

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 11 February 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith an assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of January 2017 during the presidency of Sweden (see annex). The assessment was prepared by the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations, in accordance with paragraph 136 of the note by the President of the Security Council of 30 August 2017 ([S/2017/507](#)), following consultations with other members of the Council. I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Olof **Skoog**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative



## **Annex to the letter dated 11 February 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

### **Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Sweden (January 2017)**

#### **Introduction**

In January 2017, the Security Council held 17 public meetings, 14 consultations of the whole and two private meetings. During the closed consultations, eight additional topics were discussed under the item entitled “Other matters”.

The Council adopted three resolutions, agreed on two statements by the President and issued 12 statements to the press.

Among the public meetings, there were two open debates. On 10 January 2017, the Council held an open debate at the ministerial level on the theme “Maintenance of international peace and security: conflict prevention and sustaining peace”, chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström. On 17 January, the Council convened its quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

In accordance with the Organization’s practice, Sweden began its presidency with the presentation of the provisional programme of work of the Council for the month, which was adopted at the Council’s consultations of the whole on 3 January.

#### **Middle East**

##### **Syrian Arab Republic**

On 4 January, the Security Council held closed consultations on the implementation of resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#). Council members were briefed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Kim Won-soo.

In his briefing, the High Representative said that security problems still remained in the area in which the last hangar due to be destroyed was located. He added that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) team had found some discrepancies between the initial declaration made by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and some of what was found on the ground, and that this issue should be addressed by OPCW in cooperation with the Syrian authorities.

Some members expressed concern over the discrepancy between the initial declaration made by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and findings in the field as outlined in the OPCW report ([S/2016/1131](#)), while others welcomed the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and the cooperation between OPCW and the Government. Several members underlined the need to ensure that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons were held accountable, referring to the final findings of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. Council members underscored the importance of the continued work of the Mechanism, in accordance with its renewed mandate.

Several members of the Council noted with concern the growing trend in the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and the region. Some Council members stressed that the role of terrorist entities was underestimated. There was a real risk that the global non-proliferation regime was being undermined. Elements for

the press were agreed and conveyed to the press by the President of the Council following the adjournment of the meeting.

On 20 January, at the request of France, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” in order to have an exchange of views on the political situation and the latest developments in the Syrian Arab Republic. The members of the Council were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, on developments on the ground and the implementation of resolution [2336 \(2016\)](#) in view of the meeting to be held in Astana. The members of the Council welcomed and supported the efforts by the Russian Federation and Turkey to end the violence, establish a ceasefire and jump-start a United Nations-led political process. They also called upon all parties to respect the ceasefire in the Syrian Arab Republic. They reiterated the call upon the parties to allow humanitarian agencies rapid, safe and unhindered access throughout the country. They also strongly condemned the ongoing barbaric terrorist acts by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Daesh) in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the destruction of cultural heritage, such as parts of the Roman theatre in Palmyra, a World Heritage Site of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Finally, they looked forward to the meeting to be held in Astana, hosted by Kazakhstan, on 23 January, viewing it as an important part of the Syrian-led political process and an important step ahead of the resumption of United Nations-led intra-Syrian talks in Geneva in February. Following the adjournment of the meeting, elements for the press were proposed and subsequently agreed and conveyed to the press by the President, and the members of the Council issued a statement to the press on the destruction of cultural heritage and on executions in Tadmur (Palmyra).

On 26 January, the Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The members of the Council were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien, who described the devastation and suffering in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2016 but also underlined that the ceasefire, the talks held in Astana and the plans to resume the United Nations-led talks in Geneva were reasons to be hopeful for 2017. He called upon Council members to do everything in their power: (a) to ensure that the ceasefire was sustained and that it resulted in increased humanitarian access; (b) to ensure that the monthly access plan to reach all those in need was fully implemented; (c) to ensure that all parties protected civilians and civilian infrastructure and abided by their obligations under international humanitarian law, and recommitted themselves to ensuring that sieges were immediately lifted; and (d) to support the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, to find a political solution. The members of the Council were also briefed by the Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Amir Mahmoud Abdulla, and the Executive Director of the Health Emergencies Programme of the World Health Organization, Peter Salama, who participated via videoconference, on the efforts of those agencies to deliver humanitarian aid to the Syrian people.

During closed consultations, Council members underlined the importance of consolidating a nationwide ceasefire, expressed concern at the insufficient cross-line humanitarian access and reiterated their support for resumed United Nations-led talks and a political solution. Council members agreed on elements for the press, in which they called for a consolidation of a nationwide ceasefire, as discussed at the Astana meeting and which was supported by the Council in its resolutions [2336 \(2016\)](#) and [2268 \(2016\)](#), and urged all parties to abide by all Security Council resolutions and international humanitarian law, to intensify efforts to ensure safe, sustained and unhindered humanitarian access, including the full implementation of United Nations

monthly inter-agency convoy plans, and to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure as well as medical personnel and medical facilities.

On 31 January, the Council held closed consultations on the political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The members of the Council were briefed by the Special Envoy for Syria on the latest developments, notably the international meeting on the Syrian Arab Republic between government officials and armed opposition groups, held in Astana on 23 and 24 January and hosted by the President of Kazakhstan, as well as plans for a resumption of United Nations-led negotiations in Geneva. The members of the Council welcomed the meeting held in Astana. They supported the commitment by the guarantors of the Astana process to consolidating the ceasefire and called upon all parties to respect the ceasefire across the Syrian Arab Republic. They reiterated their call upon the parties to respect international humanitarian law and to allow humanitarian agencies safe, immediate, sustained and unhindered access throughout the country. The members of the Council condemned all acts by terrorist groups, as designated by the Council, in the Syrian Arab Republic and reiterated their determination to fight terrorism. Finally, the members of the Council reaffirmed their support for a political solution on the basis of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) and a Syrian-led political process under the auspices of the United Nations. In this regard, they supported the decision by the Special Envoy to resume United Nations-led intra-Syrian talks in Geneva on 20 February and reiterated their full support for his efforts. Following the adjournment of the meeting, the members of the Council issued a statement to the press on the meeting held in Astana.

## **Iraq**

On 4 January, at the request of the Russian Federation, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” on the humanitarian situation in Mosul, Iraq. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator briefed the Council on the humanitarian situation in and around Mosul and the efforts of the United Nations humanitarian agencies and partner organizations to address the situation. The difficult situation for the approximately one million people beyond the reach of humanitarian assistance in areas in Mosul under the control of ISIL/Daesh, who were suffering indiscriminate violence and abuse by ISIL/Daesh, was highlighted. The Under-Secretary-General alerted Council members to the acute need for increased trauma care capacity on the front line and highlighted the need to fund the Mosul flash appeal and the humanitarian response plan for Iraq. The care that the Iraqi security forces had taken to protect civilians during the military campaign was praised by the Under-Secretary-General.

Security Council members expressed their strong support for the coordinated efforts of the United Nations and its partner organizations and the Government of Iraq to address the humanitarian crisis in and around Mosul and welcomed the fact that the Iraqi security forces had taken care to protect civilians. The members of the Council expressed grave concern for the people beyond the reach of humanitarian assistance in Mosul. Council members agreed on elements for the press, in which they called upon all parties to comply with international humanitarian law and human rights law, took note of the acute need to increase trauma care capacity and encouraged Member States to consider financial contributions to that end. They also urged all Member States to consider contributing to the 2017 humanitarian response plan for Iraq and the Mosul flash appeal. The members of the Council also reiterated that they would not like to see the spread of ISIL into neighbouring Syrian Arab Republic.

### **The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

On 17 January, the Council convened its quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, participated via videoconference. In his briefing, he said that divisive positions among Israelis and Palestinians following the adoption the previous month of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) risked destroying the prospects for peace, stressing that both sides had to create the conditions for launching direct final status negotiations. The Special Coordinator said that the same message had been delivered at the conference on Middle East peace held in Paris on 15 January, during which representatives of 70 countries, and others, reaffirmed their support for a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and their readiness to foster a return to the negotiation table. He said that, through those measures, the international community had called upon Israel to halt its settlement activities and to adjust its policies to align with prior agreements. Similarly, the international community had urged Palestinian leaders to condemn all acts of terrorism and to curb incitement. He said that “such steps by both sides would have a powerful and positive impact on the prospects for peace”, pointing out that, in its report of July 2016 ([S/2016/595](#)), the Middle East Quartet (the Russian Federation, the United States of America, the European Union and the United Nations) had made the same call. Amid calls for the partial or total annexation of Area C, he cautioned against unilateral actions that could prejudice a negotiated final status solution. More generally, he said that rare opportunities to advance peace must be seized. “What is required is action, first and foremost on the part of the parties themselves”, he added, pledging that the United Nations remained committed to supporting Israelis and Palestinians on the difficult road ahead.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, Riyad Mansour, described resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) as a chance to salvage the two-State solution. The text was not anti-Israel but pro-two-States and pro-peace, he emphasized, adding that it represented a turning point. “The stakes are too high – the possibility of peace in the present, but also our collective future – and must be prioritized”, he stressed. The State of Palestine was ready to abide by the resolution, bearing in mind the serious obstacles arising from the occupation. The Permanent Representative of Israel, Danny Danon, said, however, that resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) had “set us back in the pursuit of peace” by designating the presence of Israel in parts of Jerusalem liberated in 1967 as a flagrant violation under international law. The message from the Council, from Washington D.C. and now from Paris only encouraged Palestinians to continue down a dangerous path of spreading lies. “Their end game is not to create a State alongside Israel but rather to replace it completely”, he said. He also said that the conflict was not about settlements but about the refusal to accept a Jewish State, adding that Israel had suspended \$6 million from its 2017 contributions to the United Nations, which should be seen as an act of protest. Throughout the day, many speakers voiced support for resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). While prospects for a two-State solution appeared to be diminishing, many advocated it as the only path to peace. Speakers agreed that, unless reversed, the situation on the ground would lead to more hatred in the region. Several speakers urged Israel to abide by its international obligations and to resume negotiations towards a two-State solution. Some speakers condemned the violence, urging Israeli and Palestinian leaders to stop incitement, reduce tensions and restore calm. More broadly, speakers welcomed the recently announced ceasefire in the Syrian Arab Republic as a much-needed sign of hope. Speakers also hailed progress made in Lebanon with the election of a President and the formation of a Government.

On 25 January, at the request of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Council held urgent closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” in the light

of Israeli announcements of additional and new settlement units. The members of the Council were briefed by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, who participated via videoconference, on the announcement made by the Government of Israel on 22 January 2017 of the approval of building permits for 566 settlement units in East Jerusalem and on 24 January of the intention to build 2,500 settlement units across the West Bank. The members of the Council who took the floor expressed strong support for the two-State solution and emphasized the need for the parties to refrain from actions that made it more difficult to achieve peace. Developments on the ground threatened to make the two-State solution more difficult to achieve. Several Council members condemned settlements, which they considered to be illegal under international law and a major obstacle to peace. Strong concern about the most recent Israeli announcements was expressed. Several Council members reiterated their support for resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and its implementation. Some Council members also expressed strong concern about violence and incitement.

## Yemen

On 26 January, the Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the situation in Yemen, during which Council members were briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, as well as by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The Special Envoy updated the Council on the Yemeni peace process. He emphasized that the ongoing heavy fighting, tragically affecting the Yemeni people, was all the more regrettable as a viable peace proposal was within the reach of the parties to the conflict. He urged both sides to demonstrate the political courage needed to stop the nearly two-year-long war. He spoke about the plans and proposals to achieve a renewed, durable, cessation of hostilities agreement, noting that his Office had completed preparations for a five-day planning meeting to develop a joint implementation plan. He recalled that, at the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs held in Riyadh on 18 December 2016, participants had called for the parties to work urgently with him on the basis of his proposals. Those proposals were based on the outcomes of meetings in Kuwait, and were consistent with both the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Council resolution [2216 \(2015\)](#), offering a path back to an orderly transition, in line with the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference.

The Under-Secretary-General informed the Council that 18.8 million people – two thirds of the population – required humanitarian and protection assistance and that 2 million were internally displaced. People were perishing from hunger, and restricted access had kept much needed assistance from reaching them. He said that the conflict was now the primary driver of the world's largest food-security emergency, adding that timely and unimpeded access to those in need was an obligation under international humanitarian law. He asked the Council to call for an immediate ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and to use its influence over the parties to ensure that they respected international humanitarian law and provided access to civilian populations. He also asked the Council to hold the parties accountable for breaching their obligations to protect civilians, to facilitate increased importation of essential supplies, to demand the resumption of commercial flights to Sana'a and to facilitate lines of credit that would enable traders and Yemenis to purchase food.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Yemen, Khaled Hussein Mohamed Alyemany, expressed readiness to work with the Secretary-General in seeking a solution to the conflict. He said that, for its part, Yemen was committed to peace and did not support efforts to legitimize

the coup. He recalled that Sana'a had accepted, in December 2016, the plan put forward by the Special Envoy to convene a workshop on the De-escalation and Coordination Committee, while the coup leaders had rejected it.

During closed consultations, Council members deplored the dire humanitarian situation and stressed the need for a durable ceasefire as well as for increased humanitarian access. They reiterated their support for the Special Envoy and the United Nations-led process to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict. At the end of the meeting, the Council members agreed on elements for the press, which were conveyed to the press following the adjournment of the meeting.

## **Africa**

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

On 4 January, the Council adopted a presidential statement ([S/PRST/2017/1](#)) on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which it welcomed the signing of the “comprehensive and inclusive political agreement” in Kinshasa on 31 December 2016 and commended the efforts of the mediators of the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their facilitation of the agreement. The Council expressed its hope for a swift implementation of the agreement, in order to organize peaceful, credible, inclusive and timely elections no later than December 2017, leading to a peaceful transfer of power. The Council further stressed the importance of including women in implementing and following up on the agreement.

On 11 January, the Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, briefed the Council on the basis of the most recent report of the Secretary-General ([S/2016/1130](#)). He updated the Council on the political and security developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and stressed that no effort should be spared in ensuring that all stakeholders committed to the “comprehensive and inclusive political agreement” and to its implementation. He encouraged the Council to call upon Congolese political actors to swiftly endorse and agree on implementation arrangements for the agreement of 31 December, and to put in place a transitional Government of national unity. He said that a failure to do so would risk delaying the holding of elections and greatly increase the risk of a renewed political crisis and increased violence across the country. Regional and international actors needed to maintain strong support for the implementation of the agreement and the holding of elections as soon as feasible. He stressed that political, financial, technical and logistical support would be needed on a large scale.

The Under-Secretary-General also expressed deep concern about reports of human rights violations and acts of violence in Kinshasa and other cities across the country on 19 and 20 December 2016 and asked that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo be encouraged to fully investigate the events. The security situation in the east of the country remained volatile. Foreign armed groups, namely, the Allied Democratic Forces and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, still posed a threat. Moreover, activities of armed militia groups were increasing. Such violence was driven in part by the escalation of deep-rooted and long-standing conflicts between ethnic communities. Spillover effects of instability in neighbouring countries, notably Burundi and South Sudan, contributed to the insecurity.

Turning to the activities of MONUSCO, the Under-Secretary-General said that the Mission continued its support of the Congolese national security forces and their

efforts to counter the destabilizing activities of armed groups. He noted, however, that many of the issues facing the east of the country could only be resolved through meaningful political engagement by authorities at the national and provincial levels. He promised to revert to the Council quickly with recommendations on how best to adjust MONUSCO to the prevailing security and political situation and on the timely implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016, within its existing mandate.

Under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure, the President of the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Monsignor Marcel Utembi, participated in the meeting via videoconference from Kinshasa. He called upon stakeholders to support the comprehensive implementation of the agreement, in particular in relation to the holding of elections in 2017. He explained that the parties to the agreement had called upon the international community to assist the Independent National Electoral Commission by providing support to ensure a smooth electoral process. The political commitments provided, *inter alia*, for the establishment of a national council for overseeing the agreement, as well as for the establishment of a Government of national unity. He said that it was critical that such bodies were set up as soon as the agreed timetable had been implemented.

Monsignor Utembi asked MONUSCO to support the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in strengthening its intervention capacity and in maintaining peace in the country. He also asked the Government and the international community to take appropriate confidence-building measures, while respecting human rights, so as to ease social and political tensions.

Under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ignace Gata Mavita Wa Lufuta, took the floor. He described the events leading up to the signing of the political agreement on 31 December 2016 and said that the agreement marked an important step for the Democratic Republic of the Congo towards consensus on the organization of the elections and the management of the transition of the country in a calm climate. He said that, in order to facilitate the implementation of the agreement, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had renewed his confidence in the Episcopal Conference and had asked it to continue consultations with the political class as a whole to define the practical modalities for the implementation of the agreement. With regard to the elections, the President had, in his address to the nation on 31 December 2016, expressed his determination to continue the process already under way for the organization of timely elections without delay, in accordance with the timetable to be set by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

Turning to the security situation, the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo explained that, despite the resumed collaboration between the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO, it seemed that the results were not what had been hoped for. He asked the Council to take all measures deemed necessary to evacuate fighters from South Sudan from Congolese territory. He said that it was necessary that neighbouring countries adopted policies that encouraged the return of nationals living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in order to reduce tension in the eastern part of the country.

During closed consultations, Council members commended the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the opposition and other stakeholders on their continued efforts to reach consensus on a peaceful electoral process and encouraged further signatures to the agreement. National ownership and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were stressed. They also reiterated their call upon all involved stakeholders to continue to work in the spirit of

compromise and good faith to achieve a swift implementation of the agreement, in particular by agreeing without delay on a timetable for the elections, and for the formation of the Government and the national follow-up committee on the agreement, also bearing in mind the importance of the participation of women and that all parties should do their utmost to deter further use of force and violence. They further reiterated their readiness to support the implementation of the agreement and stressed that the role of MONUSCO in this regard would be important. The role of MONUSCO and the challenges that it faced in the east of the country were also raised. At the end of consultations, elements for the press were agreed.

### **Central African Republic**

On 4 and 6 January, the Council issued statements to the press in which it condemned in the strongest terms the attacks against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, during which one peacekeeper from Bangladesh and two peacekeepers from Morocco had been killed. The Council underlined that attacks targeting peacekeepers might constitute a war crime and reminded all parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law.

On 27 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2339 \(2017\)](#), in which it decided to extend the arms embargo, asset freeze and travel ban on the Central African Republic until 31 January 2018 and renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. For the first time, involvement in planning, directing or committing acts involving sexual and gender-based violence was distinguished as a separate listing criterion.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic welcomed the adoption of resolution [2339 \(2017\)](#), including the Council's decision to distinguish involvement in sexual violence as a separate listing criterion. She stated that calls for the lifting of the embargo reflected a lack of understanding of the uncontrolled circulation of weapons in the Central African Republic.

### **Sudan and South Sudan (Darfur)**

On 12 January, the Council held a briefing on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), followed by an informal interactive dialogue on the situation in Darfur with the former President of South Africa and Chair of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel concerning negotiations for the cessation of hostilities, Thabo Mbeki.

In his briefing to the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations outlined the contents of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on UNAMID ([S/2016/1109](#)), highlighting a marked decrease in violence as a result of the recent military successes of the Government of the Sudan against armed movements and efforts to curb intercommunal violence. He said, however, that civilians remained under threat and the situation had been further exacerbated by the widespread proliferation of weapons and the inadequacy of rule of law and justice institutions. Despite efforts by UNAMID, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and other stakeholders, political progress remained stalled owing to persistent disagreements between the parties, in particular on the modalities for the disclosure of armed movement locations in Darfur, the release of prisoners, and the role of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in future negotiations. He also recalled that the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid still remained outside the peace process and had rejected talks with the Government. Tensions between various communities continued to centre on access to land, water and other natural resources,

and were exacerbated by the proliferation of arms, continued impunity for acts of intercommunal violence and ongoing skirmishes between farmers and livestock herders.

He said that UNAMID continued to provide physical protection through military and police patrols to prevent, deter and respond to threats of violence against civilians, focusing on large areas of displacement. Some progress was said to have been made in the Operation's relations with the Government, including the clearance of food shipments at Port Sudan and the granting of visa requests for some UNAMID personnel. At the Council's request, the United Nations and the African Union had held discussions with the Government on the implementation of the Operation's benchmarks and exit strategy.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, Omer Dahab Fadl Mohamed, reiterated his country's commitment to achieving lasting peace in Darfur and pointed to constant improvements in its security and humanitarian situation, which had been confirmed in reports and by official visits, noting also the return of some internally displaced persons. He requested that Abdul Wahid al-Nur be added to the sanctions list. While the efforts of UNAMID were acknowledged, a request was also made for its gradual disengagement and progressive withdrawal in the light of the improved situation.

In the informal interactive dialogue that followed, the Chair of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, in a similar manner, described a stalled political process owing to persistent disagreements between the parties and a reluctance to make concessions. The Government's position was unchanged in regard to reopening the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. He said that he was engaging with the parties to find a constructive solution. As to the national dialogue, he said that it had reached a number of positive conclusions that, if implemented, would contribute to addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. He said, however, that the process had not been inclusive enough and that it remained critical to include groups that had not participated in the dialogue. Meanwhile, the risk of violence and criminality remained high across Darfur, not least owing to the high proliferation of weapons.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations added to his briefing that it had not been possible to carry out a joint African Union-United Nations strategic review because visas had not been issued. Differences on the relationship between the review and the work of the joint working group were cited as the main point of contention.

Most Council members recognized the overall improvement in the security situation, while several also stressed that insecurity remained in the absence of measures to address the root causes of the conflict. Some members noted the efforts by the Government to advance the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Several members agreed with Mr. Mbeki that the national dialogue had not been inclusive enough. As to the strategic review, several members said that it would be needed for the Council to be able to make significant changes to the mandate and configuration of UNAMID. The President of the Security Council was tasked with approaching the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to explore ways forward.

On 20 January, the Council held closed consultations on the quarterly report of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1591 \(2005\)](#) concerning the Sudan, regarding the work of the Committee from 28 September 2016 to 20 January 2017. The Chair briefed the Council on the activities of the Committee and noted that, on 22 December, the Panel of Experts had submitted its final report ([S/2017/22](#)) pursuant to resolution [2265 \(2016\)](#) to the Committee.

The Chair informed the Council that the Panel of Experts had not yet received visas to enter the Sudan and highlighted his efforts to facilitate the issuance of visas. Several members of the Council underscored the importance of the Panel of Experts being granted access to the Sudan. A number of delegations noted the progress that was being made and that visas would be issued in the coming days.

### **Peace and security in Africa (Lake Chad Basin region)**

On 12 January, at the request of the United States, the Council was briefed on the situation in the Lake Chad Basin region by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, and a civil society representative, Fatima Askira, from the Borno Women Development Initiative in Nigeria.

The Assistant Secretary-General confirmed that Boko Haram had shifted its tactics following the split of its leadership and confirmed the persistent threat posed by the groups despite commendable military efforts by the region. He outlined the devastating effects of the ongoing violence in the region, including destroyed lives, livestock and food stocks, paralysed local economies and the undermining of economic development, stating that only a combined and coordinated approach addressing both immediate needs and root causes of instability would help to repair the damage inflicted on communities.

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs stressed that the humanitarian situation across north-eastern Nigeria and parts of Cameroon, Chad and the Niger was worsening; 10.7 million people were in need of assistance, 2.4 million people were displaced and 5.1 million people were food insecure at crisis and emergency levels. He reported that protection needs remained dire, not least in relation to Boko Haram-related sexual violence affecting over 7,000 women and girls, many of whom continued to be treated as sympathizers of Boko Haram by their own communities and faced deep stigma. He expressed his hope that 2017 would be a turning point for people affected by the crisis, urging development actors to act decisively to expand humanitarian assistance, protection and basic services and to lay the groundwork for early recovery and reconstruction. He called upon the Council to maintain and enhance its support for national and regional action in all aspects, for the conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin that was to be held in Norway on 24 February, for development strategies to help to sustain recovery and peace and for the engagement of local organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Ms. Askira stressed that assistance programmes must have mechanisms to communicate with, and listen to, communities, be transparent, flexible and sensitive to trauma and local conflicts, and promote peaceful coexistence across communities. She also asked that peacebuilding be prioritized, especially through the engagement of young people and women.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the representative of Nigeria, Anthony Bosah, underlined that the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Government of Nigeria had made significant progress in the fight against Boko Haram. He recognized, however, that challenges affecting development in the region remained, including the shrinking of Lake Chad and the humanitarian situation. He emphasized the need for a holistic approach based on the promotion of good governance, transparency and accountability and called for determined international action to address humanitarian needs and the root causes of terrorism.

Council members, as well as the briefers, called for sustained support for national and regional security and political and humanitarian action. Council members expressed concern that Boko Haram remained a severe threat to the region and maintained the capacity to carry out targeted attacks. It was essential to address

the underlying root causes of the conflict, to enhance the capability of the countries in the region and to increase humanitarian, military and logistical support. Several Council members emphasized the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of the region. Council members also underlined the need for greater cooperation among the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations and welcomed the proposed mission to the region.

On 23 January, at the request of France, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters”, during which Council members were informed of the preparations for the mission to the Lake Chad Basin region jointly led by France, Senegal and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Council members agreed that Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria should be included in the itinerary, that security, humanitarian and development aspects would be covered, and that the African Union would be invited to participate as an observer.

### **United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel**

On 13 January, the Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel and Head of UNOWAS, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, briefed the Council on the basis of the most recent report of the Secretary-General ([S/2016/1072](#)). He noted a positive democratic development across the region, pointing to the successful holding of presidential elections in Cabo Verde and Ghana, among other places.

In the Gambia, however, a political crisis had ensued after the presidential election on 1 December 2016. After having delivered a concession speech, the outgoing President, Yahya Jammeh, had changed his mind and rejected the election results. The Special Representative reported that, from the moment that the crisis had erupted, he had worked closely with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to facilitate interactions and negotiations aimed at ensuring a peaceful transfer of power from the outgoing President to the President-elect, Adama Barrow. The Special Representative had joined an ECOWAS Heads of State mission to the Gambia on 13 December. Another high-level ECOWAS delegation had returned to Banjul the same day, to mediate and try to persuade Mr. Jammeh to respect and abide by the results of the elections.

The Special Representative also noted that, in Nigeria, more frequent attacks by Boko Haram had disrupted the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes. Going forward, he pledged to further strengthen the relationship of UNOWAS with regional and subregional partners and to contribute to the implementation of resolution [2282 \(2016\)](#), on sustaining peace.

During closed consultations, Council members continued to deliberate and engage with the Special Representative on the developments in the subregion. The discussion centred on security-related challenges, the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and the situation in the Gambia. Members of the Council expressed their support for the Special Representative and the work of UNOWAS. They further underlined the need for preventive diplomacy, measures to address the root causes of conflict, and cross-border challenges such as organized crime and terrorism. In addition, members raised questions about the implementation of recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. At the end of the meeting, elements for the press were agreed.

On 20 January, the Council adopted a presidential statement ([S/PRST/2017/2](#)) on UNOWAS, in which it welcomed the recent positive political developments in

several West African countries. The Council stressed the need to combat all forms and manifestations of terrorism, including by addressing the conditions conducive to its spread. The Council further reiterated deep concern over the dire humanitarian situation resulting from the activities of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin region, and urged Member States participating in the Multinational Joint Task Force to further enhance regional military cooperation and coordination, deny safe haven to Boko Haram, and secure the conditions necessary to enable humanitarian access. The Council commended the efforts of UNOWAS and encouraged further progress towards the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

### **Peace consolidation in West Africa (the Gambia)**

On 18 January, at the request of Senegal, the Council held closed consultations on the situation in the Gambia under the item entitled “Other matters”. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs briefed the Council on developments concerning the post-electoral crisis in the country. He reported that, despite intense diplomatic efforts, no agreement had been reached with the former President, Yahya Jammeh. He also updated Council members on the efforts of ECOWAS and countries in the region, as well as the preparations for the installation of the President-elect, Adama Barrow, which was to be carried out the following day. In the ensuing discussion among members of the Council, the need for continued strong and united messaging, during what was described as a critical and sensitive period, was emphasized. At the end of the meeting, elements for the press were agreed.

On 19 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2337 \(2017\)](#), in which it endorsed the decisions of the African Union and ECOWAS to recognize Mr. Barrow as President-elect. The Council requested that Mr. Jammeh carry out a peaceful transition of power, in accordance with the Constitution of the Gambia. After the adoption of the resolution, several Council members delivered explanations of vote. Several members expressed their view that the resolution did not imply the Council’s endorsement of possible military measures.

On 20 January, at the request of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, the Council held closed consultations on the situation in the Gambia under the item entitled “Other matters”. The Under-Secretary-General updated the Council on developments, including the efforts by the team of ECOWAS mediators, Presidents from the region and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel to urge Mr. Jammeh to step down. The team was working on a statement that outlined the conditions under which Mr. Jammeh would hand over power and leave the country. Such deliberations had included notions of guarantees of personal safety for Mr. Jammeh and his family. The Under-Secretary-General emphasized that the Council should continue to pay attention to the Gambia, as there was more to be done after a transition of power.

On 25 January, the Council held closed consultations on the situation in the Gambia in order to receive an update regarding the implementation of resolution [2337 \(2017\)](#). The Special Representative briefed the Council via videoconference and updated members on developments since the adoption of the resolution on 19 January. He said that the principle of “political means first” had guided efforts on the ground during the previous week. The peaceful resolution of the political crisis in the Gambia was described as being the result of joint African efforts and as an African solution. A joint declaration had been adopted by the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations. According to the Special Representative, the mediators in Banjul had been in constant contact with their respective headquarters during the drafting process. He said that the declaration was in line with the Constitution of the Gambia. It was of political nature and should not be seen as a legally binding document. He also emphasized that no provisions in the declaration entailed an amnesty for Mr. Jammeh.

The Special Representative went on to describe the presence of ECOWAS in the country, including the fact that the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau had 2,500 troops in the Gambia. Regarding its presence, ECOWAS had referred to a clear request from Mr. Barrow for its assistance. The duration of the deployment of the Mission to the Gambia was unclear. The Special Representative also touched upon some of the challenges awaiting the next Administration, including institutional and constitutional reform, and the need to strengthen rule of law and accountability within the security sector. In the ensuing discussion, all Council members commended the joint efforts by ECOWAS and UNOWAS.

## **Mali**

On 18 January, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Annadif Mahamat Saleh, briefed the Council on the situation in Mali on the basis of the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/1137). The Permanent Representative of Algeria, Sabri Boukadoum, was invited to brief the Council, considering that Algeria was Chair of the Agreement Monitoring Committee.

The Under-Secretary-General firmly condemned the suicide attack against the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao the same morning and pointed out that it was clearly aimed directly at derailing the peace process by undermining trust between the signatory parties and the people, and at countering recent progress in the implementation of the security arrangements of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Presenting the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali, he said that the attack in Gao also reflected the extent to which terrorist operations had become increasingly disturbing in northern and central Mali, as well as in the subregion. While the number of attacks had decreased, their level of sophistication was a source of concern. If the situation deteriorated further, there would be no peace to maintain in Mali. The only viable solution was the redeployment of the Malian Defence and Security Forces to the north and the centre of the country.

In addition, he stressed, it was imperative that armed groups put an end to their obstruction of humanitarian access, while the Government and its partners had to work more closely together to create the conditions for sustainable prosperity and growth. Stating that the peace process had reached a pivotal moment, he said that, despite some advances, too little progress had been recorded since the signing of the Agreement in May 2015. With only five months remaining until the end of the interim period, the absence of tangible results was of major concern and put the real will and commitment of the signatories to the Agreement into doubt. The year 2017 would be an important one, with regional elections and a constitutional referendum in Mali, which had to be held in an open and inclusive environment conducive to reconciliation and the election of many women. The Under-Secretary-General said that the convening of a national reconciliation conference could offer an inclusive forum to address all the root causes of the crisis. Furthermore, he reiterated that MINUSMA still faced significant capacity gaps, including a lack of helicopters and other aircraft, armoured vehicles, logistical support and protective equipment, that hindered its ability to implement its mandate.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of Mali, Abdoulaye Diop, stressed that the Government was determined to continue to defend and promote peace and that the attack in Gao must not distract the parties from their desire to move forward. He presented the achievements that had been made, including the process of constitutional reform, the appointment of the members of the interim authorities and transitional electoral colleges, the organization of local elections, the

establishment of benchmarks and the elaboration of a national strategy for the security sector. He underlined that the Government was determined to launch mixed patrols, that a specific strategy to develop regions in the north of Mali had been elaborated but was yet to be approved and that the organization of the national reconciliation conference was under way. The Minister pointed out that the Government of Mali shared the view that the security situation in the centre and north of the country remained of concern. The Government was carrying out several initiatives to contain the terrorist threat, promote coexistence and national reconciliation and address the aspirations of young people. Efforts to improve the humanitarian and human rights situation had been further enhanced.

The Permanent Representative of Algeria noted that all parties regularly stated their complete and unequivocal support for and commitment to the full implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and stressed the importance of all stakeholders, including the Security Council and the Secretariat as parties of the follow-up mechanism, to continue to show support for, and confidence in, the process. He said that, in order to respond to terrorism and transnational crime, it was vital to restore State authority across the entire territory, to strengthen the security forces of Mali and to ensure reconciliation between all Malians through nationally owned mechanisms.

During closed consultations, the members of the Council condemned the attack in Gao against the Operational Coordination Mechanism, expressed deep concern over the lack of progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, stressing that the persistent delays threatened its viability, and discussed ways of encouraging an accelerated implementation of the Agreement, including the possibility and implications of establishing a sanctions regime to increase pressure on those who obstructed its implementation or resumed hostilities. Members further urged all parties to implement their obligations under the Agreement, including through the establishment of joint patrols, interim authorities and a national reconciliation conference, reiterated their support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, commended the efforts of Algeria, and expressed their intention to continue to monitor closely the implementation of the Agreement, including through the benchmarks. Council members also expressed concern about the persistent capability gaps in MINUSMA and urged Member States and the Secretariat to examine ways to close those gaps as expeditiously as possible.

Following the meeting, the Council issued a statement to the press in which it condemned in the strongest terms the attack against the camp of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao the same day, which had caused the death of dozens of people from the Malian Defence and Security Forces, the Platform coalition of armed groups and the Coordination des mouvements et fronts patriotiques de résistance. The Council also condemned any attempt to derail the peace process and reiterated its determination to support the parties in fully implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

On 24 January, the Council issued a statement to the press in which it condemned the attack against the camp of MINUSMA in Aguelhoc on 23 January, which had caused the death of a Chadian peacekeeper, expressed concern about the security situation in Mali and further stressed the importance of MINUSMA having the capacities necessary to fulfil its mandate and promote the safety and security of the United Nations peacekeepers.

On 27 January, the Council held a private meeting with current and prospective countries contributing troops and police to MINUSMA. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Atul Khare, briefed the Member States on the current situation of the Mission in the light

of the political process and persistent capability gaps. In the ensuing discussion, Member States reiterated that MINUSMA had to be seen in the light of the overall political and security situation, in which the slow implementation of the Agreement contributed to the difficulties faced by the Mission. They stressed the need for innovative solutions to closing the capability gaps and called for a more transparent force-generation process and dialogue between the Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat.

### **South Sudan**

On 23 January, the Council held an informal interactive dialogue on the situation in South Sudan with the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and former President of Botswana, Festus Mogae, followed by closed consultations to hear a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on recent developments relating to the deployment of the regional protection force and impediments to the operations of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

The Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission described slow progress on the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. He said that the focus of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission was on keeping the Agreement relevant while the number of parties to the conflict was increasing. While he said that the announcement of a national dialogue by the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, was a welcome development, he underlined that it needed to be genuinely inclusive in order to be successful. The security situation in the capital was described as being calmer than in the past, while fighting was escalating in other parts of the country. He said that the deployment of the regional protection force remained important and would contribute to a secure environment in the capital, which would benefit the peace process. Lastly, he made a number of recommendations to the Council, including to support the national dialogue and urge all parties to denounce violence and commit to the peace process.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council and outlined the contents of the most recent update of the Secretary-General to the Council. He highlighted some mixed messages from members of the Government regarding the acceptance of the regional protection force, despite the fact that the Permanent Mission of South Sudan had reiterated the Government's acceptance. Furthermore, the practical preparations for the arrival of the force were under way, although some key issues, such as allocation of land for its base and issuing of visas, were still outstanding.

During closed consultations, members of the Council recognized the importance of a revitalized political process and noted that, in this regard, the announcement by the Secretary-General of his intention to make the situation in South Sudan one of his priorities was welcome. Most members called for improved access for UNMISS as well as for humanitarian relief efforts. Several members stressed the need for a unified Council in support of the regional efforts to improve the situation. The upcoming visit of the Secretary-General to the African Union summit was identified as an important occasion to increase cooperation.

### **Somalia**

On 27 January, the Council was briefed on the situation in Somalia by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, Michael Keating, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Francisco Caetano José Madeira, and the founder and Executive Director of the Asha Gelle Foundation and Chairperson of the Committee of Goodwill Ambassadors, Asha Gelle Dirie. The briefings were followed by closed consultations.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia stated that, despite repeated delays and instances of malpractice, the recent election of a new parliament had marked a milestone in the country's post-conflict transformation, and had set the stage for a move to a new phase in terms of sustaining peace, resolving violence and building a functioning federal State. He urged candidates in the forthcoming presidential elections to adhere to the code of conduct and to ensure that the final stage of the electoral process would be conducted according to the agreed rules. At the same time, he said that Al-Shabaab remained a significant threat to the security and stability of Somalia and that it was imperative that the incoming President and Government expeditiously agreed on a plan to strengthen the Somali national security forces.

The Head of AMISOM highlighted the fact that the Mission was working hand in hand with the Somali national security forces to provide a safe environment in which a political process could be successful. Despite logistical, financial and operational challenges, the Mission was supporting Somali operations and training, while its police units were carrying out their mandated tasks in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Kismaayo, Beledweyne, Jawhar and Cadaado. He urged the United Nations and others to provide additional support to enable AMISOM to conduct its military operations. He said that there was also a need for a comprehensive approach to security, anchored by functioning State institutions, democratic governance, humanitarian assistance and capable national security forces.

Ms. Dirie noted that women had secured 25 per cent of the seats in parliament, thereby advancing their political empowerment. Working towards the full political empowerment of women would entail mapping the distribution of parliamentary seats per clan and launching an advocacy campaign to secure the involvement of political leaders and clan elders. She said that a massive structural transformation had to have the aim of advancing women's representation and the democratization process in Somalia.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion of Somalia said that the country had made historic progress with the holding of its first national elections in decades. Going forward, the Government would partner with all stakeholders to complete the constitutional review and strengthen democratic institutions. Investment, education and jobs would be a priority to enhance security nationwide. Noting the deteriorating humanitarian situation, poised to worsen as drought conditions spread, he appealed to the Council, the donor community and the public and private sectors to address the country's need for support.

During closed consultations, all members of the Council condemned the recent terrorist attacks by Al-Shabaab. All members went on to commend the electoral process, and most members welcomed the increased representation of women and youth in parliament. Most members also expressed concern over the drought conditions present in the country and called for swift action to avoid a worsened humanitarian situation. Several members highlighted the importance of the swift formation of a Government so as to address critical issues, such as strengthening the security sector in a coordinated manner. In this regard, the upcoming conference in London was highlighted as an important occasion.

## **Western Sahara**

On 27 January, at the request of Uruguay, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” in order to review the situation concerning the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The members of the Council were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the situation in Guerguerat and on the implementation of resolution 2285 (2016), more specifically on efforts to return MINURSO to full functionality. The members of the Council who took the floor recognized the important role played by MINURSO on the ground and expressed full support for the Mission. They also welcomed ongoing efforts by the Secretariat to return MINURSO to full functionality. With regard to the situation in Guerguerat, Council members called upon the parties to de-escalate, refrain from provocations and show restraint. The need for a solution that allowed both parties to withdraw was emphasized. Some Council members also expressed support for a visit to the region by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, and, more broadly, for a resumed political process.

## **Americas**

### **Colombia**

On 11 January, the Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the United Nations Mission in Colombia. The Council heard from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, Jean Arnault. In his briefing, the Special Representative emphasized the overwhelming popular aspiration in Colombia to end one of the world’s oldest armed conflicts, and underscored the significant role to be played by the Latin American region and the broader international community.

He said that the attention and unanimous support of the Council was an important source of confidence and strength as the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace was getting under way. Briefing the Council on recent developments, he noted the adoption by the Congress of Colombia on 28 December – and its ratification by the President, Juan Manuel Santos, two days later – of an amnesty law paving the way for the release of around 4,000 prisoners while facilitating the movement of the members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP) to 26 designated zones to lay down arms. He said that the most difficult challenge so far had involved the logistics of implementing the ceasefire and agreement to lay down weapons. That was due in part to political uncertainty in the wake of a national referendum on the Agreement held on 2 October and to the large number and remote location of disarmament zones. The target for concentrating FARC combatants and militias in those zones by 1 January 2017 had been missed, and it would be difficult to meet a 30 January deadline for destroying caches of unstable ammunition countrywide. With the determination of all sides, however, it would be possible to meet the original goal of a comprehensive laying down of weapons by early June.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Colombia, María Emma Mejía Vélez, drew the Council’s attention to the recent developments, including the security deployment, construction of new zones, establishment of the Mission, resumption of the Mission’s tasks, deployment of international observers and investigation of incidents. Despite such progress, it was difficult to implement the ideas suggested in Havana, in particular the operationalization of the tripartite mechanism. It was critical to maintain the

momentum to finalize the structure of the Mission and to initiate relevant activities such as the laying down of weapons.

During closed consultations, the Council members unanimously expressed their support for the efforts made by the Special Representative and renewed their unanimous support for the special political mission and the speedy implementation of the Agreement.

## **Non-proliferation**

### **Islamic Republic of Iran**

On 18 January, the Council held a briefing on resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#). The briefing was the second since the adoption of the resolution, by which the Council endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. In his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs presented the second report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the resolution ([S/2016/1136](#)). The Head of the European Union delegation, João Vale de Almeida, briefed the Council on the work of the Joint Commission set up under the Plan of Action, and the Permanent Representative of Italy, Sebastiano Cardi, briefed the Council in his capacity as Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#).

The Under-Secretary-General reported that the overall implementation of the resolution was proceeding well and that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran was complying with its nuclear-related obligations, as evidenced in reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He also indicated that there was no information regarding activities in contravention of restrictions regarding ballistic missile activity and related technology. At the same time, he underlined that there were reports of unauthorized arms transfers and travel.

The Head of the European Union delegation added that, while progress was undeniable, implementing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action would be an ongoing task. The new Procurement Working Group that examined proposals by States seeking to engage in activities with the Islamic Republic of Iran had already reviewed and approved several submissions. Transparency had been a guiding principle during negotiations and was a cornerstone of the Plan of Action.

The Permanent Representative of Italy recalled that IAEA had submitted two quarterly reports on verification and monitoring activities between 16 July 2016 and 15 January 2017 ([S/2016/808](#) and [S/2016/983](#)). In both reports, IAEA had affirmed that the Islamic Republic of Iran had not pursued construction of its Arak heavy water research reactor on the basis of its original design. Nor had it conducted any uranium enrichment at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant.

Council members welcomed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as an example of peaceful dispute resolution and conflict prevention, which benefited the region and beyond. All participants would have to adhere to the Plan of Action to ensure its continued success. Some Council members echoed what had been included in the report of the Secretary-General regarding the need for full compliance by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran with current restrictive measures. In addition, some members asserted that the country continued to play a destabilizing role in the Middle East, including by supplying military and financial support to Hizbullah and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

On 31 January, at the request of the United States, under the item entitled “Other matters”, Council members again discussed the Islamic Republic of Iran following the launch of a medium-range ballistic missile. Some Council members considered

that the launch was inconsistent with resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and the provisions outlined in annex B thereto. However, that view was not held by all Council members.

## Europe

### **United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus**

On 20 January, the Council held a private meeting with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

On 23 January, the Council held closed consultations on the question of Cyprus and received a briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of UNFICYP, Elizabeth Spehar, and from the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Espen Barth Eide. The Special Representative presented the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus ([S/2017/20](#)), indicating that the situation along the Green Line had remained relatively stable throughout the period. The Special Adviser reported on the progress made in the ongoing negotiations, aimed at a comprehensive settlement. Council members reiterated their commitment to supporting both sides in their efforts to reach a settlement and urged all parties to maintain momentum and seize the opportunity to secure an historic agreement for a united Cyprus.

On 26 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2338 \(2017\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of UNFICYP until 31 July 2017.

### **Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council ([S/2014/136](#))**

On 31 January, at the request of Ukraine, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” on the situation in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in Ukraine. The members of the Council expressed grave concern about the dangerous deterioration of the situation and its severe impact on the local civilian population, underlined the need for strict compliance with resolution [2202 \(2015\)](#), expressed full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and called for an immediate return to a ceasefire regime.

## Thematic issues

### **Maintenance of international peace and security: conflict prevention and sustaining peace**

On 10 January, the Council held an open debate at the ministerial level on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. A summary by the President of the Council is contained in document [S/2017/105](#).

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