

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

Ethiopia has the presidency in September. A visiting mission to Addis Ababa is planned in early September for the 11th annual consultative meeting between members of the UN Security Council and members of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). Immediately after the visit there will be a briefing on the visiting mission. A briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the [partnership between the UN and the AU](#) by UN Special Representative to the AU Haile Menkerios is also expected in September.

A summit-level open debate on “[Reform of UN peacekeeping: implementation and follow-up](#)” is planned for the high-level week of the General Assembly’s 72nd session. Secretary-General António Guterres and Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, are expected to brief the Council, along with a representative from the High-Level Panel on Peace Operations. A resolution may be adopted as an outcome.

There will be two briefings related to [counter-terrorism](#). The Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), and the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, Fang Liu, will brief the Council on security in civil aviation, in accordance with resolution 2309. A presidential statement may be adopted as an outcome.

The second [counter-terrorism](#) meeting will take place in late September where the head of the newly-created UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, is expected to brief the Council for the first time. The newly-appointed Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, Michèle Coninx (Belgium), is also likely to brief the Council.

Two resolutions on the mandates of peace operations in Colombia and Libya are expected to be adopted in September:

- The Council expects a briefing from the Special Representative and head of the UN Mission in [Colombia](#), Jean Arnault, and will

discuss recommendations and adopt a resolution on the size, operational aspects, and mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, which is expected to start its activities on 26 September.

- An adoption is scheduled for the renewal of the mandate of UNSMIL in [Libya](#) ahead of its expiry on 15 September.

Other discussions of African issues this month include:

- [Somalia](#), on the activities of UNSOM;
- [Sudan](#), on the activities of UNAMID in Darfur; and
- [South Sudan](#), update on the activities of UNMISS and deployment of the Regional Protection Force.

There will also be a briefing on developments in the [Lake Chad Basin](#) region, required by resolution 2349.

Regarding Middle East issues, Council members expect to receive the monthly briefings on political and humanitarian developments in [Syria](#) and on chemical weapons.

Other Middle East issues to be considered this month are:

- [Israel/Palestine](#), the regular monthly briefing and consultations; and
- [Yemen](#), an update by the Special Envoy.

Regarding Asian issues, the Council will hold a debate on UNAMA in [Afghanistan](#).

The chair of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee is expected to provide the quarterly briefing on the [DPRK](#), which had originally been expected in August. Following the launch of a ballistic missile over Japan on 28 August and the adoption of a presidential statement, members are expected to consider ways of further increasing pressure on the DPRK.

In addition, Council members will watch closely developments in the [DRC](#) and [Mali](#) and may begin negotiations on a draft resolution on accountability for Da’esh crimes in [Iraq](#). More meetings may be scheduled during the month.

1 September 2017

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In Hindsight: Mandating Peace Operations

More than two years ago, the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) issued its report, with recommendations to ensure better design and delivery of UN peace operations. Since then, there has been little discussion by the Council of the overall approach of the panel's report and the implication of its recommendations for the Council's own practice. The summit-level open debate organised by Ethiopia during its presidency in September provides a timely opportunity for the Council to discuss the way it mandates and oversees peace operations and to hear the views of the broader membership about how this process can be made more strategic and inclusive.

The HIPPO report emphasised that political strategy must drive the design and implementation of peace operations. In a 25 November 2015 presidential statement, the Council underlined “the significant impact its statements and actions can exert in situations of armed conflict or in support of peace processes”. However, the Council has often failed to agree on a political strategy in support of peace operations for many reasons, including decision-making processes that do not favour the emergence of strategic or collective thinking, divergent political priorities, inadequate Secretariat analysis and planning, and the resistance of host states. In recent months, Council members have promoted increased interaction with regional mediators and other actors, such as the chairs of peacebuilding configurations, but formalistic rules continue to prevent these meetings from taking place in consultations. Despite some informal initiatives, troop- and police-contributing countries remain dissatisfied with the quality of triangular consultations.

While engagement with relevant stakeholders is an important part of devising or refining a political strategy, it is not enough. For the Council to develop the political strategies that must underpin peace operations, it needs to change the way it operates. The Council could start by adopting a mandating process that addresses—and as far as possible agrees on—political objectives before negotiating language in drafts; by reviewing

and modifying mandates when needs on the ground shift, rather than waiting until the mandate cycles end; by encouraging the emergence of groups of friends on particular situations on its agenda; and by agreeing compacts with host governments. The Council has sometimes had a positive impact in conflict situations when it has been able to deliver unified messages directly to the parties, either through visiting missions or demarches by its President. More effort could be put into ensuring that outcomes of Council discussions reach the parties involved.

In order to allow missions to develop over time, the Panel advocated sequenced and prioritised mandates “rather than trying to do everything at once, and failing”. It proposed a two-stage, sequenced mandating process to design more effective, situation-specific missions with realistic, streamlined and prioritised tasks. The 25 November 2015 presidential statement said that the Council will consider sequenced and phased mandates, where appropriate, when evaluating existing UN peace operations or establishing new ones. The sequenced and prioritised establishment of two consecutive operations in Colombia is an example of how this process can work. To respond to tight timelines agreed to by the parties, the Council established both missions several months before they were expected to start operating. This allowed the Secretary-General to provide recommendations to the Council regarding their size, operational aspects and mandate following an integrated planning process informed by experience on the ground. However, until now, there has been limited emphasis on the sequencing or prioritisation of already existing mandates.

One of the main elements of the HIPPO report that has been subject to Council discussions recently is the strategic partnership with the AU. Resolution 2320 of 18 November 2016 built on the HIPPO report and stressed that the AU-UN partnership should be underpinned by mutual consultations between the Council and the AU Peace and Security Council “based on respective comparative advantage, burden sharing, consultative decision making, joint analysis and

planning missions and assessment visits by the UN and AU, monitoring and evaluation, transparency and accountability”.

The Council has often recognised the absence of flexible, sustainable and predictable funding for the AU peace operations it authorises, but members have divergent views on how this should be addressed. The panel recommended the use of UN assessed contributions on a case-by-case basis to support AU peace operations authorised by the Council, including the costs associated with deployed uniformed personnel, to complement funding from the AU and/or African member states. Most recently, the Council has been divided over the UN's role in relation to the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel). The US and several other major financial contributors did not wish the Council to authorise the force, in part because they considered it unnecessary but also because it could imply a financial obligation. France and the African Council members supported the position of the G5 Sahel countries and the AU that the UN should consider providing funding from assessed contributions. The Secretary-General endorsed such use of assessed contributions in his report on options for authorisation and support for AU peace operations. While the issue of funding will feature prominently in negotiating the draft resolution to be adopted at the September meeting, other important elements of the partnership, such as ensuring coordination throughout the conflict cycle, also deserve emphasis.

The Council has taken note of the HIPPO report and accepted in principle several of its recommendations, with members making frequent references to those which accord with their perspectives, but essential shifts the panel proposed towards the primacy of politics and the flexible use of the spectrum of peace operations still require changes on the part of both the Council and the Secretariat. Several recent mandate renewals have shown again the limitations of a process that continues to be led by one of three permanent members as penholder and driven by numbers. In negotiating these resolutions, Council members often prioritise their national agendas over

SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF HIPPO IMPLEMENTATION [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2320](#) (18 November 2016) welcomed the AU Assembly decision to fund 25 percent of AU peace support operations. [Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2015/26](#) (31 December 2015) expressed the Council's readiness to further develop the process of informal consultation sessions with troop- and police-contributing countries. [S/PRST/2015/22](#) (25 November 2015) took note of the recommendations of the HIPPO report and the Secretary-General's implementation report. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8033](#) (29 August 2017) was an open debate organised by Egypt on UN peacekeeping operations and their potential contribution to the overarching goal of sustaining peace. [S/PV.8006](#) and [Resumption 1](#) (19 July 2017) was an open debate on “Enhancing African capacities in the areas of peace and security” held at the initiative of China. [S/PV.7918](#) (6 April 2017) was a briefing on peacekeeping operations held at the initiative of the US. [Security Council Letter S/2015/446](#) (17 June 2015) was the HIPPO report.

In Hindsight: Mandating Peace Operations

providing adequate resources for realistic mandates. The gap between mandates and capacity is broadened when Fifth Committee decision-making effectively becomes a partial re-negotiation of mandates.

Some Council members still insist on using the terminology of peacekeeping in a way which runs counter to the panel's perspective of a spectrum of peace operations, and to a large extent the Council's working methods undermine the objective it sets for itself of political strategy and flexible transitions. The current insistence of Council members on reviewing peace operations might be an opportunity to address some of

the HIPPO recommendations that have gone unimplemented, while the Secretary-General's new Executive Committee, emphasis on strategic planning and monitoring in his Executive Office, and review of the Secretariat's peace and security architecture offer the prospect of improved integrated analysis and options from the Secretariat. The Council could use its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations to draw lessons on how it agrees on strategic objectives for these missions, designs mandates, and monitors the capacity to achieve them. The Working Group could submit recommendations for the Council's consideration, after engaging with a broad

range of actors including Secretariat officials and troop- and police-contributing countries. The open debate can be a platform for member states to contribute their suggestions for improving this critical process.

Expected Council Action

The high-level open debate will be entitled "Reform of UN peacekeeping: implementation and follow-up" and is scheduled for 20 September. Secretary-General António Guterres and Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, are expected to brief the Council, along with a HIPPO representative.

Status Update since our August Forecast

Burundi

On 2 August, the Council adopted (S/PV.8016) a presidential statement, expressing concern over the political situation and ongoing violence in Burundi and strongly urging the government and all parties to immediately cease and reject such violence (S/PRST/2017/13). The Council further reiterated its full support to the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy in their efforts to engage the government of Burundi on the modalities of the implementation of resolution 2303.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 5 August, the Council adopted resolution 2371 condemning the 3 and 28 July ballistic missile launches (S/PV.8019). The resolution significantly strengthened the sanctions on the DPRK. It imposed a full ban on the export of coal, iron and iron ore from the DPRK, whereas previously these items could be exported for livelihood purposes, with a cap on the amount of coal that could be exported. It also prohibited the export of lead, lead ore and seafood from the DPRK. It froze the number of work authorisations for DPRK laborers working abroad at current levels, unless the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee approves on a case-by-case basis additional authorisations to allow for purposes such as the delivery of humanitarian assistance or denuclearisation. It decided that states shall prohibit the formation of joint ventures or cooperative commercial entities on their territory or by their nationals

with DPRK individuals or entities. In addition, the resolution designated several additional individuals for a travel ban and assets freeze, and additional entities for an assets freeze. It further requested INTERPOL to issue "special notices" regarding designated individuals and directed the sanctions committee to work with INTERPOL toward that end. The resolution was adopted unanimously. On 29 August, Council members held consultations following the DPRK's firing earlier that day of a missile over the territory of Japan. Later that afternoon, the Council met (S/PV.8034) in a formal session to adopt a presidential statement condemning the launch (S/PRST/2017/16) and urging DPRK to comply with previous Council resolutions and presidential statements.

Famine

On 9 August, the Council adopted (S/PV.8020) a presidential statement expressing its grave concern about the threat of famine presently facing more than 20 million people in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan, and north-east Nigeria (S/PRST/2017/14). The statement was negotiated following the Council's 16 June Arria-formula meeting on the risk of famine in these four conflict-affected countries. The statement requested the Secretary-General to provide an oral briefing during the month of October on country-specific impediments to an effective response to the risk of famine in Yemen, South Sudan,

Somalia, and north-east Nigeria, and to make specific recommendations on how to address these impediments.

Sudan/South Sudan

On 9 August, Council members were briefed in consultations by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El-Ghassim Wane on the first of two reports requested in resolution 2352 on progress in implementing the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (S/2017/649). He noted that the security situation in the Abyei Area remains unpredictable and that in the absence of progress in the implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011, and on the final status of the territory, intercommunal tensions and the proliferation of arms create a continued risk.

Annual Report to the General Assembly

On 9 August, the Council adopted the introduction to its annual report to the General Assembly (S/PV.8021). The report, on an exceptional basis, covers the 17-month period from 1 August 2015 to 31 December 2016, as stipulated by a Note by the President of the Security Council (S/2015/944) of 10 December 2015. The note, elaborated by the Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions in 2015, changed the reporting period of annual reports from the previous practice of covering the period from 1 August through 31 July to covering a full calendar

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year, i.e. from 1 January through 31 December. As a transitional measure, the report to the 71st session of the General Assembly was submitted and discussed late in the session and covered a longer period. (Security Council President for the month of August, Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), presented the report to a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 28 August.)

Women, Peace and Security

On 10 August, the Council was briefed by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed following her 19-27 July joint visit to the DRC and Nigeria with Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security Bineta Diop, Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten (S/PV.8022). Mohammed described the trip as the first of its kind - a high-level mission focused entirely on women, peace, security and development - with the goal of advancing peace by advancing the equality, empowerment and well-being of women. The mission also deepened the partnership between the UN and the AU, she said. Ambassador Tête António, Permanent Observer for the AU, also briefed.

Mali

On 14 August, Council members condemned the terrorist attack against the MINUSMA camps in Douentza, Mali, which caused the death of one Togolese peacekeeper and injured another (SC/12954).

Sahel

On 15 August, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El-Ghassim Wane briefed the Council on the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5), providing an assessment on the deployment of the G5 joint force (S/PV.8024). During members' interventions, France announced that it would propose a Council visiting mission to the Sahel. Several members highlighted the importance of providing UN assessed contributions to the G5 force.

Kosovo

On 16 August, the Council held its quarterly briefing on Kosovo (S/PV.8025). Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNMIK Zahir Tanin briefed

the Council on the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/640) and the recent developments in Kosovo. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia Ivica Dačić and Kosovo's ambassador to the US, Vlora Çitaku also participated in the meeting. Tanin stressed the need for Kosovo to form a new government following the general elections in June. Some members, including the US called for the downsizing and eventually terminating the UNMIK while also lengthening the reporting period to six month periods. Russia noted that there is no reason to reduce the UN presence in Kosovo and that the mission still plays important role in normalising relations.

Central African Republic

On 22 August, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed Council members on his recent visit to the CAR under "any other business" in consultations. The Secretary-General discussed developments in the CAR with Council members during his monthly luncheon on 17 August. On 3 August, the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee issued a press release (SC/12943) concerning its 21 July meeting with its Panel of Experts, where the panel's midterm report was presented to the committee (S/2017/639). On 11 August, the committee issued a press release drawing attention to the recommendation contained in the midterm report concerning exemptions from sanctions (SC/12952).

Israel/Palestine

On 22 August, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča briefed the Council on the situation in Israel/Palestine (S.PV/12963). The meeting was followed by consultations.

Liberia

On 23 August, the Council held consultations on the situation in Liberia. Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El-Ghassim Wane briefed on the preparations for the 10 October presidential and legislative elections in Liberia, as requested by resolution 2333 of 23 December 2016. The resolution requested another oral briefing after the elections in Liberia and no later than 15 December.

Lebanon

On 23 August, Assistant Secretary-General

for Peacekeeping Operations El-Ghassim Wane briefed Council members in consultations on UNIFIL. At press time, the Council was scheduled to adopt a resolution renewing UNIFIL's mandate on 30 August.

Guinea-Bissau

On 24 August, the Council received a briefing (S/PV.8031) from Modibo Touré, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of UNIOGBIS on the Secretary-General's latest report on developments in the country and the activities of the mission (S/2017/695). Ambassador Elbio Rosselli (Uruguay), chair of the 2048 Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee, and Ambassador Mauro Vieira (Brazil), chair of the PBC configuration for Guinea-Bissau also briefed, focusing on recent visits they had each undertaken to the country. In addition, representatives of the Economic Community of West African States, Ambassador Kokou Kpayedo (Togo) and Maria Antonietta D'Alva (Guinea-Bissau) addressed the Council. Members continued discussions in consultations.

Peacekeeping and Sustaining Peace

On 29 August, the Security Council held an open debate on "UN Peacekeeping Operations: Their Potential Contribution to the Overarching Goal of Sustaining Peace" (S/PV.8033). Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed briefed, as did Youssef Mahmoud, Senior Adviser at the International Peace Institute and a former member of the High Level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), and Gert Rosenthal, former chair of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture (PBA). The session was organised by Egypt, which prepared and circulated a concept note ahead of the meeting (S/2017/692).

Myanmar

On 30 August, at the request of the UK, Council members were briefed under "any other business" on the situation in Myanmar.

Working Methods

On 30 August, the members of the Council reached agreement on a new version of the compendium of its working methods, commonly referred to as Note 507. The document, elaborated under the leadership of Japan, is expected to be issued as S/2017/507.

Security Council Visit to the African Union

Expected Council Action

In early September, the Security Council will conduct a visiting mission to Addis Ababa for the eleventh annual consultative meeting between members of the UN Security Council and members of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). Members of the two councils are expected to discuss Somalia, South Sudan, and the Lake Chad Basin. Ahead of this meeting, there will be informal consultations on the partnership between the AU and the UN, funding for AU peace and security activities, and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Security Council members and PSC members have held annual joint meetings since 2007, alternating between their respective headquarters. The last meeting between members of the two councils was held in New York on 23 May 2016.

A communiqué has generally been issued after these annual consultative meetings. However, last year differences over how to reflect the situations in Burundi and Somalia made it difficult to agree on the joint communiqué by the time of the meeting. It was finally issued on 23 March 2017.

Immediately after the visit there will be a briefing on the visiting mission. A briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU by Haile Menkerios is also expected in September.

Key Recent Developments

Since the last consultative meeting in May 2016, the Council has held several meetings discussing the partnership between the AU and the UN. During this period, three reports relevant to AU-UN cooperation were issued: the Secretary-General's report on ways to strengthen the UN-AU partnership, a joint UN-AU review of mechanisms currently available to finance and support AU peace support operations authorised by the Council, and a report on predictable and sustainable financing for the AU Peace Fund.

On 18 November 2016, at the initiative of Senegal, the Council held a debate on "Strengthening the UN-AU partnership in peace and security". The objective of the debate was to encourage greater political

support and commitment from the Council particularly regarding the issue of ensuring predictable, flexible and sustainable support and financing for AU peace operations. It also focused on the relationship between the two councils, and between the UN Secretariat and AU Commission throughout the conflict cycle. Briefers for the debate included El Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Haile Menkerios, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU; and Donald Kaberuka, AU High Representative for the Peace Fund. At the meeting, the Council adopted resolution 2320 which welcomed the AU Assembly decision to fund 25 percent of AU peace support operations, to be phased in over a five year period.

Following up on this resolution and debate, at the initiative of the three 2017 African members of the Council (Egypt, Ethiopia and Senegal) the Council had a briefing and interactive dialogue on 15 June on AU-UN cooperation. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on options for authorisation and support to AU peace operations which had been requested in resolution 2320. AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui stressed the need for predictable and sustainable funding for AU-mandated or authorised peace support operations and briefed on progress on the Peace Fund. The briefers at the informal interactive dialogue were Under-Secretary-General for Field Support Atul Khare; Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El Ghassim Wane; Samba Sane, Officer in Charge of the Africa I Division of the Department of Political Affairs; and Dr. Donald Kaberuka, AU High Representative for the Peace Fund.

In his report, the Secretary-General identified four options through which UN assessed contributions could be used to help to meet the requirements of AU peace support operations:

- subvention in exceptional or emergency circumstances;
- joint financing of a jointly developed budget;

- establishment of a UN support office to support an AU peace operation; and
- joint financing of a hybrid mission.

In addition to the issue of financing, the report also proposed a decision-making framework aimed at making joint action more effective, which would involve further work on the modalities for joint analysis, planning and assessment, as well as reporting to the relevant intergovernmental bodies of each organisation.

On 19 July, during China's presidency, the Council held an open debate on "Enhancing African capacities in the areas of peace and security" with briefings by UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui. The focus of the debate was on the importance of strengthening the capacities of African countries for prevention and effective responses to peace and security challenges in Africa.

Guterres and the chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, signed a joint AU-UN framework for enhanced partnership in peace and security on 19 April. Both organisations reiterated their willingness to consider options to enhance the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of financing for AU-led peace operations.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in African met on 25 August to discuss preparations for the joint meeting between members of the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council. It also met on 2 July to discuss the AU Peace Fund report "Silencing the Guns" on securing predictable and sustainable financing for peace. Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El Ghassim Wane and Permanent Observer of the AU Tete Antonio spoke on behalf of the UN and AU, while Ambassador Olaf Skoog (Sweden) and Ambassador Macharia Kamau (Kenya) provided the perspective of Council members and the African Group respectively.

Issues and Options

An issue over the years has been the scripted nature of the joint consultative meeting. However, the innovation of an informal session ahead of the consultative meeting last

UN DOCUMENTS ON AU-UN COOPERATION Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2359 (21 June 2017) welcomed the deployment of the G5 force. S/RES/2320 (18 November 2016) welcomed the AU Assembly decision to fund 25 percent of AU peace support operations. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2017/454 (26 May 2017) was on options for authorisation and support for AU peace support operations. S/2016/780 (13 September 2016) was on strengthening the AU-UN partnership on peace and security in Africa. **Security Council Letter** S/2017/248 (23 March 2017) was the joint communiqué agreed to after the tenth annual joint consultative meeting between members of the Council and the AU PSC. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.8006 and **Resolution 1** (19 July 2017) was the debate on enhancing African capacities in peace operations. S/PV.7971 (15 June 2017) was the discussion of the Secretary-General's report on AU peace support operations. S/PV.7816 (18 November 2016) was the debate on Strengthening the UN-AU partnership on issues of peace and security.

Security Council Visit to the African Union

year allowed for more substantive discussion, particularly on more controversial areas. The informal session has been retained this year and is expected to allow for more in-depth discussion of issues around the relationship between the UN and the AU. Interaction during the formal session may be improved by moving away from statements to a more free-flowing discussion.

A key issue continues to be the need for sustainable and predictable funding for AU peace support operations. A frank discussion of the limitations of the current structures in supporting AU peace support operations and consideration of the four options presented in the Secretary-General's 26 May report could help clarify positions on both sides and develop a better understanding of next steps.

An issue over the years has been the perception of the AU PSC that its role in handling conflicts in its region has not been sufficiently acknowledged. More regular interaction with the UN Security Council, particularly on specific African conflicts, would be a way of tapping into the AU's knowledge and experience in dealing with African conflicts as well as a fuller recognition of the AU as a partner in the UN's peace and security activities.

Resolution 2320 stressed that the AU-UN partnership should be underpinned by mutual consultations between the Council and the AU PSC "based on respective comparative advantage, burden sharing, consultative decision making, joint analysis and planning missions and assessment visits by the UN and AU, monitoring and evaluation, transparency and accountability". Given that this is the first joint meeting of the AU PSC and the Security Council since the adoption of resolution 2320 in November 2016, a discussion of how to strengthen the partnership based on this commitment could be beneficial. Concrete proposals could be included in the joint communiqué.

Sensitivities in the past regarding the agenda of the consultative meeting have related to the inclusion of more controversial issues like Western Sahara. Libya has also in the past been a highly sensitive issue which made agreement on how to reflect the discussion difficult. Reaching agreement on the agenda this year appears to have been relatively smooth, but some members may want to raise more controversial country-specific situations in the informal session.

Council Dynamics

Council members have divergent views

regarding operations carried out by the AU. Those who are major financial contributors have concerns about committing UN assessed contributions for AU peace support operations and are likely to take a cautious position regarding anything related to financing.

The African members of the Council, despite sometimes having divergent views on specific issues, have been proactive about keeping alive matters of importance to the AU. They have consistently made clear that pursuing a substantive resolution on financing of AU support operations is a priority while they are on the Council. Of the permanent members, China has been particularly supportive of the need to strengthen the capacity of the AU in peace and security.

Although there has been increasing acknowledgment of the importance of working with regional organisations in the area of peace and security, particularly in relation to conflict prevention, implementation of either Council resolutions or joint communiqués has not always been easy. For example, although in the 2015 communiqué the AU PSC and the Security Council agreed to conduct a joint field mission, this was not carried out.

Colombia

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council is expected to discuss recommendations and adopt a resolution on the size, operational aspects and mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, which is set to start its activities on 26 September. The Council will be briefed by Special Representative and head of the UN Mission in Colombia Jean Arnault.

The mandate of the current UN Mission in Colombia expires on 25 September 2017, and the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia expires on 26 September 2018.

Key Recent Developments

On 10 July, the Security Council adopted resolution 2366, which established the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, a successor mission to the current UN Mission in Colombia. The request for a successor political mission was incorporated into the November 2016 "Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace" between the government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), under item 6.3.3. While the agreement specified that the mission be authorised by the UN General Assembly, the parties decided

to make their request to the Security Council, as they did with the first political mission. A 5 June letter to the Council and the Secretary-General from Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón conveyed the request of the parties to establish the Verification Mission and outlined the elements of the new mandate envisioned in accordance with the agreement.

The Verification Mission is expected to verify implementation of several elements of the agreement at the national, regional and local levels. These include political, economic and social reincorporation of the FARC-EP; personal and collective security

UN DOCUMENTS ON COLOMBIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2366 (10 July 2017) established the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, a successor mission to the UN Mission in Colombia. S/RES/2307 (13 September 2016) approved the Secretary-General's recommendations on the size, operational aspects and mandate of the UN Mission in Colombia. S/RES/2261 (25 January 2016) established a political mission to monitor and verify the laying down of arms and the bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/6 (11 May 2017) followed the Council's visiting mission to Colombia. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/539 (23 June 2017) was the latest report on Colombia. Security Council Letter S/2017/481 (7 June 2017) attached a letter by President Santos regarding the second special political mission.

Colombia

guarantees; and comprehensive programmes on security and protection measures for communities and organisations in conflict-affected areas. The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to initiate preparations, including on the ground, and to present detailed recommendations to the Security Council for its consideration and approval regarding the size, operational aspects and mandate of the mission.

The resolution calls on the UN Mission in Colombia to start “provisional work anticipated by the Verification Mission...within its current configuration and capacity” up until the time its mandate ends. This is in keeping with the 23 June Secretary-General’s report, which recommended that the verification tasks be moved forward to coincide with the start of the reintegration process. On 1 August, the 26 zones and points for normalisation in the country became “territorial spaces for training and reintegration”.

A ceremony marking the completion of the laying down of individual weapons took place on 27 June. On 30 June, Jean Arnault, the Special Representative and head of the UN Mission in Colombia, briefed the Council on the final stages of the implementation of the mission’s mandate. Most of the weapons and explosives stored in 949 caches throughout the country were expected to be extracted and destroyed by 1 September. As of 15 August, this had happened with 510 caches. According to a joint communiqué agreed to by the parties on 29 May, the responsibility to dismantle the remaining caches will be with the government of Colombia as of 1 September, with the support of FARC-EP members. On 15 August, the mission finished extracting containers with armaments and scrap ammunition that were stored in 26 zones.

As a result of the new tasks in its mandate, the mission expressed its concerns on 13 July over the continuing imprisonment of FARC-EP members despite the adoption by Congress of amnesty law 1820 on 31 December 2016 and different governmental decrees to speed up the process to reintegrate them into civilian life. (The Constitutional Court is currently reviewing the amnesty law.) It also raised concerns about the vulnerability of FARC-EP members outside the 26 zones, as shown by recurring physical attacks against them and their families.

Challenges to the implementation of the

agreement continue. Some of the supporters of the “no” vote in the October 2016 plebiscite have continued to criticise the agreement despite the changes made to it after the vote. This is particularly relevant given the legislative and presidential elections upcoming in 2018.

Non-state armed actors, including paramilitary groups, have taken control of some of the areas vacated by the FARC-EP. The security environment also constitutes a challenge for the UN. On 6 August, a UN team along with national police and FARC-EP members who were deployed to extract and destroy material from a cache were attacked in El Cauca. A member of the national police was wounded as a result of the attack. A UN official who had been kidnapped on 3 May in Guaviare by a group of FARC-EP dissidents was released on 5 July.

Over the last six months, the parties have emphasised their different priorities in implementing the agreement. While FARC-EP representatives urged progress on physical protection for their members as well as guarantees of their socioeconomic and political reintegration, the government emphasised the importance of delivering on the commitment to lay down weapons and abide by the established timelines. Now that the laying down of individual weapons has been completed, the FARC-EP has criticised delays in the reintegration process. On 24 July, the FARC-EP announced that it would launch a political party on 1 September.

Key Issues and Options

The Council was planning to receive by the end of August the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the Verification Mission’s functions, size, structure and operational aspects and is expected to adopt a resolution approving them. While some civil society members who met with the Council in Colombia argued for the inclusion of elements such as the verification of human rights-related measures, no Council member has so far proposed to add a mandated task that goes beyond item 6.3.3. of the agreement. Depending on how the Secretary-General reconciles what “the market can bear” financially and the requirements on the ground, some Council members are likely to prioritise budgetary restraint when negotiating the resolution.

During their visiting mission in May, Council members emphasised the importance of securing the gains made as part of the peace process and ensuring their irreversibility, particularly in the context of a polarised political environment.

In a context in which key governmental demands have been met as part of the process to lay down weapons, it is important to ensure that the agreement is fully implemented. Hence the role of the Council might become more relevant in the next period. The upcoming elections are likely to make it difficult for the government to proactively address issues related to the reintegration and protection of FARC-EP members. In that context, the role of the Council, through its oversight of the Verification Mission, is expected to provide guarantees that the agreement will be implemented in full.

An important issue for the Council is the volatile security situation in some areas and the high level of impunity for violence against community leaders and human rights defenders in rural areas, often related to the presence of non-state armed groups in the territories vacated by the FARC-EP.

Given that the mandates of the two missions in Colombia were sequenced and prioritised responding to the needs on the ground and to the timing agreed to by the parties, the Council could ask the Secretariat to draw lessons learned from the integrated planning process in order to incorporate them into the Council’s mandating practices.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Given the priority that some Council members attach to budgetary issues, these are expected to feature prominently in the negotiations of the resolution. Part of the mandate of the UN Mission in Colombia, particularly the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, was funded through a cost-sharing agreement with the Colombian government that is not envisaged for the second mission. Also, the need for fewer military observers and more civilian personnel and the geographic scope of the mission are also expected to drive up the costs compared with the first mission.

The two-step mandating process for the Verification Mission is consistent with the recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. It is also

Colombia

consistent with what the Council did when it adopted resolution 2261 of 25 January 2016, which established the UN Mission in

Colombia and requested the Secretary-General to present detailed recommendations regarding the size, operational aspects and

mandate of the mission.

The UK is the penholder on Colombia.

Somalia

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council expects to receive the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2358, which renewed the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) until 31 March 2018. The Council will hold a briefing and consultations on the report.

Key Recent Developments

On 24 August, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, along with other UN officials, met in Mogadishu with top officials of the Federal Government of Somalia for consultations on political and security developments in the country. The Speaker of the National Assembly, Mohamed Osman Jawari, briefed the UN officials on the ongoing constitutional review process and the progress made towards the selection of the new Constitutional Review Commission of the Federal Parliament. Earlier in August, Special Representative for Somalia and head of UNSOM Michael Keating expressed concern that the committee, which will play an important role in shaping the country's future, included no women among its members.

Minister of Constitutional Affairs Abdirahman Hosh Jibril said on 9 August that the government was set to launch national consultations on the constitutional review following a public awareness and sensitisation process to engage all Somalis and ensure that their views were represented in the new constitution. He noted that for the constitution, which is to be adopted in the next two years, to have legitimacy it needs to be taken to the public for consultations. Deliberations on the constitution will also be held in the regional states and the Somali diaspora. The minister's comments followed a meeting he held with the AU Commissioner for Somalia, Francisco Caetano Madeira, in

Mogadishu. Jibril also said that the government was seeking the assistance of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to enable it to hold the planned nationwide consultations successfully.

At a ceremony for the official opening of the second session of the Somali parliament on 9 July, Special Representative Keating welcomed the opening of the parliament and congratulated the speaker and parliament members. "The Somali parliament can make a decisive contribution to progress by passing key legislation, including the electoral law, legislation enabling a constitutional review and revenue generating laws", he said. He added that real sovereignty for Somalia hinges on the country reducing its dependency on others and being able to raise revenues and shape its own agenda, particularly in strengthening security and the rule of law, advancing peace and reconciliation, and engaging Somalia's entrepreneurial spirit and the private sector to create jobs.

The terrorist group Al-Shabaab continues to carry out deadly attacks against security forces and civilians in Somalia and beyond. On 3 August, the Council issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the 30 July attack perpetrated by Al-Shabaab against AMISOM's Ugandan contingent in Garyowein, Lower Shabelle, in which 12 soldiers were killed and seven injured during a joint patrol with the Somali National Army.

On 4 August, the militant Islamist group seized Leego town in the south after it was abandoned by the military and AMISOM, residents said. The town was the site of a 26 June attack on an AMISOM peacekeeping base housing Burundian, Kenyan and Ugandan troops; at least 12 AMISOM peacekeepers were killed. On 15 August, suspected members of Al-Shabaab killed five Kenyan police officers in an ambush in north-eastern

Kenya. Al-Shabaab militants were also suspected of carrying out the 18 August beheadings of three Kenyans in Lamu county.

A former Al-Shabaab deputy leader and spokesman, Mukhtar Robow Abu Mansur, on 15 August called for others to quit the group following his defection in Mogadishu. "I left Al-Shabaab because of misunderstanding, and I disagreed with their creed, which does not serve Islamic religion, people and the country," he said. Robow's defection comes two months after the US withdrew a \$5 million reward for his capture and removed him from its list of sponsors of terrorism. In early April, Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo" announced a 60-day amnesty for Al-Shabaab militants while also offering to open talks with the movement's leadership. Reports indicate that roughly 50 of the group's members, including some high-level individuals, have surrendered since Farmajo's announcement.

Speaking during an 18 August event to mark World Humanitarian Day in Mogadishu, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia Peter de Clercq commended aid workers and volunteers for their contribution to serving humanity and averting a famine that threatened Somalia earlier this year, thanking them for risking their lives on a daily basis to save the lives of others in distress. He noted that humanitarian workers had not only suffered death, injuries and abductions but also expulsion from the country in the course of fulfilling their duties, noting that more than 100 incidents targeting humanitarian workers had been reported thus far in 2017 and that four aid workers had been killed. Somalia's Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs, Mohamed Moalim, also spoke, promising that the government would provide

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2372](#) (30 August 2017) reauthorised AMISOM until 31 May 2018. [S/RES/2358](#) (14 June 2017) renewed the mandate of UNSOM until 31 March 2018. [S/RES/2346](#) (23 March 2017) was a technical rollover of UNSOM's mandate until 16 June 2017. [S/RES/2275](#) (24 March 2016) extended the mandate of UNSOM. [Secretary-General's Report S/2017/408](#) (9 May 2017) was on Somalia. [Security Council Letter S/2017/404](#) (5 May 2017) was a strategic assessment of the UN presence in Somalia. [Security Council Press Statement SC/12944](#) (3 August 2017) condemned the terrorist attack of 30 July 2017 perpetrated by Al-Shabaab against the Ugandan contingent of AMISOM in Garyowein, Lower Shabelle.

Somalia

humanitarian workers and needy civilians with protection.

UNSOM's mandate was renewed on 14 June when the Council adopted resolution 2358, which extends the mandate until 31 March 2018. The resolution followed the strategic assessment of the UN presence in Somalia, requested by resolution 2275, that was transmitted to the Council on 5 May. The assessment concluded that UNSOM's overall concept as a political mission should be retained, with its core tasks being to provide good offices and strategic advice on peace-building and state-building, to coordinate international support, to build the capacity of federal and state institutions, and to monitor and report human rights violations. However, one of the main recommendations was that the mandate should be adapted to integrate support at the level of federal member states in all areas of the mandate and that the functions of the mission's presence at federal and state levels should be clarified. Taking note of this, the resolution requested UNSOM to implement its mandate at both the national and regional levels, including

through maintaining and further strengthening its presence in all federal member states, subject to UN security requirements and as the security situation allows.

On 30 August, the Council adopted a resolution renewing the authorisation of AMISOM until 31 May 2018. It also authorised a reduction of AMISOM personnel by 31 December to a maximum of 21,626 (a reduction of 500 uniformed personnel).

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 36th session in September, the Human Rights Council is set to hold an interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Bahame Tom Mukirya Nyanduga, to consider his latest report (A/HRC/36/62).

Key Issues and Options

Ensuring that UNSOM is properly equipped to support the Somali government in the three priority areas outlined by the strategic assessment—state-building, security strategy, and socio-economic reform—is the key issue. Thus, Council members can take the opportunity in consultations to discuss how

the mission can best help the government in facilitating key political processes, such as the constitutional review, preparations for one-person, one-vote elections, and establishing a functional federal state, as well as advising and assisting the government on security matters and promoting economic development. Council members could also explore ways in which the mission can support the government's call for members of Al-Shabaab to lay down their weapons and how the Council can promote further calls for defection.

Council Dynamics

On Somalia generally, Council members are united in supporting state-building processes and in their support for UNSOM, as demonstrated by unified messages conveyed during the Council's visit to Somalia in May 2016 and the uncontentious adoption of several recent Council outcomes on Somalia.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia, and Kazakhstan is the chair of the 751/1907 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee for 2017.

Lake Chad Basin

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council will receive a briefing on the Secretary-General's report on the Lake Chad Basin. The Council requested the report, which is expected to be distributed to members by 30 August, in resolution 2349 adopted in March following its visiting mission to the Lake Chad Basin region.

Key Recent Developments

Recent months have seen an intensification of attacks by the terrorist group Boko Haram, especially in north-eastern Nigeria, with repeated strikes around Maiduguri and nearby internally displaced persons (IDP) sites. On 7 June, Boko Haram launched a series of raids in Maiduguri in which 14 people were killed. This was the group's largest attack in the capital city of Borno state

in a year and a half. Seventeen people were killed, including five female suicide bombers, in an attack on Kofa village outside Maiduguri on 18 June. On 25 and 26 June, four suicide bombers killed a further 16 people in Maiduguri. Following deadly suicide attacks against two IDP camps outside the city on 24 July, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Nigeria, Edward Kallon, issued a statement condemning the strikes and noting "the recent accelerating trend of attacks on civilians in north-east Nigeria". In June and July alone, according to OCHA, 60 female suicide bombers were involved in attacks across Borno state.

On 25 July, Boko Haram ambushed an oil exploration team from the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and University of Maiduguri in Magumeri, Borno. Some 50 Nigerian soldiers, members of the civilian

joint task force, and other civilians were killed, and an unknown number abducted. During August, attacks continued, including the killing of 31 fishermen on 5 and 6 August in Kukawa, Borno, and an estimated 40 people died in an attack in Madagali, Adamawa state, on 10 August. Boko Haram also intensified attacks in the far north of Cameroon, including 18 suicide bombings in June and nine in July, according to the International Crisis Group. Boko Haram continues to threaten Niger's Diffa region and border areas of Chad.

The Lake Chad Basin region faces a dire humanitarian situation as a result of the long-running violence associated with Boko Haram. More than 2.3 million people are displaced across the region. According to OCHA's 11 August crisis update, "food insecurity and malnutrition have reached critical levels" across the four countries of the Lake

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE LAKE CHAD BASIN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2349 (31 March 2017) was on the Lake Chad Basin crisis. Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2017/14 (9 August 2017) was on the threat of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan, and north-eastern Nigeria. S/PRST/2017/10 (24 July 2017) was on the activities of UNOWAS, welcoming the subregional, regional and international efforts to mitigate the security, humanitarian and development consequences of Boko Haram and reiterating deep concern over the humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin region. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8022 (10 August 2017) was a briefing by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed on her recent visit to Nigeria and the DRC.

Lake Chad Basin

Chad Basin. Over seven million food-insecure people are classified as being at crisis and emergency levels, of whom 5.2 million are in Nigeria's northeast, with 1.5 million in Cameroon, 340,000 in Niger, and 123,000 in Chad. As of 8 August, only 39.6 percent of the \$1.5 billion in funding that OCHA says is required in 2017 to address the Lake Chad Basin crisis had been provided.

There was a notable spike in Nigerian refugees returning from Cameroon to Borno state in recent months. In May alone, 12,000 Nigerians returned, raising concerns that the refugees were being forced to return by the government of Cameroon, which the latter denies. On 2 March, Cameroon signed a tripartite agreement with Nigeria and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees.

The Security Council undertook a visiting mission to the four affected countries of the Lake Chad Basin—Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria—from 2 to 7 March. The mission was organised to focus more attention on the situation and for members to gain a better understanding of the scale of the humanitarian crisis and the root causes of the conflict. A common message pressed upon members was the need to bring under control the humanitarian emergency and the conflict's underlying causes, such as poverty, underdevelopment, poor governance, and the shrinking of Lake Chad, a key source of water and livelihoods for the whole region. These are factors, according to government and UN officials that the Council met with, that have fostered radicalisation and, unless addressed, are likely to cause continued instability.

On 31 March, the Council adopted resolution 2349, its first on Boko Haram and the Lake Chad Basin crisis. The resolution outlines the security situation and protection needs of civilians, the humanitarian crisis, and the conflict's root causes and development challenges. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to submit within five months a report assessing the situation, "particularly regarding the progress made and remaining challenges, and possible measures for consideration, including with respect to achieving greater coherence of efforts in the context of overlapping regional strategies".

The humanitarian crisis was discussed during a 16 June Arria-formula meeting on the threat of famine in the conflict-affected

situations of Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-eastern Nigeria. The Council subsequently adopted a 9 August presidential statement on the threat of famine facing these four countries that, inter alia, reiterated the Council's calls on all parties to allow safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance and called on donors to immediately disburse pledged funds, including those committed at the Oslo donor conference on 24 February for Nigeria and the Lake Chad region. It further requested the Secretary-General to provide an oral briefing in October with specific recommendations on how to address impediments to a more effective response to the risk of famine in these four countries.

The Council more recently discussed the conflict's impact on women and girls when Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohamed briefed it on 10 August about her recent visit to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mohamed stressed that women and girls have been subjected to forced marriages and used as suicide bombers, while many associated with Boko Haram face stigmatisation upon returning to their communities. She also highlighted the widespread sexual exploitation of IDPs.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 8 June, the Committee on the Rights of the Child published its concluding observations on Cameroon, expressing concern at persistent discrimination, ongoing police violence (possibly amounting to torture), and prolonged pre-trial detention of children suspected of association with Boko Haram.

On 24 July, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) published its concluding observations on Niger and Nigeria. With regards to Niger, CEDAW expressed concern that no strategic policy or legislative response exists to address the "extremely precarious conditions of displaced women and girls" in Niger, which is particularly aggravated in the Lake Chad region. CEDAW noted that displaced women and girls are at risk of sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage, human trafficking, forced prostitution, and abduction by terrorist groups. It also pointed out that there is no independent mechanism to investigate allegations of such human rights violations by state forces and terrorist groups. On Nigeria, CEDAW commended the country for its efforts in the fight against Boko Haram's insurgency and the rescue of over 100 abducted girls, but it remained concerned by the significant number of girls who have yet to be rescued and continue to be subjected to rape,

sexual slavery, forced marriage and impregnation by members of Boko Haram. CEDAW also expressed concern that the military and law enforcement officials have carried out blanket arrests and detentions of women and girls suspected of being radicalised by, or associated with, Boko Haram. Also of concern was the reported sexual exploitation taking place in camps for IDPs.

Key Issues and Options

The Secretary-General's report is expected to provide an update about the security and humanitarian situations in the four affected countries and to review efforts to implement resolution 2349. This includes support for the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)—the regional force composed of Lake Chad Basin countries and Benin to combat Boko Haram—as well as UN and broader international efforts to respond to the humanitarian crisis, protect human rights, and tackle root causes of the crisis. How the Council can remain engaged and support the efforts of the region, the UN system, and humanitarian partners will be an important issue.

The Council could adopt a presidential statement:

- commending the region's progress in combating Boko Haram, while expressing concern over the continued threat posed by the group;
- encouraging international support for the MNJTF and urging donors to fulfil pledges and provide additional funding to address the humanitarian crisis;
- reaffirming that counter-terrorism operations must comply with international humanitarian and human rights law and reiterating that the return of refugees and IDPs should be voluntary, safe and respectful of individual dignity; and
- stressing the need for the countries of the Lake Chad Basin to develop a regional strategy to address the root causes of the crisis, including through the Lake Chad Basin Commission or the AU.

Regarding follow-up reporting, the Council may request that this continue to be provided through the six-month reports of the UN's regional offices for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and for Central Africa (UNOCA), or it may request the Secretary-General to provide more regular, separate reports on the Lake Chad Basin.

Lake Chad Basin

Council Dynamics

Resolution 2349 was the first Council resolution related to the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin region despite the destructiveness and brutality of the conflict, which began in 2009. Nigeria long resisted its consideration by the Council, contending that it was an internal conflict. As it became clear in 2014 that Nigeria's response to the insurgency was failing and the violence drew in Nigeria's neighbours, there was more pressure on the Council to engage with the situation. The Council has usually been informed on the situation through the reporting of UNOWAS and UNOCA.

The UK organised an initial session on the Lake Chad Basin humanitarian crisis in July 2016 and was key in organising the Council visiting mission in March, which it co-led with France and Senegal. The mission to the Lake Chad Basin seemed useful in developing a common understanding among Council members of the crisis affecting the region, and the link between the conflict and the importance of addressing its underlying causes. This contributed to agreement on resolution 2349, which stands out among Council resolutions for the extent to which it focuses on root causes and development needs.

Ahead of the Council's expected consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the Lake Chad Basin, the Council will hold its annual consultations with the AU Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa. The Lake Chad Basin crisis is among the issues on the agenda.

France, particularly through its counter-terrorism Operation Barkhane deployed across the Sahel, as well as the UK and the US, provide support to the counter-insurgency efforts of the Lake Chad Basin countries.

The UK served as penholder for resolution 2349.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).

UNSMIL's mandate expires on 15 September, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee expires on 15 November 2018.

Key Recent Developments

Deep divisions remain between the parties despite the growing consensus regarding the need to amend some provisions of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). Outstanding issues are related to the mandate and structure of the Presidency Council and the authority of the supreme commander of the armed forces. Members of the delegations appointed by the eastern-based House of Representatives and the Tripoli-based High State Council have met informally in the Netherlands in recent months, but no formal negotiations have taken place. On 25 July, French President Emmanuel Macron convened a meeting between the head of the Presidency Council, Faiez Serraj, and the commander of the Libyan National Army (LNA), Khalifa Haftar, with the participation of the newly-appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ghassan Salamé. In a joint declaration after the meeting, Serraj and Haftar

committed to a ceasefire and to the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as possible. In his 22 August report, the Secretary-General warned that only a broad political agreement among political factions, competing state institutions, and security and societal actors "can create the enabling environment for elections."

On 29 July, the consensus committee of the Constitutional Drafting Assembly (CDA) adopted a draft constitution that requires approval in a referendum. Several members of the CDA challenged the legality of the proceedings. During a luncheon with Council members in August, Secretary-General António Guterres announced his intention to convene a meeting on Libya in the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly in September. At the meeting, Guterres is expected to outline a comprehensive strategy and an action plan for the engagement of the UN system in Libya. In his 28 August briefing, Salamé stressed that one of the most immediate tasks is to build a consensus on the meaning of the upcoming two year anniversary of the LPA and the end of the transitional period in December.

The security situation continues to be volatile. Despite efforts to implement security arrangements, the Presidency Council

continues to rely mostly on militias nominally loyal to it. While Haftar declared the "liberation of Benghazi from terrorism" on 5 July, fighting continues in some neighbourhoods. The LNA is also conducting military operations in Derna, resulting in the worsening of the humanitarian situation there. In another example of bilateral initiatives by member states seeking to advance the political process, Egypt convened two meetings between military delegations from Misrata and the LNA in late July. While it does not hold territory in Libya, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) remains active.

The strategic assessment of the UN's role in Libya conducted by the Department of Political Affairs recommended that the mission continue to focus on good offices and mediation efforts to:

- backstop the political transition in Libya by supporting key Libyan institutions;
- support efforts to secure uncontrolled arms and counter their proliferation;
- promote respect for and the protection of human rights and the rule of law; and
- coordinate international engagement.

In line with the recommendations of the review, the Secretary-General intends to reconfigure the senior leadership structure of UNSMIL, including by appointing a Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs.

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions 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/2357 (12 June 2017) renewed for an additional year the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels bound to or from Libya suspected to be violating the arms embargo. S/RES/2323 (13 December 2016) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2017. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/726** (22 August 2017) was the most recent report on Libya. **Security Council Press Statement SC/12933** (27 July 2017) welcomed the meeting between Serraj and Haftar as well as the joint declaration they issued. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8032** (28 August 2017) was a briefing by Salamé.

Libya

The mission will increase its presence in Tripoli first, with a plan to open offices in other regions at a later date. UNSMIL's guard unit (composed of Nepalese troops) is expected to arrive in Tripoli in September.

The situation of migrants and refugees in Libya, which was characterised in December 2016 as a "human rights crisis" by UNSMIL and OHCHR, continues to be critical. According to the International Organization for Migration, almost 98,000 persons had reached Italy in 2017 via the central Mediterranean Sea route as of 20 August. It is estimated that more than 2,200 refugees and migrants have died or gone missing trying to cross from Libya this year.

On 15 August, Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf al-Werfalli, a commander of the LNA allegedly responsible for war crimes committed between June 2016 and July 2017 in eastern Libya. Following the release of Saif al-Islam Gaddafi from Zintan, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda called on the Libyan authorities, the Security Council, state parties to the Rome Statute, and all other states to provide her office with any information regarding Gaddafi's whereabouts. He remains at large, and the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee has so far not updated his listing to reflect the current situation.

Sanctions-Related Developments

Resolution 2362, adopted on 29 June, added refined petroleum products to the commodities banned from illicit export from Libya. As a result of this change, the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee designated two vessels for transporting gasoil illicitly exported from Libya. The listings were made on 21 July and 2 August; the flag states of

the vessels were Tanzania and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 15 August, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Agnes Callamard, warned that a new code of conduct, drawn up by Italy and supported by the European Commission, imposes procedures on organisations rescuing migrants and refugees from the Mediterranean Sea that "could reduce the ability of NGOs to carry out life-saving activities" and result in more deaths. The code of conduct seeks to prevent privately operated ships from ferrying refugees to safety in Italy from waters off the Libyan coast. Callamard also warned that the European Commission's funding for the Libyan border and coast guards could lead to refugees and migrants who are returned to Libya being subjected to further "appalling violence". Noting that refugees and migrants in Libya face abuse and extreme violence, with some "being deliberately killed [and] others...dying as a result of torture, malnutrition and medical neglect", Callamard said that although the Libyan coast guard's search and rescue capabilities were in need of improvement, "this cannot happen in the absence of demonstrable guarantees that the rights of intercepted migrants and refugees will be respected". On 17 August, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Felipe González Morales, and the Special Rapporteur on torture, Nils Melzer, released a statement echoing Callamard's warnings and expressing concern that the European Commission was effectively trying to move Europe's borders to Libya.

During its 36th session in September, the Human Rights Council is set to hold an interactive dialogue on Libya in which the High Commissioner for Human Rights will present an oral update on the human rights situation in the country.

Key Issues and Options

The strategic assessment recommended that the mission prioritise reaching a political agreement. While most agree on the need to

end the political deadlock, deciding how to address the issues raised by those refusing to support the LPA remains elusive. The Council could visit Libya and the region to show a unified front, rebuild credibility among Libyans, underscore the added value and relevance of UN mediation efforts, and press external actors to ensure the coherence of their mediation efforts.

The Council could renew UNSMIL's mandate for a year, as recommended by the Secretary-General. While no radical changes may be made to the mandate, the Council could set a clear direction to reach and support a political settlement, by allowing Salamé the time and space to deliver results and by proactively supporting the work of the mission throughout the mandating cycle.

Council and Wider Dynamics

While the Council has expressed its unanimous support for efforts to reach a political settlement within the framework of the LPA, its members remain divided over the way forward to achieve a solution, including regarding the legitimacy of the different Libyan institutions and the role that Haftar may play in the future. As an illustration of this dynamic, Council members struggled to find a compromise over how to refer to Haftar in the 27 July press statement. In the end, he was referred to as "Commander of the LNA", in response to concerns that spelling out the reference to the LNA as the Libyan National Army would seem to imply an official role that some challenge.

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

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council will hold a briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The mandate of UNAMID expires on 30 June 2018.

Key Recent Developments

The level of armed hostilities in Darfur has

continued to be significantly lower than in previous years. Sudanese government forces now dominate Darfur and occupy most of the territory previously controlled by rebel groups. The unilateral ceasefire, declared by

UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2363 (29 June 2017) renewed the mandate of UNAMID for one year. S/RES/2340 (8 February 2017) renewed the mandate of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts until 12 March 2018. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/437 (18 May 2017) was the special report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the Secretary-General on the strategic review of UNAMID. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7969 (14 June 2017) was a UNAMID briefing. S/PV.7963 (8 June 2017) was a briefing by the ICC Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, on the situation in Darfur and cooperation with the ICC's work pursuant to resolution 1593. Sanctions-Related Documents SC/12903 (5 July 2017) was on the report of the chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee's visit to Sudan, which took place from 14 to 18 May. S/2017/22 (9 January 2017) was the Sudan Sanctions Committee's final report.

Sudan (Darfur)

the government of Sudan in mid-2016 and extended for a further three months in July, reportedly continues to be largely observed. While the overall security situation is improving, the region remains fragile, and an environment of instability persists.

Several key issues remain to be addressed, notably the presence of Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) fighters in the Jebel Marra region, unresolved intercommunal disputes over land and other resources, the prevalence of weapons and criminal violence, and weak rule-of-law institutions. On 7 August, the Sudanese government launched a campaign to collect illegal arms and unlicensed vehicles in the Darfur region, which Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has said is a top priority for the government. However, the campaign is so far reportedly facing several challenges, including refusals by tribal militias to hand over their arms.

There have been no reports of major displacements in 2017, but existing groups of internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to require significant protection and humanitarian assistance. The reported occupation of villages and land by armed militia previously associated with government forces, particularly in Jebel Marra, and general lawlessness have impeded the return of IDPs. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi paid his first official visit to Sudan in August. During his trip, he met President al-Bashir and welcomed the president's assurances that Sudan will continue providing safety to those fleeing conflict and persecution—including those who arrive from South Sudan and other countries in the region. According to OCHA, 4.8 million people require humanitarian assistance in Sudan, while only 23 percent of the \$804 million needed for humanitarian aid in Sudan for 2017 has so far been received.

On 29 June, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2363, renewing UNAMID's mandate for an additional year. The Council expanded the mandate to incorporate peacebuilding activities in currently stable areas while significantly reducing the mission's force structure. The changes are largely in line with recommendations made in the 18 May AU-UN strategic review, including a process of restructuring and redeployment, to be completed over the course of two successive six-month

phases. By the end of phase one, the authorised numbers of troops and police will be reduced from 15,845 and 3,403 to 11,395 and 2,888, respectively; by the end of phase two, the mission will consist of 8,735 troops and 2,500 police. Ahead of the second phase, beginning 1 January 2018, the Council requested the Secretary-General and the chairperson of the AU Commission to provide an assessment, allowing the Council an opportunity to delay or alter the second phase if needed. The assessment is expected to address progress in implementing phase one of UNAMID's reconfiguration, the impact of the phase one reductions on areas that UNAMID has withdrawn from, the government's cooperation with the mission, the removal of bureaucratic obstacles to the mission, and whether conditions on the ground are conducive to further reductions. The resolution also shortened the reporting period for UNAMID from 90 days to 60 days.

The Council was last briefed on UNAMID on 14 June by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, El-Ghassim Wane, on the AU-UN strategic review. Wane reported on the changes in UNAMID's operating environment and recommended the proposed restructuring, redeployment and refocusing of UNAMID to reflect the mission's "new realities". Key changes to UNAMID's priorities discussed by Wane included the recommended increased focus on the effective implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and an increased focus on the protection of civilians in the greater Jebel Marra area. On 8 June, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, briefed the Council on the situation in Darfur and the ICC's work pursuant to resolution 1593. Bensouda requested that the Council take action to respond to ongoing instances of non-compliance or non-cooperation relating to the situation in Darfur and the outstanding ICC arrest warrants.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee met on 3 July to discuss the report of the chair, Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko (Ukraine), on his 14 to 18 May visit to Sudan. Yelchenko briefed Council members in consultations on the work of the committee on 24 July.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue that Council members will want to follow closely is the effect of the troop reduction on the security situation.

Another key issue for the Council is to support efforts to break the ongoing impasse in the negotiations between the government and Darfuri rebel movements, leading to a durable cessation of hostilities and a final settlement. An option moving forward could be for the Council to consider seeking an African member as co-penholder on Darfur to share the pen with the current penholder, the UK, to enhance African involvement on this issue in the Council.

The Council may also need to tackle how to promote intercommunal reconciliation, given the high levels of intercommunal fighting in Darfur in recent years. An option for the Council could be to request the Joint Special Representative for Darfur and head of UNAMID Jeremiah Mamabolo to brief on the issue. Another option would be to organise an Arria-formula meeting with experts on intercommunal violence, to discuss its root causes and ways to bring opposing parties together.

Regarding the Sudan Sanctions Committee, the chair of the committee might consider holding the briefing in an open session, rather than in closed consultations, to enhance the transparency of the committee's work.

Council Dynamics

In a departure from previous years, and within a context of longstanding divisions in the Council regarding Darfur, improvements in stability in many parts of the region have created an opportunity for apparent unity amongst Council members on certain issues, including agreeing on improvements in the overall security situation, troop reductions, and the government's efforts to improve humanitarian access. Traditionally, some Council members, notably China and Russia, have tended to emphasise the importance of upholding the sovereignty of Sudan and improvements in the security situation in Darfur. Other members of the Council, such as France, Italy, Sweden, the UK, Ukraine, Uruguay and the US, have been critical of the government for committing human rights violations, restricting the operations of UNAMID, and fostering a culture of impunity in Darfur. While concerns remain, a number of

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these states have expressed the view that the government is making an effort to improve humanitarian access in the region and have welcomed reduced violence in Darfur. The

US, which has had longstanding bilateral sanctions against Sudan, is currently reviewing these measures.

The UK is the penholder on Darfur;

Ukraine chairs the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Counter-Terrorism

Expected Council Action

The Council is expected to hold two briefings on counter-terrorism in September.

Early in the month, the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), and the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Fang Liu, will brief the Council on security in civil aviation, in accordance with resolution 2309. The Council may adopt a presidential statement on the issue.

The head of the newly-created UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, will brief the Council for the first time in late September. The newly-appointed Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), Michèle Coninx (Belgium), is also likely to brief the Council.

Background to ICAO Briefing

ICAO was created as a specialised agency of the UN to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation. The Council has recognised the importance of ICAO for the implementation of Council resolutions, particularly with respect to sanctions. For example, in resolution 1617 of 29 July 2005, the Council welcomed the efforts of ICAO to prevent travel documents from being made available to Al-Qaida terrorists and their associates.

The interplay between civil aviation security and sanctions is also reflected in other Council resolutions. For example, resolution 2178 of 24 September 2014 on the threat of foreign

terrorist fighters calls on member states to require that airlines operating in their territories provide advance passenger information to the appropriate national authorities to detect the transit, by means of civil aircraft, of individuals on the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List and share this information in accordance with international obligations.

On the initiative of New Zealand, the Council held a ministerial-level meeting on the terrorist threat to civil aviation on 22 September 2016, during which it was briefed by Liu. At the meeting, the Council adopted resolution 2309, which called on member states to work within ICAO to ensure that its international security standards are reviewed, adapted and implemented to effectively address this threat. The resolution further encouraged continued cooperation between ICAO, the CTC, and the CTED on identifying gaps and vulnerabilities relevant to aviation security, and welcomed the cooperation between ICAO and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of aviation security. It also requested the CTC to hold a meeting within 12 months, in cooperation with ICAO, on the issue of terrorist threats to civil aviation and invited the Secretary General of ICAO and the Chair of the CTC to brief the Council on the outcomes of this meeting.

Key Recent Developments

The Council unanimously adopted resolution 2368 on 20 July renewing and updating the

1267/1989/2253 sanctions regime concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. The updates are intended to better reflect the current and evolving threat presented by Al-Qaida and ISIL. They focus on addressing in particular foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin; trafficking in persons and kidnapping for ransom by Al-Qaida and ISIL; and measures to restrict Al-Qaida and ISIL financing. The resolution also provides updates concerning the Office of the Ombudsperson, including communications among the Ombudsperson, the sanctions committee and petitioners. Negotiations on the resolution were prolonged to allow for agreement between the US and Russia on a new Annex III to the resolution (the agreement was reached prior to circulation of the draft resolution to all 15 Council members). The annex adds eight individuals or organisations to the 1267/1989/2253 Sanctions List. The US pushed for the inclusion of the annex due to frustrations on the part of some members over delays in the committee process, including holds being put on names. Russia had previously opposed the use of annexes to resolutions as a means of adding individuals to sanctions lists, arguing that the listing of individuals in resolutions undermines the credibility of the sanctions committee.

The Council held a briefing on “threats to international peace and security: preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons” on 2 August. Deputy Director of CTED Weixiong Chen, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Executive Director Yury Fedotov,

UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNTER-TERRORISM [Security Council Resolutions 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. [S/RES/2309](#) (22 September 2016) called on member states to work within ICAO to ensure that its international security standards are reviewed, adapted and implemented to effectively address the terrorist threat to civil aviation. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2016/6](#) (11 May 2016) focused on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8007](#) (20 July 2017) was on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, during which the Council adopted resolution 2368 renewing and updating the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida sanctions regime. [Security Council Press Statements SC/12960](#) (17 August 2017) condemned the terrorist attack in Barcelona, Spain, during which at least 13 people were killed and at least 80 were injured. [SC/12955](#) (14 August 2017) condemned the terrorist attack in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on the night of 13 August 2017, during which at least 18 people were killed and at least 18 were injured. [SC/12925](#) (24 July 2017) condemned the terrorist attack in Lahore, Pakistan, on 24 July that resulted in more than 80 people killed or injured, with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan claiming responsibility. [SC/12905](#) (7 July 2017) condemned a terrorist attack at a checkpoint in Rafah, Egypt, where at least 26 officers and soldiers from the Egyptian armed forces were killed or injured. [Sanctions Committee Documents SC/12962](#) (18 August 2017) was a press release about the addition of Shane Dominic Crawford to the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List for acting as a propagandist for ISIL. [S/2017/573](#) (7 August 2017) was the 20th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team assisting the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida sanctions regime.

Counter-Terrorism

Special Representative of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to the UN Emmanuel Roux, and Jehangir Khan of the UN Office on Counter-Terrorism briefed the Council (Fedotov briefed via video teleconference).

During the meeting, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2370 on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons. The resolution reaffirms existing obligations to refrain from providing any form of support to those involved in terrorist acts, including by eliminating the supply of weapons to terrorists. The Council further urged states to ensure their capacity to take legal action against those providing terrorists with weapons, implement marking and tracing procedures for weapons, and strengthen judicial, law enforcement, and border control capabilities.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/291 on 15 June, establishing the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism headed by a new Under-Secretary-General. It was decided that this official will also serve as Chair of the UN Task Force and Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre. Among other things, the office is to enhance coordination and coherence across the 38 Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force entities, strengthen the delivery of UN counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to member states, and ensure that due priority is given to counter-terrorism across the UN system and that preventing violent extremism is firmly rooted in the strategy. The office is to maintain a close relationship with the Security Council, strengthening existing links and developing new partnerships.

The Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team assisting the 1267/1989/2253 Sanctions Committee presented its 20th report to the Committee on 20 August. The report notes that there has been a decrease in the overall number of foreign terrorist fighters travelling to Iraq and Syria and that the financial situation of ISL continues to deteriorate. That said, the threat from ISIL continues to evolve. ISIL is still capable of sending funds outside the conflict zone to its supporters, and to motivate and enable attacks around the world. Al-Qaida and particularly its affiliates have demonstrated significant resilience in some areas, such as West Africa, East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and ISIL continues to establish a foothold in South-East Asia.

On 9 August the 1267/1989/2253 Sanctions Committee amended one entry on the sanctions list, and on 18 August Shane Dominic Crawford was listed for acting as a propagandist for ISIL.

Catherine Marchi-Uhel, the Ombuds-person responsible for reviewing requests for delisting from the 1267/1989/2253 Sanctions List, left her position for another UN post on 7 August. A replacement has yet to be named.

Key Issues and Options

The implementation of resolution 2309 and enhancing cooperation between the Council and its subsidiaries and ICAO will be an area of focus in September. The Council may issue a presidential or press statement encouraging further cooperation and requesting a future briefing by Liu.

More generally, a continuing issue for the 1267/1989/2253 Sanctions Committee and the CTC is to ensure that they are able to

address, within their respective mandates, the widening scope and various facets of the Council's counter-terrorism agenda.

Council members will look to hear from Coninx as to her approach and priorities, and may at a later time request the CTC, CTED and the Secretariat to focus on specific areas or trends related to counter-terrorism. Council members will also expect to hear from Voronkov about his plans for implementation of the mandate of the new Office of Counter-Terrorism, including his views as to his own role and priorities, and regarding the interaction between his office and the Council, the CTC and CTED.

Council Dynamics

The importance of counter-terrorism efforts continues to be one of the principal consensus issues in the Council. However, disagreement as to the methodology of implementation of counter-terrorism measures can be divisive amongst Council members. Currently, such an issue is the imposition of a trade embargo on ISIL-controlled territory. Russia has been a proponent of such an approach as a means of restricting the group's ability to generate revenue. However, some Council members, including the US, have practical concerns regarding the feasibility of imposing a full embargo on the shifting territory controlled by ISIL, and, furthermore, reservations that a trade embargo may negatively impact long-term stabilisation efforts in Iraq and Syria.

The US is the penholder on counter-terrorism; Kazakhstan is the chair of the 1267/1989/2253 Sanctions Committee, and Egypt chairs the CTC.

South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In September, the Security Council will consider the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the implementation of the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). It will also receive his monthly assessment of

the deployment and future requirements of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) and impediments to UNMISS in carrying out its mandate.

The mandate of UNMISS expires on 15 December.

Key Recent Developments

Conflict between government and opposition forces has continued, exacerbating the humanitarian catastrophe gripping the country. According to OCHA, some 6 million people, approximately half the population,

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOUTH SUDAN **Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/2353 (24 May 2017) extended the mandate of the South Sudan sanctions regime until May 2018. S/RES/2327 (16 December 2016) extended the mandate of UNMISS for one year and reauthorised the Regional Protection Force. S/RES/2304 (12 August 2016) authorised the Regional Protection Force. **Security Council Presidential Statement** S/PRST/2017/4 (23 March 2017) emphasised the need for a political solution to the conflict in South Sudan. **Secretary-General's Report** S/2017/505 (15 June 2017) was the 90-day report on UNMISS. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.8030 (24 August 2017) was a briefing by Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El-Ghassim Wane, Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom, and JMEC Chairman Festus Mogae.

South Sudan

are severely food-insecure. Some 1.89 million people are internally displaced persons (IDPs), and 1.97 million people have fled to neighbouring countries. Among the IDPs, approximately 218,000 people are being protected in seven UNMISS protection of civilians sites.

On 6 August, government forces seized Pagak, the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition headquarters, which is located in the Upper Nile region near South Sudan's border with Ethiopia. The government claimed it took the town while responding to an opposition offensive, while the opposition alleged that the attack was not provoked. At press time, the situation remained volatile as clashes continued, with the opposition again claiming control.

Deployment of the RPF, which was initially authorised in August 2016, is continuing. The Bangladeshi Construction Engineering Company has partially deployed to Juba, and the Nepalese High Readiness Company has fully deployed. The Rwandan infantry battalion began arriving in early August. Ethiopian troops who will participate in the RPF are expected to arrive shortly. There has still been no agreement regarding the RPF's mandate to protect Juba International Airport, with the government consistently reiterating that it needs to retain control over safeguarding the airport. The government issued a warning on 20 August regarding the deployment of RPF forces at the airport, which it alleges is not consistent with the Status of Forces Agreement, and temporarily grounded UN flights, which were allowed to resume the following day.

On 23-24 July, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Council of Ministers convened its 58th Extra-Ordinary session in Juba, to discuss efforts to revitalise the peace process in South Sudan. At the conclusion of the meeting, the participants adopted a communiqué in which they urged "all South Sudanese stakeholders to embrace the objectives of the High Level Revitalization Forum for the Implementation of the ARCSS [the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan]". According to the 12 June communiqué of the Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State held in Addis Ababa, the purpose of the Revitalization Forum is to discuss concrete measures to restore a permanent ceasefire, to

advance implementation of the peace agreement, and to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transition period. The forum is expected to convene in early October.

From 1 to 3 August, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix visited South Sudan. He met with President Salva Kiir, First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai, other senior government officials, and representatives of UNMISS and UN entities. He also visited the UN protection of civilians site in Malakal, which shelters some 30,000 people. During a press conference in Juba at the conclusion of his visit, Lacroix underscored the importance of IGAD's initiative to revitalise the peace process and said that efforts were being made to expedite the deployment of the RPF.

On 24 August, the Council was briefed by Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations El-Ghassim Wane, Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Nicholas Haysom, and Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) Chairman Festus Mogae. Wane began by highlighting that enhanced cooperation with the government would be critical for the RPF to carry out its mandate. He emphasised that the security situation remains of serious concern and that July saw the highest number of access incidents reported by the humanitarian community of any one month since December 2013.

Haysom, briefing via video teleconference from Addis Ababa, focused on the current five internal and regional initiatives to restart the political process, none of which have, he said, so far produced a definite breakthrough. The government has created an appearance of reconciliation and linked these efforts to the national dialogue initiative, while calling for political actors to prepare for elections in 2018, he said. He emphasised that the prevailing insecurity, displacement, and lack of appropriate institutions or a reasonably level political playing field, in an increasingly divided ethnic environment, militate against organising credible elections within the year. The holding of elections in this context might well contribute to deepening and extending the conflict, he said.

Mogae, briefing via video teleconference from Juba, stressed the need for the government to resolve controversies with UNMISS

on the deployment of the RPF. He discussed IGAD's upcoming High Level Revitalization Forum, saying its success requires demonstrable political will by the relevant parties to be inclusive; clear consequences for intransigent groups, spoilers and violators; and commitments by the parties to adhere to revised timelines and implementation schedules.

Following closed consultations, Council members issued elements to the press condemning the fighting in Pagak, demanding that the government cease obstructions to UNMISS and the RPF, noting the temporary grounding of UN flights, and reminding all parties that the obstruction of activities of international peacekeeping may be subject to sanctions under resolutions 2206 and 2290.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 36th session in September, the Human Rights Council is set to hold an enhanced interactive dialogue on the human rights situation in South Sudan, with representatives from OHCHR, the AU, the JMEC, the AU Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and other stakeholders invited to participate.

Key Issues and Options

The central issue for the Council remains how to support IGAD's efforts to revitalise the political process. Compelling the South Sudanese government and the opposition to implement a ceasefire and embrace an inclusive process has proved difficult.

Another issue is how much impact the deployment of the RPF, which is mandated to provide a secure environment in and around Juba, and other areas in extremis, will have on improving the security environment in South Sudan. While in Juba on 3 August, Lacroix maintained that the arrival of RPF units there would free up UNMISS units already in the capital to deploy to other insecure areas of the country.

Another key issue is how to encourage greater cooperation by the government and armed groups, including ending the ongoing violence against civilians, removing impediments to humanitarian access, and more broadly, working with UNMISS to enable it to fulfil its mandate.

The Council could consider adopting a presidential statement that:

- strongly condemns violence perpetuated by government forces and armed groups in South Sudan and calls for an immediate

South Sudan

- ceasefire;
- welcomes the communiqué of the 12 June IGAD Summit; and
- emphasises the Council's support for the High Level Revitalization Forum.

Coercive options that have been considered but not pursued because of divisions on the Council include an arms embargo on South Sudan, an assets freeze and travel ban on additional figures responsible for

the ongoing violence (other than those sanctioned in 2015), or both.

Council Dynamics

The Council remains divided on its approach to South Sudan. There is no consensus on the degree to which the Council should welcome the national dialogue as it is currently presented by the government of South Sudan. Some Council members are concerned that a

focus on the national dialogue may come at the cost of reviving the inclusive political process. Council members also remain divided over whether to incentivise cooperation by the South Sudanese government or whether the targeting of civilians by Sudan People's Liberation Army forces necessitates a strong response by the Council to push the South Sudanese government towards peace.

The US is the penholder on South Sudan.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council expects to receive a briefing from the Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Key Recent Developments

The war in Yemen continues amidst stalled efforts to resume political talks and against the backdrop of the world's largest humanitarian crisis. The conflict pits the Houthis, a Zaydi Shiite rebel group, and allied forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh against the Yemeni government and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition.

According to a report issued in August by the Yemen Protection Cluster, which is led by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, there were 5,676 airstrikes in Yemen during the first six months of 2017 compared to 3,936 in all of 2016. The average number of armed clashes per month was 56 percent higher for the first half of 2017 compared to 2016. Front lines have remained largely unchanged, but in late July Yemeni government and coalition forces captured the Khalid bin al-Walid military base in Taiz governorate, which oversees key roads linking Hodeidah, Mokha and Taiz.

In August, Yemeni government forces, reportedly numbering 2,000 troops, backed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and US special operations forces, began an offensive against Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Shawba governorate.

Amidst the fighting, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. On 16 July, OCHA announced that 20.7 million Yemenis

are in need of assistance, an increase of nearly 2 million people from its previous estimate of 18.8 million in January. Of these, seven million people are severely food insecure and at risk of famine. Since late April, an outbreak of cholera has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. On 14 August, the World Health Organization announced that total suspected cases had surpassed 500,000, with nearly 2,000 recorded deaths.

Fighting continues to produce large numbers of civilian casualties. After a 5 August airstrike killed at least 12 civilians in Saada, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, Jamie McGoldrick, issued a statement, labelling the airstrikes an example of the "brutality in which the conflict is being conducted" and indicative of the "disregard for the protection of civilians and the principle of distinction" that all parties to the conflict continue to show. A 20 August airstrike killed more than 20 civilians in Taiz, and a 23 August airstrike on a hotel in Sana'a governorate killed 33 civilians and wounded 25.

Recently there have been public signs of a fissure in the Houthi-Saleh alliance. Over the weekend of 19-20 August, Houthi leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi and Saleh exchanged public barbs. Al-Houthi suggested during a speech that the Saleh loyalist forces were not doing their share of the fighting, while Saleh accused the Houthis of dominating decision-making. The media reported heavier presences of both sides' forces on the streets of Sana'a. A rally in Sana'a on 24 August for the 35th anniversary of the founding of the General People's Congress, Saleh's political party,

drew tens of thousands amidst the tensions. On 26 August, clashes erupted at a checkpoint in Sana'a and a colonel loyal to Saleh and two Houthi-linked fighters were killed.

The Council met on Yemen on 18 August. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed, describing the humanitarian crisis as "a direct result of the deliberate policies, tactics and actions of the parties and their powerful proxies to the conflict". He highlighted continued obstructions and delays created by the Yemeni government and the coalition for critical commercial imports, described the closure of Sana'a airport to commercial flights by the coalition as "cruel and baseless", and drew attention to repeated diversions of aid by the Houthis, particularly in Taiz governorate. O'Brien stressed that responding to humanitarian needs in Yemen's north depended on access through Hodeidah's port and the Sana'a airport, and that proposed alternatives such as Aden's port were inadequate.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed, briefing via video teleconference from Amman, said that he was continuing to promote his plan to avert a possible coalition attack on Hodeidah's port and to restart the payment of civil servant salaries, while also trying to reach an agreement to reopen Sana'a's airport. Following consultations, Council members issued press elements, calling for, inter alia, the full implementation of the Council's 15 June presidential statement, which focused on the situation of Hodeidah's port and confidence-building measures.

On 9 August, the Council adopted a

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2017/14 (9 August 2017) was on the threat of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria. S/PRST/2017/7 (15 June 2017) stressed the importance of keeping all of Yemen's ports functioning, including Hodeidah. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8027 (18 August 2017) was a briefing on Yemen. S/PV.7999 (12 July 2017) was a briefing on Yemen.

Yemen

presidential statement on the risk of famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan, and north-east Nigeria, which, among other things, reiterated its calls on all parties to allow safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance and to facilitate access for essential imports of food, fuel and medical supplies and their distribution. On 21 August, the Council held an Arria-formula meeting on the role of the UN's humanitarian assistance partners in Yemen. O'Brien and the Supervisor General of Saudi Arabia's King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, Abdallah al-Rabeeh, briefed.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 31 July, the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee considered the mid-term update of the Yemen Panel of Experts. The coordinator of the panel, Ahmed Himmiche, provided a briefing on the 185-page report.

Among its observations, there were no new reports of maritime seizures of arms nor major seizures on land supply routes. All parties continue to commit violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, according to the report, which expressed concern that member states of the coalition are hiding behind "the entity" of the "coalition" to divert attention and shield themselves from state responsibility for violations by their forces during airstrikes. The panel writes that the coalition air campaign continues to have little operational or tactical impact on the ground and is only serving to stiffen civilian resistance. Other issues covered in the report include the proliferation of militia forces supported by coalition members outside Yemeni government control and the threat to Hadi's ability to govern the south; illegal detention practices by the government of Yemen, Houthi-Saleh forces and the UAE; sources of Houthi funding; and the activities of AQAP.

On 11 August, the committee agreed to the panel's three recommendations in the mid-term update. Most notable was the recommendation for the committee chair to engage with Saudi Arabia to request that it comply with reporting obligations under paragraph 17 of resolution 2216, which requires that inspections carried out in enforcing the targeted arms embargo against the Houthis and Saleh loyalist-forces be reported to the committee. The coalition has failed to report inspections of cargoes since the adoption of resolution 2216 over two years ago. The report said this failure undermines safeguards to ensure

that the sanctions regime is not used to achieve unilateral objectives and contributes to increased obstructions in the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 25 August, a spokesperson for OHCHR said that a 23 August airstrike by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition on a hotel in Sana'a governorate killed at least 33 civilians and injured another 25. Another coalition airstrike in Sana'a governorate the same day killed six civilians and injured 13, while a coalition airstrike the previous day in Sa'ada governorate killed a woman and two children. The spokesperson called for "comprehensive and impartial investigations" into the incidents. Since March 2015, OHCHR has documented over 5,000 civilian deaths in Yemen, but the "overall number is probably much higher", with some estimates suggesting more than 11,000 civilians have been killed since the conflict began, the spokesperson said.

During its 36th session in September, the Human Rights Council is set to consider the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Yemen (A/HRC/36/33).

Key Issues and Options

A key issue is getting the parties to implement the Council's 15 June presidential statement, which called for the Hodeidah port to remain open and for the resumption of salary payments to Yemen's civil servants, who have either not been paid or only paid sporadically over the past year. The statement also encouraged the rapid installation of new cranes to increase the port's capacity, the deployment of UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism monitors, and increased access through the Sana'a airport. Such measures are linked to addressing obstructions of humanitarian aid and commercial goods coming into and being distributed throughout Yemen, and are critical steps to better address Yemen's humanitarian crisis. They are also considered confidence-building measures towards resuming broader political talks.

A related issue for the Council is getting the parties to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law. Another issue of concern is the risk of further state

collapse, benefitting AQAP and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The Council may, therefore, wish to closely monitor the parties' actions in accordance with its June presidential statement and be prepared to exert further pressure through a follow-up statement or resolution, if they fail to follow through on the Council's calls. In the case of an escalation of violence or a worsening of the humanitarian situation, the Council could adopt a resolution demanding, inter alia, an immediate cessation of hostilities.

In light of the deteriorating humanitarian situation, the Council could seek monthly briefings on Yemen's humanitarian crisis.

Council and Wider Dynamics

While members agree that there is no military solution to the conflict and all express concern about the humanitarian crisis, bilateral interests and relationships, particularly with Saudi Arabia, have made the Yemen conflict difficult for the Council to address. Members are cautious about taking positions that are contrary to Saudi preferences. These have included Saudi Arabia's opposition to any new Council resolutions on the conflict. Other than the annual resolution to renew the Yemen sanctions regime, the Council's 15 June presidential statement was its first decision on Yemen in nearly 14 months.

Within the Council, Egypt, as a member of the coalition, and at times Senegal, champion Yemeni government and coalition positions. Russia has, at times, highlighted Houthi perspectives, arguing that Council outcomes should be more even-handed, but has also sometimes raised the humanitarian consequences of this conflict in the face of criticism regarding its role in Syria. Sweden has been keen to see the Council become more proactive and played an important role pressing for the agreement on the 15 June presidential statement and the presidential statement on famine.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen. Japan chairs the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council will hold its quarterly debate on Afghanistan, during which it will consider the latest Secretary-General's report on the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The Special Representative and head of UNAMA, Tadamichi Yamamoto, is expected to brief.

The mandate of UNAMA expires 17 March 2018.

Key Recent Developments

The ongoing Taliban offensive and the resurgence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have had particularly damaging effects on the civilian population in the country. The clashes between the Taliban and Afghan security forces have been intense as the Taliban pursues its objective to take greater control of country's territory and its population centres. At the moment, the Taliban controls around 10 percent and the government forces control some 60 percent of country's districts. The remaining 30 percent of districts are contested between the two. The US and Afghan security forces have continued to counter the activities of ISIL. On 11 July, the US airstrike in Kunar province killed a leader of ISIL in Afghanistan, Abu Sayed. Despite some successes by the US-led coalition in targeting the leadership of the group, ISIL still continues to launch attacks targeting civilians, especially the Shia Muslim population. In the latest attack targeting the Shia population which took place on 25 August, ISIL attacked a mosque in Kabul, killing at least 20 and wounding more than 40 people.

During the last debate on Afghanistan on 21 June, both Yamamoto and Council members emphasised the damaging effects of the deteriorating security situation. They also stressed the importance of reviving national reconciliation efforts and political dialogue. The months since the debate have been particularly violent throughout Afghanistan, with both ISIL and the Taliban launching a series of attacks. On three occasions, the Council issued press statements condemning the attacks, including after a 24 July attack carried out by the Taliban in Kabul in which more than 70 people were killed and after an

attack on a Shi'ite mosque in Herat province on 1 August that killed more than 90 people, for which ISIL affiliates claimed responsibility.

ISIL has also claimed responsibility for the 31 July attack on the Iraqi embassy in Kabul. One suicide bomber activated a bomb outside the embassy, after which several gunmen entered the building. Two Afghan nationals who were employees of the embassy were killed and several Afghan police officers were injured. After a standoff of several hours, Afghan police killed all the attackers. The Council issued a press statement condemning the attack.

On 20 August, UNAMA issued a special report on mass killings that took place in early August in the predominantly Shi'ite village of Mirza Olang in the Sayyad district of Sari Pul province. An investigation by UNAMA confirmed that Taliban and self-proclaimed ISIL fighters killed at least 36 people in the village. Among the dead were both civilians and at least seven members of a pro-government militia. Initially, local Afghan officials claimed that more than 50 people were killed and that some of the victims were beheaded, but UNAMA's investigation could not validate such claims. The attack on Mirza Olang village is a rare case of cooperation between the Taliban and ISIL; the two groups have clashed on many occasions in the past.

When the Council extended UNAMA's mandate in March, it requested the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of the mission with the aim of examining mandated tasks, priorities and related resources. The review team headed by Under-Secretary-General Ján Kubiš held meetings with a variety of stakeholders in both Afghanistan and New York. One of the main general recommendations of its report is that the UN mission's ultimate goal in the upcoming period should be to "support all efforts to reach sustainable peace and self-reliance in Afghanistan". Among its main findings was a recognition of the added value of UNAMA as an impartial actor that could play an important mediating role.

The Secretary-General recommended that UNAMA increase its role in supporting and promoting bilateral and multilateral

cooperation with the aim of enhancing international support for the Afghan peace process. Regarding structural and staff changes, the Secretary-General recommended abolishing the military, police and rule of law advisory units. His report recommends closure of the UN office in Farah province and exploring the possibility of further nationalising functions in remaining provincial offices. Furthermore, the Secretary-General recommended exploring the option of reducing international staff and forming smaller multidiscipline teams. He recommended that the findings of the strategic review be integrated into the next UNAMA mandate.

On 21 August, US President Donald Trump unveiled a new strategy for the war in Afghanistan. Trump said that the US would deploy additional troops to Afghanistan without specifying exact numbers, although media reports point towards an increase of 4,000 troops. He also accused Pakistan of providing safe havens to terrorist organisations and called on the country to cooperate with the US in its efforts in Afghanistan. Regarding US objectives in Afghanistan, Trump said that the US will not engage in nation-building but rather confront the terrorist threat.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 24 August, the Council adopted a presidential statement confirming that the Council has reviewed the implementation of resolution 2255 and that no further adjustment to the measures outlined in the resolution were necessary at that time. The Council adopted resolution 2255 in December 2015 to clarify how the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee functions and to reflect the changing conflict dynamics in the country. The resolution called on the Council to review the implementation of the measures outlined in the resolution by August 2017.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 17 July, OHCHR and UNAMA released a joint report on civilian casualties in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 January to 30 June. The report concluded that the numbers of civilians killed and injured in the first half of the year persisted at the same record high levels as last year, with a total of 1,662 killed (a 2 percent increase) and 3,581 injured (a 1 percent decrease). There was also a rise in the number of women and children killed and injured, with casualty figures

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2344 (17 March 2017) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2018. S/RES/2255 (21 December 2015) clarified how the 1988 Afghanistan sanctions regime functions in the context of changing conflict dynamics in Afghanistan. Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/15 (24 August 2017) was on the review of the implementation of the measures outlined in resolution 2255. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/696 (10 August 2017) was on the strategic review of UNAMA. S/2017/508 (15 June 2017) was on UNAMA. Sanctions Committee Document S/2017/573 (7 August 2017) was the 20th report of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida/Taliban Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. Security Council Press Statements SC/12939 (2 August 2017) was on the terrorist attack in Herat, Afghanistan. SC/12935 (31 July 2017) was on the terrorist attack on the embassy of Iraq in Kabul. SC/12924 (24 July 2017) was on the terrorist attack in Kabul.

Afghanistan

for women up 23 percent and child casualties up 1 percent (with the number of children killed increased by 9 percent), reversing a decline in 2016. The report attributed 67 percent of casualties to anti-government elements (including the Taliban and ISIL), a 12 percent increase from 2016, and 18 percent to pro-government forces, a 21 percent decrease from 2016, with the remainder caused by unattributed cross-fire or other means. In a statement accompanying the release of the report, the High Commissioner for Human Rights emphasised that as "horrifying" as the statistics in the report are, they "can never fully convey the sheer human suffering of the people of Afghanistan", with each casualty figure reflecting a "broken family, unimaginable trauma and suffering, and the brutal violation of people's human rights".

Key Issues and Options

There are several inter-related issues that the Council faces with regard to Afghanistan. First, the security situation in Afghanistan has continued to deteriorate, taking an increasingly heavy toll on the civilian population and undermining the country's stability. The presence of ISIL in Afghanistan has further complicated the security environment. Second, there continues to be a link between the insurgency and illicit activities related to drug production and trafficking and the exploitation of natural resources. Third, amidst ongoing fighting between the government and Taliban forces, efforts to promote reconciliation have continued to falter. Fourth, the regional context remains difficult, with recurring cross-border tensions between

Afghanistan and Pakistan, including accusations that Pakistan provides a safe haven for insurgents. Fifth, there are growing concerns that factionalism within the government has created political tensions.

Addressing these interlinked issues has been challenging for the Council. One option is to initiate a visiting mission to Afghanistan, to show the Council's support for counter-insurgency, reconciliation, and anti-corruption efforts, and to learn how it could further assist efforts on the ground. A smaller mission, consisting of members with an especially keen interest in and engagement on the issue, rather than one of all 15 members, might be easier to organise, given security concerns.

Another option would be for the Council to adopt a resolution or presidential statement that:

- deplores the high number of civilian casualties and demands that all sides avoid killing and injuring civilians, stressing that targeting civilians is a war crime;
- encourages efforts toward political inclusivity and dialogue within the government;
- underscores the need for the international community, and particularly neighbouring countries, to support and cooperate with Afghanistan;
- emphasises the importance of development assistance in promoting Afghanistan's stability; and
- calls for accountability for crimes committed.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain concerned about the worsening security environment in Afghanistan and its impact on the civilian population. The renewed prominence of ISIL and its violent tactics have added another dimension to the conflict, with the potential to deepen ethnic and sectarian tensions. Among permanent members, Russia has been particularly vocal in emphasising the urgency of the threat of ISIL, while expressing disappointment that some members have in its view tried to downplay the significance of this issue. Several Council members, most notably France, Egypt, Russia and Kazakhstan, continue to raise concerns regarding the connection between the insurgency and drug production and trafficking.

Kazakhstan and Russia have also stressed the important role of regional organisations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in addressing the situation in Afghanistan. During the last debate, Kazakhstan noted that the Council should review its approach to Afghanistan with the aim of strengthening regional cooperation, while UNAMA should play a greater role in facilitating Afghanistan's integration with its Central Asian neighbours.

Japan is the penholder on Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan chairs the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In September, Council members expect to receive the monthly briefings on political and humanitarian developments in Syria and on chemical weapons.

Key Recent Developments

Iran, Russia and Turkey have yet to agree on the operational and technical aspects of the de-escalation areas that were announced in May in Astana. However, several initiatives by

relevant member states have led to measures aimed at curbing violence. On 23 August, a monitoring centre was established in Amman for the de-escalation area in south-western Syria, agreed to by the US and Russia, along with Jordan, in early July. In July and August, Russia and Egypt brokered ceasefire agreements in Eastern Ghouta and Homs. Despite the deployment of Russian military police to ensure compliance, the Syrian government has repeatedly violated the ceasefire in those

two areas. During consultations on 14 July, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura emphasised the need to ensure that the de-escalation areas are a temporary measure and highlighted the importance of preserving the national unity and territorial integrity of Syria.

Since the end of the seventh round of the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva on 14 July, de Mistura's team has convened opposition experts as part of a technical process to address constitutional and legal issues. The

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2336 (31 December 2016) welcomed efforts by Russia and Turkey to end the violence in Syria and promote a political process. S/RES/2319 (17 November 2016) and S/RES/2118 (27 September 2013) were on chemical weapons. S/RES/2254 (18 December 2015) was on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. Secretary-General's Report S/2017/733 (24 August 2017) was on the humanitarian situation. Security Council Letters S/2017/693 (28 July 2017) was from Russia's Defence Minister on the willingness to ensure the safe passage of humanitarian convoys in de-escalation areas. S/2017/658 (28 July 2017) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. S/2017/638 (25 July 2017) expressed concerns regarding the lack of humanitarian access by members of the Geneva-based humanitarian task force. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8015 (27 July 2017) was a briefing by Mueller.

Syria

government has also been invited to participate, but has so far refused to attend these meetings between rounds of talks. Following the postponement to mid-September of the Astana meeting to discuss the implementation of the ceasefire and de-escalation areas, it remains unclear whether there will be a new round of talks in Geneva this month. Members of the opposition groups (including the High Negotiations Committee and the Moscow and Cairo platforms) met in Riyadh in late August to identify areas of convergence and explore the possibility of forming a unified delegation ahead of the next round of talks. A meeting of the contact group proposed by France on 13 July to support UN efforts to broker a political settlement is expected to be convened in New York in the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly.

A 28 July letter by the director of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) said that the security situation now allows safe access for the OPCW's secretariat to confirm the condition of the last two stationary chemical weapons production facilities included in Syria's original declaration. On 16 August, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, briefed Council members in consultations on progress in the destruction of Syria's declared stockpile of chemical weapons. At the meeting, the US expressed its intention to table a resolution ensuring accountability for chemical weapons attacks before the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the OPCW and the UN releases its final substantive reports on two recent attacks, which are expected in October. On 21 August—the fourth anniversary of the chemical weapons attack by the government in Ghouta, which led to the adoption of resolution 2118—the US demanded that the Syrian government cease its use of chemical weapons, fully declare all of its chemical weapons stockpiles, and cooperate with the OPCW and the JIM.

Ursula Mueller, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, briefed the Council on 27 July via video teleconference from Jordan. Mueller stressed the ongoing difficulties with humanitarian access, especially in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Despite the drop in violence in some parts of the country, humanitarian convoys continue to be delayed and blocked by bureaucratic

restrictions that limit their ability to get to civilians living in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. OCHA has repeatedly stressed that the Syrian government imposes the most egregious restrictions, while other groups operating in areas not controlled by the government also implement procedures that impinge upon humanitarian operations and violate humanitarian principles. Mueller also discussed how the intensification of fighting between non-state armed opposition groups in Idlib governorate resulted in civilian casualties. The border crossing of Bab al-Hawa was closed for a week in late July, negatively impacting UN cross-border operations and the delivery of humanitarian aid.

In a 28 July letter to de Mistura, Russia's Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, expressed the willingness of Russian military police units to ensure the safe passage of humanitarian convoys in coordination with Syrian authorities in the Southern and Eastern Ghouta de-escalation areas. The Council was briefed by Russia in consultations on 9 August under “any other business” on the contents of this letter and the role of these units in the de-escalation areas. On 17 August, an aid convoy reached the besieged town of Douma for the first time since May, after Russian military police stationed along the route secured the road.

The Syrian government and the US-led coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continue to separately target ISIL positions in Deir ez-Zor. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—which include the Kurdish armed group YPG—pursue their offensive against ISIL in Raqqa with the support of the coalition. As the humanitarian crisis mounts, Jan Egeland, senior humanitarian adviser to de Mistura, urged members of the humanitarian task force on 24 August to “do whatever is possible to make it possible for people to escape Raqqa”.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement on 3 August, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria of the Human Rights Council (HRC) called on the international community to recognise that the crime of genocide was being committed by ISIL against the Yazidis and to “undertake steps to refer the situation to justice, including to the International Criminal Court or an ad hoc tribunal with relevant geographic and temporal jurisdiction as well as to dedicate resources to bringing cases

before national courts”.

On 6 August, the Commission of Inquiry released a statement confirming that one of its three commissioners, Carla Del Ponte, had resigned. The statement said that Del Ponte had informed her fellow commissioners in mid-June of her intention to step down. Del Ponte was quoted in media reports as saying she was resigning because the Commission of Inquiry “is not backed by any political will” and she has “no power as long as the Security Council does nothing”. In its statement, the Commission of Inquiry said that it would continue its investigations as it had an “obligation to persist in its work on behalf of the countless number of Syrian victims of the worst human rights violations and international crimes known to humanity”.

During its 36th session in September, the HRC is set to hold an interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry to consider its latest report (A/HRC/36/55).

Key Issues and Options

More than six years since the start of the war, the essential issue is whether the Council can rise above P5 divisions and exert leadership in efforts to reach a political solution. However, the options at the disposal of Council members are limited by those divisions.

The ceasefire and de-escalation initiatives raised the expectations of many inside and outside Syria. Ensuring that these are fulfilled and improve the living conditions for 13.5 million civilians in need, without promoting a de facto partition of the country, should be a key priority of the international engagement. Once details are worked out by the countries involved, Council members could be informed about the operationalisation of the ceasefire and de-escalation agreements, and discuss whether the Council has any role to play in supporting the monitoring mechanisms needed to enforce them.

As international efforts against ISIL continue, ensuring coherence of stabilisation initiatives with UN efforts aimed at brokering a political settlement is important so as not to create conditions on the ground that undermine such efforts. Some regional and international actors prioritise expediting the return of refugees to Syria. The Council could hold a session to hear directly from refugees and UNHCR and reaffirm the right of all Syrians to seek asylum and enjoy refugee protection until conditions are conducive for voluntary return in safety and in dignity.

Syria

Council and Wider Dynamics

Divisions in the Council persist on Syria. On 27 July, Russia rejected the inclusion of language proposed by the UK in press elements on the humanitarian situation that would have criticised the Syrian government for the difficulties imposed regarding humanitarian access and for the forcible removal of medical supplies. The UK then objected to the press elements that had been presented by the humanitarian penholders, and these were not released. During Russia's presentation of its involvement in ensuring humanitarian access to de-escalation areas on 9

August, the US and the UK criticised that this is only happening in places that Russia considers as priorities and that the Syrian government continues to be the main obstacle to the delivery of humanitarian aid. The US initiative of drafting a resolution regarding accountability for attacks with chemical weapons is unlikely to bridge Council divisions. Iran, Russia and Turkey continue to discuss the delineation of de-escalation areas and confidence-building measures, but divergent priorities have prevented them from delivering as a tripartite mechanism.

As has been the case in the past on Syria,

Council members' engagement has been limited to following the lead taken by key actors outside the Council. However, if progress on the establishment of de-escalation areas leads to the deployment of third-party monitoring mechanisms, it is likely that such a decision would be dealt with in the Council. The presentation in September of France's initiative to create a contact group to support efforts for a political solution will show whether this new effort can contribute to exerting pressure on the parties and increased coordination by member states—including regional actors—regarding Syria.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In September, the Council will continue to watch the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) closely, and a briefing may be requested depending on developments.

The mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) expires on 31 March 2018.

Key Recent Developments

Lack of progress in implementing the 31 December 2016 agreement on the electoral process and a transitional government, heightened political repression, and increased violence in different parts of the country have continued to require the Council's attention.

On 9 July, the president of the DRC electoral commission, Corneille Nangaa, suggested that the timelines needed for voter registration would make it difficult to meet the December 2017 deadline. President Joseph Kabila has made statements that suggest he does not believe elections must occur this year, and various political figures supporting the government have already suggested timetables for elections that stretch into 2018.

The 15 August report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the agreement confirms an increasing trend of

violations of political freedoms, compounded by an absence of investigations and accountability for human rights violations. It concludes that failure to create conditions conducive to the holding of timely, peaceful, transparent and credible elections enabling a peaceful transfer of power could deepen the political crisis and have grave results.

In a statement on 1 August, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for the DRC and head of MONUSCO Maman Sidikou expressed concern about the more than 120 arbitrary arrests and detentions, including of local and international media representatives, which occurred in various areas of the DRC on 31 July, following peaceful civil society demonstrations calling for the holding of elections before the end of the year. Anti-Kabila protests in early August reportedly resulted in 27 deaths as government forces attempted to disperse crowds.

The violence in the Kasai region continues. Intercommunal violence and clashes between militias and government forces in the region began in August 2016 when the leader of the Kamwina Nsapu militia was killed in fighting with the DRC police. According to UNHCR, approximately 30,000 people fled the Kasai to Angola between April and 22 June, and 1.3 million people are internally displaced.

On 22 August, Under-Secretary-General

for Safety and Security Peter Drennan briefed Council members under "any other business" on the conclusions of the Secretary-General's Board of Inquiry regarding the murder in March of two members of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee's Group of Experts, Zaida Catalán (Chile/Sweden) and Michael Sharp (US).

The report itself was not shared with Council members; however, they received the executive summary on 16 August. Regarding the murders, the board found that it was likely that militia groups were responsible for the deaths of Catalán and Sharp and that further investigation is needed to determine the exact identity of the perpetrators. It recommends a further criminal investigation by the DRC with the support of other member states.

The board also reviewed the UN's security procedures related to the safety of panels of experts. It recommended a review of the management of their activities and a review and adjustment of support arrangements for groups of experts to enable the safe and effective implementation of their mandates. After inquiries from Council members, Drennan said he will keep them updated as to the follow-up on these recommendations.

The report was also briefly discussed during the Secretary-General's monthly luncheon with Council members on 17 August.

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2360 (21 June 2017) renewed the DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts. S/RES/2348 (31 March 2017) renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 31 March 2018. **Secretary-General's Report S/2017/712** (15 August 2017) was on the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016. **Security Council Letter S/2017/713** (15 August 2017) was a letter from the Secretary-General containing the executive summary of the Board of Inquiry's report on the murder of two members of the DRC Sanctions Committee's Group of Experts. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8026** (17 August 2017) was a briefing by the chair of the DRC Sanctions Committee on the Group of Experts' final report. **Sanctions Committee Documents SC/12959** (17 August 2017) was a press release on the 4 August open briefing of the DRC Sanctions Committee. **S/2017/672/Rev.1** (8 August 2017) was the final report of the Group of Experts.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Secretary-General raised various options regarding the way forward with the investigation, along the lines suggested in the board's report. One such option included a DRC investigation with some UN assistance.

On 17 August, the chair of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), briefed the Council on the final report of the Group of Experts. The group's report called on the Council to mandate the Secretary-General to establish an independent international investigation into Catalán and Sharp's murder. During the meeting, several Council members raised concerns about the continuing political crisis in the DRC and the lack of progress in implementing the 31 December 2016 agreement. The US, for example, said that in the absence of a clear election timeline, it will pursue stronger sanctions in the Council. It added that while many of the attacks are perpetrated by armed groups, the government also violates human rights, thus casting doubt on its legitimacy. Russia, on the other hand, warned against any sweeping attempts to blame government forces for the violence until further investigations are conducted.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 4 August, the DRC Sanctions Committee held an open briefing with interested member states on the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the DRC. Following the chair's opening remarks, the permanent representative of the DRC, Ambassador Ignace wa Lufuta; the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit; the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Zachary Muburi-Muita; and the Acting Coordinator of the Group of Experts, Zobel Behalal, also delivered statements.

The Group of Experts' final report tracks the continuing violence by armed groups in the eastern DRC. It notes that these groups are becoming further fragmented, operating in a more decentralised but heavily networked manner, with foreign and local armed groups increasingly interconnected. The report emphasises that the gold sector continues to suffer from the lack of a traceability system, and gold from conflict areas continues to be illegally exported.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The High Commissioner announced on 26 July, the appointment of three international experts

to investigate human rights abuses in the Kasai region as mandated by Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution 35/33 of 22 June. The team of experts is expected to investigate reports of "recruitment and use of child soldiers, sexual and gender-based violence, destruction of houses, schools, places of worship, and state infrastructure by local militias, as well as of mass graves" and to present their findings to the HRC in June 2018.

In a 4 August report, OHCHR warned that violence in the Kasai region has taken on "a more pronounced ethnic dimension" with human rights abuses and violations documented against at least 282 victims (including 251 extrajudicial and targeted killings) between 12 March and 19 June. According to the report, the ethnic dimension of the violence has increased since April, with attacks against civilians by DRC government armed forces, the Bana Mura (pro-government militia), and the Kamwina Nsapu (anti-government militia) "often launched along ethnic lines".

On 15 August, the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC released its report on the human rights situation in the country in July. During the month, 398 human rights abuses and violations were documented, representing a 19 percent decrease from June, with state agents (including Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo soldiers and the police) again committing the majority of the violations.

During its 36th session in September, the HRC Council is set to hold an enhanced interactive dialogue on the DRC in which it will consider the OHCHR report on the human rights situation in the country (A/HRC/36/34).

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is seeking to ensure that the 31 December 2016 agreement is implemented and that a clear electoral calendar is set for timely elections. Another important issue is addressing the continued violence in the east and the increasing violence in Kasai.

The Council will want to follow up on next steps regarding investigations into the murder of the two experts, and regarding a general review of the security procedures pertaining to panels or groups of experts appointed by the Council.

The Council may convene a meeting on the DRC in accordance with developments on the above issues. The Council may also adopt a resolution or a presidential statement that:

- calls on stakeholders to cooperate and

swiftly implement the 31 December 2016 agreement and resolve all outstanding issues in order to hold timely, free and fair elections;

- condemns the mass violence in Kasai and elsewhere and calls for accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law; and
- calls on the Secretary-General to take steps to follow up on the recommendations of his Board of Inquiry.

Another option for the Council would be to consider imposition of targeted sanctions against those identified as having failed to implement the 31 December 2016 agreement.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain concerned about the ongoing political crisis but are divided on the importance of holding elections in 2017 as stipulated by the 31 December 2016 agreement. While some Council members emphasise the potentially dire consequences of elections being further delayed, others assert that timing is less important than ensuring that they are peaceful and inclusive. However, there is a consensus that the publication of a clear timetable for elections is vital and necessary to avoid further tensions and possible escalation of violence.

As for the next steps regarding the Board of Inquiry's report, the US and Sweden see a need for the Secretary-General to launch an independent investigation into the incident without delay. Some Council members, such as Russia, emphasise that they support further investigations under the jurisdiction of the DRC, with the support of other member states, in accordance with the recommendations of the board. Several Council members take the view that further accountability measures will require the cooperation of the DRC in order to be effective.

Council members agree that there needs to be an in-depth review of the security procedures regarding the safety of members of the panels and groups of experts assisting the sanctions committees. At this point, however, they are unclear as to the role the Council is to play in this regard.

France is the penholder on the DRC.

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Security Council Report Staff

Ian Martin
Executive Director

Joanna Weschler
Deputy Executive Director

Shamala Kandiah Thompson
Deputy Executive Director

Paul Romita
Senior Policy Analyst

Victor Casanova Abos
Policy Analyst

Lindiwe Knutson
Policy Analyst

Dahlia Morched
Policy Analyst

Vladimir Sesar
Policy Analyst

Eran Sthoeger
Policy Analyst

Benjamin Villanti
Policy Analyst

Robbin VanNewkirk
Website Manager

Audrey Waysse
Operations Manager

Maritza Tenerelli
Administrative Assistant

Aubrey Bloomfield
Research Assistant

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Design Point Five, NY

Security Council Report
One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
885 2nd Ave at 48th St, 21st Floor
New York NY 10017

Telephone +1 212 759 6394
Fax +1 212 759 4038
Web securitycouncilreport.org
whatsinblue.org