, and inclusive national elections and advancing the unification of Libya's institutions. Council members underlined the importance of the agreement receiving support from all Libyan stakeholders and encouraged them to work towards its implementation. They also stressed the importance of further progress towards the unification of Libya's institutions, including its military and security institutions, as well as the establishment of a unified executive authority.

The US, meanwhile, has been pursuing a separate diplomatic initiative on Libya led by Senior Advisor for Arab and African Affairs Massad Boulos. Media reports have suggested that the initiative envisages a power-sharing arrangement involving GNU Prime

Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah and LNA Deputy Commander Saddam Haftar, son of LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar, although no agreement has yet been publicly announced. At the same time, the US has reiterated its support for UNSMIL's political roadmap and the broader UN-led political process.

China and Russia have continued to emphasise Libya's sovereignty and the principle of a "Libyan-led and Libyan-owned" political process. China has stressed that the UN should retain a central role in mediation and has called for UNSMIL to maintain broad engagement with Libya's main political forces. Russia has also expressed support for UNSMIL and Tetteh's efforts, while placing greater emphasis on existing Libyan legal and institutional frameworks. It has argued that agreements reached through the Smaller Convening would need to be validated within Libya's legal framework and cautioned against allowing new discussion formats to supplant earlier inter-Libyan understandings. Moscow has also characterised the Structured Dialogue as playing a supporting role rather than serving as the principal basis for a settlement.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council will hold its quarterly open debate on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" (MEPQ). Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis is expected to chair the meeting, which is taking place during Greece's Council presidency. The anticipated briefer is Acting Special Coordinator and Resident Coordinator at the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) Ramiz Alakbarov.

Key Recent Developments

October's open debate will be held one year after Israel and Hamas agreed to the US-brokered "Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict", which the Security Council endorsed through resolution 2803 of 17 November 2025. The first phase of the framework committed the parties to a ceasefire in Gaza, secured the release of all hostages, and established the Board of Peace (BoP)—chaired by US President Donald Trump—as a "transitional governance administration" in the enclave. The second and third phases of the plan, which have not yet been implemented, entail Hamas' disarmament and the full withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) under the oversight of an International Stabilization Force (ISF) deployed by the BoP, enabling Gaza's reconstruction and ultimately a credible pathway to Palestinian statehood.

On 31 July, the BoP announced that Hamas had accepted a 15-point roadmap that it and the mediating countries—Egypt, Qatar, Türkiye, and the US—had presented for implementing the

outstanding stages of the Comprehensive Plan. Briefing the Security Council on 26 August (S/PV.10214), BoP High Representative for Gaza Nickolay Mladenov described Hamas' agreement to disarm in exchange for Israeli withdrawal as a breakthrough that would establish the principle of "one authority, one law, one weapon" in Gaza through sequenced steps that are "performance-based, not calendar-based". These steps would be certified by an Implementation Verification Committee led by the BoP and the US and supported by the ISF and the other mediators.

The roadmap's content and prospects appear unclear, however. Following a meeting between Mladenov and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on 3 August, the BoP issued a statement that appeared to modify the roadmap's sequencing in Israel's favour. On 9 August, Netanyahu cast further doubt on his commitment to the plan, reportedly stating that "Israel is ruling out the 15-point document". In his 26 August briefing to the Council, Mladenov noted that Israel is not a signatory to the roadmap and that the mediators had instead asked the country to reaffirm its commitments under the Comprehensive Plan and the 1999 Sharm El-Sheikh protocol. While Mladenov stated that Israel had done so, he acknowledged that "important questions" remain regarding the roadmap's implementation.

Other aspects of the Comprehensive Plan have also stalled. The ISF has yet to deploy, and while it has continued to formalise troop pledges under the command of US Major General Jasper Jeffers—including from Morocco in July and Kosovo in September—media reports suggest that the force may field only a fraction of the roughly

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2803 (17 November 2025) endorsed the "Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict", welcoming the establishment of a BoP and authorising the BoP to establish a temporary ISF in Gaza. The resolution received 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (China and Russia). S/RES/2334 (23 December 2016) condemned Israeli settlements and called for immediate steps to prevent violence against civilians, including acts of terror. It was adopted with 14 votes in favour and a US abstention. Secretary-General's Report S/2026/513 (24 June 2026) was the latest Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 2334. Security Council Letter S/2026/418 (15 May 2026) was a letter from the Permanent Representative of the US addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the first biannual report of the BoP, submitted pursuant to resolution 2803 of 17 November 2025.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

20,000 personnel originally envisaged. Additionally, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG)—the local governing body established by the BoP comprising Palestinian technocrats—has prepared a six-month recovery programme for Gaza but has not yet been able to enter the enclave from its temporary base in Cairo amid the current impasse. Meanwhile, the IDF retains territory beyond the “yellow line” demarcating the approximately 50 percent of Gaza that Israel was allowed to hold during the first phase of the ceasefire.

Humanitarian conditions remain dire. According to a 24 September situation report by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), citing local health authorities, 1,394 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire was announced in October 2025, bringing the total killed since October 2023 to 73,914. Despite some improvement in food security, funding and fuel shortages continue to disrupt health services, and a survey cited in the UNRWA report found that 90 percent of Gaza’s population face frequent disruptions in access to safe water. According to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), restrictions on the entry of engine oil and generator parts have increased the risk of death and severe illnesses, as these supplies are essential for keeping hospital generators and water pumps running.

Another survey cited by UNRWA found that 94 percent of Gazans require shelter and household assistance. On 16 September, a war-damaged residential building collapsed in Gaza City, killing at least 20 of the approximately 100 residents sheltering there. In a statement issued the same day, Alakbarov called for urgent approvals for the entry of heavy machinery, specialised equipment, and fuel for search and rescue, and for tents and tarpaulins to reach vulnerable communities within four weeks, warning that “no one should have to risk their life simply to find a safe place to shelter”.

The situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, also continues to deteriorate. In his most recent quarterly briefing to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 2334 of 23 December 2016 (S/PV.10230), held on 28 September, Alakbarov stated that 32 Palestinians, including nine children, were killed in Israeli security forces operations, armed exchanges, settler attacks, and other incidents during the reporting period from 13 June to 18 September. According to a situation report from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), dated 18 September, more than 1,600 settler attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties, property damage, or both had been recorded this year as at 14 September—an average of 6.7 per day, compared with five per day in 2025. At the request of the Security Council’s five European members—Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia, and the UK—the Council convened a briefing on 11 August to discuss the escalating violence in the West Bank.

The violence has occurred alongside intensifying settlement activity. In his 28 September briefing, Alakbarov said that Israeli planning authorities had advanced or approved nearly 4,570 housing units in Area C of the West Bank and 3,515 units in East Jerusalem during the reporting period. On 18 August, Israel’s housing ministry published tenders for 1,234 of the 3,401 housing units approved for a settlement in the E1 area, which covers approximately 12 square kilometres between East Jerusalem and the Ma’ale Adumim settlement. The E1 project—which had been under consideration for decades but not implemented due to international pressure—was

approved in August 2025 by Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who said that it was intended to “permanently bury the idea of a Palestinian state”. In his Council briefing, Alakbarov said that the project would “effectively sever the connection between the northern and southern West Bank and further isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank”, constituting “an existential threat to the two-State solution”. The deadline for bids is 19 October, just eight days before Israel’s general elections scheduled for 27 October, and some observers have argued that the government is seeking to sign contracts before the vote to make it more difficult for a future government to cancel construction. On 28 September, however, Israel’s Attorney-General reportedly ruled that no tenders could be awarded until after the election.

Diplomatic activity has escalated in response to the E1 project. On 8 September, Canada, France, and the UK announced a ban on the import of goods from settlements and issued a joint statement criticising the project with nine other countries that either have or will introduce similar measures. In response, Israel ordered the closure of the UK’s consulate in East Jerusalem. On 22 September, Secretary-General António Guterres opened the general debate of the 81st session of the General Assembly, delivering a statement in which he criticised ceasefires in the region that had “amounted to little more than ‘lesser fires’”; condemned violence, displacement, and settlement expansion in the West Bank that is “raising the spectre of ethnic cleansing”; and stressed that “we cannot allow the two-State solution to disappear before our eyes”. On the same day, on the margins of the general debate, Guterres participated in a high-level meeting on the two-state solution convened by Canada, France, the UK, and Saudi Arabia, marking the one-year anniversary of the General Assembly’s endorsement of the New York Declaration. On 24 September, the BoP hosted a high-level briefing on the Comprehensive Plan and the status of its implementation. The following day, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee held a ministerial meeting on support for Palestinian governance and institutions.

Key Issues and Options

One year after Israel and Hamas agreed to the Comprehensive Plan in Gaza, a key immediate issue for the Security Council remains the poor implementation of the plan’s first stage, as violence and dire humanitarian conditions in the enclave persist. An important priority in this regard is to ensure that both parties abide by their commitments under the plan and fully cease hostilities, and that Israel withdraws the IDF to the agreed deployment line and allows unobstructed aid at scale.

In the medium and long terms, a central issue for the Security Council is how to facilitate implementation of the second and third stages of the Comprehensive Plan in a manner that is consistent with international law and conducive to achieving unified Palestinian governance over the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) under a two-state solution. The feasibility of the BoP’s 15-point implementation roadmap without Israel’s buy-in is uncertain, as it relies on reciprocal steps by both parties, and the compatibility of Israel’s existing obligations under the Comprehensive Plan and the Sharm El-Sheikh protocol—on which the BoP has premised the country’s compliance with the roadmap—is unclear.

In addition to Gaza, the deteriorating situation in the West Bank is another critical issue for the Council. Intensifying settler violence

The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

and settlement expansion is an increasingly acute protection and displacement crisis—especially as the E1 project advances—that is also eroding the long-term viability of a two-state solution. The deepening fiscal crisis experienced by the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a result of Israel's withholding of tax revenue is further exacerbating these challenges.

To comprehensively address these issues and more assertively oversee the implementation of the Security Council's decisions—including resolution 2803 that endorsed the Comprehensive Plan—Council members could consider undertaking a visiting mission to Israel and the OPT. Such a mission would allow members to assess the situation on the ground, receive field-level briefings from relevant stakeholders, and apply political and diplomatic pressure on the parties to uphold their commitments and obligations. If members are unable to achieve the consensus required to undertake an official mission, interested members could organise an informal one.

Council members could also consider adopting a product to mark the one-year anniversary of the Comprehensive Plan, either in conjunction with or independently of a visiting mission. Such a product—for instance in the form of a presidential statement—could call on the parties to implement their commitments in good faith and without delay. It could also underscore the importance of ensuring

that efforts under the Comprehensive Plan are consistent with other international frameworks—including the New York Declaration, Council resolution 2334, and the July 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice—and restore a credible political pathway towards the two-state solution.

In the absence of consensus on such a product, Council members as well as the broader UN membership could consider accountability and protection measures in their national capacities, including sanctioning violent settlers and banning settlement goods, building on the recent announcement by Canada, France, the UK, and other countries.

Council and Wider Dynamics

While Council members remain largely united in supporting the peace framework that the Comprehensive Plan established and resolution 2803 endorsed, they are divided over where responsibility for the current impasse lies.

At the Council's 28 September meeting, most members reiterated that implementation cannot rest on Palestinian obligations alone, criticising continued Israeli strikes in Gaza and the country's rejection of the 15-point roadmap. China and Russia—the two members

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In October, 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 23 June, Rugwabiza briefed the Council, focusing on recent political developments in the CAR since the Council's last meeting on this file in February. These include the completion of the country's combined local, legislative, and presidential elections; the inauguration of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra; the formation of a new government; and the installation of a new legislature. (For more information, see our 22 June *What's in Blue* story.)

Council members received the Secretary-General's report pursuant to resolution 2800 of 13 November 2025, which last renewed the mission's mandate for another year. The resolution requested him to submit a report by 15 September to help the Council explore the opportunity and feasibility of an eventual handover of tasks from MINUSCA to the CAR government or the UN Country Team (UNCT).

At the June meeting, Rugwabiza briefed Council members about the mission's efforts to consolidate and rationalise its operational footprint, noting the closure of 21 bases, including seven permanent operating bases and 14 temporary operating bases located in

stabilised areas. (On 10 June, MINUSCA had handed over its seven permanent operating bases to the CAR government in an official ceremony organised in the Lobaye Prefecture and attended by the Prime Minister Félix Moloua.) Rugwabiza also added that the mission closed three field offices, as well as one of its three main compounds in Bangui, handing over static security positions to national counterparts in Bangui. Following the conclusion of the country's electoral process, MINUSCA's electoral assistance division was also closed on 5 August.

Additionally, MINUSCA has been closely coordinating with the CAR government on the modalities for the gradual transfer of certain tasks to national authorities, through an interministerial committee. Moloua co-chaired a 10 August meeting with Rugwabiza which discussed the work that had been undertaken jointly to plan the mission's transition, taking into account the evolving security situation on the ground and the need to consolidate the political and security gains achieved by the country.

On 1 September, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) met to receive updates on the situation in the CAR. It also discussed MINUSCA's transition plan and underscored the need for the AU to be actively involved in discussions on the transition. The AUPSC had already directed the AU Commission in April to undertake a comprehensive study on the potential impact of a MINUSCA drawdown and propose concrete recommendations on the way forward. It reiterated this decision at its September meeting and requested the Commission to explore the

UN DOCUMENTS ON CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Secretary-General's Report S/2026/264 (1 April 2026) was the Secretary-General's report on UNMIK. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10132** (9 April 2026) was the Council's first briefing of the year on Kosovo.

Central African Republic

possibility of activating resolution 2719 of 21 December 2023, on the financing of AU peace support operations, in coordination with the three African members of the Security Council (A3), to support CAR's peace consolidation efforts.

While the security situation in the CAR is generally stable, challenges persist in the north-east and south-east of the country with cross-border incursions, attacks on mining sites, and other criminal activities, including abductions. In July, an attack by an armed group in areas close to the border with Sudan injured three Zambian peacekeepers, one of them seriously. The area is affected by armed group incursions amid the ongoing conflict in neighbouring Sudan, which is posing significant peace and security threats to the CAR.

Peacebuilding-Related Developments

At the 23 June Security Council meeting, the Chair of the CAR configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Omar Hilale (Morocco), briefed on his visit to Bangui from 28 March to 3 April.

On 10 August, the Steering Committee of the UN Peacebuilding Fund met in Bangui to review nine ongoing projects with a total value of nearly US\$29 million. According to MINUSCA, the committee also discussed strategic priorities for the coming years in support of CAR's peacebuilding endeavours.

At its 1 September meeting, the AUPSC encouraged the AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, an AU specialised technical agency supporting African countries emerging from conflicts, to deploy quick-impact interventions in the CAR to rebuild public trust and prevent conflict relapse.

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. While the country has made progress with the improvement of its security and the conclusion of its electoral processes, its political and security situation remains fragile, underscoring the country's need for continued support to its post conflict and peacebuilding endeavours. Council members should focus on this issue in October ahead of MINUSCA's upcoming mandate renewal in November.

The reconfiguration of MINUSCA, including the possible gradual, phased, and responsible transfer of tasks to the CAR government or the UNCT will be a major issue in October. Council members will be grappling with this issue, while at the same time trying to avoid a security vacuum that could undermine the hard-won gains in recent years. The Secretary-General's report pursuant to resolution 2800 is likely to inform the Council's deliberations and subsequent

actions in this regard. A possible option for France, the penholder on the file, would be to organise an informal briefing by the UN Secretariat to discuss the report and its recommendations.

The UN's liquidity crisis and its implications for the operational effectiveness of the mission continue to be an issue. In consultations, Council members may wish to reiterate their concerns about the situation and underscore the need for the mission to be provided with adequate resources to effectively carry out its mandated tasks. They could also choose to ask Rugwabiza for her assessment of the impact of the cuts on the mission's ability to implement its mandate.

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.

At the June meeting, CAR's permanent representative cautioned against implementing drastic measures driven solely by budgetary considerations at a time when the CAR continues to face persistent security risks, including the spillover effects of the war in Sudan. In this connection, he invited Council members to visit the country to better understand the progress made and the challenges that remain ahead of MINUSCA's mandate renewal in November. While some Council members might think it is a good idea to visit the CAR, it seems unlikely that a Council visit before November could take place given the full programme anticipated in October, one of the busiest months of the year for the Council.

At the June meeting, the US, which pushed for a larger reduction in troop levels during the last mandate renewal negotiations, maintained that the mission cannot stay in the CAR forever. It may reiterate this point in the upcoming negotiations in November. However, other Council members argued that the Council has a responsibility to help the country in consolidating its peace, underscoring MINUSCA's indispensable role in this regard. They cautioned against a rushed drawdown process and called for closer coordination with the CAR authorities to facilitate a proper transition that will help the country preserve and sustain its gains.

France is the penholder on the CAR.

Kosovo

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold its second briefing of the year on Kosovo. Special Representative and Head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Peter Due will brief on recent developments and the Secretary-General's latest report.

Key Recent Developments

The European Union (EU) continued efforts to advance the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, with limited progress. EU Special Representative Peter Sørensen met with Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić on 9 April and Prime Minister Albin Kurti on 15 April. In separate

UN DOCUMENTS ON KOSOVO Secretary-General's Report S/2026/264 (1 April 2026) was the Secretary-General's report on UNMIK. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10132** (9 April 2026) was the Council's first briefing of the year on Kosovo.

meetings with both leaders on 22 September, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas reiterated that agreements reached through the EU-facilitated dialogue, particularly the 2023 Ohrid Agreement, are binding, and stressed that progress on normalisation and European integration must go hand in hand.

Kosovo faces continued political uncertainty over the election of a new president. Following the December 2025 legislative elections, the Assembly of Kosovo failed to elect a successor to former President Vjosa Osmani and was subsequently dissolved on 28 April, prompting the third legislative election in 18 months on 7 June. Kurti's Vetëvendosje party won 53 of 120 seats.

On 31 August, Kurti's Vetëvendosje party and the opposition Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) agreed to support Bekim Sejdiu, a former Constitutional Court judge and law professor, for president, but six LDK legislators rejected the agreement. On 13 September, the Assembly elected a Kurti-led government with 62 votes. The LDK did not participate, while legislators from non-majority communities helped provide the majority. Sejdiu withdrew his candidacy the following day, recognising that he would not have the necessary support to assume the presidency. On 23 September, the Constitutional Court upheld the government's election and ruled that the deadline for electing a president would expire on 6 October. Failure to meet it would trigger another legislative election.

Ahead of the June election, on 19 May, Kosovo Police arrested seven directors of Serbia-run educational and healthcare institutions in Gračanica, central Kosovo, on suspicion of pressuring voters. Srpska Lista (Serbian List), the largest Kosovo Serb political party, disputed the allegations, claiming that the arrests were intended to facilitate the forcible integration of these institutions into Kosovo's system and intimidate Kosovo Serb voters into supporting rival politician Nenad Rašić.

On 28 May, Kosovo authorities took control of four Serbia-operated railway stations in northern Kosovo, drawing criticism from Belgrade.

The implementation of Kosovo's Law on Foreigners, which establishes residence and registration requirements for foreign nationals, continued to raise concerns over access to Serbia-run education and healthcare for Kosovo Serbs without Kosovo-issued documents. In a 28 May statement, the UK urged gradual, transparent, and coordinated implementation that ensures uninterrupted access to essential services.

The reintegration of Kosovo Serb judicial personnel has also stalled. In November 2022, 25 Kosovo Serb judges and ten prosecutors, integrated into the judiciary in 2017 under an EU-facilitated agreement, resigned during the vehicle registration dispute. (For more information, see the brief on Kosovo in our April 2023 *Monthly Forecast*.) Amid EU efforts to facilitate their reintegration, Kosovo Serb judges and prosecutors sought to withdraw their resignations on 15 July. On 20 July, the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council rejected the prosecutors' request, arguing that their voluntary resignations had terminated their employment and that reinstatement would require new recruitment procedures. The following day, Acting President Albulena Haxhiu issued decrees formally dismissing seven prosecutors. The Kosovo Judicial Council subsequently rejected similar requests from Kosovo Serb judges on 27 August, and Haxhiu formally dismissed 18 judges on 2 September. In statements issued

on 21 July and 28 August, the EU questioned these decisions' compatibility with due process and warned that they undermined efforts to restore a multi-ethnic judiciary. Kurti maintained that reintegration must respect Kosovo's constitution and judicial independence.

The circumstances surrounding the September 2023 attack in Banjska/Banjskë, in which a Kosovo police officer and three armed Kosovo Serbs were killed, remained contentious. On 24 April, a Pristina court convicted three Kosovo Serbs of terrorism offences, sentencing two to life imprisonment and one to 30 years. Serbia rejected the verdict and denied supporting the attackers. Dozens of suspects, including former Serbian List deputy leader Milan Radoičić, who admitted involvement in the attack, remain at large. During his September meeting with Kallas, Kurti asked the EU to put pressure on Belgrade to cooperate in bringing those responsible to justice. (For background information on the attack, see our 22 October 2023 *What's in Blue* story.)

UNMIK has continued operating under financial constraints. At the April briefing, Due reported that liquidity-related contingency measures had reduced filled encumbered positions by almost 30 percent. He distinguished these measures from the Civilian Staffing Review completed in 2025, whose recommendations would inform subsequent budget adjustments.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue is how the Council can encourage implementation of EU-facilitated dialogue commitments while preventing renewed tensions in northern Kosovo. The reintegration of Kosovo Serbs into institutions, continuity of essential services, and accountability for violence remain important to rebuilding trust. Outstanding commitments such as those contained in the 2023 Ohrid Agreement include Kosovo's establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities and Serbia's obligation not to object to Kosovo's membership in international organisations. Kosovo's unresolved presidential election could further complicate sustained political engagement. One option would be a presidential statement encouraging both parties to implement existing agreements, refrain from unilateral actions that heighten tensions, and protect the rights of all communities.

Another issue is how UNMIK can fulfil its open-ended mandate amid resource constraints and competing views of its future. Members could request a focused briefing from Due on the operational effects of staffing reductions; the functions that remain central to UNMIK's work; and coordination with the EU, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR).

A further issue is how to foster more constructive engagement on Kosovo in the Council. Open briefings frequently feature sharply contrasting accounts from Belgrade and Pristina, leaving limited scope for substantive discussion of obstacles to normalisation. Council members could consider holding the regular briefing as a private meeting instead. This could facilitate a more candid exchange on outstanding commitments under the EU-facilitated dialogue while preserving the participation of a representative of Serbia under rule 37 and a Kosovo official invited in a personal capacity under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Kosovo

Council Dynamics

Most Council members support the EU-facilitated dialogue to establish conditions for the normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. Deep divisions among permanent members, however, continue to characterise the Council's approach to the issue.

Among the five permanent Council members, France, the UK, and the US recognise Kosovo's independence and tend to be supportive of its government; China and Russia do not recognise its independence and support Serbia's position and its claim to territorial integrity. Elected members Bahrain, Colombia, Denmark, Latvia, Liberia, Pakistan, and Panama recognise Kosovo's independence, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Greece do not. Somalia reportedly recognised Kosovo's independence in May 2010, although its recognition has been disputed by Serbian officials in recent years. Most recently, on 1 September, Serbian Foreign Minister Marko Đurić thanked Somalia for its continued respect for Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity during a meeting with his Somali counterpart. Earlier in the year, Kosovo's authorities published a 17 February letter from Somali President Hassan Sheikh

Mohamud congratulating Kosovo on the 18th anniversary of its independence and expressing support for stronger bilateral relations.

Council members hold differing views on the future of UNMIK. At the 9 April briefing, the US called for the mission's closure, and pending that outcome, further staffing reductions and the transfer of its residual functions to other institutions. The UK called for a strategic review of UNMIK's role, responsibilities, and funding, while Denmark and Latvia also supported a possible strategic review. France supported efficiency measures while emphasising that UNMIK's mandate is intrinsically linked to the normalisation process. Greece supported the continuation of the mission's mandate for as long as necessary, while remaining open to measures to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. The DRC cautioned against premature reductions or withdrawal, while Liberia stressed that the mission's adaptation should reflect conditions on the ground and the perspectives of all communities. Russia opposed reductions in UNMIK's staffing and funding, as well as changes to the frequency or format of Council meetings on Kosovo. China called for adequate political and budgetary support for the mission.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold its monthly meeting on political and humanitarian developments in Syria. 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.

Key Recent Developments

On 23 September, Syria's interim president Ahmed al-Sharaa delivered a statement at the general debate of the 81st Session of the UN General Assembly in New York. He outlined the progress Syria has made since his first address to the UN in 2025, as the country moves to post-conflict recovery with the government focused on reconstruction, rehabilitating the economy, and building international partnerships. Challenges to the transition persist, however, as ordinary Syrians continue to feel the weight of the economic crisis. On 13 September, large demonstrations reportedly erupted across Syria over rising fuel and living costs.

In his 17 September monthly briefing to the Council, Cordone said that he had held discussions with the Syrian interim authorities on preparations for "future parliamentary and presidential elections, [...] in line with a new constitution", to be implemented within the remaining three-and-a-half years of the transition. He also said that discussions have included exploring opportunities for UN electoral assistance.

On the security front, Syria continues to grapple with both exterior and interior threats to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. On 9

September, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited a military position on Mount Hermon, inside Syrian territory, accompanied by Defence Minister Israel Katz and senior military officials. Damascus condemned the visit and called for a return to implementation of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between the two countries. The escalation comes amid an expanded occupation of Syrian territory and near-daily incursions into the southern governorates of Quneitra and Daraa by the Israeli military, which intensified in December 2024 following the ouster of the former Syrian government. In his 23 September statement at the UN General Assembly, Sharaa called on Israel to withdraw from Syrian territory to the lines of 8 December 2024, reaffirming Damascus' position that the Golan remains Syrian territory and its commitment to the 1974 agreement. (For more information, see the brief on the UN Disengagement Observer Force [UNDOF] in the Golan in our October 2026 *Monthly Forecast*.)

In the southern governorate of Suweida—one of the only territories of the country that remains outside of Damascus' control—tensions have persisted between government forces and armed Druze groups. In late August and early September, clashes were reported in the governorate, resulting in a number of casualties. Some Druze leaders also continued to suggest separatist agendas in their statements. In the September briefing, Cordone called for a reinvigoration of the September 2025 Suweida roadmap agreed by Jordan, Syria, and the US, and for efforts to address issues regarding detainees and missing persons, build trust between Damascus and the Druze, and promote reconciliation between the Bedouin and Druze communities.

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 Meeting Record S/PV.10225** (17 September 2026) was a meeting on political and humanitarian developments in Syria. **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.

Syria

Syrian authorities continued efforts to resolve the issues pertaining to the previous government's chemical weapons and nuclear programmes. During the Council's 3 September meeting on Syria's chemical weapons programme, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu noted significant progress by Damascus in the elimination of remnants of the chemical weapons programme and said that for the first time, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) had verified the destruction of chemical munitions from Syria, following the destruction of 42 aerial bombs. Additionally, on 9 September, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) unanimously adopted a resolution terminating the Agency's investigations into Syria's non-compliance, after Damascus gave the IAEA access to sites suspected to be part of the former government's nuclear programme.

During the Council's 17 September briefing on Syria, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher underlined the four obstacles threatening the country's progress: continued displacement, localised insecurity, regional escalation, and landmines. He noted that while several million internally displaced Syrians and refugees have returned, 5.5 million people remain displaced, with around 800,000 in camps. Additionally, he stressed how terrorism and sporadic violence continue to threaten peace in Syria, while external tensions and supply route disruptions are impacting the country's economy, driving up costs for essential goods and services. Fletcher asked the Council to invest in assisting Syria's transition from humanitarian needs to reconstruction; removing obstacles standing between recovery and development; and insulating Syria from regional conflict, including by supporting its territorial integrity.

Women, Peace and Security

Briefing the Security Council at its 27 August meeting on Syria, the Country Director of Women Now for Development-Lebanon, Rola Roukbi, warned that the political transition taking shape in the aftermath of the fall of the Assad regime risks changing those in power without changing how power is exercised. Stressing that stability in Syria should not come at the expense of civic space, fundamental freedoms, and justice, she highlighted concerns about such issues as excessive centralisation, the absence of an effective separation of powers, transparency, accountability, and the deteriorating economic situation.

Roukbi stressed that despite the leading role of women during the conflict in documenting violations, supporting communities, and advocating for justice and accountability, women remain marginalised from decisions about Syria's future, accounting for less than 11 percent of parliamentarians and only one member of the transitional cabinet. She called for reforming the nationality and personal status laws, establishing stronger protections from gender-based violence, and removing Syria's reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Citing violations and abductions particularly targeting Alawite women, Roukbi stressed that all victims—before and after the regime's fall—have an equal right to truth and justice.

Roukbi called on the Security Council and the UN to centre human rights; civic space; women's full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation; accountability; and the rule of law in any new UN presence in Syria, and in the UN's political engagement with the Syrian transitional authorities. She also urged the Council to continue to support independent UN human rights and accountability mechanisms and insist on rights-based institutional and security sector reform.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 3 September, three UN Human Rights Council rapporteurs urged the

transitional government in Syria to suspend laws that led to "systematic dispossessions and displacement" under the prior government, calling on the authorities to "initiate a process in the People's Assembly to review and replace them with new regulations". In this regard the rapporteurs referred to Decree No. 66 of 2012 and Law No. 10 of 2018, stating that these laws "privileged property interests of a wealthy minority at the expense of the housing rights of families of average or modest means".

The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria (COI) delivered a statement to the UN Human Rights Council on 8 September. In the statement, the commission emphasised the "importance of ensuring that all perpetrators of grave violations are equally the subject of accountability, warning that selective justice for international crimes is not compatible with international law, and further, could renew grievances and undermine reconciliation". While welcoming ongoing engagement with the government on human rights and transitional justice, the COI called for strengthened accountability for recent violence, including in coastal and Western Syria and in Suweida in 2025.

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 pressures. By maintaining a united position anchored in the principles of resolution 2254, Council members could encourage the Syrian government to make continued progress on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR); security sector reform (SSR); transitional justice; and social cohesion—including through transparent accountability and reconciliation processes.

A remaining issue regarding Syria's unity is the situation in the southern governorate of Suweida, which remain largely out of Damascus' control amid tensions with Druze groups.

The continued violations of Syrian sovereignty and territorial integrity by Israel also remains a pressing issue.

Furthermore, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) continues to pose a threat to Syrian security, despite Damascus' enhanced counter-terrorism efforts.

The Council could consider adopting a presidential statement calling for full respect for Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity and for full respect for the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. Such a statement could:

- welcome progress made towards Syrian unity, while also calling on progress on the Suweida political roadmap;
- welcome further cooperation with the OPCW and IAEA;
- urge Damascus to strengthen independent accountability mechanisms and meaningfully engage victims and civil society on transitional justice;
- call for sustained support towards advancing Syria's counter-terrorism efforts, SSR, and capacity-building for Syrian security forces;
- and call for enhanced financial support for humanitarian needs and long-term recovery.

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 significant value at this juncture. Council members, in close collaboration with Syria, could consider requesting written advice from the PBC on how best to support the country's transition.

Syria

Council members could further continue to press for progress on an expedited agreement for the Special Envoy's office to relocate an appropriate number of personnel to Damascus, to support the transition.

Sustaining international support for Syria's shift from emergency humanitarian assistance to longer-term recovery remains a key issue. Council members could consider convening an informal interactive dialogue with relevant UN entities and international financial institutions—including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—to discuss options on how to address humanitarian and economic recovery needs, such as by accelerating Syria's reintegration into international financial systems and convening a donors' conference focused on rebuilding Syria's economy.

Council and Wider 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. There is agreement that intercommunal tensions cannot be 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 Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) from the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions list signalled unified support for Syria's interim government and the overall transition following years of deep divisions on the file.

Members differ in their criticism of Israel's continued attacks on Syrian territory and its military presence in the south of the country, with European members and the US tending towards more measured language, while the A3 group (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, and Somalia), China, Pakistan, and Russia are more likely to condemn Israeli actions in stronger terms. Colombia's position on the Golan seems to have shifted after President Abelardo de la Espriella assumed office. On 10 August, the new government

recognised Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan, a break from the previous government's approach and only the second such recognition globally following the US.

On 11 September, Syria's Permanent Representative to the UN Ibrahim Olabi was joined by representatives of 44 other member states—including Council members Bahrain, China, Denmark, France, Pakistan, Russia, and Somalia—in a press stakeout reacting to Netanyahu's visit to Mount Hermon and the continued Israeli incursions into Syrian territory. These members affirmed the importance that international law, the UN Charter, and the 1974 agreement are fully respected and upheld, and warned that such escalations could undermine recent progress made by the Syrian government.

During the 17 September Council meeting, Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN Danny Danon said that Israel maintains a "small security buffer" in Syrian territory as a "defensive measure" against terrorist cells operating in Syria, including Hezbollah and ISIL. Additionally, he accused Türkiye of planning to "expand its own military capabilities inside Syria and take over the country" through the presence of its troops and bases in Syrian territory, contrasting it with Israel's smaller presence in the country. Danon further framed the Turkish military build-up in Syria as a direct threat to Israeli security. Speaking at the same meeting, Türkiye's Permanent Representative to the UN Ahmet Yıldız rejected the Israeli claims and stressed that Türkiye's role in Syria is positive, constructive, and conducted with the consent of the Syrian government.

Many Council members remain aligned on the importance of counter-terrorism efforts in Syria, while calling for sustained support for Syrian counter-terrorism capacity. China has been particularly vocal in calling on Damascus to take a stronger stance against all Security Council-listed terrorist organisations, including the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, whose members have reportedly been integrated into the Syrian armed forces.

Sudan

Expected Council Action

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

During the month, the Security Council is also expected to vote on a draft resolution to extend the 1591 Sudan sanctions regime.

Key Recent Developments

On 11 September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2828 extending the sanctions regime until 9 October. The vote followed several weeks of negotiations on an initial US draft that sought to expand the arms embargo throughout Sudan, apply it to all parties,

and explicitly cover drones and related dual-use technology. Differing positions led to members only being able to agree to a one-month technical rollover. The three African members (A3)—the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, and Somalia—alongside China, Pakistan, and Russia, wanted a straightforward one-year renewal confined to Darfur. China and Russia further argued the draft over-emphasised the role of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and systems (UAS) in the conflict and their impact on civilians. Divergences also emerged among the A3 over how to engage with the text, though they ultimately made a number of joint proposals. (For more information, see our 10 September *What's in Blue* story.)

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2828](#) (11 September 2026) extended the 1591 Sudan sanctions regime—including targeted sanctions (asset freezes and travel bans) and an arms embargo—until 9 October and renewed the mandate of the PoE until 9 November. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10220](#) (11 September 2026) was a meeting on the extension of the Sudan sanctions regime and the mandate renewal of the PoE assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee. [Selected Human Rights Council Documents A/HRC/63/23](#) (1 September 2026) was a report by the FFM titled *Fuelling Sudan's Conflict: weapons, fighters and external support networks*. [A/HRC/RES/62/1](#) (6 July 2026) was a Human Rights Council resolution that, among other things, requests the FFM to conduct an inquiry into violations and abuses of international human rights law, violations of international humanitarian law, and related international crimes committed in and around El Obeid.

Sudan

The security situation has continued to deteriorate on multiple fronts in the past months. In North Kordofan, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) has held the reopened Khartoum–El Obeid corridor and towns retaken in late July, but the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a Sudanese paramilitary force, has continued contesting the corridor and striking El Obeid with drones. El Obeid—whose population has roughly doubled from displacement inflows even as it faced the risk of encirclement in recent weeks—remains under siege-like conditions, with worsening water shortages, a cholera outbreak, and mounting reports of sexual violence.

In Blue Nile, fighting has escalated sharply since the RSF/Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) alliance recaptured Kurmuk and Geissan in mid-August. By early September, the alliance claimed control over Bakori and Sorkam army bases, prompting the SAF to reinforce Ed Damazin, the state capital, which came under direct assault—including by RSF drones—on 4 September. Analysts suggest that the alliance's gains have brought the capital within closer reach, sharpening concerns about the conflict's regionalisation amid persistent allegations of Ethiopian territory being used to supply and launch RSF operations.

Efforts to resolve the conflict have continued, although without any breakthrough. The Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Sudan, Pekka Haavisto, visited Khartoum on 6 September to discuss de-escalation, protection of civilians, and detainee release/exchange with SAF leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Transitional Prime Minister Kamil El-Tayeb Idris. The Quintet—comprising the African Union, the European Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the League of Arab States (LAS), and the UN—followed with an 8 to 10 September good offices visit to Khartoum, engaging with Al-Burhan, Idris, and a wide range of political, civilian, women's, and youth representatives, including the Sudanese preparatory committee formally launched in late August (an outgrowth of Al-Burhan's 10 August consultations, for which he pledged legal, political, and security guarantees to participants).

On 14 September, Council members held an informal interactive dialogue, "From Principles to Practice: translating international mediation commitments into a coherent, civilian-led path to peace", organised by Denmark and the UK, with briefings by respective Quintet members. (For more information, see our 13 September *What's in Blue* story.)

Tensions over the mediation track deepened further when the US withheld a visa for Al-Burhan ahead of his scheduled address to the General Assembly on 25 September, a move Sudanese and other sources linked to a US-backed 90-day ceasefire proposal that Khartoum has resisted. Sudan's Permanent Representative, Ambassador Al-Harith Idriss al-Harith Mohamed, apparently appealed to Secretary-General António Guterres to intervene, arguing that barring Al-Burhan would violate the UN's obligations to member states. UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said the Secretary-General was "deeply concerned" that the visa had not been issued and was raising the matter with US authorities.

The dispute coincided with deepening divisions among the Quad—Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the US—after US Senior Advisor for Arab and African Affairs Massad Boulos confirmed on 19 September that Washington was working with Quad partners, Qatar, Türkiye, and European counterparts on a renewed push for a humanitarian truce. Saudi Arabia

reportedly raised concerns over its ongoing role within the Quad during a ministerial meeting on Sudan hosted by France, the Council's September president, conveying Riyadh's objections to what it saw as US favouritism towards the UAE and to language treating the SAF and the RSF as equivalent parties.

The World Food Programme's (WFP) acting Executive Director, Carl Skau, held a press briefing on 14 September following an eight-day visit to Khartoum, El Obeid, El Fasher, and Tawila, describing Sudan as the world's largest hunger and displacement crisis, with 20 million people in acute hunger, 14 million displaced, and 200,000 at IPC 5 starvation levels. He warned that severe underfunding (WFP is roughly one-third funded compared to last year) risks forcing significant scale-backs in the coming weeks.

Drone attacks have continued to hit civilians and aid operations across Kordofan. WFP condemned a 30 August strike on food trucks outside Dilling, South Kordofan, that destroyed over 50 metric tons of food, while a separate drone strike near a courthouse in Umm Rawaba, North Kordofan, killed 13 civilians. Drones have also struck petrol stations in Ed Damazin, killing six and causing severe fuel shortages. Compounding the crisis, on 16 September the collapse of an informal gold mine—the al-Zara mine near Nuhud in RSF-controlled West Kordofan—killed at least 82 people, with dozens more feared trapped.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 July, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution without a vote at its 62nd session on the human rights situation in and around El Obeid, requesting the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan (IFFM) to conduct an urgent inquiry into violations allegedly committed there.

On 3 September, the IFFM issued a report, *Fuelling Sudan's conflict: weapons, fighters and external support networks*, finding that foreign recruitment and external support networks are driving the war by strengthening both parties' military capabilities, including through the deployment of up to 2,000 former Colombian military contractors operating alongside RSF units and foreign-supplied drones enhancing both RSF and SAF strike capacity. It found reasonable grounds to believe that repeated RSF drone strikes on El Obeid between July and August 2026 constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes, and that the same support networks fed into RSF operations in Zamzam camp and the takeover of El Fasher, where it documented conduct displaying hallmarks of genocide. The report urged the Human Rights Council to enforce and extend the arms embargo across the whole of Sudan, adding weight to proposals on expanding the sanctions regime's geographical scope.

Key Issues and Options

An outstanding matter is the extension of the sanctions regime, and whether members can reach substantive consensus by 9 October on expanding the sanctions regime—including its geographic scope, new listing criteria, explicit drone coverage, and a strengthened Panel of Experts (PoE)—as the US has pushed for, or whether the divide that produced September's rollover will persist, requiring another short-term extension. The US is likely to continue to pursue an expanded sanctions regime, but consensus may be difficult. Among the possible options is another technical rollover for a slightly longer period or a compromise that would allow for a more limited expansion of the regime.

On sanctions implementation, an open question is how the practical impact of the US-proposed expansion of the sanctions would play out on the ground. One option is an informal meeting with the PoE to assess this issue before the vote, alongside greater

Sudan

information-sharing between members and the panel on arms transfers and financing networks.

Building on the 14 September informal interactive dialogue, members could consider how the Council can support the Quintet's role as a bridge among stakeholders. One option is for the Council to pursue a presidential statement supporting the Quintet's efforts to advance the political process.

The escalation of fighting in Blue Nile, and the risk it poses to Ed Damazin, has raised concern about the conflict's regionalisation. Members could consider a dedicated briefing on this front and its cross-border dimension.

The FFM's El Obeid inquiry, mandated by the Human Rights Council's 8 July resolution, remains outstanding. Security Council members could take the inquiry's eventual findings into account in future discussions on accountability and the scope of the sanctions regime once it is released.

Council Dynamics

The divisions beneath the unanimous adoption of resolution 2828 were laid bare in the explanations of vote. The US, as penholder, argued that the current sanctions regime is outdated, insisting that "a long-term technical rollover of this mandate is not an option". The UK welcomed Washington's push to "update the regime, in light of a conflict that has changed significantly", while Latvia argued

the conflict "has spread far beyond Darfur" and pressed for explicit designation grounds covering conflict-related sexual violence. China warned that increasing coercive measures risked worsening the humanitarian situation or even "fuel[ling] the prospect of Sudan's fragmentation". Russia was the most categorical, stating it "will not allow even a hint of broadening" of the regime and casting this position as aligned with the Sudanese government's own, questioning why expansion was being pushed now—given the SAF's current battlefield advantage—rather than in 2023 when RSF threatened Khartoum. It suggested a full one-year renewal without changing the mandate. Sudan's delegate rejected any expansion outright, invoking Article 51 on self-defence rights, and asked what the penholder had done "to deter the genocide committed by a militia supported by one of its closest partners in the region".

The 11 September vote crystallised the Council's underlying divide: the US, UK, and Latvia pushed for a substantively expanded regime against China's procedural caution and Russia's outright rejection of any expansion, with Russia explicitly aligning its position with Khartoum's own objections. The unanimous vote reflected agreement only that more time was needed, not consensus on substance. The US position has been reiterated by the US State Department which recently asserted that neither the SAF nor the RSF "represent legitimate, constitutional governance for Sudan".

Iraq/Kuwait

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold a meeting on the Iraq-Kuwait file concerning missing persons and property. Council members will consider the Secretary-General's report on implementation of resolution 2792 of 17 September 2025, due by 30 September.

Background and Key Recent Developments

The Council's engagement on this file follows the conclusion of the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) on 31 December 2025. UNAMI had overseen the missing persons and property issue since 2013, under resolution 2107. As the mission wound down, Kuwait pressed for the file to remain under direct Council oversight, while Iraq favoured resolving it through bilateral channels following UNAMI's closure. On 17 September 2025, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2792, which authorised a senior representative of the Secretary-General to promote, support, and facilitate the repatriation or return of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals (or their remains) and Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, and requested progress reports from the Secretary-General every six months. The adoption marked a transition of responsibilities pertaining to the Iraq-Kuwait file from UNAMI to a follow-on mechanism.

On 31 March, the Secretary-General reported to the Council that

the Secretariat had established the mechanism and appointed Mari Yamashita as senior representative, effective that day, supported by a small team. The letter described the representative's priorities as building confidence between Iraq and Kuwait; addressing political and technical obstacles; encouraging the use of modern technology for search and identification; and working closely with both governments, the Tripartite Commission—comprising France, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UK, and the US, and chaired by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)—and relevant UN entities.

Since her appointment, Yamashita has engaged both capitals directly. She met Iraq's National Security Adviser Qasim al-Araji in Baghdad on 15 June, receiving assurances of Iraq's "full cooperation" on the file, and was received by Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah in Kuwait City two days later. The two also met again in September on the margins of the General Assembly's High-Level Week to discuss efforts to "achieve tangible progress", according to a press statement by the foreign ministry.

The Iraq-Kuwait file's cooperative tone stands in contrast to a fraught regional backdrop. Since the outbreak of the US-Iran war in February, Iran-aligned Iraqi militias operating under the "Islamic Resistance in Iraq" umbrella have struck Kuwaiti territory on multiple occasions, including Kuwait's civilian airport. The attacks prompted calls for Baghdad to rein in the militias. For a bilateral

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAQ Security Council Resolution S/RES/2792 (17 September 2025) authorised the appointment of a senior representative with a mandate to promote, support, and facilitate efforts to repatriate or return missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwait property. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.9997** (17 September 2025) was the meeting at which resolution 2792 was adopted.

Iraq/Kuwait

relationship that both governments have framed in terms of reconciliation and "brotherly" trust, the episode underscores the limits of Iraqi state authority and adds a layer of strain.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is whether the new follow-on mechanism can sustain progress on the missing persons and property file now that UNAMI is no longer present on the ground. A related issue is reciprocal access for excavations, as Iraq has alleged that Kuwait has not responded to repeated Tripartite Commission requests to excavate potential sites on Kuwaiti territory in search of Iraq's own missing nationals, a grievance that is likely to resurface at the October meeting. One option would be for the Council to request that the Secretary-General's reports specify the excavation access granted by each side in order to better assess this claim through verified information.

Another outstanding issue concerns the return of the Kuwaiti national archives. Iraq maintains that it has already returned large volumes of material, while Kuwait says Iraq has not specified what remains outstanding. Council members could press both parties towards agreeing on a documented inventory process to resolve this impasse.

A further issue is the duration of the senior representative's mandate. Iraq has voiced reservations about the five-year term set out in resolution 2792 and has signalled discomfort with the prospect

of a second term, while Kuwait has framed the mechanism in more open-ended, institutional terms. This divergence could shape how benchmarks for the mandate's success are eventually set, and Council members may wish to use the October meeting to signal expectations for periodic progress reviews.

Finally, members may want to assess whether search and identification work has lost momentum. No Kuwaiti remains have been recovered since 2019. With UNAMI's departure, the Tripartite Commission is now the principal technical vehicle for this work. Council members could ask that future Secretary-General reports detail what forensic and technical support the Tripartite Commission has requested to help identify where the bottleneck lies.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain broadly aligned on this file—both resolutions 2732 (2024) and 2792 (2025) passed unanimously. The UK, as penholder, has been the driving force behind sustaining Council attention on the issue and stressed the humanitarian imperative during the September 2025 vote. Other members (France, the A3+, China, Panama, and the US) have voiced consistent support for the new mechanism, while differing somewhat in tone: the US linked its support to broader concerns about UN mission cost and duration, while European and African members framed it in humanitarian and reconciliation terms.

Women, Peace and Security

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on women, peace and security (WPS). The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Giorgos Gerapetritis, is expected to chair the open debate, which will be titled "Women, peace and security in the next quarter-century: fulfilling the promise through implementation". UN Secretary-General António Guterres, UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous, and a woman civil society representative are the anticipated briefers.

Key Recent Developments

This year's annual 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. Analysts, senior UN officials, and civil society organisations are warning of a growing, organised backlash against women's autonomy and gender justice. These pressures are unfolding alongside rising levels of militarisation and violence, with devastating consequences for women and girls in conflict situations.

The Secretary-General's annual report on WPS is expected to highlight a sharp rise in the number of women and girls living within

50 kilometres of armed conflict, from 676 million in 2024 to 756.1 million in 2025. It will likely describe the impact of conflict on women and girls in settings such as Sudan and Ukraine, and stress that the growing use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas has increased casualties among women and girls, including in Gaza and Myanmar. It is also expected to highlight the impact of restrictions on women and girls in Afghanistan, Mali, Yemen, and Somalia, and the high incidence of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). (The Secretary-General's latest annual report on CRSV documented 9,788 UN-verified cases of CRSV in 2025—a sharp increase from 2024.)

The annual report will most likely stress that global military expenditure has increased for the 11th consecutive year, reaching almost \$2.9 trillion in 2025, while foreign aid continues to decline. The report may also note that, while women continue to lead local peacebuilding, they remain underrepresented in formal peace negotiations, with women comprising only 5 percent of negotiators across 57 peace processes in 2025, compared to 7 percent in 2024. It may also provide information on the impact of contingency measures taken to address the UN liquidity crisis, including a significant decrease in dedicated gender expertise.

UN DOCUMENTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY Security Council Resolutions [S/RES/2467](#) (23 April 2019) recognised the need for a survivor-centred approach to preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. [S/RES/2242](#) (13 October 2015) expressed the Council's intention to convene an IEG on WPS and to invite women civil society briefers to country-specific and thematic meetings of the Security Council. [S/RES/1325](#) (31 October 2000) was the first Security Council resolution on WPS. [Secretary-General Report S/2025/556](#) (5 September 2025) was the Secretary-General's annual report on WPS. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.10190](#) (8 July 2026) was the annual open debate on CRSV. [S/PV.10175](#) (17 June 2026) was an open debate on WPS focused on women's participation in peace processes.

Women, Peace and Security

The Gender Snapshot 2026 report, which was issued on 17 September by UN Women and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), paints a picture of political and financial retreat from gender equality. The report says that, over the past two years, one-third of national mechanisms for gender equality indicated having experienced a decline in institutional power, while about one-quarter reported having faced reductions in their operating budgets, and nearly one in ten indicated having lost control of their budgets entirely. Additionally, 42 percent of UN entities reported “actual or anticipated weakening of their gender equality efforts”. More broadly, the report notes that while women are overrepresented in poverty, they remain underrepresented in positions that determine poverty reduction policies.

At the Security Council, several recent resolutions renewing UN peace operation mandates have narrowed or at times removed references to WPS issues, including gender equality and gender as a cross-cutting consideration in implementing mission mandates. For example, resolution 2814, which in January renewed the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), removed WPS provisions contained in the mission’s previous mandate, including language recognising the link between gender violence and arms flows and encouraging the mission to ensure that gender equality issues are addressed as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate, including by supporting women’s political participation. The exclusion of language on gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue in mission mandates was also evident in resolution 2820, which in April renewed the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). 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”.

In June, China, the penholder on Afghanistan, sought to consolidate the priorities and tasks of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) set out in resolution 2626 of March 2022. This followed requests by the US in the preceding months for a broader review of the mission’s tasks and priorities, including whether aspects of the mandate could be streamlined. UNAMA’s mandate, as reframed by resolution 2822 of 15 June, retains some WPS language in relation to UNAMA’s core tasks, including regarding monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation, political engagement, and humanitarian coordination. However, requests from Denmark, Latvia, and other like-minded delegations to include a reference to gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue throughout the implementation of the mission’s mandate—which appeared in resolution 2626—were not accommodated. Instead, drawing partially on language from resolution 2626, resolution 2822 mandates the mission to support equality for all women and girls, their empowerment, freedom of movement, participation in public life and decision-making, as well as equal access to, among other things, education and employment “in line with resolution 1325”, the Council’s first resolution on WPS, and “related resolutions”. References to monitoring abuses and reprisals against women journalists and humanitarian workers and women who “protect and promote human rights”, which appeared in resolution 2626, no longer appear in the text. In addition, while resolution 2822 retains a reference to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), it did not retain specific language on adopting a

survivor-centred approach to preventing and responding to SGBV.

Dilutions of WPS language in 2026 follow a marked decline in 2025 in terms of omissions, deletions, and scaling back of WPS references. According to figures cited by the NGO Working Group on WPS, only 46 percent of Council decisions adopted in 2025 contained language related to WPS, the lowest since 2009. This compares to an average of 65 percent of Council decisions between 2015 and 2023, with recent years following below that average, according to figures cited in the Secretary-General’s annual reports on WPS. (In 2023, the average was 58 percent, and in 2024 it was over 60 percent.)

In recent months, women civil society representatives have briefed the Council on several situations on the Council’s agenda, including Afghanistan, Haiti, Sudan, and Syria. Among other things, they called for women’s full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation in peace, political, and decision-making processes; ceasefires; protection of civilians; unhindered humanitarian access; an end to SGBV, including CRSV; and increased funding.

Participation of women civil society briefers in Council meetings has, however, 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 percent decrease compared to 2024, when 55 women civil society representatives briefed the Council, and is the lowest since 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend has seemingly continued into 2026. Figures for the first quarter of the year indicate that only five women civil society representatives were invited to brief the Council, a 50 percent decline compared to the same period in 2025. The NGO Working Group on WPS’ analysis says that continuation of this decreasing trend likely reflects the impact of travel restrictions to the US, concerns regarding the security of some civil society representatives, and difficult Security Council dynamics.

As an informal subsidiary body, the Informal Experts Group (IEG) on WPS has remained unaffected by the impasse in the allocation of subsidiary body chairs and vice-chairs. Since January, the IEG on WPS has met six times, focusing on Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, Myanmar, and Libya.

Key Issues and Options

The overarching issue remains the full implementation of the WPS agenda and its impact on the ground. Against the backdrop of mounting challenges to women’s rights and gender equality, a key issue for the Security Council is ensuring that the future trajectory of the WPS agenda does not fall short of the framework it has created since the adoption of resolution 1325 in 2000.

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”, 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.

Council members supportive of the WPS agenda have a number of options to further its implementation. They could draw on 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 and country situations.

Women, Peace and Security

Another option could be to commission a study of follow-up to recommendations developed in the context of the IEG on WPS, including their reflection in Council products, mission mandates, and UN reporting.

Council members could also 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. Amid increasing budgetary pressures, Council members may consider underscoring the importance of allocating adequate resources to sustain these positions at the open debate.

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), crimes against humanity, genocide, 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, specifying that the decision was taken in response to serious violations of international law and acts of SGBV, and call for accountability for such violations. The statement could also call for redirecting military spending towards, among other things, gender equality, conflict prevention, and climate preparedness.

Council Dynamics

Colombia, Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia, Liberia, Panama, and

the UK are the current members of the Shared Commitments on WPS initiative, which was started in 2021 by Ireland, Kenya, and Mexico. Some of these members regularly advocate for the inclusion of WPS and gender language in Council resolutions. Since January, the signatories to the Shared Commitments delivered joint statements at the Security Council press stakeout on Syria (February), Afghanistan (March and September), women's participation in peace processes (June), the Central African Republic (June), CRSV (July), and South Sudan (August). Colombia and Denmark have held Council meetings that are consistent with the commitment to "[m]aking WPS-related issues an explicit focus of at least one mandated geographic meeting of the Council or specifically host a WPS signature event in each Presidency and requesting UN briefers to focus on this aspect".

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

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.

This position has converged with Russia's long-held oppositional stance regarding the inclusion of WPS language in Council outcomes. During the negotiations on UNAMA, members including Russia and Pakistan also advocated for a "balanced approach" to the inclusion of language on human rights and WPS vis-à-vis other aspects of the mission's mandate.

The UK is the penholder on WPS, and the US is the penholder on CRSV. Colombia and Denmark are the co-chairs of the Informal Expert Group on WPS. Panama is the coordinator of the Shared Commitments initiative.

Emerging Technologies and Maritime Security

Expected Council Action

In October, Greece will convene a high-level briefing on emerging technologies, with an emphasis on maritime security, under the "Maintenance of international peace and security" agenda item as a signature event of its Council presidency.

Background and Key Recent Developments

The Council has traditionally addressed maritime security in the context of specific country and regional situations, including piracy off Somalia and illicit arms transfers to Libya. However, in recent years, several elected members have also sought to broaden the Council's consideration of maritime threats to the thematic level and discuss their wider implications for international peace and security. During India's August 2021 presidency, the Council held its first thematic meeting on maritime security and adopted a presidential

statement reaffirming that international law, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), sets out the legal framework applicable to activities in the oceans. The statement also encouraged member states to continue strengthening their maritime security capacities, including to address piracy and armed robbery at sea, terrorist activities, and transnational organised crime.

On 11 August 2025, the Council held a high-level open debate on "Maritime Security: Prevention, Innovation, and International Cooperation to Address Emerging Challenges" as a signature event of Panama's presidency. Bahrain subsequently convened a high-level open debate on "The Safety and Protection of Waterways in the Maritime Domain" on 27 April as a signature event of its presidency, followed by an Arrria-formula meeting on "Safe Seas, Shared Security: Protecting Freedom of Navigation in an Evolving Security Environment" on 17 September.

UN DOCUMENTS ON EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND MARITIME SECURITY Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2024/6 (21 October 2024) committed to more systematic consideration of scientific advances within the Council's mandate. S/PRST/2021/15 (9 August 2021) reaffirmed that international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, sets out the legal framework applicable to activities in the ocean. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.10228 (23 September 2026) was a briefing on AI organised by France. S/PV.10145 (27 April 2026) was the open debate on maritime security organised by Bahrain. S/PV.9919 (20 May 2025) was the open debate on maritime security organised by Greece.

Emerging Technologies and Maritime Security

Separately, the Council has increasingly considered the implications of new and emerging technologies for international peace and security, holding its first formal briefing on artificial intelligence (AI) in July 2023 at the UK's initiative. Since then, it has held six additional meetings on AI. At Switzerland's initiative, the Council also convened an Arria-formula meeting on 17 May 2024 and a briefing on 21 October 2024 examining the impact of scientific and technological developments on international peace and security. At the latter meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement committing to take scientific advances into account more systematically, where appropriate and within its mandate.

Greece has been active in advancing the Council's engagement in both areas. On 4 April 2025, it co-organised an Arria-formula meeting with France and the Republic of Korea on the responsible use of AI for international peace and security. During its May 2025 presidency, Greece also convened a high-level open debate on maritime security, at which Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis advocated using new technologies, including AI, to improve maritime surveillance and facilitate communication and information-sharing. Briefing the Council, Secretary-General António Guterres identified cyberattacks against ports and shipping companies as an emerging threat, while the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) Fellow Christian Bueger raised concerns about autonomous weapons systems and the protection of critical maritime infrastructure. Greece, together with India and the Philippines, subsequently convened a 21 November 2025 Arria-formula meeting on "Maritime Safety and Security: Protection of Seafarers".

In a related initiative outside the Council, Greece and India co-hosted a high-level side event on 25 September on AI and international peace and security, with an emphasis on maritime security. Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis discussed AI's potential to improve maritime monitoring and early warning, as well as cyber vulnerabilities affecting shipping and critical infrastructure, including ports and undersea cables. Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar similarly highlighted AI's potential to strengthen maritime domain awareness and resilience, while arguing that Security Council engagement should focus on applications and consequences with a demonstrable bearing on international peace and security.

Recent conflicts have demonstrated the growing role of emerging technologies in maritime insecurity. The war in Ukraine has seen maritime drones and other advanced weapons deployed in the Black Sea, while Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea have involved unmanned systems. In September, Anthropic identified a Southeast Asian government entity involved in maritime shipping and tracking among the targets of an AI-assisted cyber-espionage campaign. The report did not establish whether the entity was successfully compromised or maritime operations were disrupted.

International efforts to address these technologies have also advanced. In May, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted the first global code for autonomous ships, which took effect on 1 July. The code establishes a framework for the safe operation of autonomous and remotely controlled cargo ships, covering areas including navigation, connectivity, remote operations, and cybersecurity. On 28 May, the IMO also issued revised guidelines on maritime cyber risk management, providing recommendations to safeguard shipping against current and emerging cyber threats and vulnerabilities.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is how it can assess the implications of rapidly evolving technologies for maritime security. AI can strengthen maritime domain awareness, improving early warning and the detection of suspicious activity. At the same time, it can enable more sophisticated reconnaissance, vulnerability mapping, and cyber operations against ports, vessels, communications networks, and undersea cables. The increasing autonomy of maritime systems may also compress decision-making time and heighten risks of misperception, miscalculation, and unintended escalation. These risks intersect with existing sources of maritime insecurity, including attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and disruption to critical maritime infrastructure, whose effects can extend to global trade, food and energy security, and communications.

Members could request relevant analysis in the Secretary-General's reports on situations involving maritime insecurity. They could also establish an Informal Expert Group on Technology, Peace and Security to convene informal, expert-level discussions on the implications of emerging technologies for issues on the Council's agenda, including maritime security. (For more information on this proposal, see our 15 September policy paper, *Artificial Intelligence, Geopolitics, and the UN Security Council*.)

Council Dynamics

Council members recognise the need for coherent and effective multilateral approaches to maritime security, given the transnational nature of these challenges. All Council members are also parties to UNCLOS, except Colombia and the US, both of which nonetheless consider many of its provisions as customary international law. (For more information, see the brief on Maritime Security in our April 2026 *Monthly Forecast*.)

Differences remain, however, over the scope of the Council's engagement in maritime issues. Russia has argued that matters such as transnational organised crime, illicit arms and drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and the illegal exploitation of marine resources fall outside the Council's remit unless they have clear implications for international peace and security and are better addressed in specialised forums. China has similarly resisted an expansive Council role, maintaining, for example, that specific maritime disputes, including those in the South China Sea, should not be addressed by the Council.

Members also differ over the Council's role in addressing new and emerging technologies. At the 23 September briefing on AI, Greece stressed the need to address the security implications of AI as they pertain to the Council's mandate, while avoiding duplication of work elsewhere. Latvia and Liberia expressed support for an informal expert group on AI and emerging technologies. Russia, however, questioned whether AI as a broad thematic issue falls within the Council's mandate, arguing that it should be addressed in more inclusive and specialised forums.

Negotiations on Council products have exposed disagreements over the scope of Council engagement in both areas. For example, during negotiations on the August 2021 presidential statement on maritime security, China apparently opposed a dedicated Secretary-General's report on maritime security. Similarly, during negotiations on the Council's October 2024 presidential statement, Russia appears to have opposed language encouraging the

Emerging Technologies and Maritime Security

Secretary-General to reflect scientific advances in reporting on situations on the Council's agenda and to take such developments into

account in efforts to enhance peace operations, early warning, conflict prevention, and resolution.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council will hold its semi-annual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The Council is also expected to vote at the end of the month on the reauthorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA) prior to its 31 October expiration.

Key Recent Developments

On 11 May, Christian Schmidt announced his resignation as High Representative for BiH, effective 1 July. Following unsuccessful consultations on selecting his successor, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) Steering Board appointed Principal Deputy High Representative Louis Crishock as Acting High Representative on 30 June. Crishock assumed the role on 1 July. The PIC's target date of 14 July for appointing a successor passed without an agreement, with Crishock remaining in office at the time of writing.

The death of Ratko Mladić on 27 August revived longstanding disputes over wartime accountability in BiH. The former commander of the Bosnian Serb army had been serving a life sentence following his conviction by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for genocide, crimes against humanity, and violations of the laws or customs of war committed during the 1992–1995 conflict in BiH. He died while hospitalised in The Hague. Describing Mladić's case as a manifestation of "double standards and anti-Serb bias", Russia criticised Judge Graciela Gatti Santana, President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (the Mechanism), for repeatedly denying his release on humanitarian grounds despite what Moscow described as his terminal illness. On 28 August, at Russia's request, Security Council members discussed his death under "any other business".

Mladić's funeral in Belgrade on 7 September, which included military honours, drew international criticism and sparked diplomatic tensions between BiH and Serbia. UN human rights experts condemned the honours accorded to Mladić and expressed concern over the attendance of senior Republika Srpska (RS) officials at the funeral. They warned that such acts risk undermining efforts to establish the truth, end impunity, and secure justice and reparations, and called for commemorations that place victims at the forefront, uphold judicially established facts, and reject denialism and historical revisionism. On 8 September, BiH expelled two Serbian diplomats. In his 22 September address to the UN General Assembly, Denis Bećirović, the Bosniak member and Chairperson of the BiH Presidency, criticised Serbia's glorification of Mladić.

Divisive reactions to Mladić's death have also marked the political environment ahead of BiH's 4 October general elections, which

will be held at the state, entity, and cantonal levels. In its 18 September interim report, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) noted complaints against RS politicians and candidates over alleged glorification of Mladić, alongside negative campaigning, appeals to voters along ethnic lines, and pressure on journalists. The report also highlighted the planned first nationwide use of biometric voter identification and ballot scanning, which has raised expectations regarding electoral integrity, while noting delays in preparations and equipment delivery.

Disputes over BiH's constitutional order have also persisted. On 25 September, BiH's Constitutional Court ruled that RS budget funding for lobbying activities pursuing unconstitutional objectives was incompatible with the constitution. The ruling concerned a September 2025 contract between RS' Representative Office in Vienna and Canadian lobbying firm Dickens & Madson. In an 11 February letter to the Security Council, BiH Foreign Minister Elmedin Konaković argued that the contract explicitly identified RS independence as an ultimate objective and sought to internationalise and legitimise secessionist aims. The Court prohibited further payments under the contract and other RS-funded lobbying pursuing objectives contrary to BiH's Constitution and institutional decisions.

Key Issues and Options

The future of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) is a key issue. The PIC Steering Board has yet to agree on Schmidt's successor, leaving Crishock in an acting capacity, while longstanding divisions remain over the OHR's legitimacy, powers, and eventual closure. One option would be for the Council to adopt a presidential statement encouraging the PIC to conclude the succession process and reaffirming the conditions established under the "5+2 agenda" for the OHR's closure. Alternatively, the Council could propose an independent strategic review of the OHR, including its remaining functions and progress towards meeting the 5+2 objectives and conditions.

Another key issue is whether Crishock will brief the Council. Since 2021, the Council has generally held the second of its two annual BiH debates, which coincides with EUFOR's renewal, without a briefer following Russia's opposition to Schmidt's participation. Crishock's appointment may prompt renewed discussion over this informal understanding. The Council presidency could consult members on whether to invite him to brief while seeking to keep this question separate from negotiations on EUFOR's reauthorisation.

Protecting BiH's constitutional order and maintaining stability during and following the elections are also key issues. Council

UN DOCUMENTS ON BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2795](#) (31 October 2025) renewed the authorisation of the EUFOR ALTHEA for another 12 months. [Security Council Letter S/2026/405](#) (11 May 2026) was a letter transmitting the High Representative's 69th report on implementation of the peace agreement. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.10150](#) (12 May 2026) was the Council's semi-annual debate on BiH.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

members could adopt a press statement reaffirming BiH's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and constitutional order, calling on political actors to respect electoral and judicial decisions and rejecting unilateral attempts to alter the constitutional framework.

Council Dynamics

Council members broadly support BiH's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the Dayton framework, but differ over the powers and future of the OHR, including the appointment and responsibilities of Schmidt's successor. The renewal of the authorisation of EUFOR ALTHEA has remained an area of agreement, with resolution 2795 adopted unanimously in October 2025.

Schmidt's succession process has exposed differences over the future role and responsibilities of the High Representative. At the 12 May debate, the US supported a successor with a "far more limited set of responsibilities" and greater authority for domestic leaders, while several European members—including Denmark, Latvia, and the UK—called for a "fully empowered" High Representative.

During subsequent PIC consultations, the US reportedly supported Italian diplomat Antonio Zannardi Landi for the post, while several European countries favoured French diplomat René Trocraz. On 5 June, Washington warned that the failure to agree on a successor was prompting it to reconsider its role in the international presence in BiH.

US policy towards BiH has also attracted congressional scrutiny. Following the Trump administration's removal of sanctions on former RS President Milorad Dodik and his associates in October 2025, a bipartisan group of US lawmakers called for their reimposition on 27 March. On 15 September, Democrats on the House Foreign Affairs Committee released a report linking the removal of sanctions and pressure for Schmidt's resignation to a proposed gas

pipeline concession worth over \$1 billion for a company co-owned by Joseph Flynn, brother of former Trump National Security Adviser Michael Flynn.

In its response, the State Department defended the lifting of sanctions as a response to steps taken by RS authorities to reverse legislation undermining the Dayton Agreement and appoint an interim president. It also maintained that, although Washington had advocated American commercial interests, decisions concerning the pipeline concession and the selection of a US company as lead investor were "sovereign choices made by Federation of BiH officials".

Russia continues to seek the OHR's closure. In a 12 July statement, its foreign ministry argued that the Dayton Agreement makes no provision for an Acting High Representative and that a legitimate appointment requires Security Council approval. China reiterated at the 12 May debate that Schmidt lacked Council endorsement and that both the OHR and the "Bonn Powers" were special arrangements for a specific period, noting that "they cannot be prolonged, let alone made permanent". (The Bonn Powers, which the PIC granted to the High Representative in 1997, include the ability to make binding decisions and unseat elected officials who are found to be in violation of legal commitments made under the Dayton Agreement.) European members maintain that responsibility for appointing the High Representative rests with the PIC Steering Board.

Among elected Council members, Liberia has defended the OHR's continuing relevance, while Pakistan has supported the prompt appointment of a successor. Somalia has advocated a comprehensive review of the High Representative's role and consultation with all PIC Steering Board members during the appointment process, while Panama has called for a successor enjoying the support of all PIC Steering Board members and, ideally, the Security Council.

Security Council Report Staff

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Executive Director

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Senior Policy Analyst

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Policy Analyst

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Rodrigo Saad
Policy Analyst

Joshua Levkowitz
Policy Analyst

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Security Council Report
125 Park Avenue
New York NY 10017

Telephone +1 212 759 9429

Web securitycouncilreport.org