

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Poland will hold the presidency of the Council in May. An open debate on the Council's role in [upholding international law](#) is planned, to be chaired by the country's President Andrzej Duda, with Secretary-General António Guterres expected to brief. A ministerial-level open debate on the [protection of civilians in armed conflict](#) is also expected, with Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs Jacek Czaputowicz presiding and briefers including Guterres and Director-General of the ICRC Yves Daccord.

The Council is due to renew the mandate of UNISFA in [Abyei](#) and AMISOM in [Somalia](#), as well as renew the 2206 [South Sudan](#) sanctions regime and the mandate of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts.

Other African issues that will be considered include:

- [Burundi](#), with a focus on the political situation;
- [Guinea-Bissau](#), an update on the work of UNIOGBIS;
- [Libya](#), briefings by ICC Prosecutor, by the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, and on UNSMIL by its head;
- [Somalia](#), a briefing on UNSOM;
- [South Sudan](#), with a briefing on UNMISS and on the work of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee;
- [Sudan](#), a briefing on UNAMID; and
- [Sahel](#), a briefing on the activities of the joint

force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

The [annual briefing by force commanders](#) will be by the commanders of three peacekeeping operations in Africa: MINUSMA, UNAMID and UNMISS.

The Council will continue to follow closely the events in [Syria](#) and will receive the three monthly briefings on political and humanitarian developments and the use of chemical weapons. Also with regards to the Middle East, in addition to the monthly briefing and consultations on [Israel/Palestine](#), the Council will hear briefings on [Lebanon](#) and on the work of UNAMI in [Iraq](#).

Two European issues will be considered in May: [Kosovo](#), through the quarterly briefing, and [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), through the biannual debate.

Also in May, the Council will hold an informal meeting with the EU Political and Security Committee.

On Asia, the Council will receive a briefing on its [visiting mission to Bangladesh and Myanmar](#) and will be briefed in consultations on the work of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee.

The [annual briefing by the chairs of the three counter-terrorism subsidiary bodies](#) is also expected.

There will also likely be two Arria-formula meetings: on [children and armed conflict](#) and on the 2000 Arusha Accord on [Burundi](#).

In Hindsight: The Security Council's Interaction with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

In March, an event took place that has raised a number of questions about the relationship of the Security Council with the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Seven Security Council members requested a briefing by the High Commissioner on the human rights situation in Syria in what would have been only the second public briefing focused specifically on the human rights situation in Syria since the beginning of the country's civil war in

March 2011. Members gathered in the chamber on the afternoon of 19 March to receive the briefing, but Russia objected to holding the meeting and asked for a procedural vote on the adoption of the agenda (each formal Council meeting starts with the adoption of its agenda, but this is done by acclamation and unanticipated calls for a vote are extremely rare). The agenda failed to receive the nine positive votes needed for a procedural decision

27 April 2018
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In Hindsight: The Security Council's Interaction with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

to be adopted (Bolivia, China, Kazakhstan and Russia voted against and Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia abstained). As a result, the formal meeting was called off and High Commissioner Zeid bin Ra'ad al-Husseini briefed later that afternoon under the informal Arria format.

This was a surprising outcome because ever since the then-High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson addressed the Security Council on 16 September 1999, the Council has sought the High Commissioner's advice on multiple occasions. Robinson spoke during an open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and covered human rights violations related to several situations on the Council's agenda at the time, including Angola, East Timor and Sierra Leone.

That first meeting would not have happened without the advocacy of various actors, including several members of the Council, human rights organisations, and, most of all, Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Over the next several years, the High Commissioner (or the Deputy or Acting High Commissioner) was invited to meet with the Council either in a formal meeting or in consultations on several occasions. In 2001, the UK organised an out-of-town retreat focused on the Security Council and human rights with the participation of the High Commissioner.

While a regular feature since 1999, the practice of interacting with the top human rights official has experienced ups and downs in terms of frequency and the ease with which different meetings have been arranged. From 2006 through 2008, there was only one meeting. During that period, different Council members suggested hearing from the High Commissioner on various occasions, but they encountered considerable resistance from their counterparts and did not push the matter further. Starting in 2009, the trend changed, and invitations to the High Commissioner began to be issued several times each year, with the most to date being 17 in 2015. Most members, including those who had been quite reluctant initially, appreciated

the usefulness of receiving information and analysis from the High Commissioner, and had come to accept that an understanding of the human rights situation was relevant to reaching political settlements of the various conflicts on the Council's agenda. Each of the permanent members sought a High Commissioner's briefing at some point during this period.

In addition to the practice of regularly interacting with the High Commissioner and his or her top advisors that has been established for nearly 20 years, the Security Council highlighted the value of such briefings in the unanimously adopted resolution 2171 of 21 August 2014. In an operative paragraph, the resolution states that the Council "[r]ecognizes the important role the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights...can play in conflict prevention", adding that briefings on human rights violations play a role in contributing to early awareness of potential conflict.

Although the Council has formally recognised the usefulness of having input from and dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, accepting the value of human rights input and of interaction with the top UN human rights officials has not always been universal and occasionally needed some concerted diplomatic work. As the Council found earlier this year, the willingness to hear out this actor is not something that can be taken for granted. The history of this relationship perhaps offers some lessons learnt.

The Council as a whole took more than five years to accept the usefulness of hearing a briefing from the High Commissioner in one of its open debates. From April 1994 when the first High Commissioner, José Ayala Lasso, took office until the first briefing in September 1999, several Council members as well as UN Secretariat officials and NGOs worked to convince the reluctant Council members that this interaction would be useful to the Council in its efforts to be more effective in maintaining international peace and security.

In this context, of particular interest may be how an elected member overcame some

members' reluctance to involve the High Commissioner in Council discussions at the end of the previous decade. Austria was to hold the presidency of the Council in November 2009 when a regular debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict was scheduled. Although at that point, the practice of inviting the High Commissioner as one of the briefers in these debates had been dropped, the Austrian Permanent Representative decided to extend an invitation to then-High Commissioner Navi Pillay to brief. Through extensive prior consultations with other members of the Council, he secured their consent. When the next regular debate on the protection of civilians was to be held in July 2010, Austria conducted informal consultations with other members of the Council and again obtained their agreement. Agreeing to invite the High Commissioner to the November 2010 debate proved much easier, with Austria again acting as the lead advocate and securing consent. From that point on, inviting the High Commissioner became a regular practice, and for the next several years, the High Commissioner was always among the briefers during these debates. The open debate on the protection of civilians became a platform for the High Commissioner to brief on a number of issues considered by his or her office as most urgent in the context of international peace and security. More recently, however, the different presidencies holding this thematic open debate have chosen to focus the debates on aspects of protection other than human rights, and the High Commissioner has not been among the invited briefers.

Whether as part of an open debate or as a briefing on a single topic, there are likely to be some members of the Council who will continue to see the usefulness in receiving human rights information and engaging in a human rights discussion when seeking to mitigate or end conflict. As history has shown it will be up to these members to ensure that the long-established practice of receiving briefings from the High Commissioner continues to be an integral part of the work of the Council.

Status Update since our April Forecast

Central African Republic

On 3 April, Council members issued a press statement condemning the attack on a

temporary operating base of MINUSCA in Tagbara (prefecture of Ouaka) on the same day, by suspected anti-Balaka elements, which

resulted in one Mauritanian peacekeeper killed and 11 others injured (SC/13275). On 11 April, Council members issued a press statement

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condemning an attack on MINUSCA in Bangui the day before by armed groups, which resulted in one Rwandan peacekeeper killed and eight others injured (SC/13291). On 18 April, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui (via video teleconference) and Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed Council members in an informal interactive dialogue on their joint visit to Sudan and the CAR from 7 to 13 April. During the visit to the CAR from 10 to 13 April, Lacroix and Chergui met in Bangui with senior government officials, including President Faustin-Archange Touadéra and Prime Minister Simplicie Sarandji. They also met with members of the National Assembly, and jointly chaired with the ECCAS a meeting of the International Support Group for the CAR, which is intended to buttress international efforts to support the peace process and provide humanitarian relief.

Haiti

On 3 April, the Council held its regular debate on Haiti with a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix (S/PV.8220). He presented to the Council the main findings from the report (S/2018/241) on the latest strategic assessment of MINUJUSTH, which also included the 11 benchmarks for the exit strategy and a transition to a non-peacekeeping UN presence in Haiti. In their statements, most Council members recognised the progress made over the past several years. However, there was also an emphasis on the importance of reforming the justice sector, strengthening the rule of law, and improving human rights. On 10 April, the Council adopted resolution 2410 which extended the mandate of MINUJUSTH for another year under Chapter VII and set a timeline for the gradual drawdown of formed police units (S/PV.8226). The resolution outlined comprehensive reporting requirements regarding the implementation of the resolution including progress assessments on the drawdown and exit strategy. China and Russia abstained during the vote and voiced their concern about designation of the mission's mandate under Chapter VII noting that the situation in Haiti does not at the moment pose a threat to international peace and security.

Use of Nerve Agent

On 5 April, the Security Council met at the request of Russia to discuss developments related to the 4 March use of a nerve agent

in Salisbury, UK on Sergei Skripal, a former Russian intelligence officer who spied for the UK, and his daughter (S/PV.8224). The Council reconvened to discuss this matter on 18 April. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, provided information on the 4 March incident from the OPCW (S/PV.8237).

Mali

On 5 April, Council members issued a press statement condemning an attack against a MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok, which caused the death of two Chadian peacekeepers and injured ten others (SC/13281). The next day, Council members condemned an attack against a MINUSMA vehicle in Gao which caused the death of a Nigerian peacekeeper (SC/13283). On 11 April, the Council was briefed (S/PV.8229) by Mahamat Saleh Annadif, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of MINUSMA, who presented the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/273). The Foreign Minister of Mali, Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, also participated. On 15 April, Council members condemned an attack on a MINUSMA camp in Timbuktu the day before, which caused the death of a Burkinabe peacekeeper and injured others, including Malian civilians, MINUSMA personnel, and members of the French forces (SC/13298). On 18 April, Council members met in consultations, at the request of France, to be briefed on the latest attacks against the mission.

Great Lakes Region

On 10 April, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region Said Djinnit briefed the Council (S/PV.8227) on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region (S/2018/209). The meeting was followed by consultations. The Council issued a press statement on the same day, calling for further engagement to address the remaining challenges in implementation of the framework and stressing the importance of opening political space to enable the full and free participation of political parties, civil society, and the media (SC/13287).

Non-Proliferation (1540 Committee)

On 12 April, Chair of the 1540 Committee Sacha Sergio Llorenty Solíz (Bolivia) briefed the Council on the planned activities of the committee including the new programme of work. Solíz emphasised that reporting on the

implementation of resolution 1540 remains one of the main priorities of the committee. He said that 180 out of 193 member states have submitted their national reports and that the committee will continue to work on achieving universal reporting as soon as possible. Solíz also said that in March 2017 the committee revised its assistance template to better suit the states in developing their requests and in turn providing them with the effective assistance.

Women, Peace and Security

On 16 April, the Council held an open debate (S/PV.8234) on the Secretary-General's annual report on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (S/2018/250). The debate focused on "preventing sexual violence in conflict through empowerment, gender equality and access to justice" and was chaired by Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru). The briefers were Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed; Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten; and Razia Sultana, Senior Researcher at Kaladan Press, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Yemen

On 17 April, the Council received a briefing from the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock (S/PV.8235). The meeting was Griffiths' first briefing to the Council since becoming Special Envoy for Yemen in March. He said that he planned to put to the Council within the next two months a framework for negotiations, while raising concerns about an escalation in fighting, including over the prospect of intensive military operations against the port city of Hodeidah, which could derail political efforts. All members delivered their statements in the public chamber, and consultations that had been scheduled were not held. On 5 April, Ahmed Himmiche was reappointed the Coordinator and finance expert of the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts (S/2018/305), leaving still pending the appointment of the armed groups expert (the regional, international humanitarian law, and arms experts were appointed on 27 March (S/2018/272)). On 27 April, the Yemen Sanctions Committee met to discuss with the committee's Panel of Experts the panel's work plan for the coming year.

Status Update since our April Forecast

Liberia

On 19 April, the Council held its final briefing on Liberia following the closure of UNMIL on 30 March (S/PV.8239). A presidential statement was adopted on UNMIL's conclusion (S/PRST/2018/8). Briefings were provided by Alexander Zuev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; Deputy Ambassador Irina Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden) on behalf of the PBC; and Chid Liberty, the chief executive officer of "Liberty & Justice". On 30 March, the mandate of UNMIL ended after a nearly 15-year presence, having been established in September 2003 following 14 years of civil war. The Secretary-General submitted his final report on Liberia to the Council on 13 April (S/2018/344).

CAR-Sudan Informal Interactive Dialogue

On 18 April, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui (via video teleconference) briefed Council members in an informal interactive dialogue on their joint visit to Sudan and the CAR from 7 to 13 April. While in Sudan, Lacroix and Chergui met with Sudanese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour and with community leaders at a camp for displaced persons near El Fasher, North Darfur. They also interacted with officials from the UN, the AU, and the government regarding the work of UNAMID. (For information concerning the 10-13 April CAR part of the trip, see above, under Central African Republic.)

Colombia

On 19 April, the Council was briefed (S/PV.8238) by Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, on the Secretary-General's latest report on Colombia (S/2018/279). The briefing was followed by consultations. Óscar Naranjo, the Vice President of Colombia, participated in the meeting as well. In a press statement adopted later that day, Council members welcomed positive developments and expressed concern about continued insecurity in some of the conflict-affected areas, in particular the killings of community and social leaders (SC/13310).

Afghanistan

On 23 April, Council members issued a press statement condemning the ISIL terrorist attack on a voter registration center in Kabul that resulted in the deaths of at least 50 and injury to about 100 people (SC/13314).

Youth, Peace and Security

On 23 April, the Council held an open debate on youth, peace and security (S/PV.8241). The lead author of the progress study on youth, peace and security, Graeme Simpson, and the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, briefed. Two civil society members also provided briefings: Sophia Pierre-Antoine, a member of the Advisory Council of the World Young Women's Christian Association and a board member of the FRIDA Young Feminist Fund in Haiti, and Kessy Ekomo-Soignet, a youth activist and the Executive Director of the Organisation URU in the CAR.

Peacebuilding

On 25 April, the Security Council held a high-level briefing on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to coincide with the two day high-level General Assembly event (24-25 April) on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Secretary-General António Guterres, Secretary of State of Romania Dan Neculăescus Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui briefed (S/PV.8243). On 26 April, the Council adopted resolution 2413 that mirrored the procedural resolution that the General Assembly had negotiated for its high-level session on continuing to consider and implement the recommendations and options in the Secretary-General's 18 January report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43). A concept note was prepared by Peru for the Council meeting (S/2018/325).

Israel/Palestine

On 26 April, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov briefed at the quarterly open debate on Israel/Palestine (S/PV.8244).

Western Sahara

On 17 April, the Council met in consultations to be briefed by Special Representative for the Secretary-General and head of MINURSO Colin Stewart on the situation in Western Sahara. During consultations, members considered the Secretary-General's latest report on Western Sahara (S/2018/277). On 27 April, the Council adopted resolution 2414 renewing the mandate of MINURSO for six months.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council expects to receive the monthly briefings on political and humanitarian developments in Syria and on the use of chemical weapons.

Key Recent Developments

Triggered by a 7 April alleged chemical weapons attack on the city of Douma, in Eastern Ghouta, the Security Council's recent engagement on Syria has represented one of

the body's most divisive periods in the post-Cold War era. The attack, which reportedly killed more than 40 civilians and injured hundreds, compelled the armed group Jaish al-Islam, which had struggled to retain control

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2401 (24 February 2018) demanded that all parties cease hostilities in Syria. S/RES/2393 (19 December 2017) renewed the authorisation for cross-border and cross-line aid delivery. S/RES/2254 (18 December 2015) was on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. S/RES/2118 (27 September 2013) was on chemical weapons. Secretary-General's Report S/2018/369 (19 April 2018) was the monthly report on the humanitarian situation. Security Council Letters S/2018/333 (10 April 2018) was a letter by the Secretary-General on the need for the Council to fulfil its responsibility. S/2018/283 (28 March 2018) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8236 (17 April 2018) was a briefing by Lowcock on the humanitarian situation, particularly in Raqqa and Rukban. S/PV.8233 (14 April 2018) was a briefing by Guterres after the airstrikes launched by France, the UK and the US. S/PV.8231 (13 April 2018) was a briefing by Guterres on Syria. S/PV.8228 (11 April 2018) was the meeting at which three draft resolutions failed to be adopted, including one vetoed by Russia. S/PV.8225 (9 April 2018) was a briefing by Markram and de Mistura. S/PV.8221 (4 April 2018) was a briefing by Markram. Other S/2018/355 (14 April 2018) was a Russian draft resolution condemning the US "aggression" on Syria that failed to garner nine votes. S/2018/322 (10 April 2018) was a Russian draft resolution on the OPCW Douma investigation that failed to garner nine votes. S/2018/321 (10 April 2018) was a US draft resolution establishing UNIMI that was vetoed by Russia. S/2018/175 (10 April 2018) was a Russian draft resolution establishing UNIMI that failed to garner nine votes.

Syria

of Douma, to agree to evacuate the area and surrender it to the government.

After the alleged attack, the Council first met on 9 April. It received briefings by Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura and the Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Thomas Markram. Council divisions were clearly visible at the meeting. While most Council members expressed outrage at the alleged attack, Russia denied that it had happened and called it a provocation aimed at justifying military intervention in Syria.

The next day, the Council failed to pass three draft resolutions. Two were competing versions by Russia and the US that would have established a UN Independent Mechanism of Investigation (UNIMI) regarding the use of chemical weapons. The US draft would have established a mechanism based on the recommendations provided by the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), “based on the principles of impartiality, independence and professionalism, to identify to the greatest extent feasible, individuals, entities, groups, or governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemical weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, in Syria”. However, it was vetoed by Russia, which argued that it did not address any of the weaknesses of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism. The draft garnered 12 affirmative votes, two against (Bolivia in addition to Russia) and one abstention (China). This was the 12th veto on Syria since the beginning of the conflict.

The Russian draft had been circulated on 23 January. It would have established the UNIMI for a period of one year from the date the Council approved the terms of reference recommended by the Secretary-General, in coordination with the OPCW. It urged the UNIMI to “fully ensure a truly impartial, independent, professional and credible way to conduct its investigations on the basis of credible, verified and corroborated evidence, collected in the course of on-site visits”, and it underlined “that the Security Council will thoroughly assess the UNIMI’s conclusions”. Although Council members met twice to discuss the draft, Russia did not revise it to address any of the issues raised by other Council members before putting it in blue in early March.

The draft was not adopted because it got only six affirmative votes (Bolivia, China, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Russia). Seven Council members voted against (France, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, the UK and the US) and two abstained (Côte d’Ivoire and Kuwait). Those who did not support the draft argued that it did not empower the proposed mechanism with the responsibility to assign accountability for the use of chemical weapons (leaving such decisions instead to the Council) and because of methodological concerns that would have called into question its independence.

The third vote was on a Russian draft resolution regarding the OPCW Douma investigation. The draft substantially modified elements of a Swedish draft circulated the day before in an attempt to broker a compromise. Sweden asked to suspend the meeting and hold consultations on the draft proposed by Russia. While Sweden proposed a new version of its text, the Russian draft was put to a vote unchanged after consultations. It failed to pass given the fact that it only garnered five affirmative votes (Bolivia, China, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Russia). There were also four votes against (France, Poland, the UK and the US) and six abstentions (Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru and Sweden).

Throughout the week, concerns about the possibility of a military response to the alleged attack by the US and its allies sparked the request for two additional Council meetings. The first one took place in consultations at the request of Bolivia, supported by China and Russia, on 12 April, and the second was a briefing the next day by Secretary-General António Guterres at the request of Russia. Guterres told the Council how in his contacts with the P5 he had expressed his deep concerns about the risk that the situation could spiral out of control. He also quoted an 11 April letter that he had sent to the Council. In the letter, Guterres expressed his “deep disappointment that the Security Council was unable to agree upon a dedicated mechanism to attribute responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria”. He appealed to the Council not to give up on efforts to agree upon a dedicated, impartial, objective and independent mechanism for attributing responsibility and conveyed his readiness to support such efforts.

Later that day (13 April), the US, along with France and the UK, carried out more

than 100 airstrikes against Syrian military facilities that were reportedly involved in the storage and production of chemical weapons. Following the attack, Russia requested a briefing by the Secretary-General on 14 April. At the Saturday meeting, Guterres reminded member states of their obligation to act in line with the UN Charter and international law in general, and he urged member states to show restraint and to avoid military escalation.

A Russian draft tabled at the end of the meeting condemned the “aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic by the US and its allies in violation of international law and the UN Charter”. The draft was not adopted as it garnered only three positive votes—Bolivia, China and Russia. Four members—Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Peru—abstained and the remaining eight voted against the draft.

After these events, de Mistura undertook a series of consultations with key stakeholders with the aim of proactively ascertaining the options for a meaningful re-launch of the UN-facilitated political process. He briefed Council members informally on this process at a 21-22 April retreat with the Secretary-General in Backåkra, Sweden.

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to be critical. On 17 April, Mark Lowcock, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, briefed the Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria. Although he focused mostly on Raqqa and Rukban, he also highlighted the precarious situation of those civilians still in Eastern Ghouta and those who were evacuated to Idlib and Aleppo. In the lead-up to a 24-25 April conference in Brussels on supporting the future of Syria and the region, which was co-chaired by the EU and the UN, Lowcock emphasised the need to scale up funding to humanitarian assistance in Syria, whose appeal was less than 15 percent funded.

On the ongoing work to eliminate chemical weapons, in a 4 April briefing, Markram told the Council about the planned destruction of two stationary aboveground chemical weapons production facilities in Syria. The OPCW continues to have concerns regarding the limited cooperation of the Syrian government in addressing the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies identified in Syria’s initial declaration. After the alleged attack in Douma, an OPCW fact-finding mission deployed to Syria and was able to collect samples from two sites.

Syria

Human Rights-Related Developments

Following the alleged chemical attack in Douma on 7 April, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a statement on 9 April, "The world is sitting idly by while their use is becoming normalized in Syria". The Security Council is "paralyzed by the use of the veto", he said, adding that "[t]he world – and in particular the veto-wielding States on the Security Council – need to wake up, and wake up fast, to the irreparable damage that is being done to one of the most important planks of global arms control and prevention of human suffering".

The Commission of Inquiry on Syria released a press statement on 13 April, expressing its grave concern over the continuing reports of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and saying that as of January, the commission had reported on 34 documented incidents of the use of chemical weapons by various parties to the conflict. The statement condemned in the "strongest possible terms the use of such weapons by any party to the conflict as this is strictly prohibited under international law" and called for the perpetrators of such attacks to be identified and held accountable, stressing the need to preserve evidence and ensure no party tampers with suspected sites, objects, witnesses, or victims before independent monitors and investigators are able to access the area.

Key Issues and Options

The current level of P5 divisions raises the question whether the Council will be able to work constructively on Syria. If the current paralysis continues, those with even limited capacity to act, whether elected members, the Secretary-General or key members of the General Assembly, may be inclined to take the initiative. The Secretary-General could provide options for the consideration of the

Council or directly mobilise a mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons, which was developed in the late 1980s. Council members could also explore the idea of referring the issue to the General Assembly for action through "Uniting for Peace".

While divided on this issue for seven years now, the Council has been able to unite around key issues during that time, such as setting the agenda for a political process and authorising cross-border deliveries. As the political climate deteriorates, there is a risk of undermining these Council decisions, just as the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism was discontinued. After discussing Syria at a retreat with the Secretary-General Council members could hold a follow-up informal, unscripted and forward-looking meeting at the ambassadorial level to discuss how to increase pressure on the parties to the conflict and seek a compromise that is both realistic and acceptable to all.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The response to the 13 April airstrikes in the Council underscored the continuing divisions among members on Syria. The views expressed by Council members fell into three distinct categories. Some members (Bolivia, China, and Russia, among others) criticised the airstrikes as a violation of the sovereignty of a member state, referring to them as a violation of the UN Charter. Other Council members justified the airstrikes (Poland, and of course the P3), with at least one member characterising them as understandable

(the Netherlands) as a response to the use of chemical weapons. A third group of Council members emphasised the importance of abiding by the principles of the UN Charter and international law but did not address directly the legality of the airstrikes.

At press time, it did not seem that the P3 were planning further military action in Syria, but the polarisation in the Council reached its peak in April and is negatively affecting all the tracks of the dossier—chemical weapons, humanitarian and political. A draft resolution circulated by the P3 on 14 April includes language on all three tracks, which Council members had attempted to keep separate before. The increasingly vitriolic exchanges in the chamber between the US and the UK, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other hand, illustrate the deepening divisions. The 17 April briefing requested by Russia to focus particularly on the humanitarian situation in Raqqa and Rukban is another recent example of the political manoeuvring in the Council. Russia has repeatedly called the Council's attention to the destruction of Raqqa by the US-led coalition in its efforts to counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. It has also criticised the US for the difficulties of ensuring access to tens of thousands of civilians stranded in the Rukban camp, given its proximity to the US military base of Al-Tanf.

In Backåрка, Council members agreed on press elements on all three tracks that may become a basis for a more constructive engagement.

Kuwait and Sweden are the penholders on humanitarian issues in Syria.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council will hold its biannual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The High Representative for BiH, Valentin Inzko, will brief, presenting the latest report of the Office of the High Representative (OHR).

The current authorisation for the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA) expires on 7 November.

Key Recent Developments

General elections in BiH are expected to take place in October, with the announcement of elections anticipated in May. Ahead of the electoral season, ethnic and political divisions among Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs continue to remain a major challenge for the country. Divisive and destabilising rhetoric by prominent political figures on all sides has continued, with many political

parties seeking to consolidate power among their respective voting bases ahead of the elections. Crucial issues related to election laws and the criminal procedure code remain unresolved.

Regarding the election law, the Constitutional Court ruled in December 2016 that several provisions for electing members to the Federation House of Peoples were unconstitutional, and after the court's six-month

UN DOCUMENTS ON BIH Security Council Resolution S/RES/2384 (7 November 2017) renewed the authorisation of EUFOR ALTHEA for an additional year. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8089 (7 November 2017) was the semi-annual debate on BiH with a briefing by the High Representative. Security Council Letter S/2017/922 (1 November 2017) was the 52nd report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

deadline for the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to amend the law passed, the court removed the unconstitutional provisions in July 2017. To date, these provisions have yet to be replaced. Without them, the election of delegates to the Federation House of Peoples, which will follow the general elections in October, will be problematic. If the Federation House of Peoples cannot be constituted, the election of the new federation president and vice presidents, who are responsible for nominating the new federation government, cannot take place, and neither can the election of Bosniak and Croat delegates to the BiH House of Peoples, one of the two houses of the state-level parliament.

In the context of this impasse, the EU and the US have been facilitating talks between the political parties to seek a resolution of this issue ahead of elections. In the city of Mostar, political parties have still not implemented a Constitutional Court decision regarding the city's election law and have been unable to agree to the necessary amendments. As a result, local elections have not been held in the city since 2008.

Regarding the criminal procedure code, the Constitutional Court declared several provisions of the criminal procedure code regulating special investigative measures unconstitutional in June 2017. To date, the six-month deadline to replace these provisions has passed without any action by the BiH Parliament. The consequence of this inaction could leave the judiciary unable to rule on organised crime and corruption cases and seriously impact the rule of law.

Republika Srpska (RS) President Milorad Dodik has continued to call for the RS's independence from BiH and to advocate for its eventual secession. In November 2017, the RS National Assembly repealed its 2015 decision to hold a referendum on the jurisdiction of BiH state courts and the High Representative's authority in RS territory. However, it adopted conclusions to revisit the referendum issue in the future. At press

time, no such action had been taken.

About the upcoming elections, the EU Commission's Interim Report on BiH, published on 17 April, said: "The electoral framework remains to be urgently amended with a view to ensuring the proper organisation of the October 2018 elections and the smooth implementation of the results. In this regard all political leaders need to assume their responsibility and to find a solution with regard to the Federation House of Peoples". It also said that "adoption of legislation stemming from the Reform Agenda...was negatively affected by tensions between ruling coalition parties and obstruction by opposition parties in Parliaments at state and entity levels, leading to a slowdown of the reform pace".

On 7 November 2017, the Council held its semi-annual debate on BiH and unanimously adopted resolution 2384, renewing the authorisation of EUFOR ALTHEA for an additional year. During his Council briefing, Inzko stressed that "the parties must do whatever is necessary to ensure that the elections can take place...and that the results are implemented without undue delays".

Key Issues and Options

Political gridlock, lack of respect for the rule of law, and ethnic divisions remain key issues. With general elections anticipated this year, lack of progress on amending election laws regarding the Federation House of Peoples and the city of Mostar are likely to be of concern. Slow progress in advancing socio-economic reforms linked to BiH's EU integration and fulfilling the criteria and objectives for closing the OHR are recurring issues.

The Council is most likely to hold the debate without taking further action. It could, however, issue a statement encouraging BiH leaders to overcome narrow political interests and ethnic divisions and calling for progress on the reforms necessary ahead of the elections. The statement could also call for

meaningful progress towards implementing commitments on economic and governance reforms and the criteria for closing the OHR, known as the "5+2" agenda.

Council Dynamics

Council members largely share concerns over BiH's divisive ethnic politics and the need for parties to take the necessary steps to amend the election laws ahead of holding general elections in October. Most members are also critical of the rhetoric of RS leaders, which they view as challenging BiH's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia, however, tends to be more supportive of the positions of the RS and is critical of the High Representative, believing that his reporting is not objective and that he should focus more on encouraging intra-Bosnian dialogue and trust.

During the debate on 7 November 2017, all 15 Council members made statements. Several members, including current members Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Sweden and the UK, stressed the need for dialogue around electoral reform issues ahead of holding elections and for actors to abandon divisive rhetoric. Russia, in its statement, criticised the work and the report of the High Representative, proposed "considering the practical aspects of shutting down" the OHR and did not mention the election.

Negotiations on resolution 2384 to reauthorise EUFOR ALTHEA, adopted on 7 November 2017, proved less challenging compared to previous years. While all members support maintaining EUFOR ALTHEA, difficulties have emerged in the past with Russia over efforts to include a description of the High Representative's powers and reference to "Euro-Atlantic" integration—language that was ultimately not incorporated in previous resolutions. Attempts to include such language were not repeated in November 2017, making the negotiations more straightforward.

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council will be briefed on the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), followed by consultations. The Council is also expected to adopt a resolution renewing the 2206 South Sudan sanctions regime and the mandate of the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts, both of which expire on 31 May. Council members expect to receive the monthly report from the Secretary-General on violations of the Status of Forces Agreement or obstructions to UNMISS, as requested in resolution 2406.

The mandate of UNMISS expires on 15 March 2019.

Key Recent Developments

The situation in South Sudan remains a cause for grave concern. The country is on the brink of famine as more than seven million people (almost two-thirds of the population) could become severely food-insecure in the coming months. More than four million people are still displaced, half of whom are refugees in neighbouring countries. Human rights violations and abuses, including incidents of sexual violence, continue at alarming levels with impunity. According to the Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence, "the proliferation of militias with ready access to arms increased the rate of sexual violence, including as a driver of displacement". UNMISS documented 196 cases of conflict-related sexual violence in 2017, a decrease in reported incidents from 577 verified incidents in 2016 that was ascribed to severely restricted access to conflict zones, the report said.

According to OCHA, seven aid workers from a South Sudanese humanitarian organisation were released on 15 April after being detained for 20 days by forces from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) in Central Equatoria. The incident followed the killing of an aid worker in Bentiu, Unity state, in early April. At least 98 aid workers have been killed since the start of the conflict in December 2013.

The third phase of the South Sudan High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF), convened by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was

at press time scheduled to be held from 17-21 May, after being postponed from 2-6 May. The third phase is expected to involve the continuation of discussions around governance and security arrangements that were begun at the second phase of the forum, which took place from 5 to 16 February. At the conclusion of the second phase, the parties had divergent views on the sharing of responsibilities in the Transitional Government of National Unity, particularly in the executive, legislature and judiciary and on transitional security arrangements and the unification of forces. The first phase of the forum took place from 18 to 22 December 2017 and resulted in the signing of the 21 December 2017 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). However, fighting has continued in South Sudan since the signing of the CoHA, although at lower levels than at this time (during the dry season) in previous years.

IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan Ismail Wais and representatives of the IGAD Council of Ministers have been undertaking shuttle-diplomacy efforts to hold consultations with relevant parties and civil society leading up to the reconvening of the HLRF. On 12 April, AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat met with former First Vice-President and opposition leader Riek Machar in South Africa. Machar reportedly expressed the commitment of the SPLM-IO to participate in the HLRF.

A delegation of members of the AU Peace and Security Council conducted a mission to South Sudan from 14 to 19 April to interact with stakeholders to assess the challenges in implementing the peace process and to express support for the ongoing efforts by IGAD and the HLRF.

The Council was last briefed on South Sudan on 27 February by Wais and Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita.

Sanctions Committee-Related Developments

On 11 April, the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee was briefed on the final report of the Panel of Experts (S/2018/292). The report concluded that "given the lack of political will to implement ongoing peace efforts, and absent robust pressure from the region and the international community, the

situation in the country will continue to deteriorate, with enormous humanitarian and regional security implications". It reiterated previous recommendations for the Council to impose additional targeted sanctions and an arms embargo.

The committee also received a briefing by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, which said that violations against children had increased considerably compared to the preceding two years; that the recruitment and use of children, by all parties to the conflict, was endemic; and that children in South Sudan were being abused in a systematic and sustained manner that enabled the conflict to continue.

Key Issues and Options

An immediate issue for the Council is how to support IGAD's efforts to revitalise the political process and what consequences it should impose on those who undermine that process. In an effort to reduce the level of violence and exert leverage on the parties, Council members could seek to impose an arms embargo and further targeted sanctions.

Another issue is whether to receive strengthened and more regular updates on the human rights situation in South Sudan. An option in this context would be to invite the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide an update on the human rights situation.

Council Dynamics

While the Council has not received a briefing on South Sudan since 27 February, Council members are following the political process and are unified in supporting IGAD's efforts to revitalise the peace process. However, differences still exist over potential action the Council could take to impose consequences on those who undermine the peace process, in particular an arms embargo or further targeted sanctions, given the long-standing divide in the Council on this issue. The resolution extending UNMISS's mandate for one year, unanimously adopted on 15 March, expresses the Council's intention to "consider all measures, including an arms embargo, as appropriate, to deprive the parties of the means to continue fighting and to prevent violations" of the CoHA. Further Council consideration of these measures will likely be influenced by assessments of the extent of violations of the CoHA and the level

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2406 (15 March 2018) extended UNMISS's mandate for one year. **S/RES/2353** (24 May 2017) extended the 2206 South Sudan sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 31 May 2018. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/25** (14 December 2017) was on the situation in South Sudan, focusing on IGAD's efforts to revitalise the peace process. **Secretary-General's Reports S/2018/250** (23 March 2018) was the Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence. **S/2018/163** (28 February 2018) was the 90-day report on South Sudan. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8192** (27 February 2018) was a briefing on South Sudan. **Sanctions Committee Documents SC/13306** (18 April 2018) was a press release on the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee briefing on the final report of the Panel of Experts. **S/2018/292** (12 April 2018) was the final report of the Panel of Experts.

South Sudan

of commitment and progress made by the parties at the next round of the HLRF. Assessments as to whether the threat of an arms

embargo is sufficient in the present context will also be taken into consideration.

The US is the penholder on South Sudan.

Poland chairs the 2206 South Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Sudan/South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) prior to its 15 May expiration.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Abyei, the disputed territory along the Sudan/South Sudan border, remains relatively stable but unpredictable in the absence of progress on establishing temporary arrangements for the administration and security of Abyei pending resolution of its final status. Reports of the presence of unidentified armed groups, intercommunal violence, criminality and acts of violence near the Amiet common market continue. Humanitarian needs remain significant as a result of intercommunal tensions and a lack of basic public services.

According to the Secretary-General's most recent report, the presence and activities of UNISFA, which include facilitating access to and delivery of humanitarian aid, has contributed to the relative stability and security of Abyei. The report also concludes that both governments have made notable progress towards operationalisation of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), established in 2011 to conduct monitoring and verification activities along the Sudan-South Sudan border. The report says, "more progress has been made during the previous five months...than in the previous five years". It recommends extending UNISFA's support to the JBVMM for a further six months with any future support being contingent upon the two countries' ability and willingness to implement the outcomes of their border management discussions.

According to resolution 2386, which extended UNISFA's mandate until 15 May, UNISFA's support for the JBVMM would cease on 15 April, unless the Council decided to extend such support based on the fulfilment

of various benchmarks set out in the resolution. Negotiations on the matter took longer than expected and on 13 April, the Council adopted resolution 2411, allowing for a ten-day technical rollover of UNISFA's support to the JBVMM.

On 23 April, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2412 which extends the mission's support for the JBVMM until 15 October, and maintains the authorised troop ceiling of 4,791 until 15 October, after which the troop ceiling will decrease to 4,250, unless the Council decides to extend the mission's support to the JBVMM. The resolution also determines that both parties should demonstrate measurable progress on border demarcation and imposes six specific measures in this regard. It also requests the Secretary-General to continue to inform the Council of progress in implementing UNISFA's mandate, including reporting on any steps taken in accordance with resolution 2412 and resolution 2386, no later than 15 September. (For more details, see our *What's In Blue* story of 22 April.)

UNISFA is one of the eight peacekeeping operations that are to be subject to a comprehensive independent review initiated by the Secretary-General. The review team visited Abyei and the wider region from 5 to 19 March to assess the mission's mandate, including conditions for its successful implementation and whether there is an achievable political solution and a viable exit strategy. The Secretary-General's summary of the review team's findings will likely inform the Council's discussions on the renewal of UNISFA's mandate in May.

Council members were last briefed on UNISFA on 24 April by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom. The briefing took place in consultations and not in the

open chamber as was the case at the preceding briefing on the issue on 26 October 2017.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is to consider UNISFA's current mandate and strategic priorities as they relate to realities on the ground, including progress made by the parties on border demarcation, and what modifications to make to the mandate and force structure, if any. An option is for such assessments to be informed by the findings and recommendations of the independent review of the mission.

Another issue is whether the Council should take steps to revive the stalled political process to avoid having to extend the mission indefinitely. In considering these issues, Council members will need to reflect on how the Council can best support the AU and Haysom in advancing the dialogue between Sudan and South Sudan on the status of Abyei.

An option is for the Council to hold briefings on UNISFA and Sudan/South Sudan issues in the Council's open chamber, as was done on 26 October 2017, instead of in consultations. That would be a way to increase international attention on the status of Abyei and add pressure on Sudan and South Sudan to advance the political process.

Council Dynamics

Negotiations in April on whether to extend UNISFA's support to the JBVMM followed similar divides between the US and Ethiopia (UNISFA's primary troop-contributing country) as during negotiations in May and November of last year on the renewal of the mission's mandate and its troop ceiling. Ethiopia initially circulated a draft resolution that proposed a one-month technical rollover of UNISFA's support to the JBVMM until 15 May and welcomed "significant progress made in the implementation of the JBVMM". This proposal was

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2412 (23 April 2018) extended UNISFA's support to the JBVMM until 15 October 2018 and imposed additional benchmarks. S/RES/2411 (13 April 2018) was a technical rollover of the mission's support for the JBVMM until 23 April 2018. S/RES/2386 (15 November 2017) extended the mission's mandate for six months. **Secretary-General's Report** S/2018/293 (3 April 2018) was on Abyei. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.8078 (26 October 2017) was an open briefing on Sudan/South Sudan.

Sudan/South Sudan

unacceptable to the US, which put its own version in blue calling for a 10-day technical roll-over to allow for further negotiations.

During negotiations on resolution 2412, a major issue related to the US's proposal to reduce UNISFA's troop ceiling from 4,791 to 4,500. Ethiopia opposed this reduction arguing that the JBVMM, at initial operating capability requires 557 troops, all of whom are already deployed and on the ground. Resolution 2412 reflects this position and maintains the current authorised troop ceiling. Compromises were also reached by softening several of the benchmarks that the parties need to meet,

for example reducing the required number of additional corridors (from among the 10 identified crossings in the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone) to be opened from three to two and reducing the necessary number of meetings to be held by the Joint Border Commission and Joint Demarcation Committee.

These dynamics reflect, on the one hand, the longstanding concern of the US that UNISFA is persisting longer than intended for an interim force and that Sudan and South Sudan are taking advantage of the relative stability that UNISFA provides to delay attempts to resolve the status of Abyei and related border-security

issues. On the other hand, Ethiopia, supported by a number of other Council members, has been of the view that suspending the mission's support of the JBVMM and reducing the troop ceiling would undermine the effectiveness of the mission and that the parties have taken sufficient steps towards establishing the JBVMM to merit retaining support. This difference in perspective is likely to be reflected again in discussions around UNISFA's mandate renewal in May.

The US is the penholder on Abyei.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expected to receive briefings by the Special Representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Ghassan Salamé, and the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), followed by consultations. Also this month, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda will deliver her semi-annual briefing on recent developments concerning cases in Libya.

UNSMIL's mandate expires on 15 September, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the sanctions committee expires on 15 November.

Key Recent Developments

Deep divisions remain between the parties in Libya. Despite the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) on 17 December 2015, little progress has been achieved in establishing unified and legitimate institutions with the capacity to deliver basic services.

Salamé has been focusing on implementing a UN action plan that the Council endorsed in October 2017. This plan involves working in parallel to amend the LPA, organise a national conference, finalise a new constitution, and prepare for parliamentary and presidential elections. Briefing the Council on 21 March, Salamé shared his assessment that agreement on amendments to the LPA "have little chance

of being passed" as Libya gets closer to elections. In consultations, he emphasised the lack of political will to engage on outstanding political issues among key decision-makers in Libya. In press elements agreed to at the meeting, Council members underlined that the status quo was unsustainable and urged Libyan leaders to "engage constructively in the dialogue process in a spirit of compromise".

Despite the emphasis of Libyan stakeholders on the importance of holding elections, Salamé has repeatedly warned that before credible elections can be conducted, much work remains to be done. Of particular importance is legislation to regulate the holding of elections and a constitutional referendum. In addition to that, the commitment by the parties to accept the results is vital for their success.

Salamé has mentioned the need is to bring Libyans together around a common national narrative. In April, public consultations took place in Benghazi, Gharyan and Zuwara, the first of some thirty Libyan cities. This is part of a consultative process leading up to the holding of a national conference to be held this summer. Furthermore, reconciliation talks have taken place among municipal officials of rival towns, such as Zintan and Misrata, and Zintan and Zawiya.

The situation in the south continues to be precarious as inter-tribal tensions reinforce existing rivalries among supporters of the

Libyan National Army (LNA) and those nominally affiliated with the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord. In mid-April, Khalifa Haftar, who leads the LNA, had to be urgently hospitalised in Paris. At press time, his condition was unclear.

In order to address the multiplicity of armed actors in Libya, UNSMIL has started a broad dialogue to explore the conditions and means for their reintegration into civilian life or into state military and security institutions. Salamé is expected to present this strategy to the Council in May.

The situation of migrants and refugees in Libya continues to be critical as they continue to be arbitrarily detained in appalling conditions. According to UNHCR, in 2018, 7,540 persons have arrived to Italy by sea, and 1,342 refugees and asylum seekers have been evacuated to emergency transit locations from where their applications for refugee status are being processed by UNHCR. On 19 March, Italy impounded an NGO-operated migrant-rescue boat and detained its crew on human trafficking charges. While the ship was released on 16 April, two crew members continue to face criminal charges.

ICC-Related Developments

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, whose extradition has been sought by the ICC, has been at large since he was set free by the Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2380 (5 October 2017) renewed the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. S/RES/2376 (14 September 2017) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2018. S/RES/2362 (29 June 2017) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and the measures regarding attempts to illicitly export oil from Libya. S/RES/1970 (26 February 2011) referred the situation in Libya to the ICC. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/140** (12 February 2018) was on Libya. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8211** (21 March 2018) was a briefing by Salamé. S/PV.8091 (8 November 2017) was a briefing by Bensouda on Libya.

Libya

Brigade, a Zintan-based militia, in June 2017. In late March, a spokesperson declared that he was planning to run in the upcoming presidential elections. Former internal security chief Mohamed Khaled al-Tuhamy, allegedly responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in 2011 in Libya, remains at large as well. While the case against former Libyan intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi was found to be inadmissible before the Court in 2013, in light of domestic proceedings against him, Bensouda had expressed in the past her intention to review her office's assessment of the al-Senussi case as new information becomes available.

On 15 August 2017, Pre-Trial Chamber I issued an arrest warrant for Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al-Werfalli, a commander participating in General Khalifa Haftar's Operation Dignity in Benghazi. According to the warrant, Al-Werfalli appears to be directly responsible for the death of 33 persons in Benghazi or surrounding areas between June 2016 and July 2017, either by personally killing them or by ordering their execution. To date, Al-Werfalli has not been surrendered to the ICC in spite of reports that he turned himself in to the military police in eastern Libya after additional, extrajudicial executions became public in early 2018.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 21 March, during its 37th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue

to consider a report on the human rights situation in Libya, with particular focus on the protection of civilians, administration of justice, rule of law and transitional justice (A/HRC/37/46). The report concluded that armed groups, including those acting on behalf of the state, "continued to be primarily responsible for grave human rights violations and abuses in Libya", and that "state institutions remained weak and often were unable or, in some cases, unwilling to ensure accountability for human rights violations or abuses or to end impunity".

On 23 March, the HRC adopted without a vote resolution 37/41, which requests the High Commissioner to continue monitoring and reporting on human rights violations and abuses across Libya and to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to promote and protect human rights and prevent and ensure accountability for violations and abuses. The resolution also requests the High Commissioner to present an oral update on the situation of human rights in Libya and the implementation of the resolution at its 39th session in September and a report on the situation of human rights in Libya at its 40th session in March 2019, including on the implementation of technical assistance and capacity-building.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is how it can contribute to compelling the parties to adhere to the UN Action Plan. Generally, the Council could discuss and devise ways in which Council members could support, collectively and bilaterally, the UN-led mediation efforts in Libya. At the appropriate time, and in support of Salamé's work, they might consider a visiting mission to Libya and neighbouring

countries to engage with key stakeholders to ensure progress in the implementation of the UN action plan.

Council members could organise an informal interactive dialogue with Bensouda to focus on options for following up ICC decisions on Libya (as the ICC is not a UN entity, the prosecutor is not allowed in Council consultations under current practice).

Council and Wider Dynamics

Overall, Council members are united in their support of Salamé's mediation efforts. However, despite recent unanimous Council outcomes—including the Council's endorsement of the UN action plan and a presidential statement ahead of the 17 December 2017 anniversary of the LPA—Council members have often had different sensitivities regarding the way forward to achieve a solution.

The semi-annual briefings by Bensouda on Libya have had limited impact, given divisions among Council members on whether to take action to support the implementation of ICC decisions. Council members have often reverted to general exhortations rather than addressing non-compliance in a more forceful and effective way.

The UK is the penholder on Libya, and Sweden chairs the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee.

Peacekeeping

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council will be briefed on aspects of UN peacekeeping by three heads of military components of UN peace operations: Lieutenant General Leonard Ngondi, Force Commander of the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID); Major General Jean-Paul Deconinck, Force Commander of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); and Lieutenant General Frank Mushyo Kamanzi, Force Commander of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre

Lacroix is also expected to address the Council. No outcome is anticipated.

Background

The force commander briefings, which have been held annually since 2010, focus on the operational challenges of implementing mission mandates. On this occasion, the meeting is expected to focus on two particular issues: the need to adapt to changing security and operational environments and the implementation of Council mandates. These two issues were recently highlighted at the 28 March open debate on "Collective Action to Improve UN

Peacekeeping Operations", held at the initiative of the Netherlands.

Adapting to Changing Security and Operational Environments

In 2017, 61 peacekeepers were killed as a result of hostile acts, the highest number since 1994. As a reaction to this worrying phenomenon, the Secretariat assigned a team led by Lieutenant General (ret.) Carlos dos Santos Cruz of Brazil to write a report on improving the security of UN peacekeepers. The report concluded that a change of mindset is needed to adapt to the new contexts in which the UN flag no longer

UN DOCUMENTS ON PEACEKEEPING Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8218 (28 March 2018) was an open debate on peacekeeping, organised by the Netherlands. S/PV.7947 (23 May 2017) was the annual briefing by force commanders.

Peacekeeping

offers “natural” protection and to break from a “Chapter VI Syndrome” that leads peacekeepers to deploy without a full appreciation of security risks and the operational approach needed to address them. The report argues that a more proactive posture will contribute to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and their ability to protect civilians and their own personnel. Building on the report, the Secretariat has developed a plan of action that identifies concrete ways to improve the safety and security of UN personnel.

Force commanders are expected to raise what they perceive as the most pressing issues needed to fulfil their mandates in situations with a challenging security environment. They may be interested in weighing in during the discussion regarding the appropriate level of “robustness” for UN operations, when circumstances call for a more proactive posture and when they do not, and how force posture has an impact on the broader mandate of the mission.

The Implementation of Council Mandates

During the 28 March open debate, Secretary-General António Guterres warned about

mandate inflation and the impossibility of implementing many mandated tasks, calling on the Council to sharpen and streamline mandates. This is in line with previous reports (including the Brahimi report in 2000 and the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations) that advocated for the prioritisation and sequencing of Council mandates to make peace operations more effective. Among the issues that may be raised as needed to achieve this goal are appropriate resources, realistic expectations, prioritising tasks, aligning resources and mandates more closely, and having coordinated and coherent political strategies.

Key Issues and Options

As the Secretariat engages in efforts to reform peacekeeping, Council members could draw lessons on how it agrees on strategic objectives for these missions, designs mandates, and monitors the capacity to achieve them. This could also include a more concerted effort to receive military advice and operational information from force commanders by having them brief the Council alongside heads of missions on a case-by-case basis. As the Secretariat rolls out a

new methodology to carry out strategic reviews, including an independent element, the Council could discuss the way in which it expects to consider the conclusions of such reviews.

Council Dynamics

In past years, Council members have found the force commander briefings useful because of the substance of the discussions and the interactive format, which allows them to ask questions. The success of these sessions prompted then-Council member Australia to organise a briefing with the heads of police components of peacekeeping operations during its November 2014 presidency. Since then, a meeting with the heads of police components has also been held annually.

This year’s meeting comes at a time of considerable discussion about peacekeeping reform. During the 28 March open debate, Guterres announced a new initiative, “Action for Peacekeeping”, aimed at mobilising all stakeholders to create peacekeeping operations fit for the future. At press time, Council members are negotiating a draft presidential statement circulated by the Netherlands as a follow-up to the open debate.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In May, the Security Council will be briefed on the 60-day report of the Secretary-General on the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The mandate of UNAMID expires on 30 June.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Darfur has improved, but the causes of the conflict and their related consequences are still largely unaddressed. Human rights violations and abuses, such as sexual and gender-based violence and violations against children, continue to be perpetrated with impunity. According to the Secretary-General’s report on conflict-related sexual violence, while the rate of new displacements was lower in 2017 than in previous years and humanitarian access improved, sexual violence

in Sudan remained prevalent, with conflict-related sexual violence occurring primarily around displaced persons camps. In 2017, UNAMID documented 152 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, a decrease from 222 victims in 2016.

UNAMID continues phase two of its reconfiguration, which started on 31 January in accordance with resolution 2363 and the presidential statement adopted on 31 January. Phase two includes further reductions of UNAMID’s authorised troop and police ceilings from 11,395 to 8,735 military personnel and from 2,888 to 2,500 police personnel; it is scheduled to be completed on 30 June. In line with this, the mission is currently redeploying military and police personnel and civilian staff to strengthen Jebel Marra Task Force operations while the State Stabilization Assistance

Force covers the remaining areas. Construction of a temporary operating base in Golo is underway, following a delay in the government’s consent to transfer the land, which was granted on 28 January.

On 18 April, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui (via video teleconference) briefed Council members in an informal interactive dialogue on their joint visit to Sudan and the Central African Republic from 7 to 13 April. According to a note to correspondents, the visit was “aimed at further strengthening the important partnership between the UN and the AU”. While in Sudan, Lacroix and Chergui met with Sudanese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour and with community leaders at a camp for displaced persons near

UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2400](#) (8 February 2018) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Sudan for one year. [S/RES/2363](#) (29 June 2017) renewed UNAMID’s mandate for one year. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/4](#) (31 January 2018) was on the situation in Darfur and UNAMID’s reconfiguration. [Secretary-General’s Reports S/2018/250](#) (23 March 2018) was on conflict-related sexual violence. [S/2018/154](#) (22 February 2018) was the 60-day UNAMID report. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8202](#) (14 March 2018) was an UNAMID briefing. [Sanctions Committee Document S/2018/223](#) (14 March) was a letter appointing four of the five members of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Sudan (Darfur)

El Fasher, North Darfur. They also interacted with officials from the UN, the AU, and the government regarding the work of UNAMID.

The joint AU-UN strategic review team completed a two-week visit to Sudan on 13 April. As set out in the presidential statement adopted on 31 January, the review will consider a new mission concept with adjusted priorities, and a written report will be submitted to the Security Council by 1 June to inform discussions ahead of UNAMID's mandate expiration on 30 June.

The Council received a briefing on Darfur on 14 March from Joint Special Representative for Darfur and head of UNAMID Jeremiah Mamabolo (via video teleconference) and Ambassador Joanna Wronecka (Poland), the chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, who provided the quarterly briefing to Council members on the committee's work. Mamabolo urged the Council to ensure that adequate resources are mobilised and that they are commensurate with the pace of UNAMID's draw-down to facilitate continued stability. Wronecka continued the practice of briefing in an open format, as Ukraine did in its last briefing as chair of the committee on 7 December 2017. Prior to this, the committee's quarterly briefings to the Council had taken place in consultations for several years.

Sanctions-Related Developments

Wronecka travelled to Sudan as chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee from 15 to 19 April. This was the third visit to Sudan by a chair of the committee, following visits by previous chairs in January 2014 and May 2017. The general objective was to obtain updated first-hand accounts of the state of implementation of the measures imposed by the Security Council. The outcome of the visit will feed into the Security Council's review of the sanctions measures on Darfur (resolution 2400 expressed the Council's intention "to regularly review the measures on Darfur...in light of the evolving situation on the ground"). The visit

included meetings with various government and UN officials and with civil society actors in Khartoum, Darfur and Golo.

On 14 March, the Secretary-General appointed four of the five members of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee; its mandate expires on 12 February 2019. According to Wronecka in her 14 March Council briefing, the committee had no objections to four of the candidates proposed, but the fifth candidate (who would serve as the panel's regional expert) was placed on hold by three members of the committee. At press time, the expert was expected to be appointed shortly.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The independent expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan, Aristide Nononsi, visited Sudan from 14 to 24 April, where he met with Sudanese officials, representatives of civil society, community leaders, diplomats and members of UN agencies in Khartoum and Darfur. A focus of the trip was to see what action had been taken to reform the current legal framework, which infringes on the exercise of political and civil rights and fundamental freedoms. Nononsi will present his findings and recommendations to the Human Rights Council during its 39th session in September.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue that Council members will want to follow closely is the progress in implementing phase two of UNAMID's reconfiguration and the effect of further troop reductions on the security and human rights situations. An option in this context would be to invite the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide an update on the human rights situation.

Another issue for the Council to consider is UNAMID's current mandate and strategic priorities as they relate to realities on the ground, including progress made in addressing the root causes of the conflict, ahead of the mission's mandate renewal in June. An option is for such assessments to be informed by the findings and recommendations of the review report, which members expect to receive by 1 June.

Another key issue is to support efforts to break the ongoing impasse in the negotiations between the government and Darfuri rebel movements and implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, adopted in 2011. One option is to invite Thabo Mbeki, chair of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel, to address the Council on his efforts (Mbeki last briefed the Council in an informal interactive dialogue on 12 January 2017). Another option is for the Council to consider imposing additional targeted sanctions on those parties who continue to refuse to participate in the negotiations.

Council Dynamics

There continue to be differences amongst Council members in assessing the improvements in the overall situation in Darfur and the government's cooperation during UNAMID's reconfiguration, which has so far progressed without any major incidents. While some members seem to view more guarded recognition of progress as appropriate, other members, including Russia and Ethiopia, are generally more positive in their assessment of improvements in the situation in Darfur and steps the government of Sudan has taken to date.

At the 14 March briefing, five Council members made statements. Peru expressed concern about the human rights situation while Equatorial Guinea, Bolivia and Kazakhstan more positively assessed the situation and emphasised the need to prioritise peacebuilding efforts. All five members, which additionally included Côte d'Ivoire, stressed the need to address the root causes of the conflict and called for progress on the political front, including implementation of the Doha Document for Peace.

The UK is the penholder on Darfur; Poland chairs the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Kosovo

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expected to hold its quarterly briefing on the situation in Kosovo. The Special Representative and head of

the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Zahir Tanin, will brief on recent developments and the latest report by the Secretary-General. As on several previous

occasions, Serbia is likely to participate at a high level while Kosovo will probably be represented by its ambassador to the US.

UN DOCUMENTS ON KOSOVO Security Council Resolution S/RES/1244 (10 June 1999) authorised NATO to secure and enforce the withdrawal of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces from Kosovo and established UNMIK. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/76** (31 January 2018) was on UNMIK. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8176** (7 February 2018) was a quarterly briefing on the situation in Kosovo.

Key Recent Developments

Tensions between Belgrade and Pristina escalated on 26 March after the Kosovo police arrested Marko Đurić, Serbia's head of office for Kosovo. Đurić was attending an event in the majority-Serb town of Northern Mitrovica in northern Kosovo when Kosovo special police dispersed the crowd and made the arrest. Kosovo authorities allege they issued an advance warning to Đurić informing him that he was not granted permission to enter Kosovo. After the arrest, Đurić was transferred to Pristina and later the same day deported back to Serbia.

In protest, Srpska List, the major political party representing Kosovar Serbs, announced that it would withdraw its representatives from the government and a ruling coalition led by Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj. They also announced that they would unilaterally establish the Association/Community of Serb Municipalities (ASM/CSM) in northern Kosovo if the government did not do so by 20 April. A day before the deadline, the leaders of the Srpska List and Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić announced that they would give Kosovo authorities an additional three months to establish the ASM/CSM.

One day after the incident in Northern Mitrovica, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini travelled to Belgrade to meet Vučić. In a statement issued after the meeting, Mogherini condemned the events in Kosovo and called for restraint while noting that she and Vučić agreed to find new ways to continue resolving peacefully the open questions between Belgrade and Pristina. During her tour of the Balkans, Mogherini met Vučić again in Belgrade on 19 April. Among other issues, Mogherini emphasised the importance of implementing the existing agreement between Belgrade and Pristina including the creation of ASM/CSM.

Over the course of the past several months, there has been no notable progress in the EU-facilitated dialogue on the normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. Mogherini hosted the first high-level meeting this year between Vučić and Kosovo President Hashim Thaçi in Brussels on 23 March. Vučić and Thaçi last met in August 2017. Among the core issues discussed at the meeting was the lack of implementation on the agreement about

the creation of the ASM/CSM in northern Kosovo.

On 21 March, Kosovo's parliament ratified the agreement on border demarcation with Montenegro following an affirmative vote by 80 representatives, which was the minimum threshold of a two-thirds majority of the votes. Self-Determination, the main political opposition party, has expressed strong objections to the agreement, and its members have sought to prevent a vote on this issue on several occasions by setting off smoke bombs in the parliament. In the past, some party members were arrested for obstructing the work of the parliament. The EU sees the ratification of the agreement as one of the main preconditions for allowing Kosovo citizens to travel visa-free within the EU.

At press time, there was still no information on those responsible for the assassination of Oliver Ivanović, a prominent Serb politician from Northern Mitrovica who was killed in January. Initially, the local prosecutor's office in Mitrovica led the investigation. However, the Kosovo Special Prosecutor's Office took over the investigation in March, citing the complexity of the case. In February, Kosovo police arrested two police officers from Northern Mitrovica suspected of having manipulated the evidence in the case, but they were later released.

Earlier this year, chief prosecutor of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC), David Schwendiman, announced he would step down from the post. On 31 March, Kwai Hong Ip became acting specialist prosecutor until a new specialist prosecutor is appointed. The KSC is the special court based in The Hague that will investigate alleged war crimes committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army during the conflict in Kosovo in the late 1990s. The KSC operates under Kosovo law and is staffed by international judges.

Key Issues and Options

Considering recent tensions between Belgrade and Pristina, maintaining stability in Kosovo remains the primary concern for the Council. Related to this is what role UNMIK can play in facilitating the implementation of the existing agreements between Belgrade and Pristina.

Some Council members, especially the P3, continue to question the usefulness of the current reporting cycle and have even called

for downsizing the mission, given the relative stability in Kosovo. An option for the Council would be to consider specific proposals to this end including possibly changing the format of the meeting to consultations or to request the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of the mission to explore ways to increase its efficiency.

The Council will continue to follow closely developments related to the KSC. An issue for the Council will be the cooperation of the Kosovo government with the KSC, given that some political actors in Kosovo have publicly criticised its work. Should Kosovo hinder its cooperation with the KSC, the Council could consider issuing a statement calling on the authorities in Kosovo to adhere to its commitments to the court.

Council Dynamics

Kosovo remains a low-intensity issue for the Council that is followed closely primarily by members with a particular interest in the region. Regional organisations, including the EU, NATO and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, now play increasingly prominent roles in Kosovo.

Deep divisions among permanent members have continued on the Kosovo issue. France, the UK and the US recognise Kosovo's independence and tend to be supportive of Kosovo's government while China and Russia do not recognise its independence and strongly support Serbia's position. The P3 and some other members have become increasingly outspoken in advocating a lengthening of UNMIK's reporting cycle and thus reducing the frequency of meetings on Kosovo. The US has called for a draw-down and eventual withdrawal of UNMIK, citing the stability in Kosovo. The US has also asserted that the mission remains overstaffed and over-resourced considering its limited responsibilities and that these resources could be put to better use in more pressing situations on the Council's agenda.

Given the current emphasis on reviewing UN peacekeeping operations with the aim of reducing costs and increasing efficiency, the issue of modifying UNMIK's mandate is likely to become more prominent. Unlike most other mission mandates the UNMIK mandate is open-ended. Any attempt to change the status quo regarding UNMIK would require a new resolution, which Russia would strongly oppose and likely block.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council expects to receive the semi-annual briefing on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559. Adopted in 2004, resolution 1559 called for the disarmament of all militias and the extension of government control over all Lebanese territory.

Key Recent Developments

Parliamentary elections in Lebanon, scheduled for 6 May, will represent a significant milestone for the country, given that elections were last held in 2009. Since then, the parliament has extended its mandate and postponed elections on several occasions, citing security concerns. Lebanese citizens living abroad were allowed to cast absentee ballots for the first time at the end of April. The current government, which is led by Prime Minister Saad Hariri and President Michel Aoun, was formed in December 2016.

Lebanon continues to face immense socio-economic challenges in great part due to the ongoing crisis in Syria. Since the start of hostilities in Syria in 2011, Lebanon's economic growth rates have dropped from around 9 percent to below 2 percent annually. Lebanon currently hosts around one million registered refugees from Syria.

On 6 April, an international donor conference focused on infrastructure investments and economic development in Lebanon was held in Paris. At the conference, various donors pledged around \$11 billion, primarily in the form of loans and a small part through direct donations. On 25 April, the Second Brussels Conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region" was held. Various donors pledged \$4.4 billion for 2018, as well as made multi-year pledges of \$3.4 billion for 2019-2020. Another \$21.2 billion in loans was pledged, of which elements are on concessional terms.

On 15 March, Secretary-General António Guterres attended the Rome ministerial meeting in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the country's Internal Security Forces under the aegis of the International Support Group for Lebanon and chaired by the UN and Italy. Guterres emphasised the importance of strengthening Lebanon's institutions and extending the state's authority

over its whole territory, and in that context, he welcomed the deployment of additional LAF troops in the south. Given the ongoing turmoil in the region, Guterres stressed that Lebanon and its neighbours should avoid any actions that could lead to misunderstanding, confrontation or escalation. In his remarks at the meeting, Hariri said that Israel constitutes a main threat to his country, and he furthermore signalled that the LAF will be deploying more troops to the south.

Some of the more significant contributions at the meeting came from the EU and the UK, which pledged around \$61 million and \$13 million, respectively. France announced that it would open a credit line amounting to 400 million euros for the needs of the LAF. The Council commended the convening of the Rome conference in a press statement on 27 March.

On 22 March, UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) head of mission and force commander Major General Michael Beary presided over a tripartite meeting with senior officials from the LAF and the Israel Defense Forces. The meeting focused on UNIFIL's liaison and coordination activities in light of the ongoing construction in the areas south of the Blue Line, a border demarcation between Israel and Lebanon. Beary noted that both sides have been taking full advantage of the mission's liaison and coordination mechanisms. He also stressed the importance of the predictability of any activity along the Blue Line to avoid misunderstandings that could escalate into incidents.

When the Council renewed UNIFIL's mandate in August of last year, it called for, among other things, an accelerated deployment of the LAF into UNIFIL's area of operations. In September 2017, the LAF deployed additional troops to the southern border to preserve order and security in close coordination with UNIFIL. Since then, coordinated activities by the LAF and UNIFIL have significantly increased. According to UNIFIL's records, the joint activities between the mission and the LAF increased by 34 percent from August 2017 to March. In the same time period, there was also a 60 percent increase in UNIFIL's foot patrols.

Key Issues and Options

Among a number of issues facing Lebanon, the

most immediate concern for the Council is the weaponry held by Hezbollah and other non-state actors and the illicit flow of arms through Syria to Hezbollah, which directly hinders the ability of the government to exercise full authority over its territory.

The ongoing crisis in Syria, with Hezbollah's involvement in support of the government, has contributed to this flow of arms, which poses a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability and contravenes disarmament provisions of resolutions 1559 and 1701, the latter of which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006. The situation generates concerns about tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border, with the continuing threat of a resumption of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel.

Should hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel flare up, the Council could work to defuse tensions by issuing some form of outcome that calls for restraint by the parties. Members could also request a briefing by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that focuses on the impact that a more proactive approach by the mission to implementing its mandate would have on the security situation.

On the political front, the Council will follow closely the upcoming general elections in Lebanon, given their implications for the security situation in the country and the wider region. It could consider delivering key political messages regarding the electoral process through a presidential statement that encourages progress or expresses concern with challenges, depending on the circumstances.

Lebanon's burden in hosting close to one million refugees from Syria is also of deep concern, and in that regard, the Council could request a briefing by OCHA on how member states can enhance services to refugees.

Council Dynamics

The Council has been united in supporting Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security, as well as the country's efforts to insulate itself from the damaging effects of the Syrian conflict. The Council is also unified in its recognition of the crucial role the LAF play in responding to security challenges.

However, there are differences of view over

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2373 (30 August 2017) renewed UNIFIL's mandate for another year. S/RES/1559 (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory and free and fair presidential elections. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2016/10 (22 July 2016) stressed the importance of Lebanon's electing a president by May 2017 in order to maintain stability. Security Council Press Statements SC/13267 (27 March 2018) commended the convening of the 15 March Rome ministerial meeting in support of the LAF and Internal Security Forces and welcomed the joint statement issued at the end of the meeting. SC/13130 (19 December 2017) welcomed Hariri's return to Lebanon and his decision to continue his term.

Lebanon

security dynamics in the region and the force posture of UNIFIL. Over the past year, the US has been interested in directing the Council's attention to the threats posed by Hezbollah and Iran in the region. This dynamic was evident during the latest negotiations on UNIFIL's

renewal, during which the US expressed some criticism of the mission due to differing views of the threat posed by Hezbollah. The US has been advocating for a more proactive role for the mission in confronting the threat of Hezbollah. On the other hand, most other Council

members—including France, which is the penholder—seem to be wary of the prospect of a more proactive approach by the mission, tending to believe that this could threaten the fragile calm in southern Lebanon that has been maintained for the past ten years.

Somalia

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expected to renew its authorisation of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which expires on 31 May. The Council will also receive a briefing on the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), which will be followed by consultations. The mandate of UNSOM expires on 27 March 2019.

Key Recent Developments

On 27 March, the Council adopted resolution 2408, which renewed UNSOM with no major changes to its mandate. The resolution underscored the importance of the mission's support to the Somali government-led political process and the federal government's preparations for 2020-2021 elections. The Council also requested continued support for the government's efforts to implement the country's National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

Speaking after the adoption, Somali Permanent Representative Abukar Dahir Osman said that, while there may be nuanced differences in how Council members assessed the current situation, they were united in recognising the important role that the UN would continue to play in promoting peace and stability in his country. He said he remained deeply concerned about comments periodically made by senior UNSOM officials at conferences on political issues that are sometimes erroneous, which have negative effects in the Security Council and in Somalia.

Osman also noted that Somalia's parliament had voted earlier that month to unanimously reject the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-based Dubai Ports World agreement with the regional authority of Somaliland and

that, two years ago, the UAE signed an agreement with Somaliland regional authorities to establish a military base in Berbera without the consent of the federal government. He said the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea maintains that the establishment of a foreign military base in Berbera, involving the transfer of military materiel to the territory, would constitute a violation of the arms embargo on Somalia and asserted that these actions are in clear violation of international law, the UN Charter, and the norms of international relations and international cooperation. Therefore, he said, the federal government called for the Council to take the necessary steps, in accordance with its mandate, to maintain international peace and security, put an end to those actions, and ensure the implementation of its resolution on Somalia.

Tensions between the speaker of parliament, Mohamed Osman Jawari, and President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo resulted in a standoff at the parliament on 4 April that threatened to turn violent. Allies of the president and prime minister sought to put forward a no-confidence motion against Jawari, reflecting a longstanding dispute over the exercise of legislative and executive powers. Parliamentary police loyal to Jawari deployed inside the parliament to prevent a vote on the motion while state security forces loyal to the president were stationed outside the building. The standoff ended peacefully after AMISOM intervened to encourage the sides to engage in dialogue. On 9 April, Jawari resigned ahead of another planned no-confidence vote.

On 8 April, a day before Jawari's resignation, Somali security services seized a \$9.6

million cache of money at Mogadishu airport that had arrived from Abu Dhabi, further raising tensions with the UAE. The cash was placed in Somalia's central bank pending an investigation. The UAE asserted the money was to pay the salaries of Somali soldiers and trainees. On 16 April, the UAE announced it was ending its military training mission in Somalia.

Regarding AMISOM, on 2 March, a summit for troop-contributing countries (TCCs) to the mission was held in Kampala. In a communiqué, the TCCs urged the Security Council to reconsider the draw-down of AMISOM, restore the mission to previous levels, and stop any further reduction of troops, asserting the timeframes and troop levels outlined in resolution 2372 were not realistic and would lead to a reversal of the gains made by AMISOM. (When the Council renewed AMISOM's authorisation last August, it decided to reduce the authorised troop level by 500 uniformed personnel by the end of 2017 to a maximum level of 21,626 and to withdraw a further 1,000 personnel by 30 October 2018.)

On 19 April, the Secretary-General transmitted to the Council a report on the future funding of AMISOM, which was prepared by the AU and UN Special Envoys on AMISOM Funding, Ramtane Lamamra and Jean-Marie Guéhenno. As Special Envoys, they had been appointed to lead a consultative process and to make recommendations on the best options for predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM and the Somali security forces. The report, which has not been published, recommended that discussion on AMISOM and its funding be placed in the context of a broader international strategy for

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2408 (27 March 2018) renewed the mandate of UNSOM for an additional year. S/RES/2372 (30 August 2017) reauthorised AMISOM until 31 May 2018. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8215 (27 March 2018) was the adoption of resolution 2408, renewing UNSOM's mandate for an additional year. Security Council Press Statement SC/13277 (4 April 2018) condemned in the strongest terms the 1 April attack perpetrated by Al-Shabaab in Lower Shabelle, in which a number of AMISOM soldiers were killed and injured.

Somalia

Somalia. It reiterated that assessed contributions remains the best long-term option for sustainable and predictable funding of the mission but in the meantime, given realities, voluntary contributions should be pursued.

The armed group Al-Shabaab continues to be a potent threat, highlighted by Special Representative and head of UNSOM Michael Keating in his last Council briefing on 24 January, when he drew attention to its 14 October terrorist attack in Mogadishu that killed over 500 people, the group's deadliest attack. On 4 April, Council members issued a press statement that condemned in the strongest terms Al-Shabaab's attack of 1 April on the Ugandan contingent of AMISOM in Lower Shabelle, in which a number of soldiers were killed and injured.

Key Issues and Options

Regarding AMISOM's re-authorisation, a key issue is ensuring that the mission is equipped to adequately strengthen the Somali forces so they can progressively take the lead in providing security, as a premature handover of security responsibilities would risk undermining Somalia's security and political gains. An operational readiness report on Somali security forces conducted in December 2017 concluded that Somali forces were very limited in their capacity to take over

such responsibilities. Closely related is the need to secure predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM and Somali security institutions.

In addition to the funding report, the Somali government is developing an AMISOM transition plan; at press time, it was anticipated the plan would be presented at an EU security summit on Somalia on 2 May in Brussels. The AU and UN are also expected to complete a review of the AMISOM concept of operations soon. These reports and reviews should feed into the Council's consideration of the AMISOM re-authorisation in May. However, the comprehensive assessment report of AMISOM, requested by 15 April in resolution 2372, has been postponed until June.

One option is to extend AMISOM's authorisation for a shortened period so as to consider any substantive changes to the mission following the completion of the comprehensive assessment expected in June.

On UNSOM, the Secretary-General's first report since the Council renewed the mission's mandate is due by 1 May. An issue for the Council is how UNSOM has been able to support the Somali government. The report will likely cover issues around political and security developments, peacebuilding and state-building processes, including financial

and technical capacity challenges facing the government, relations between the federal member states and federal government, and the government's AMISOM transition plan. It may cover the humanitarian situation, where famine remains a risk.

Council Dynamics

On Somalia generally, Council members are united in supporting state-building processes and in their support for AMISOM, as demonstrated by unified messages and the uncontentious adoption of several recent Council outcomes on Somalia. Concerning AMISOM, however, some Council members have expressed more caution about the draw-down of troops than others.

The AU continues to press the Council to do more to ensure predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM. It appears that most Council members are in favour of providing some funding to AMISOM through UN assessed contributions. The US, however, is opposed to the idea—a reality acknowledged by the Secretary-General when he discussed the funding report at his monthly luncheon with the Council—which makes using assessed contributions very unlikely.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia. Kazakhstan chairs the 751/1907 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee.

Counter-Terrorism

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is scheduled to receive its annual briefing from the chairs of its counter-terrorism-related committees. The briefers will be Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), chair of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee; Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru), chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC); and Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorenty Solíz (Bolivia), chair of the 1540 Committee, which focuses on

the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Key Recent Developments

1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee

The Council unanimously adopted resolution 2368 on 20 July 2017, renewing and updating the 1267/1989/2253 sanctions regime. The updates are intended to better reflect the current and evolving threat presented by Al-Qaida and ISIL. The resolution also provides updates concerning the Office

of the Ombudsperson, including communications among the Ombudsperson, the sanctions committee and petitioners. (The Ombudsperson position has been vacant since 7 August 2017.)

The Council adopted resolution 2396 on foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and returnees on 21 December 2017. The resolution acknowledges that returning and relocating FTFs have participated in attacks in their countries of origin or third countries, including assaults on public spaces and civilian targets, and therefore present an immediate threat to

UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2396 (21 December 2017) addressed the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. S/RES/2395 (21 December 2017) renewed the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate until 31 December 2021. S/RES/2368 (20 July 2017) renewed and updated the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions regime. Through an annex to the resolution, eight individuals or organisations were added to the sanctions list. Security Council Letter S/2018/340 (12 April 2018) was the 17th programme of work of the 1540 Committee. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8230 (12 April 2018) was the annual briefing by the chair of the 1540 Committee. S/PV.8180 (13 February 2018) was a briefing by the chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee, Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru), on the implementation of resolution 2341 concerning critical infrastructure. S/PV.8059 (28 September 2017) was a briefing by Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the UNOCT; Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt); and David Scharia, CTED deputy head of the Assessment and Technical Assistance Office.

Counter-Terrorism

member states. In aiming to address this threat, it calls on states to assess and investigate suspected individuals whom they have reasonable grounds to believe are terrorists, including suspected FTFs and their accompanying spouses, children and other family members.

The 1267/1989/2253 sanctions list, which was last updated on 29 March, currently contains the names of 257 individuals and 82 entities.

1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee

On 28 September 2017, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), briefed the Council for the first time. Also briefing the Council were then-chair of the CTC, Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), and David Scharia, the deputy head of the Assessment and Technical Assistance Office of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), the Secretariat body that assists the CTC.

On 21 December 2017, the Council adopted resolution 2395, renewing the mandate of CTED as a special political mission until 31 December 2021. The resolution addresses CTED's functions within the wider UN system, including the relationship between CTED and the UNOCT. It provides a comprehensive text regarding CTED's full mandate, which now encompasses cross-cutting issues, such as FTFs and countering violent extremism. It stresses that assessing the implementation of resolution 1373 and other relevant counter-terrorism resolutions is the core function of CTED.

On 13 February, Meza-Cuadra briefed the Council on the implementation of resolution 2341 on the protection of critical infrastructure against terrorist threats.

On 9 April, Council members held an

Arria-formula meeting on Peru's initiative titled "Enhancing synergies between the United Nations and regional and subregional organisations to address the nexus between terrorism and transnational organised crime". Among the briefers were CTED Executive Director Michèle Coninsx, the executive director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Under-Secretary-General Yuri Fedotov, and Voronkov.

1540 Committee

On 12 April, Solíz held his annual Council briefing as the chair of the 1540 Committee. Solíz provided an overview of the programme of work for the upcoming year, which includes plans by the committee to hold deliberations on enforcing applicable laws for the prohibition of activities under paragraph 2 of resolution 1540. Solíz emphasised that reporting on the implementation of resolution 1540 remains one of the main priorities of the committee. He said that 180 out of 193 member states have submitted their national reports and that the committee will continue to work on achieving universal reporting as soon as possible. In addition, Solíz informed the Council that Bolivia planned to host a regional conference on the implementation of resolution 1540 for Latin American and Caribbean countries in May.

Key Issues

A key issue for the committees is to ensure that they are able to address the widening scope and various facets of the Council's counter-terrorism agenda within their respective mandates.

A particular issue for the 1267/1989/2253 Committee is to continue to strengthen member states' compliance with the sanctions regime.

A key issue for the 1540 Committee is the follow-up on implementation and reporting to the committee.

Council Dynamics

In the past, most counter-terrorism-related discussions were held in the Council's subsidiary organs, but over the last two years the Council has discussed and adopted decisions on various aspects of counter-terrorism and related issues, including updating the Al-Qaida and ISIL sanctions regime and the mandate of CTED and addressing FTFs, returnees and others.

The importance of counter-terrorism efforts enjoys overall unanimity among Council members, notwithstanding divergences over the politicisation of the issue in the Middle East. However, frictions on certain issues remain, such as divergences between Russia and other member states over the identity of the new Ombudsperson to be appointed by the Secretary-General.

That some differences remain between Council members in their approach towards counter-terrorism was also evident during the negotiations over resolutions 2395 and 2396. For example, several states, mainly the western ones, took the view with respect to FTFs and returnees that states need to distinguish between FTFs and their families in their screening process rather than automatically assume they are complicit. Furthermore, they wanted the resolution to call on states to develop comprehensive prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies to determine the most appropriate solution for FTFs and their families. However, Russia took the view that FTFs should be held criminally liable, and that family members travelling with FTFs are complicit and should, therefore, be held accountable.

Guinea-Bissau

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expecting a briefing on Guinea-Bissau. This will be an oral update from the Secretariat, which the Council requested in its 28 February resolution

extending the mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) for a year.

Key Recent Developments

Rare progress has emerged towards resolving

the two-and-a-half-year political crisis in Guinea-Bissau and starting preparations for legislative elections.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) imposed targeted

UN DOCUMENTS ON GUINEA-BISSAU Security Council Resolution S/RES/2404 (28 February 2018) extended the mandate of UNIOGBIS for one year. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8194** (28 February 2018) was the adoption of resolution 2404 and explanation of vote. **S/PV.8182** (14 February 2018) was a briefing from Touré. **Security Council Press Statement SC/13218** (21 February 2018) took note of ECOWAS's decision to sanction 19 individuals for obstructing implementation of the Conakry Agreement.

Guinea-Bissau

sanctions on 4 February on 19 individuals allied with President José Mario Vaz for obstructing implementation of the October 2016 Conakry Agreement on ending the political crisis. These included Vaz's son, Fernando Vaz; members of the Party for Social Renewal (PRS), which is the main opposition party in the National Assembly; and the dissident members of parliament from the majority African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC).

Following the imposition of the sanctions, two mediation processes were undertaken. Discussions were held between the PAIGC and PRS, reportedly facilitated by Angola, to gain agreement on names for a new consensual prime minister. Similarly, the Catholic Archbishop of Bissau brought together the two parties to discuss holding a plenary session of the National Assembly, which has not met since January 2016, so as to appoint four new members of the National Electoral Commission (CNE), whose terms had expired, and to extend the mandate of the current legislature, which was expiring on 23 April, until legislative elections could be organised.

ECOWAS, aware of these mediation efforts and an apparent agreement among the PAIGC and PRS on a new prime minister, deployed a ministerial mission to Bissau on 11 April led by Togolese Foreign Minister Robert Dussey. Three days later, on 14 April, the mission reported on developments at an extraordinary summit of ECOWAS heads of states and government in Lomé, Togo. In addition to Vaz, the National Assembly president and representatives of the PAIGC and PRS were invited. At the summit, Vaz agreed to name Aristides Gomes as prime minister and to set 18 November as the date for legislative elections. An ECOWAS communiqué announced the agreement, which also endorsed extending the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) to 30 June 2018.

On 16 April, Vaz dismissed Prime Minister Artur Silva, whom he had appointed in January, and subsequently issued decrees appointing Gomes as the new prime minister and establishing 18 November as the date for legislative elections. On 19 April, the plenary of the National Assembly convened, taking decisions to appoint the CNE President and its executive and deputy secretaries and to extend the mandate of the current legislature.

Staying abreast of these developments,

UN Secretary-General António Guterres issued a statement on 17 April to welcome the breakthroughs. Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau Modibo Touré briefed Council members in consultations under “any other business” via video teleconference on 19 April. Members issued press elements following the meeting, which expressed full support for ECOWAS's sustained efforts and underscored the importance of swiftly forming an inclusive government and taking other steps for conducting timely and credible elections and implementing the Conakry agreement.

On 25 April, Vaz issued a decree announcing a new inclusive government comprised of 18 ministers and eight secretaries of state, who were sworn in the following day.

Key Issues and Options

While there have been recent positive developments, challenges remain in carrying forward the Conakry Agreement and organising the legislative elections that will require close attention amidst what is still likely to be a difficult political situation. An immediate need is updating the voter registration, which should be done annually but has not occurred since 2014. This includes obtaining the funds required for the registration (estimated to cost \$800,000 to \$1 million) and for the overall organisation of the elections (an estimated \$7.1 million). The Guinea-Bissau government is expected to contribute \$4.5 million but may not have these resources available until after the cashew harvest. Other critical provisions of the Conakry Agreement on which progress is needed include adopting the government programme (akin to the government budget), agreeing to a stability pact, passing electoral law reforms, and conducting a constitutional review.

A further issue is progress in realigning the work of UNIOGBIS following the re-prioritisation and streamlining of its tasks during the mission's February mandate renewal in resolution 2404. A UN technical assessment mission deployed to Guinea-Bissau in March to assist with this reorganisation.

The Council, as it has done, may seek to politically support further ECOWAS initiatives. Another option in addressing some of these issues is issuing a statement at the time of the Council meeting that encourages Bissau-Guinean stakeholders to continue to implement the Conakry Agreement's provisions while encouraging donors to support

outstanding funding needs for the legislative elections.

Council and Wider Dynamics

On Guinea-Bissau, the Council tends to follow the lead of ECOWAS, seeking to support its decisions or agreements. On the ground, representatives in Bissau from ECOWAS, the AU, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, the UN and the EU—collectively referred to as the P5 in Guinea-Bissau—often act together to defuse tensions. Council members' concerns over the course of the political crisis have included the possibility that a deterioration of the situation could lead to an increase in transnational crime, such as drug trafficking and piracy, or be exploited by terrorist groups in the region. Members also commonly express concern about the risk of Guinea-Bissau's military interfering in the political situation, given the country's history.

The mandate renewal of UNIOGBIS in February this year revealed some emerging differences. The US—frustrated by the lack of any progress at the time and in line with its position to seek the drawdown of long-standing UN operations—pushed for only a six-month renewal. Other members opposed this, in part to avoid creating uncertainty about the mission's future amidst the need to support the upcoming elections. These differences, though, led to removing some of UNIOGBIS's mandated tasks and pushing up the time-frame of a proposed Secretary-General's assessment to consider a future UN presence, which will now be submitted to the Council in nine months as opposed to a year. Resolution 2404 also established a more frequent reporting cycle during 2018 in response to some members' concerns about elections taking place in a politically fragile environment. The UN's oral update in May is a result of this provision. During the negotiation, Russia sought more neutral language on how the Council referred to the ECOWAS sanctions, as it objects to sanctions not established by the Security Council, and does not view the political crisis as a threat to international peace and security that would warrant Council sanctions.

Côte d'Ivoire is the penholder on Guinea-Bissau. As a West African country, it requested the Council's April briefing following the ECOWAS summit. Equatorial Guinea chairs the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee, which was established in 2012 after the country's last coup d'état.

Rule of Law

Expected Council Action

An open debate on the maintenance of international peace and security with an emphasis on the Council's role in upholding international law within the context of peace and security is planned in May. The Secretary-General is expected to brief the Council, and Poland's president, Andrzej Duda, is expected to preside. No outcome is expected, but a note summarising the debate will be circulated to the wider membership.

Background

In recent years, rule of law and justice issues have gained prominence in Council thinking and discussions about long-term solutions. They have also influenced the design of the UN's operations in the field and are now part of mainstream Council discussion and action.

Rule of law and international justice issues have also become a focus in a number of other thematic issues in the Council—such as protection of civilians; children and armed conflict; and women, peace and security—and are referred to when the Council resorts to sanctions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

The Council held its first thematic debate on the rule of law in 2003, followed by debates in 2004, 2006, 2010 and 2012. The last open debate on the rule of law as a general issue (without focusing on any particular aspect of it) was held on 19 January 2012. In a presidential statement following the debate, the Council recognised that sustainable peacebuilding requires an integrated approach that strengthens the coherence between political, security, development, human rights and rule of law activities. It also reaffirmed its opposition to impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

On 30 January 2013, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson briefed the Council on rule of law, however the meeting was not open to participation by the wider membership and the discussion took place in consultations. On 19 February 2014, the Council held an open debate on the role of the rule of law in peacekeeping operations, chaired

by the foreign minister of Lithuania, Linas Linkevičius. The Secretary-General briefed the Council, and representatives of 64 member states, the EU and Palestine participated. Two days later, the Council adopted a presidential statement underlining the importance for peacekeeping operations and special political missions to support the strengthening of rule of law institutions in their host countries within the scope of their mandates.

Key Developments since the 2014 Debate

Several developments relating to various aspects of the rule of law have taken place in the Council since it last met to discuss the rule of law as a general issue.

On 22 May 2014, France, with the support of eight other Council members, tabled a resolution to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC. The referral was prompted by reports of widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Syrian authorities, pro-government militias, and non-state armed groups. Cosponsored by 65 states, the draft resolution was put to a vote on 22 May but was vetoed by China and Russia, with 13 votes in favour.

Further on Syria, on 21 December 2016, the General Assembly established a mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for crimes under international law committed in Syria since March 2011.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) officially closed on 31 December 2015, after delivering its final judgment on appeal on 14 December 2015. During its two decades, the ICTR sentenced 61 people to terms of up to life imprisonment, acquitted 14 and referred ten others to national jurisdictions. The Council issued a press statement on 31 December, acknowledging the ICTR's substantial contribution and calling upon all states to cooperate with the Residual Mechanism for the International Criminal Tribunals now responsible for the arrest and prosecution of the eight remaining ICTR-indicted fugitives.

The International Criminal Tribunal

for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) officially closed on 31 December 2017, after delivering its final judgement on 15 December 2017. During its existence, the ICTY concluded proceedings against 161 persons indicted, with 90 individuals sentenced, 19 acquitted, 13 referred to a national jurisdiction, 37 whose indictments were withdrawn or who are deceased, and two with retrials to be conducted by the Residual Mechanism.

Key Issues and Options

Key issues Poland hopes members will focus on during the debate include:

- enhancing the Council's efforts on the pacific settlement of disputes, including by binding legal procedures such as arbitration and adjudication, in accordance with Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Member states can encourage the Council to consider and recommend, when appropriate, that parties to a particular dispute resolve it through legal means, and in particular before the International Court of Justice;
- the Council's role in upholding international law in the context of international peace and security, particularly international humanitarian law and human rights law. Member states may highlight the Council's responsibility to overcome disagreement between its members and restore peace and security in ongoing conflicts where such violations are being committed;
- the Council's role in ensuring accountability for international crimes, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Member states may suggest that the Council consider more frequent use of the tools at its disposal, such as commissions of inquiry or referrals to the ICC; and
- compliance with the UN Charter and Security Council resolutions. Member states may emphasise that the Council has been given the unique power to authorise collective security measures under the UN Charter, and that this creates both obligations on member states wishing to act unilaterally but also an onus on the Council

UN DOCUMENTS ON RULE OF LAW Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2014/5 (21 February 2014) underlined the importance for a number of peacekeeping operations and special political missions to support the strengthening of the rule of law institutions of their host countries within the scope of their mandates. S/PRST/2012/1 (19 January 2012) was on the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security, which included a request for the Secretary-General to provide a follow-up report within 12 months. Secretary-General's Report S/2013/341 (11 June 2013) was the annual rule of law report on measuring the effectiveness of the support provided by the UN for the promotion of the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7113 (19 February 2014) was an open debate on the promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security, chaired by the foreign minister of Lithuania, Linas Linkevičius. S/PV.6913 (30 January 2013) was a briefing on the rule of law. Other S/2014/348 (22 May 2014) was the draft resolution referring Syria to the ICC, co-sponsored by 65 member states, which was vetoed by China and Russia. All other Council members voted in favour of the referral.

Rule of Law

to take the action necessary to restore international peace and security.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Poland sees the open debate, the centrepiece of its presidency, as an opportunity to reflect on some of the key issues mentioned above, with the idea of having a practical debate generating concrete ideas about how to advance

these issues. On the issue of compliance with Council resolutions, it wants to raise awareness that some states do not have the capacity to implement all Council resolutions and the ways other states can assist them.

One concern over discussing issues such as compliance with the UN Charter and international human rights is that members might focus on recent events in Syria following the

alleged chemical weapons attack in Douma in Eastern Ghouta and the airstrikes by France, the UK and the US on chemical weapons storage and production facilities in Syria at the expense of other rule of law issues. This could make it difficult to have a fruitful discussion about wider rule of law issues.

Protection of Civilians

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council will hold a ministerial-level open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Prior to the debate, it expects to receive the Secretary-General's report on this topic. Themes expected to be raised in the report—and inform the debate—include measures to enhance compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law and the protection of health care in armed conflict. Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz of Poland, the Council president this month, will chair the meeting. Briefers are expected to include Secretary-General António Guterres; Yves Daccord, the Director-General of the ICRC; and a civil society representative.

A chair's summary of the meeting that captures concrete proposals for possible Council follow-up is expected to be circulated to the Council and the wider UN membership.

Key Recent Developments

In the past year, the scope of the challenges facing civilians in a number of conflict-affected countries, including several on the Council's agenda, has remained significant. In addition to those civilians wounded or killed in conflict, statistics provided by OCHA paint a bleak picture of the humanitarian impacts of warfare. In Yemen, 22.2 million people require humanitarian assistance, including 8.4 million people who are severely food-insecure. In Syria, 13.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, 12.2 million people have been forcibly displaced by the fighting, and 6.3 million people are food-insecure. With

regard to South Sudan, 4.3 million people are now either internally displaced or refugees living in neighbouring countries, and 5.1 million people are food-insecure. In South Sudan—as in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali—UN peacekeepers continue to struggle to provide effective protection to civilian populations in complex environments.

The Security Council held its most recent open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict on 25 May 2017. This meeting focused broadly on the protection of civilians agenda, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/414), and on the implementation of resolution 2286, specifically on the protection of health care in armed conflict, which the Secretary-General is required to brief on annually. (The Secretary-General will address this issue at the debate again this month.) In addition to Council members, 48 other member states participated in the 27 May 2017 debate.

Briefers included Guterres, ICRC Vice President Christine Beerli, and Human Rights Watch's Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy Bruno Stagno Ugarte. Guterres highlighted three ways to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflict: ensuring "greater respect for international humanitarian and human rights law"; protecting health care personnel and facilities in armed conflict; and "prevent[ing] forced displacement and find[ing] durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced people". Beerli discussed the difficulties of civilian protection in urban

environments, noting that the ICRC "advocates that all parties should avoid using explosive weapons that have a wide-impact area in populated places". Stagno Ugarte recommended that "the Secretary-General commit to alerting the Council of all future attacks on health-care facilities on an ongoing, rather than an annual basis", and that the "United Nations system...prioritize the collection of information about such attacks wherever they happen, push States to hold perpetrators responsible and recommend avenues for accountability".

Since the May 2017 open debate, there have been several thematic discussions relevant to the protection agenda in the Council:

- on 13 June 2017, at the initiative of Bolivia, a meeting was held on a "Comprehensive Approach to Mine Action and Explosive Hazard Threat Mitigation", featuring briefings from the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Alexander Zuev, and Nathalie Ochoa Niño, a mine action worker from the UN Mine Action Service in Colombia;
- a meeting on conflict and hunger was convened on 23 March at the initiative of the Netherlands, which featured briefings by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock and David Beasley, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), on behalf of the Rome-based agencies WFP, the Food and Agricultural Organization, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development; and

UN DOCUMENTS ON PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2286](#) (3 May 2016) condemned attacks on health care workers and facilities in armed conflict. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/14](#) (9 August 2017) was on famine. [Secretary General's Report S/2017/414](#) (10 May 2017) was on the protection of civilians. [Security Council Letter S/2016/722](#) (18 August 2016) transmitted the Secretary-General's recommendations on the protection of health care in armed conflict. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8213](#) (23 March 2018) was a briefing on conflict and hunger. [S/PV.8069](#) (12 October 2017) was a briefing on the risk of famine in four countries – Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. [S/PV.7966](#) (13 June 2017) was on a "Comprehensive Approach to Mine Action and Explosive Hazard Threat Mitigation". [S/PV.7951](#) (25 May 2017) was a debate on the protection of civilians.

Protection of Civilians

- during the past year, there have also been Arria-formula meetings on attacks on schools (13 October 2017), particularly in relation to the protection of children in armed conflict, and unarmed approaches to the protection of civilians (30 November 2017).

Another notable meeting with regard to the protection agenda, held on 12 October 2017, was the briefing to the Council by the Secretary-General on the risk of famine in four countries—Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen—as called for by the August presidential statement on the issue.

Key Issues and Options

The overarching key issue is whether, and how, discussions about the protection of civilians at the thematic level can be translated into concrete measures to mitigate the suffering of civilians in armed conflicts around the world. In this sense, it is important for the Council to consider how the open debate can galvanise greater attention to, and support for, addressing the needs of civilians in conflict-affected countries.

One option is for member states to ensure that their statements focus on how the protection of civilians can be enhanced in country-specific contexts with regard to compliance with international law and accountability, the protection of medical facilities and personnel, and humanitarian access, among other relevant issues.

Another key issue is the need to ensure that there continues to be follow-up and engagement on protection issues in the aftermath of the debate. Capturing concrete proposals in

a chair's summary as proposed by Poland is one option.

An additional possibility could be to produce a presidential statement that:

- emphasises the importance of the Secretary-General using his article 99 powers to inform the Council and provide it with recommendations for action when large-scale attacks on civilians are anticipated or unfolding;
- calls on UN country teams to negotiate commitments from armed non-state actors to adhere to international human rights and humanitarian law;
- requests that the UN system develop a civilian casualty-tracking process to monitor violations of international law in country-specific cases of conflict;
- condemns the arbitrary refusal of humanitarian access by conflict parties; and
- requests the UN system to develop a mechanism to collect data on attacks on medical workers and facilities across conflicts in a standardised way.

A related option would be to listen to the ideas of Council members and the wider membership during the open debate and to use these ideas to help inform an outcome to be produced in the weeks after the debate.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members (and the wider membership) are acutely aware of the devastating impact that armed conflict has had on civilians in recent years, and the debate affords an opportunity to reaffirm commitments to international human rights and humanitarian law in armed conflict situations. At the same time, member states

realise that more needs to be done to translate advances at the normative level into effective country-specific strategies.

Political differences among permanent members have hindered the Council's ability to play an effective role in protecting civilians in some situations on the Council's agenda, including in Burundi, Syria, and Yemen.

There are further divisions among members regarding the Council's approach to protecting civilians. Some members, including the P3 and others, tend to advocate accountability measures and sanctions as mechanisms for leveraging compliance from conflict parties to conform with international human rights and humanitarian law, whereas other members, such as China and Russia, tend to be more circumspect about using such measures and emphasise the importance of state sovereignty.

The need to implement resolution 2286 on the protection of health care in armed conflict is an ongoing concern to several member states, both on and off of the Council. Canada and Switzerland currently co-chair an informal group of friends working to implement the resolution. Since the resolution's adoption, one challenge has been that some of the permanent members of the Council have either been involved in armed conflicts or provide military support to conflict parties in which attacks on health care have been reported.

Some members may also use the opportunity to emphasise their commitment to the Kigali principles, which were articulated in 2015 to provide guidance to peacekeepers regarding the protection of civilians.

The UK is the penholder on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

G5 Sahel Joint Force

Expected Council Action

In May, the Council is expected to receive a briefing from Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, on the activities of the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel), or FC-G5S.

Key Recent Developments

The FC-G5S was formed by the countries of the G5 Sahel—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger—in 2017, comprising up to 5,000 personnel in order to combat terrorism and drug and human trafficking in the Sahel. On 8 December 2017, the Council adopted resolution 2391, clarifying

the ways in which the international community, including the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), is expected to provide support to the FC-G5S. In particular, the resolution requested the Secretary-General to conclude a technical agreement among the UN, the EU and the G5 Sahel states for the provision

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE SAHEL [Security Council Resolutions Resolution 2391](#) (8 December 2017) outlined the ways in which MINUSMA is expected to support the G5 Sahel joint force and described how the UN will be reimbursed for its assistance. [Resolution 2359](#) (21 June 2017) welcomed the deployment of the G5 Sahel force. [Secretary-General's Report S/2018/273](#) (29 March 2018) was on the situation in Mali. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8129](#) (8 December 2017) was the meeting at which resolution 2391 was adopted. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13234](#) (2 March 2018) condemned in the strongest terms terrorist attacks earlier that day in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, against the army headquarters and the French Embassy.

G5 Sahel Joint Force

of operational and logistical support through MINUSMA to the joint force, including medical and casualty evacuation capabilities, access to life-support consumables, and engineering support. The resolution also described how the UN would be reimbursed for its assistance to the force, which is expected to be a temporary measure applying to G5 Sahel troops deployed on Malian territory. It requested a follow-up Secretary-General's report on the activities of the FC-G5S in five months, followed by reports every six months.

On 23 February, more than 60 countries and multilateral organisations attended the International High Level Conference on the Sahel, held in Brussels. The summit was organised under the auspices of the EU, the UN, the AU and the G5 Sahel countries. Donors increased their pledges for the FC-G5S to a total of 414 million euros, with the EU doubling its contribution from 50 million to 100 million euros. A communiqué by the co-chairs called for renewed support for the political efforts of the G5 Sahel countries to achieve conditions for lasting stability in the region; encouraged full implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali; and announced the conclusion of the technical agreement, signed on the margins of the summit, between the EU Commission, the UN and the G5 Sahel to provide support through MINUSMA to the joint force. The agreement, according to the Secretary-General's 29 March report on Mali, includes medical and casualty evacuation and engineering and logistical support from MINUSMA, at an estimated cost of 44 million euros over two years. The EU is contributing 10 million euros of this total through a separate financial agreement. Previously, on 8 January, G5 Sahel countries decided to create a trust fund to channel donor funds for the force.

The security situation across the Sahel remains unstable. Mali, which is the epicentre of the crisis, continues to see an intensification of violence. During the first quarter of 2018, the UN reported 63 attacks conducted by terrorist groups. Malian forces were the most heavily targeted, recording 45 soldiers killed. Among international forces, four MINUSMA peacekeepers and two soldiers from France's regional counter-terrorist Operation Barkhane were killed. In April, the trend appeared to continue, including attacks on MINUSMA camps in Timbuktu

and Aguelhok that killed three peacekeepers, while a fourth peacekeeper was killed by an attack on a UN vehicle.

Violence continued in Burkina Faso—in particular, from the Burkinabe group Ansarul Islam in the north—and in parts of Niger, where Islamic State in the Greater Saharathe Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) and Boko Haram are present. From mid- to late-January, the FC-G5S conducted Operation Pagnali along the border area between Burkina Faso and Mali, the joint force's second operation since its establishment.

On 2 March armed attacks in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, claimed by JNIM, targeted the defence headquarters and the French embassy. At least 16 people were killed, including nine assailants. The attack on the defence headquarters happened as officials from the G5 countries were to hold a meeting there that day on the FC-G5S.

Resolution 2391 welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts "to give renewed impetus" to implementing the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), first developed in 2013 to address the root causes of the region's instability and to ensure coordination of international assistance. On 21 March, the Secretary-General appointed Ibrahim Thiaw of Mauritania as his Special Adviser for the Sahel to support Mohammed Ibn Chambas, the Special Representative and head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, in advancing efforts to "recalibrate" the UNISS and a new Sahel Support Plan being developed to trigger investment and mobilise further resources.

On 25 April, a follow up high-level meeting to the Brussels conference was held in New York. Lacroix briefed that MINUSMA was prepared to provide medical evacuation and life support provisions. But the mission could not move forward with its engineering support, which is currently the most urgent activity, such as constructing camps, until more funding than the EU contribution of 10 million euros is predictably secured.

Key Issues and Options

Many of the issues related to the FC-G5S expected to be highlighted in the Secretary-General's report include:

- progress in the deployment of the FC-G5S;
- international support for the force and

possible measures to enhance efficiency of that support given the multiple channels for donors—including the EU's African Peace Facility, the G5 Trust Fund and bilateral mechanisms;

- implementation of the technical agreement on support provided by MINUSMA to the FC-G5S, an assessment of the impact on MINUSMA, which is struggling to fill its own needs, and development of benchmarks that would indicate the level of operationalisation of the FC-G5S at which MINUSMA's logistical and operational support may be gradually withdrawn; and
- challenges encountered by the joint force and possible measures for further consideration.

Steps taken to ensure that FC-G5S operations are conducted in full compliance with international humanitarian law is a related issue to be covered in the Secretary-General's report. This includes implementation by G5 Sahel states of a "compliance framework", the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN support to non-UN security forces, and ways to mitigate any adverse impact of the military operations of the FC-G5S on the civilian population, including on women and children.

Another significant issue is the importance of complementing military efforts with initiatives to address grievances of local populations and development challenges that have enabled the rise of terrorist groups in the Sahel. These include initiatives such as the UNISS and the French-German-EU Alliance for the Sahel.

Council follow-up action is likely to depend on the recommendations in the upcoming report of the Secretary-General, who has appeared keen to ensure more predictable and reliable funding for the FC-G5S. Council members may seek to adopt a resolution that would mandate a support package for the FC-G5S if the Secretary-General reiterates the options from his October 2017 report, including those that implied establishing a dedicated UN support office financed through assessed contributions.

Council Dynamics

Before agreeing on resolution 2391, discussions about whether the UN was able to support the FC-G5S divided the Council. The

G5 Sahel Joint Force

Secretary-General laid out several options to provide additional support through the UN (including mandating support packages or adjusting MINUSMA's mandate), but the US and others preferred to assist the force bilaterally and warned against increasing the responsibilities of an already over-stretched mission. While resolution 2391 established

some multilateral support for the FC-G5S, some members—including France, which has championed the joint force—believe there is still a case for providing further support. That support could be both financial and political, including through a Chapter VII Council mandate. The US still takes the position as stated by Ambassador Nikki

Haley at the adoption of resolution 2391, that its agreeing to MINUSMA's provision of logistical support is the extent of any support role that the UN should play, and before expanding this, the Council should see how the arrangement works.

France has acted as the penholder on Council products on the G5 Sahel joint force.

Burundi

Expected Council Action

In May, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Michel Kafando, is expected to brief the Council on the Secretary-General's latest report on the situation in Burundi. The chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi Configuration, Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), may also brief.

The Netherlands and Equatorial-Guinea are expected to organise an Arria-formula meeting during May to discuss the situation in Burundi further, with a particular focus on the Arusha Accord, which in 2000 put an end to civil war and ethnic violence and established the basis for the current constitution.

Key Recent Developments

The security and political situation in Burundi—which deteriorated sharply after April 2015 when Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza announced that he would run for a controversial third term later that year—remains unsettled. The Burundian government, for its part, maintains that the security situation is good throughout the country.

At the same time, serious human rights abuses continue to be committed daily with impunity, and oppression and state control over Burundian society—including the opposition and the media—remain high, exerted mainly by the government and the Imbonerakure, the youth group of Nkurunziza's party. House search operations, arbitrary arrests and other abuses have reportedly become the norm. Thus, while the security situation may not have deteriorated, many fear it is untenable and masks a serious risk of violent

escalation between the government and those that oppose it.

A referendum on amendments to the constitution is scheduled for 17 May. The amendments remove references to the Arusha Accord. They extend the presidential term from the current five years to seven years and provide that the maximum of two presidential terms is to be counted from the adoption of the amendments, thus allowing Nkurunziza to run for re-election in 2020. The amendments further provide for a possible future review of the ethnic quotas—a key element of the Arusha Accord—of 60 percent Hutu and 40 percent Tutsi in the executive branch, the parliament and the judicial branch.

On 26 February, Kafando briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's latest report. Lauber also briefed the Council. In the report, the Secretary-General expressed concern regarding the lack of inclusiveness and consensus among the key political stakeholders regarding the upcoming referendum.

During consultations following the briefing, France proposed circulating a draft presidential statement to address the current situation. About five weeks after the draft was first circulated, on 5 April, the Council adopted a presidential statement condemning all violations and abuses of human rights in Burundi. The statement supported the inter-Burundian dialogue led by the East African Community (EAC), while expressing concern over its slow progress and the lack of engagement by the Burundian government. While not mentioning the referendum explicitly, the statement called on Burundi to undertake all political initiatives through a broad

consensus of all stakeholders, which requires a political and security environment that all political actors can feel confident about. The Council expressed its expectation that the 2020 elections will be free, fair, transparent, peaceful and inclusive. Resolution 2303 of 29 July 2016, which authorised the deployment of a police component to Burundi but has not been implemented because of Burundi's opposition, is not mentioned in the statement.

On 16 April, a joint UN-AU communiqué was issued expressing concern over the decision by the government of Burundi to suspend its participation in the Inter-Burundi Dialogue led by the EAC. In a statement the following day, Burundi's ambassador to the UN, Albert Shingiro, expressed Burundi's commitment to the dialogue and said that it was in touch with the EAC facilitator of the dialogue, Benjamin Mkapa, regarding the next meeting. (Burundi cancelled a meeting planned for the end of April to allow it to focus on the referendum, according to the government.) The joint UN-AU statement has since been removed from the AU website.

Also on 17 April, several media outlets reported that Burundi's security forces and the Imbonerakure have been killing, beating and intimidating suspected opponents of Nkurunziza, in order to ensure a favourable result in the referendum.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 1 February, the president of the Human Rights Council (HRC), Vojislav Šuc, announced the appointment of Doudou Diène (Senegal) to serve as a member and new chairperson of the three person HRC-mandated Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, replacing Fatsah Ouguergouz (Algeria).

UN DOCUMENTS ON BURUNDI [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2303](#) (29 July 2016) established a UN police component in Burundi of 228 officers for an initial period of one year. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2018/7](#) (5 April 2018) condemned all violations and abuses of human rights in Burundi. [Security-General's Report S/2018/89](#) (25 January 2018) was on the situation in Burundi. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8223](#) (5 April 2018) was a meeting at which a presidential statement condemning human rights abuses in Burundi was adopted. [S/PV.8189](#) (26 February 2018) was a briefing by Special Envoy Michel Kafando on the Secretary-General's latest report on Burundi. The chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi Configuration, Ambassador Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), also briefed the Council.

Burundi

In early March, Lucy Asuagbor (Cameroon) was appointed, replacing Reine Alapini Gansou (Benin) following her election as a judge at the ICC. Françoise Hampson (UK) remains the third member of the commission.

During its 37th session, the HRC held a clustered interactive dialogue with the commission on 13 March, which noted that restrictions imposed on the media continue and that only government-organised demonstrations are allowed. The commission said it had received information and testimonies regarding harassment committed by officials against people considering voting against the proposed constitutional reforms. The commission also highlighted the increase in taxes on sugar and fuel, further burdening the population in the midst of a humanitarian emergency, in which more than three million people require assistance. Burundi, speaking as the concerned country, rejected the report, saying that it was rife with false allegations, and it accused the HRC President of trying to extend the commission's mandate to new areas that were not under its mandate. The commission will present an oral briefing at the HRC's 38th session in June and a final report at its 39th session in September.

In a 21 March address at the HRC introducing country reports, briefings and updates of the Secretary-General and High Commissioner for Human Rights, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kate Gilmore remarked that there were continued reports of killings, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, sexual violence, and arbitrary arrests and detention in Burundi.

Developments in the Peacebuilding Commission

On 16 April, Lauber briefed the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on his 27-30 March visit to Burundi. During his visit, he met with Nkurunziza and other ministers; the president of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), Pierre Claver Ndayiragije; the leaders of several political parties; and Kafando, among others. Lauber stressed that there is a need for coherence among UN actors and

the international community and for finding common ground with the government in order to build trust and a better sense of partnership. Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, also addressed the configuration members.

Key Issues and Options

The pressing issue is ensuring that the referendum of 17 May does not prompt Burundi to descend into chaos and further violence. The Council could monitor developments as they unfold and meet as necessary. An option would be to adopt a presidential or press statement after the referendum, addressing issues that arose, with a view towards the conduct of the 2020 elections.

Another major issue is the continued lack of accountability for potential human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, over the last few years in Burundi, a trend that may be exacerbated further during the referendum.

The lack of progress in the EAC-led mediation is of serious concern, particularly in light of Burundi's insistence that the dialogue be held in Burundi, thus excluding from the discussions some opposition parties in exile that are not recognised by the government.

A general issue is for the Council to find a new avenue for reengagement with Burundi in order to address the political crisis, likely one that is not based on resolution 2303. Perhaps the Arria-formula meeting, currently scheduled for late May, could address possible options, including those that uphold the centrality of the Arusha Accord to any political solution.

One possible way to address these issues

would be to impose targeted sanctions against those obstructing a genuine political dialogue, those responsible for human rights violations, and those who are blocking the implementation of resolution 2303.

Council Dynamics

Burundi remains entrenched in its opposition to the involvement of the international community in the country's political affairs. The Council, meanwhile, is at an impasse with respect to its engagement with the country. The fact that the 5 April presidential statement does not mention resolution 2303 suggests that Council members have all but given up on the implementation of certain elements of the resolution, such as the police deployment.

The prolonged negotiations over the 5 April presidential statement, consisting mostly of previously agreed language, further highlighted that Council members are divided. Some Council members, questioning the need for the Council's involvement as they view the situation as an internal issue lacking a pressing security dimension, refused to refer directly to the referendum and the circumstances surrounding it, which they view as a sovereign prerogative of Burundi.

Though all Council members agree on the importance of the viability of the Arusha Accord, only some Council members view the constitutional amendment process as a key event that may potentially destabilise Burundi further, similar to events that unfolded in April 2015. These members continue to see the situation as volatile and a threat to the Arusha Accords, which ended ethnic-based violence and a civil war.

France is the penholder on Burundi.

Iraq

Expected Council Action

In May, the Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ján Kubiš, will brief the Council

on the Secretary-General's report on UNAMI and the most recent developments.

The mandate of UNAMI expires on 31 July.

Key Recent Developments

Iraqi government forces defeated the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in December 2017 after three years of fighting

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAQ **Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/2390 (8 December 2017) indicated that measures imposed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter regarding the oil-for-food programme had been fully implemented. S/RES/2379 (21 September 2017) was on the accountability measures for crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq. S/RES/2367 (14 July 2017) renewed UNAMI for a year. **Security Council Letters** S/2018/118 (9 February 2018) contained the terms of reference for the investigative team to support domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable by collecting, preserving and storing evidence of war crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq. S/2018/63 (19 January 2018) was the Secretary-General's request for an extension of the deadline for the submission of the terms of reference for the investigative team to hold ISIL accountable until 9 February 2018. S/2017/966 (15 November 2017) contained the executive summary, the observations and the full set of recommendations of an independent external assessment of the structure and staffing of UNAMI submitted by the team of experts. **Security Council Press Statement** SC/13002 (21 September 2017) expressed concern regarding the Kurdistan Regional Government's plans to unilaterally hold a referendum on independence. **Sanction Committee Document** S/2017/1078 (22 December 2017) was the annual report of the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee.

Iraq

that has resulted in massive destruction of infrastructure and several million internally displaced people in the areas previously held by ISIL. Amidst these conditions, Iraq will hold parliamentary elections on 12 May, during which some 7,000 candidates will compete for 329 available seats in the parliament. Election campaigning officially started on 15 April in most of Iraq and a day later in the Kurdistan region.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and his predecessor, Nouri al-Maliki—who are both members of the Shi'a Dawa party—will lead separate coalitions within the same party. Hadi al-Amiri—the leader of the Badr organisation, the political arm of a Tehran-backed Shi'a militia—has entered the race with his own coalition. A prominent Shi'a cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, has formed an alliance with the Communist Party. The political landscape in Iraq has been marked by divisions among and within major sectarian groups. Some Sunni politicians have called for the elections to be postponed due to concerns that the Sunni population, displaced as a consequence of the fight against ISIL, would not be able to return in time to vote.

Leading up to and during the start of the election campaign, a number of candidates were attacked on different occasions. On 15 April, a car bomb targeted a convoy transporting a Turkmen candidate in Kirkuk. At least one person died and over ten were injured in the attack. The same day, another candidate from the Wataniya Coalition was fired upon in Baghdad. Two days earlier, the motorcade of another Turkmen candidate was attacked on the road connecting Baghdad and Kirkuk. In a press statement, Kubiš condemned the attacks on the candidates and called on the Iraqi government to ensure a secure environment for the upcoming elections.

In March, representatives of the political parties and coalitions were invited to sign the Electoral Charter of Honour drafted by UNAMI and Iraq's High Electoral Commission. The charter denounces the use of violence, sectarian and ethnic rhetoric, and voter intimidation. Kubiš called on all signatories to abide by the charter's provisions and

reiterated the mission's readiness to support the election process.

There has been some easing of tensions in relations between Baghdad and Erbil. In March, Al-Abadi announced the reopening of airports in Erbil and Sulaymani-yah for international flights. According to al-Abadi's statement, Kurdish authorities have also agreed to the central government's control of the airports. The Iraqi government had imposed a ban on international flights to and from Kurdistan following the referendum on independence held in the region in September of last year. Kubiš welcomed this positive development and called for continued dialogue on other outstanding issues between Baghdad and Erbil.

In September 2017, the Council adopted resolution 2379, which requested the Secretary-General to establish an investigative team to support Iraqi domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable for crimes it committed in the country. After months of negotiations between the Secretariat and the government of Iraq, the Secretary-General submitted the terms of reference (TOR) for the investigative team to the Council in February. In April, a needs-assessment mission was deployed to Iraq to evaluate the conditions on the ground for the investigative team. At press time, the Secretary-General had yet to appoint the Special Envoy who will head the investigative team as mandated by resolution 2379.

Key Issues and Options

The Council will closely follow developments related to the upcoming parliamentary elections, given their importance for the stability of the country and because UNAMI will play a role in the process by providing electoral assistance to the government of Iraq. Looking ahead, the Council could consider conducting a visiting mission to Iraq after the elections to show support for the government and to get a better understanding of the current challenges on the ground (a visit to Baghdad planned for late April was cancelled at the request of the government due to problems with timing).

Following the defeat of ISIL in December of last year, the Council's attention has gradually started to shift towards other immediate

issues, such as human rights and the humanitarian situation and the threats posed by terrorism. In addition to regular briefings on UNAMI, the Council could consider receiving updates on the human rights and humanitarian situations from the UN agencies with a field presence, given the reports of violations committed by pro-government forces.

As for accountability efforts, the Council will continue to monitor the developments regarding the formation of the investigative team that will support Iraqi domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable for the crimes committed in the country. The Council could consider holding consultations with relevant Secretariat officials involved in the formation of the investigative team to get a better understanding of the process. Also, the Council could explore the option of holding a meeting with the Secretariat to review and comment on the TOR for the investigative team, given that some delegations had concerns with some aspects of the TOR.

Council Dynamics

Council members support UNAMI, and some subscribe to the view held by the US and Iraq, as well as by Kubiš, that the mission's mandate is sufficiently broad and flexible to support the mission's good-offices role. Other Council members believe that UNAMI would benefit from a resolution that updates and prioritises its tasks, given that the mandate has not changed since resolution 1770 was adopted more than ten years ago. Some members have previously expressed interest in incorporating stronger language in the mandate renewal resolution on such issues as the promotion of national reconciliation; accountability; security sector reform; deeper political and economic reforms; women, peace and security; children and armed conflict; and the right of internally displaced persons to return to their homes. It seems that the US, the penholder, and Iraq, the host country, are reluctant to make any substantial changes to UNAMI's mandate.

The US is the penholder on Iraq issues in general, and the UK is the penholder on Iraq-Kuwait issues. Poland is the chair of the 1518 Iraq Sanctions Committee.

DPRK (North Korea)

Expected Council Action

In May, the chair of the 1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Karel van Oosterom (Netherlands), is due to provide Council members with his 90-day briefing on the work of the committee.

Key Recent Developments

Following the participation of the DPRK in the Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea (ROK), in February, there has been a flurry of diplomatic activity. On 6 March, senior ROK envoys and DPRK's supreme leader, Kim Jong-Un, met and agreed to an inter-Korean summit of the leaders of the DPRK and ROK, which took place on 27 April in Panmunjom. This was the first summit since 2007. ROK envoys and US President Donald Trump held a meeting on 9 March, during which Trump accepted an invitation from Kim, conveyed through ROK National Security Advisor Chung Eui-yong, to meet to discuss the DPRK's nuclear programme. Preparations are now underway for this meeting of the two leaders, but the date and venue have not been confirmed. As part of the lead-up to this meeting, the director of the US Central Intelligence Agency, Mike Pompeo—who has been nominated to be the next Secretary of State—met with Kim in late March.

Kim visited Beijing from 25 to 28 March and met with China's President, Xi Jinping. This was Kim's first foreign trip since assuming power in 2011. According to media reports, the two leaders discussed diplomatic developments in the last few months as well as denuclearisation. It seems that Xi has accepted an invitation to visit Pyongyang later this year.

On 19 April, ROK President Moon Jae-in said that the DPRK was not asking for the withdrawal of US troops from the Korean peninsula as a precondition for denuclearisation. On 20 April, Kim announced that the DPRK would immediately suspend nuclear and long-range missile tests and dismantle its main nuclear test site.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The final report of the Panel of Experts was circulated to the Council on 1 March. The report, which was sent to the committee on 1 February,

was discussed in the committee on 21 February. One of the overall conclusions of the report is that the DPRK is accessing the global financial system through deceptive practices that have been combined with "critical deficiencies in the implementation of financial sanctions". It notes that the expansion of the sanctions regime over the last year has not been matched by the " requisite political will, international coordination, prioritization and resource allocation necessary to drive effective implementation". The committee is expected to meet at the end of April to discuss the recommendations further.

The final report highlighted the multi-million-dollar business of illicit ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum and the continued export of commodities under sanctions, which generated an estimated \$200 million in revenue between January and September 2017. It also covered how the DPRK has managed to continue to illegally export coal despite the sanctions. The recent designations are largely attributed to violations of DPRK sanctions that have occurred on the high seas, such as ship-to-ship transfers, fuel acquisitions, and transfer of banned DPRK coal.

On 30 March, the committee added one person and 21 entities to the sanctions list. It also designated 27 vessels. So far, 80 persons and 75 entities have been listed by the UN.

On 21 March, the Council adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the sanctions committee until 24 April 2019.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 12 March, the Human Rights Council (HRC) considered the report of the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, Tomás Ojea Quintana (A/HRC/37/69), as part of its 37th session. The report describes instances in which sanctions may have had a negative impact on civilians, including reduced access to chemotherapeutic products for cancer patients and delays and blockages in the import of disability equipment. The report also reiterated the call for a comprehensive assessment of the unintended impact of Security Council sanctions on human rights in the country, in particular economic, social and cultural rights. On 23 March, the HRC adopted without a vote a resolution extending the mandate of the special rapporteur for one year (A/HRC/RES/37/28).

Key Issues and Options

The overarching issue for the Council continues to be how best to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula. The recent and anticipated upcoming diplomatic activity has provided the first glimmer of hope in years of a way forward in reaching this goal. Much of this

activity is currently taking place outside the Council, and the Council's role will be largely determined by how these larger geo-political developments play out. If there are positive developments following the inter-Korea and US-DPRK summits, one option is for the Council to consider a formal product encouraging further similar engagements.

Finding the right balance between applying pressure through sanctions and exploring the diplomatic track will remain an increasingly relevant issue, especially over the next few months. In light of the current diplomatic activity, the Council may need to consider whether it needs a new approach to the DPRK that provides both a "carrot" as well as a "stick".

An issue for the Council, keeping in mind its powers under Chapter VIII, is whether it should encourage regional organisations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to develop confidence-building mechanisms that could support positive diplomatic developments.

The key issue for the committee continues to be the implementation of the sanctions. The committee still has not reached agreement on the recommendations in the panel's final report. An option would be for the chair of the committee to direct his energy to more active outreach, including more open briefings and meetings with regional groups. Providing member states with practical information to facilitate better understanding of the available tools to help them implement sanctions could lead to improvements in the implementation rate by member states.

A continuing issue is the need to mitigate the humanitarian impact of sanctions. Following a concerted effort by the sanctions committee to publicise the conditions for humanitarian exemptions, UN agencies and international organisations now have a better understanding of this issue. The committee could continue to work with OCHA and other relevant organisations to ensure that it gets the information it needs for humanitarian exemptions.

A future issue is what the Council's role might be if an agreement is reached on denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula following the upcoming summit meetings. It is

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2407 (21 March 2018) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 24 April 2019. **S/RES/2397** (22 December 2017) tightened sanctions further in response to the DPRK's nuclear test. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/16** (29 August 2017) condemned the launch of a missile over the territory of Japan and urged the DPRK to comply with previous Council resolutions and presidential statements. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8151** (22 December 2017) was the adoption of resolution 2397. **Selected Sanctions Committee Documents S/2018/171** (5 March 2018) was the final report of the Panel of Experts, including findings and recommendations for the Council. **SC/13272** (30 March 2018) was on the addition of one individual, 21 entities and the designation of 27 vessels.

DPRK (North Korea)

unclear at this point if any such agreement would require adjustments to UN sanctions, but Council members may wish to consider what they would be comfortable with regarding sanctions relief.

A related future issue is the role of the Council regarding any follow-up to a denuclearisation agreement. While UN agencies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency would take the lead role, there may be a need for the Council to continue to monitor the process through regular briefings.

Council Dynamics

Council members are aware that there will be some significant events in the next few months that could fundamentally change the Council's consideration of this issue. They have generally been surprised by the change in the DPRK's behaviour since the beginning of the year. For years the approach to the DPRK has been that of the "stick" rather than the "carrot". Since 2006, the Council has regularly reacted to violations, such as missile and nuclear tests, through punitive measures. While many are still cautious and unsure if some of the recent announcements will be followed through, some members are beginning to think about whether a new approach is needed to the Council's relationship with the DPRK, including a greater response to positive developments through Council outcomes and other possible means of showing support for serious dialogue on

the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. However, others, particularly the US, still believe it is important to continue the "maximum pressure" approach to the DPRK. Whether there is a narrowing of these different positions may depend on developments following the two upcoming summits.

The Netherlands, which is the chair of the sanctions committee for 2018, has shown in the last few months that it wants to play an active role as chair. It has been focused particularly on outreach to member states as a way of trying to improve implementation of the sanctions. It has also been working with member states to try to get agreement on the recommendations of the final report of the Panel of Experts.

It is hard to predict how developments over the next few months will impact Council dynamics on this issue. For many years, it was taken for granted that China and the US would negotiate resolutions on the DPRK with little involvement from the rest of the Council. Although Russia has become a more active player on this file over the last year, China was seen as the main interlocutor with the US because of the leverage it is perceived to have with the DPRK. While China is still a key player on this issue, it is possible that direct talks between the US and the DPRK might result in a re-calibration of the long-standing dynamic on this issue.

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Security Council Report is a non-profit organisation supported by the Governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Germany, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Turkey and United Arab Emirates, and Carnegie Corporation, Humanity United and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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