

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

China takes on the Council presidency in November. It will hold two open debates: on the UN's role in [strengthening multilateralism](#), and on enhancing African capacities in [peace and security](#). UN Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief at both meetings, while AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smaïl Chergui is a possible briefer for the debate on African capacities.

Regarding [Libya](#), the Council is expected to receive briefings by Special Representative of UNSMIL Ghassan Salamé and the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden). Additionally, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda will deliver her semi-annual briefing.

Two adoptions on [Somalia](#) are scheduled. The first is to renew counter-piracy measures in Somalia, and the second is for a resolution addressing partial lifting of Somalia and Eritrea sanctions. There will also be a briefing by Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), the chair of the 751/1901 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee.

Other African issues include:

- [Burundi](#), update by the Special Envoy;
- [CAR](#), renewal of MINUSCA;
- [Sahel](#), a briefing on the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel; and
- [Sudan/South Sudan](#), the renewal of UNISFA

in Abyei.

With regard to [Syria](#), there will be the regular monthly briefings on political and humanitarian developments and on the use of chemical weapons.

Other meetings on Middle East issues this month include:

- [Lebanon](#), on resolution 1701;
- [Israel/Palestine](#), the monthly briefing;
- [Iraq](#), on recent developments and UNAMI; and
- [Yemen](#), an update on efforts to resume political consultations.

The Council will hold its semi-annual debate on [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and will adopt a resolution renewing the authorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force. There will also be a briefing on UNMIK in [Kosovo](#).

The fifth annual briefing with heads of police components of [peacekeeping](#) operations will be held in early November.

Regarding the [DPRK](#), the chair of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Karel van Oosterom (Netherlands), will brief in consultations.

The 15 current Council members and the incoming five (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Germany and South Africa) will participate in the annual "Hitting the Ground Running" workshop organised by Finland.

In Hindsight: Recent Trends in Council Visiting Missions

In September, the Council undertook its 63rd visiting mission since 1992 when it visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for the 14th time. The Council has utilised visiting missions more often in recent years, having conducted 13 missions covering 26 countries between January 2016 and October 2018, with five missions in both 2016 and 2017.

(For more information on the history of Council visiting missions, please see <https://www>.

[securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/visiting-mission.php](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/visiting-mission.php))

An analysis of Council visiting missions between 2016 and 2018 shows some emerging trends and insights into their possible impact.

Until 2001, visiting missions were made up of small groups of Council members, and the intention to embark on a visit up to the mid-1990s was often recorded in a Council resolution or presidential statement. Today, all 15 members tend to

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In Hindsight: Recent Trends in Council Visiting Missions

join visiting missions, which are agreed on during informal discussions. Getting agreement tends to be a protracted process, often leaving little time between the decision and the departure. The agreement to undertake a mission, its participation and terms of reference are provided through letters to the Secretary-General.

Visiting missions have been used for a range of reasons, from assessing the implementation of Council decisions and supporting political agreements to reviewing the mandate of a peacekeeping operation and getting a better understanding of the situation on the ground. Often, they are motivated by a combination of factors.

Council members visited Colombia in May 2017 largely to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process and to support the government, and travelled to Guinea-Bissau (2014), Burundi (2015 and 2016), the DRC (2016), Haiti (2015) and South Sudan (2016) mainly to express their concerns over ongoing political crises. Visiting missions carried out with the aim of assessing whether a peacekeeping mandate needed to be adjusted include Haiti (2017) and Mali (2016). Visits to the Lake Chad Basin (2017) and to Bangladesh and Myanmar earlier this year had a strong humanitarian focus.

A new element in several recent missions has been the inclusion of a visit to a regional organisation. The Burundi trip in January 2016 included a visit to the AU, which had been actively involved in the situation following President Pierre Nkurunziza's announcement that he would run for a third term. After a visit to Somalia and Kenya in May 2016, Council members travelled to Egypt for their first consultative meeting with the League of Arab states. The two bodies discussed Middle East issues, as well as Somalia, Libya and migration and refugee issues. During their March 2016 visit to West Africa, which covered Mali and Guinea-Bissau, Council members also stopped in Dakar to be briefed on the work of the UN Office in West Africa and the Sahel, particularly in relation to conflict prevention. They also discussed challenges facing the region with President Macky Sall of Senegal, who was then chair of ECOWAS.

A new trend in 2017 and 2018 has been for Council presidents to propose a visiting mission to a region of significance to their foreign policy. Four of the five visits in 2017

reflect the presidencies' strong national interest: to Colombia (under Uruguay); Haiti (Bolivia); Addis Ababa for the annual UN Security Council-AU Peace and Security Council meeting (Ethiopia) and the Sahel region (France). This trend continued into 2018 with Kazakhstan leading a mission in January to Afghanistan during its presidency (although it had originally been proposed a few months earlier.)

While the impact of a Council visiting mission is hard to measure, it appears that the deeper understanding of the political climate and security challenges that comes with first-hand exposure can influence the Council's actions. These visits also provide a unique opportunity for Council members to interact with the wider UN mission and country team. Following the visit to Mali in March 2016, Council members provided a more robust mandate for the mission in June, influenced by what they had heard from Malian stakeholders. The Lake Chad Basin visit in March 2017 resulted in a resolution that addressed the complexity of the situation, notably the link with root causes of the conflict including development and climate change. Such a resolution, which was the first to focus on the armed group Boko Haram, was largely possible because members had heard the same messages from stakeholders in all four countries.

During the visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh in April, Council members could appreciate the reality of the refugee camps in Bangladesh as well as the lack of readiness on the Myanmar side for the return of the refugees to Rakhine State. Council members were united in pressing for greater UN involvement, which may have accelerated the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Myanmar government, UNHCR and UNDP the month after the visit regarding the repatriation of refugees from Bangladesh. Implementation of the MOU continues to be slow, however. While the visit may have provided momentum for continued Council attention to the issue, stronger action, particularly on accountability, has been difficult as the visit did not result in a fundamental shift in Council members' positions.

In several cases, visiting missions have led to Council actions that might have been more difficult to achieve in New York. During the visit to South Sudan in September

2016, the Council agreed on a joint communiqué with the Transitional Government of National Unity in which the government consented to the deployment of the Regional Protection Force as a part of UN Mission in South Sudan. The Burundi visit in January 2016 eventually led to a resolution authorising a UN police presence, an option that was raised by Russia during the visit. While implementation has been difficult in the case of the communiqué with South Sudan and has not occurred in the case of the police force in Burundi, the visits provided an opening to try to move forward on intractable issues.

Visiting missions can be useful tools, but their high cost, which is almost always entirely borne by the UN (where the visit is to a peace operation, it is a cost to that mission's budget) and complex logistical arrangements suggest they are best utilised where they will have the greatest impact. A key element of this is their timing. Being able to visit as a crisis develops, rather than in the aftermath, would allow these missions to be conducted within a conflict-prevention framework. Visits in the early stages of a peace operation could lend insight to mandate sequencing. Another important component for a mission having an impact is sustained follow-up. The Council agenda is so heavy that it is often difficult to remain focused on a particular issue. But without consistent follow-up after a mission, the momentum and gains achieved can diminish over time.

An option to address some of these problems would be to revive the practice of "mini-missions" of a small number of Council members deployed quickly at critical moments to address specific challenges. This could afford greater flexibility when a crisis breaks, incur lower costs and perhaps allow for more regular return visits as follow-ups. An example of such a mission was when the Council dispatched a five-member delegation to East Timor in 1999 following the violence in the aftermath of the Council-authorized referendum in which East Timor overwhelmingly opted for independence from Indonesia. The Council constituted a mission of five members (Malaysia, Namibia, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the UK) and the delegation departed within 24 hours of obtaining Indonesia's agreement. High-level engagement during the visit and

In Hindsight: Recent Trends in Council Visiting Missions

a resolution upon the delegation's return authorising an enforcement operation with Indonesia's consent had significant impact on the situation, and illustrates the Council's ability to use a visiting mission for conflict resolution and prevention.

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Counter-Terrorism

On 3 October, the chairs of the counter-terrorism-related committees, Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorenty Solíz (Bolivia), chair of the 1540 Committee; Ambassador Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), chair of the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee; and Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez (Peru), chair of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) briefed the Council on the work of their respective committees (S/PV.8364). On 8 October, the CTC, in cooperation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, held a public session on the nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism, and arms trafficking and terrorism. The 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee held its quarterly briefing by the monitoring team assisting it on 17 October, where it was also briefed by the head of the Iraq Investigative Team, Karim Asad Ahmad Khan.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 3 October, the Council members were briefed in consultations by the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on the Ebola crisis in the DRC. The Council visited the DRC between 5-7 October. A briefing by the co-leads of visiting mission (Bolivia, Equatorial Guinea and France) was held on 11 October (S/PV.8369). Also on that day, Special Representative and head of MONUSCO Leila Zerrougui briefed on the latest MONUSCO report (S/2018/882), and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region Said Djinnit briefed on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Region (S/2018/886), followed by consultations (S/PV.8370). At press time, the Council was negotiating a resolution on Ebola in the DRC.

Sudan (Darfur)

On 3 October, Ambassador Joanna Wronecka (Poland), chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, provided the quarterly briefing to Council members on the committee's work (S/PV.8366). She highlighted aspects of the interim report of the Panel of Experts presented to the committee on 17 August. On 22 October, Joint Special Representative and head of UNAMID Jeremiah Mamabolo briefed (S/PV.8377) the Council on the Secretary-General's 90-day report (S/2018/912). He said that with the Council's adoption of resolution 2429 in July, UNAMID has begun its reconfiguration and drawdown, while monitoring the reconfiguration's impact on security and the protection of civilians. He also emphasised the importance of meeting the benchmarks for the mission's exit set out in the Secretary-General's report.

Children and Armed Conflict

On 10 October, the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict met for the introduction of the report on Children and Armed Conflict in South Sudan (S/2018/865).

Western Sahara

On 11 October, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MINURSO Colin Stewart briefed Council members in consultations on the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2018/889). During the meeting, members expressed support for the UN-led efforts to renew a political process and the planned roundtable to be held in December in Geneva with the parties and neighbouring countries. A Council meeting with troop-contributing countries to MINURSO had been held two days earlier, on 9 October. On 29 October, the Security Council extended the mandate of MINURSO for a further six months.

Yemen

On 11 October, the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee issued a press release that condemned attacks on commercial vessels

described in the 9 July case-study of the Yemen Panel of Experts as perpetrated by the Houthis (SC/13536). On 23 October, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock briefed the Security Council on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen focusing on the rising threat of famine that has the potential to affect up to 14 million people, according to the latest UN estimates (S/PV.8379). Ahead of the meeting, on 20 October, OCHA had sent Council members a white paper on the worsening food crisis. During the briefing Lowcock warned of imminent danger of "a famine engulfing Yemen". He called for Council support in five areas, including a cessation of hostilities in and around all infrastructure and facilities that the aid operation and commercial importers rely upon and for a larger and faster injection of foreign exchange into the economy.

Natural Resources and Conflict

On 16 October, the Security Council held a briefing on the role of natural resources as a root cause of conflict (S/PV.8372). Bolivia, which initiated the meeting, circulated a concept note in advance (S/2018/901). Secretary-General António Guterres briefed. While noting that the "exploitation of natural resources, or competition over them, can and does lead to violent conflict", he also emphasised that "shared natural resources have traditionally also been a catalyst for cooperation among States, communities and people."

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

On 16 October, Council members were briefed in consultations by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix on the latest 90-day report by the Secretary-General on UNDOF (S/2018/867).

Afghanistan

On 18 October, ahead of the parliamentary and district council elections scheduled for 20 October, Security Council members issued a press statement condemning recent

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attacks and underscoring the importance of a secure environment for the elections (SC/13545). On 23 October, after the elections took place, Council members issued a press statement welcoming the holding of the elections while noting the difficult security environment and that voting in Kandahar, which was postponed, needs to take place (SC/13551).

Middle East (Israel/Palestine)

On 18 October, the Security Council held its quarterly open debate on the Middle East (Israel/Palestine) (S/PV.8375 and Resumption 1). Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov, and Hagai El-Ad, an Israeli human rights activist who serves as the Executive Director of B'Tselem, briefed the Council. Mladenov, who briefed via video teleconference, expressed significant concerns about the current situation, which he said is “sliding into a one-State reality of perpetual occupation and violence that does not serve peace.”

Silencing Guns in Africa

On 19 October, Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, South Africa and the AU co-organised an open Arria-formula meeting entitled “Silencing the Guns in Africa: How Can the UN-AU Partnership Contribute to a Continent Free of Conflict?”. Permanent Observer of the AU to the UN, Fatima Kyari Mohammed, and Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Africa, Bience Gawanas, briefed during the meeting.

Mali

On 19 October, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix briefed the Council on a 25 September report of the Secretary-General on Mali (S/2018/866) and the work of MINUSMA (S/PV.8376). Following the meeting, Council members issued a press statement commending the 15 October signing of a pact for peace between the government of Mali and the UN (SC/13547). On 27 October, Council members issued a press statement condemning the attacks that same day against a convoy of MINUSMA near the town of Konna, which resulted in two peacekeepers from Burkina Faso killed and several from Burkina Faso and Togo injured (SC/13557).

Women, Peace and Security

On 22 October, Côte d’Ivoire, France, the Netherlands and Peru co-hosted an Arria-formula meeting entitled “Moving from a Culture of Impunity to a Culture of Deterrence: The Use of Sanctions in Addressing Sexual Violence in Conflict.” Briefers were Rita Lopidia, Executive Director and Co-founder of the EVE Organization for Women Development in South Sudan, and head of the South Sudan Women Coalition for Peace; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten; Rebecca Brubaker, Senior Policy Adviser at the Centre for Policy Research at United Nations University; Ruben de Koning, coordinator of the Panel of Experts assisting the 2374 Mali sanctions committee; and Hans-Jakob Schindler, former coordinator of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team assisting both the sanctions committee concerning ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida, as well as the 1988 Sanctions Committee concerning the Taliban and associated individuals. On 25 October, the Security Council held its annual open debate on Women, Peace and Security entitled “Promoting the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Sustaining Peace through Women’s Political and Economic Empowerment”. Secretary-General António Guterres made a statement and briefings were given by Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Randa Siniora Atallah, Director of the Women’s Center for Legal Aid and Counselling (a non-profit organisation based in Jerusalem supporting female survivors of gender-based violence and advocating for gender equality and non-discrimination of women in Palestine).

International Court of Justice

On 24 October, the Council received the annual briefing by President of the International Court of Justice Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf in a private meeting (S/PV.8380).

Water, Peace and Security

On 26 October, an Arria-formula meeting was held on water, peace and security. The meeting was organised by the Netherlands, in collaboration with Belgium, Bolivia, Côte d’Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia, and Italy. Panelists were Danilo Türk, chair of the Global High-Level Panel

on Water and Peace; UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča; and Manish Bapna, the Executive Vice President and Managing Director of the World Resources Institute on behalf of the Water, Peace and Security Initiative.

Myanmar

On 24 October, Marzuki Darusman, the chair of the Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar briefed the Council (S/PV.8381 and Resumption 1) on the Mission’s 27 August report (A/HRC/39/64). Nine members—Côte d’Ivoire, France, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, the US and the UK—had requested the meeting on 16 October through a letter to the Secretary-General. In response, Bolivia, China, Equatorial Guinea and Russia wrote to the Secretary-General on 18 October expressing their objection to such a briefing (S/2018/938). Ahead of the meeting there was a procedural vote on whether or not to hold the meeting, with nine members voting in favour, three against and four abstaining.

Sexual Violence in Conflict

On 26 October, Poland, in partnership with Bolivia, France, Germany and South Africa, organised an Arria-formula meeting on the plight and rights of children born of wartime sexual violence. The briefers included Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Pramila Patten and Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF Omar Abdi. There were also briefings by Ambassador Masud Bin Momen (Bangladesh) and Ambassador Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom (Iraq). The civil society briefers were Evelyn Amony, co-founder and chairperson of the Women’s Advocacy Network in Uganda; Charo Mina-Rojas, Human Rights and International Working Group of Proceso de Comunidades Negras; and Betty Sunday Ben Kute, Coordinator of the Women’s Monthly Forum in South Sudan (by video teleconference).

Cyprus

On 30 October, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo briefed the Council on the Secretary-General’s report on his good offices in Cyprus (S/2018/919). DiCarlo updated Council members on the outcome of the consultations that the UN

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consultant Jane Holl Lute conducted with the Cypriot leaders and the representatives of the guarantor powers Greece, Turkey and the UK. Although there has not been any tangible progress in unification talks for over a year, DiCarlo noted that the Secretary-General still believes that prospects for

a comprehensive settlement remains alive. Council members expressed their support for the Secretary-General's good offices and called on both Cypriot leaders to increase their efforts in finding a solution.

Ukraine

At press time, the Council is scheduled to hold a briefing on Ukraine on 30 October. Briefings are expected from Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo and Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Ursula Mueller.

Group of Five for the Sahel

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council expects a briefing on the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) or FC-G5S, which Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger decided to establish in February 2017 to combat terrorist and criminal groups in the region. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix is expected to brief. G5 Sahel Permanent Secretary Maman Sidikou is also expected to participate, among other briefers.

Key Recent Developments

The operationalisation of the FC-G5S continues to experience challenges while insecurity persists across much of the Sahel, with a notable deterioration in Burkina Faso.

On 19 May, elements of the Malian armed forces under the command of FC-G5S reportedly killed at least 12 civilians in retaliation for the killing of one of their own soldiers in Boulikessi, in the Mopti region of central Mali. The incident was investigated by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which concluded that soldiers assigned to FC-G5S had "summarily and/or arbitrarily executed 12 civilians", according to a 26 June statement. The report of this inquiry was sent to the Mali government. The Malian Ministry of Defense announced the opening of a criminal investigation into the matter. On 5 September, the prosecutor of Mopti requested MINUSMA's assistance in the investigation.

A major setback for the FC-G5S occurred on 29 June when the joint force headquarters

in Sévaré, Mali was targeted in a complex suicide car bomb and gunfire attack. Two Malian soldiers were killed and 11 personnel of the joint force were injured, including five from Chad, four from Niger and two from Mali. The Al-Qaida-linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM) claimed responsibility. Following the incident, General Hanena Ould Sidi of Mauritania was appointed force commander of the joint force on 12 July, replacing General Didier Dacko of Mali. The headquarters were temporarily relocated to Bamako, and joint force operations were halted. Since being established last year, the FC-G5S has conducted six operations, all of which were carried out before the headquarters attack.

There was progress in establishing the police component of the FC-G5S with the appointment on 7 August of Abdellahi Sidi Aly as the police adviser. As noted in the Secretary-General's 25 September report on Mali, the police component is important for promoting greater accountability, rule of law, and prevention and response to human rights violations.

MINUSMA support for the FC-G5S, which was mandated on a reimbursable basis by resolution 2391 in December 2017, has remained limited. MINUSMA has only received the EU's commitment of 10 million euros made this past February, out of the 44 million dollars two-year budget for its logistical and operational support to forces of the FC-G5S deployed on Malian territory.

An independent strategic review of MINUSMA, some of the findings of which were contained in the Secretary-General's 6

June report on Mali, flagged the challenges placed on MINUSMA to support non-UN security actors, which also contribute to the perception that the UN mission engages in counter-terrorism actions. The review underlined the need for a clear regional political framework, including for support to the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali by leveraging the influence of the country's neighbours on the signatory parties. The authors of the review concurred with the Secretary-General's previous recommendation that support for the FC-G5S be provided through an assessed contributions-based support package, distinct from MINUSMA.

On 19 May, the EU extended the mandate of the EU Training Mission in Mali for two years. In doing so, it also expanded the mandate to include providing advice and training support to the FC-G5S.

Overall, security continues to deteriorate across much of the Sahel. The situation has worsened particularly in Burkina Faso. For the past two years, violent attacks were confined mostly to the country's north. Since the end of 2017, the number of people displaced due to violence in the north increased from 5,000 to almost 39,000 by mid-October, according to figures from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Since mid-year, armed groups have started attacking military and civilian sites in Burkina Faso's east, with attacks also being recorded in the west.

Key Issues and Options

Progress towards bringing the FC-G5S to

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE G5 SAHEL [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2391](#) (8 December 2017) outlined the ways in which MINUSMA is expected to support the G5 Sahel joint force and described how the UN will be reimbursed for its assistance. [S/RES/2359](#) (21 June 2017) welcomed the deployment of the G5 Sahel joint force. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2018/866](#) (25 September 2018) was on Mali, including information on the G5 Sahel joint force. [S/2018/541](#) (6 June 2018) was on Mali, which included some of the findings and recommendations put forward by the independent strategic review of the mission. [S/2018/432](#) (8 May 2018) was on the G5 Sahel joint force. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8266](#) (23 May 2018) was a briefing on the G5 Sahel. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13407](#) (29 June 2018) condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attack on the headquarters of the FC-G5S in Sévaré. [SC/13353](#) (23 May 2018) encouraged G5 States to achieve the full operational capacity of the joint force as soon as possible and insisted on the critical need for generating supporting through the swift disbursement of all pledges by donors.

Group of Five for the Sahel

full operational capacity is a key issue. This includes ensuring the FC-G5S is provided with sufficient and predictable resources to be an effective instrument in restoring stability in the Sahel. The Secretary-General has continued to advocate for establishing a UN support office, independent of MINUSMA and using assessed contributions, that could deliver a support package to the FC-G5S across its entire area of operations, similar to the UN Support Office in Somalia set up for the AU Mission in Somalia, known as AMISOM. He is expected to reiterate this recommendation in his forthcoming report due by 8 November.

Other challenges face the FC-G5S, however, including its shortfalls in manpower, training, equipment; the condition of bases; issues of command and control; and different funding mechanisms. Promoting and ensuring that the FC-G5S complies with international humanitarian law, which is necessary for UN support and critical for effective counter-terrorism, is a related issue.

A continuing option before the Council is to adopt a resolution that establishes a dedicated UN support office to deliver a support package for the FC-G5S, as recommended

by the Secretary-General. Council members may wait to pursue this option until the force achieves full operational capacity and is making use of funding that donors have promised.

To encourage such progress, Council members may issue a statement: urging G5 countries to fulfil commitments such as fully deploying required forces; reiterating the need for donors to disburse pledged funds; and stressing the importance of accompanying military efforts with political and development initiatives, and governance reforms.

Another ongoing issue is integrating the force within a larger political and institutional framework and strategy, which was highlighted in the Secretary-General's last report on the G5 Sahel. There is a need to more effectively link the G5 Sahel joint force with the G5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat, headquartered in Mauritania, and its development-related initiatives, and to create greater coherence among G5 countries, which hold divergent views on the role of the FC-G5S. Likewise, there is a need to address governance and security sector reforms in G5 countries. A political approach also involves securing the support of neighbouring countries for the implementation of the Malian peace agreement.

Council Dynamics

Discussions about whether the UN should support the FC-G5S financially have divided the Council. While resolution 2391 established some multilateral support for the FC-G5S, some members—including France, which has championed the joint force—believe there remains a case for providing further support in line with the Secretary-General's recommendations. That support could be both financial and political, including through a Chapter VII Council mandate. Since last year's divisive negotiations on this, France has sought to take a more incremental approach and allow time for the force to become more operational before reviving debate on such a resolution. The US has objected to proposals that could incur UN assessed contributions and prefers to assist the force bilaterally. It has taken the position that last December's agreement on MINUSMA's provision of support is the extent of any support role that the UN should play, and before expanding it, the Council should see how the arrangement works.

France is the penholder on the G5 Sahel joint force.

Somalia

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution on the Somalia and Eritrea sanctions regime, addressing the partial lifting of the arms embargo on Somali security forces, the authorisation for maritime interdiction to enforce the embargo on illicit arms imports and charcoal exports, and humanitarian exemptions to the sanctions regime, which all expire on 15 November. The Council will also consider lifting sanctions on Eritrea. The mandate review of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG), which expires on 15 December, is also due in November.

The chair of the 751/1901 Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee, Ambassador

Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), will brief the Council in consultations.

Finally, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution renewing counter-piracy measures which expire on 7 November.

The authorisation of the AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) expires on 31 May 2019.

Key Recent Developments

The armed group Al-Shabaab remains highly active. On 12 October, US airstrikes on an Al-Shabaab camp near Harardhere, about 500 kilometres north-east of Mogadishu, killed about 60 militants. On 16 October, two Ugandan AMISOM troops were killed

and several were injured in an ambush by Al-Shabaab militants in the town of Marka in southern Somalia. Two suicide bombers blew themselves up in restaurants in the city of Baidoa in south-western Somalia on 14 October, killing 20 people and injuring 40 others. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Regional political developments will be at the heart of discussions about the sanctions regime. On 9 July, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki signed a peace agreement in Asmara, ending a 20-year conflict. During consultations on 23 July, Ethiopia updated Council members on the recent developments under

UN DOCUMENTS ON SOMALIA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2431](#) (30 July 2018) renewed the authorisation of AMISOM until 31 May 2019. [S/RES/2385](#) (14 November 2017) was on Somalia and Eritrea sanctions, with 11 affirmative votes and four abstentions (Bolivia, China, Egypt and Russia). [S/RES/2383](#) (7 November 2017) renewed for one year authorisation for international naval forces to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2018/903](#) (10 October 2018) was on piracy in Somalia. [S/2018/800](#) (30 August 2018) was on UNSOM and UNSOS. [Security Council Letter S/2018/687](#) (11 July 2018) was from Djibouti to the president of the Security Council regarding its unresolved boundary dispute with Eritrea. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8352](#) (13 September 2018) was a briefing by Special Representative and head of UNSOM Michael Keating on the latest UNSOM report. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13516](#) (20 September 2018) welcomed the Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation signed by Eritrea and Ethiopia on 16 September.

Somalia

“any other business”. Eritrea and Ethiopia signed an Agreement on Peace, Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation on 16 September, which was welcomed by Council members in a press statement. Ethiopia has taken the position that sanctions on Eritrea should be lifted.

In a letter transmitted to the Secretary-General on 11 July, Djibouti referred to resolutions 1862 and 1907 of 2009, which called on Eritrea to withdraw its forces to their previous positions from an area disputed with Djibouti, the Ras Doumeira peninsula and adjacent territory, to engage in the peaceful settlement of the border dispute and to resolve related issues such as unaccounted-for prisoners of war (resolution 1907 imposes sanctions for obstructing the implementation of resolution 1862 concerning Djibouti). Djibouti called on the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with the Security Council, to use his good offices to facilitate an agreement between the parties on a particular method of dispute settlement, preferably adjudication or arbitration.

On 6 September, Eritrea and Djibouti announced the restoration of diplomatic ties, following a trilateral high-level meeting with Ethiopia, and the presidents of the two states met in Jeddah on 17 September. On 25 September, Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed met with Umarov in New York. This was followed by a meeting between an Eritrean presidential advisor and the SEMG, also in New York.

In October, the Council received the final report of the SEMG and discussed it in a meeting of the 751/1901 Sanctions Committee on 12 October. The report notes that while the quantity of illicitly exported charcoal has diminished, it continues to be a significant source of revenue for Al-Shabaab. It further points to some Gulf countries and Iran as importers of charcoal. In the 12 October meeting, the SEMG indicated that it would provide the committee with information on individuals involved in the charcoal trade. The report further notes that the United Arab Emirates has violated the arms embargo imposed on Somalia by continuing the construction of a military base in Somaliland. Furthermore, in September 2017, a ship heading from Yemen to Somalia was seized and armaments were found on board, including Chinese weapons. The report also

highlights continuing concerns over lack of Somali compliance with reporting requirements on exemptions from the arms embargo and points to Somalia’s limited capacity in this regard.

On Eritrea, the report states that for the fifth year in a row, the SEMG found no conclusive evidence that Eritrea was providing support to Al-Shabaab. Furthermore, it notes that armed groups acting against Ethiopia with the support of Eritrea have now signed agreements with Ethiopia.

On piracy, the Secretary-General transmitted his report on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia on 10 October. The report found that five significant piracy incidents occurred near the Somali coastline between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2018. No ships were successfully hijacked for ransom, nor were any hostages taken. The Secretary-General noted that another attack on a ship on 22 July “was assessed as an Al-Shabaab event rather than piracy, demonstrating the fluid nature of the maritime security space in Somalia.”

The report concludes that “continued piracy attempts demonstrate that the underlying conditions fuelling piracy have not yet changed and that piracy networks are still very much active”, and that piracy networks remain ready to resume attacks should the opportunity present itself. In 2018, the report adds, pirates have extended their potential field of operations as far across the Indian Ocean as possible to ensure a successful hijacking. It concludes that the international community’s ongoing counter-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia remain critical for the region and that reducing related transnational organised crime will assist these efforts.

On 1 October, Nicholas Haysom succeeded Michael Keating as the Special Representative for Somalia and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 39th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on 26 September with the independent expert on human rights in Somalia, Bahame Nyanduga, and considered his report (A/HRC/39/72). The independent expert highlighted the suffering of women and girls, particularly the endemic problem of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as the abduction and forced recruitment of children by Al-Shabaab. The continued violation by

both the federal and state security forces of the rights to freedom of expression and opinion was highlighted in the report as well as the situation of internally displaced persons. On 28 September, the HRC adopted without a vote a resolution on assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights (A/HRC/RES/39/23). The resolution renewed the mandate of the independent expert for one year and requested him to report to the HRC at its 42nd session and to the General Assembly at its 74th session, both in September 2019.

Key Issues and Options

The impact of the recent positive regional developments will be a central element in the review of the sanctions regime. The Council may consider lifting sanctions on Eritrea partially or completely while allowing the SEMG to continue to monitor regional developments.

The Council may also call on states to meet their obligations in implementing the sanctions regime, particularly with respect to the arms embargo and charcoal ban, and impose or threaten to impose sanctions on individuals involved in the illicit trade in charcoal.

Council Dynamics

Council members have been considering lifting sanctions on Eritrea in recent months. They conveyed to Eritrea that this could be done if Eritrea receives Umarov for a visit, meets with the coordinator of the SEMG, and commits to resolving its dispute with Djibouti. These steps have been viewed with flexibility, and Council members seem to agree that the recent meetings between Eritrean officials and Umarov and the coordinator may suffice.

On the Eritrea-Djibouti front, Council members agree that there have been positive developments. Nevertheless, there are diverging views as to whether these are sufficient to justify lifting sanctions. Ethiopia, with the support of some members, such as Russia and Sweden, has been pushing for the lifting of sanctions on Eritrea. The US and France have expressed more cautious views, insisting that Eritrea and Djibouti demonstrate commitment to resolving their dispute beforehand, for example in a letter to the Council.

The UK is the penholder on Somalia, and the US is the penholder on piracy.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to receive briefings by the Special Representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Ghassan Salamé, and the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden). Additionally, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda will deliver the semi-annual briefing on recent developments concerning cases in Libya. The Council is also scheduled to adopt a resolution extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee and renewing measures related to the illicit export of crude oil from Libya. At press time, it appeared possible that the resolution would be adopted before the end of October.

The mandate of UNSMIL expires on 15 September 2019, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts expires on 15 November.

Key Recent Developments

The recurring issue of competing institutions in Libya includes the oil sector: the final report of the Panel of Experts says that six attempts to illicitly export crude oil by the self-styled “National Oil Corporation” in Benghazi (a rival to the internationally recognised “National Oil Corporation” based in Tripoli) were documented between August 2017 and August 2018.

The security situation in Libya remains highly volatile. According to a statement by UNSMIL on 23 October, Fayez al-Sarraj, president of the Presidency Council, adopted a Greater Tripoli Security Plan, developed with the support of UNSMIL and aimed at the establishment of professional security forces. Currently, the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli relies on armed groups for its security.

The House of Representatives in Tobruk was supposed to adopt legislation regulating parliamentary and presidential elections by 16 September, according to a declaration

following an international conference on Libya in Paris in June. The deadline passed without such legislation being produced. The same declaration named 10 December as the election date.

As announced during a visit by Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte to meet with US President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C. at the end of July, Italy will host an international conference on Libya in Palermo from 12 to 13 November.

At press time, UNHCR reported that 193,581 people remained internally displaced in Libya. In addition, the UN’s 2018 humanitarian response plan for Libya of \$312.7 million was funded at 23 percent, with \$240.7 million outstanding.

On 3 October, the Council adopted resolution 2434, renewing for another 12 months the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that they are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking.

ICC-Related Developments

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, whose extradition has been sought by the ICC, has been at large since he was set free by the Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq Brigade, a Zintan-based militia, in June 2017. According to the final report of the panel of experts, his lawyer stated that he resides in Zintan. On 5 June, he filed an inadmissibility challenge to his case.

Former internal security chief Mohamed Khaled al-Tuhamy, allegedly responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in 2011 in Libya, also remains at large.

On 4 July, Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC issued a second arrest warrant for Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf al-Werfalli, a commander participating in General Khalifa Haftar’s Operation Dignity in Benghazi. According to the first arrest warrant, issued on 15 August 2017, Al-Werfalli appears to be directly responsible for the deaths of 33 persons during seven different incidents in Benghazi or surrounding areas between June 2016 and July 2017, either by killing them himself or ordering their executions. The second arrest warrant relates to an eighth incident on 24 January in which Al-Werfalli allegedly killed ten persons in Benghazi. To date, Al-Werfalli has

not been surrendered to the ICC despite reports that he turned himself in to the military police in eastern Libya after news about the executions became public.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 39th session, the Human Rights Council received an oral update on Libya from OHCHR on 26 September, which was followed by an interactive dialogue. OHCHR’s Director of Field Operations and Technical Cooperation, Georgette Gagnon, presented the oral update and noted that armed groups continued to proliferate in Libya and to commit grave violations of human rights with almost complete impunity. Gagnon also highlighted the plight of migrants and refugees, detainees, and journalists and urged member states to prioritise addressing impunity; to adopt a human rights-centred approach when addressing migration; and to strengthen the processes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of fighters. Also during the interactive dialogue, Special Representative and head of UNSMIL Ghassan Salamé expressed concern in a video message about the situation in Libya, particularly the impact of the conflict that broke out in Tripoli on 26 August, and said that armed groups had spread throughout the country, committing torture and other human rights violations. He similarly emphasised the suffering faced by migrants, including rape, torture, slavery and forced labour.

Key Issues and Options

Key actors involved in the fighting between armed groups in Tripoli at the end of August could be considered for designation by the sanctions committee for targeted sanctions. In that context, the Council could also issue a press statement in support of the GNA’s efforts to establish professional security forces. At the appropriate time and in support of Salamé’s work, the Security Council might consider a visiting mission to Libya and neighbouring countries.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Members are generally supportive of UNSMIL’s role in the stabilisation of Libya but have divergent views on the way forward. Regarding the elections, France is holding firm about the 10 December date, but the majority of members, including the UK (the

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2437 (3 October 2018) renewed the authorisation for member states to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. S/RES/2434 (13 September 2018) extended UNSMIL’s mandate until 15 September 2019. S/RES/2420 (11 June 2018) renewed the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya bound to or from the country that they have reasonable grounds to believe are violating the arms embargo. 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 until 15 November 2018. S/RES/1970 (26 February 2011) referred the situation in Libya to the ICC, imposed an arms embargo and targeted sanctions (assets freeze and travel ban), and established a sanctions committee. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2018/780** (24 August 2018) was on UNSMIL. **Security Council Letter S/2018/871** (26 September 2018) was from the Chargé d’affaires ad interim of Libya to the president of the Security Council on the “Asset-Freezing (Compensation) Bill” being debated in the UK House of Commons. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8365** (3 October 2018) was the meeting during which resolution 2437 was adopted. S/PV.8341 (5 September 2018) was the latest briefing by the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, and Ambassador Olof Skoog (Sweden), chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee. S/PV.8250 (9 May 2018) was the semi-annual briefing by ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda on recent developments concerning cases in Libya. **Selected Sanctions Committee Document S/2018/812** (5 September 2018) was the Panel of Experts’ final report.

Libya

penholder) and the US, appear more cautious about focusing on a specific date, considering the challenges in establishing an environment conducive to peaceful and credible elections. It remains to be seen how Italy's Libya conference will influence the situation. Council resolutions and presidential statements have called upon UN member states to cease

support for and official contact with parallel institutions in Libya, but it seems that some countries, including Council members, have not respected this.

The semi-annual briefings by Bensouda on Libya have had limited impact, given divisions among Council members on whether to take action to support the implementation of

ICC decisions. Council members have often reverted to general exhortations rather than addressing non-compliance in a more forceful and effective way.

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

Syria

Expected Council Action

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

Key Recent Developments

October was marked, at least momentarily, by a respite over the tense situation in the north-western province of Idlib after Turkey and Russia agreed to establish a demilitarised zone 15 to 20 kilometres wide along the contact line between armed groups and government troops. Following the timeline established by the memorandum of understanding between the two countries, heavy military equipment had been removed from the area by 10 October.

The agreement also provided for the separation of forces of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (a Council-designated terrorist group) from other rebel groups. While Syria considers this measure temporary, OCHA has repeatedly stressed the need to prevent an all-out military offensive of disastrous humanitarian consequences.

Despite the military impasse, the political process has failed to gain traction, including over the establishment of the constitutional committee. The committee is expected to comprise 150 people (one-third each from the government, the opposition, and civil society). Briefing the Council on 17 October, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura told Council members that the main reason for the delay in convening the first session of a credible and inclusive constitutional committee is

the government's difficulty in accepting the current list of civil society participants, which was prepared by the UN. In his statement, he mentioned that Russia and Iran have also called that list into significant question, while Turkey has indicated lately its full understanding of the logic and composition of the list.

De Mistura also briefed Council members on a late September meeting between Secretary-General António Guterres and Syrian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Walid Muallem, in which the latter questioned the validity of the 30 January final statement that resulted from a meeting of Syrians in Sochi and the UN facilitation role in establishing the constitutional committee. This controversy is not new, as illustrated by the Syrian government's uploading of a modified version of the Sochi final statement to its website, which led to the circulation of the original statement as an official Council document in February, at Russia's initiative. De Mistura travelled to Damascus in late October in a last attempt to get the government to engage on the establishment of the constitutional committee, and briefed the Council on his mission on 26 October. He told the Council that the Syrian government did not accept a role for the UN in general in identifying or selecting the civil society list.

Ahead of the 17 October meeting, the members of the Small Group (Egypt, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the P3) had encouraged de Mistura and the Secretary-General to convene the constitutional committee as quickly as possible. They

reiterated this message in the meeting, but Russia warned against pursuing "artificial deadlines". De Mistura also announced that he will be stepping down from his position at the end of November and that the Secretary-General has directed him to actively verify once and for all the feasibility of the implementation of a credible and inclusive constitutional committee.

Despite the reprieve in Idlib, the threat of a military offensive continues to loom. Cross-border deliveries of humanitarian aid, which have been vital in providing assistance to Idlib, continue as a result of a Council authorisation which is set to expire on 10 January 2019. There have also been efforts to provide life-saving winterisation assistance. In late October, the UN and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent had to postpone for security reasons the organisation of a joint convoy to an estimated 50,000 civilians stranded at the Rukban camp in southeast Syria, where the situation is critical. The last delivery of UN aid to Rukban took place in January 2018 through Jordan. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock briefed the Council on 29 October.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, briefed Council members on 9 October. At the meeting, several Council members expressed concern about recent reports of the attempt by Russia to hack the internal computer system of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In November, the Conference of States Parties (CSP) to the Chemical

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2401](#) (24 February 2018) demanded that all parties cease hostilities in Syria. [S/RES/2393](#) (19 December 2017) renewed the authorisation for cross-border and cross-line aid delivery. [S/RES/2254](#) (18 December 2015) was on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. [S/RES/2118](#) (27 September 2013) was on chemical weapons. [Secretary-General's Report S/2018/947](#) (23 October 2018) was the monthly report on the humanitarian situation. [Security Council Letters S/2018/875](#) (27 September 2018) was an OPCW report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. [S/2018/121](#) (14 February 2018) was the final statement from the Sochi the conference. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8384](#) (29 October 2018) was a briefing by Lowcock on the humanitarian situation in Syria. [S/PV.8383](#) (26 October 2018) was a briefing by de Mistura after his visit to Damascus. [S/PV.8373](#) (17 October 2018) was a briefing by de Mistura with the participation of the guarantors of the Astana process and the members of the Small Group.

Syria

Weapons Convention is expected to discuss a progress report of the OPCW Director-General regarding arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria in line with a 27 June CSP decision.

There have been internal debates among donors and repeated requests by Russia and Syria regarding the need to contribute to the reconstruction of the country. On 18 September, nine former, current and incoming Council members (Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Sweden, the UK and the US) sent a letter to the Secretary-General stressing that there can be no international support for funding for development and long-term reconstruction “until irreversible progress has been made through the UN-led process towards a comprehensive, genuine and inclusive political transition”.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 39th session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) voted 27 to four (with 16 abstentions) on 28 September to adopt a resolution on the human rights situation in Syria (A/HRC/RES/39/15). Of the five Security Council members currently on the HRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Peru, and the UK voted in favour, Ethiopia abstained, and China voted against. The resolution incorporates provisions of past HRC resolutions on Syria, and added several new ones, such as urging an immediate end to the violence in Idlib to prevent further deaths and “to avoid a potential humanitarian catastrophe” and expressing “deep concern” over the Commission of Inquiry on Syria’s finding “that tactics used in the recapturing of the besieged area of Eastern Ghouta amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity”. Other new provisions noted “the recent issuing of death notifications of detained individuals by the Syrian authorities, which provides further indication of systematic violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law” and urged authorities “to provide families with the remains...to protect the lives and rights of all persons currently detained or unaccounted for, and to clarify the fate of those who remain

missing or are still in custody”. The resolution also expressed “deepest concern” that the Commission’s latest report (A/HRC/39/65) stated that “a vast body of evidence suggested that chlorine had been dropped by helicopter on a residential building...in Douma on 7 April” and that “in a series of ground attacks in Douma on 22 January and 1 February 2018, the Syrian authorities and/or affiliated militias had committed the war crime of using prohibited weapons”.

Key Issues and Options

Given the crucial role of actors such as Russia, Turkey and Iran on both the political and humanitarian fronts, Council members could seek an informal interactive dialogue with them in order to have a more action-oriented discussion regarding current and future efforts to avert a full-fledged military offensive in Idlib.

Some Council members question whether any efforts on the political process are likely to yield results, given the Syrian government’s emphasis on regaining and consolidating control of territory. Before the end of de Mistura’s tenure, Council members could hold an informal and frank discussion about the challenges that he encountered in facilitating a political process and how Council members, individually and collectively, could better support the work of his successor.

The issue of detainees, abductees and missing persons has not attracted much attention in the Council, and is mostly considered under the rubric of confidence-building measures being discussed by the Astana guarantors. With little progress on this front and the Syrian government’s recent release of thousands of death notices for prisoners, the Council could hold a meeting on this matter.

Council and Wider Dynamics

A new element since September has been the

participation in Council meetings of Iran and Turkey, the Astana guarantors currently not on the Council. The members of the Small Group that do not sit on the Council (Egypt, Germany, Jordan and Saudi Arabia) asked to participate in the 17 October meeting as well under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure. Although the participation of Germany was initially opposed by China and Russia, in the end the Council President (Bolivia) granted all requests to speak. The meeting exposed wider regional tensions regarding political Islam and the assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The UK and France criticised some participants for discussing topics that were not on the meeting’s agenda, and Russia then defended their right to make such statements.

In December 2017, the adoption of resolution 2393, drafted by Egypt, Japan and Sweden, renewed the authorisation for cross-border humanitarian access to Syria. It was adopted with abstentions by Bolivia, China and Russia. In explaining their vote, China and Russia highlighted the importance of working through the government and eventually rolling back a provision originally devised as a temporary measure. As the expiration of the authorisation nears and as the situation in Idlib evolves, Council members are expected to look closely at the role that this authorisation continues to play in the provision of life-saving assistance.

In early October, Russia requested a discussion under “any other business” regarding allegations that volunteers involved in search and rescue operations, known as White Helmets, were involved in the preparation of attacks with chemical weapons in Syria. Most Council members consider these reports unsubstantiated.

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

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council is expected to hold its semi-annual debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and to renew the authorisation of the EU-led multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR ALTHEA). High

Representative Valentin Inzko is expected to brief on the latest report of the Office of the High Representative (OHR).

The current authorisation for EUFOR ALTHEA expires on 7 November.

Key Recent Developments

General elections in BiH took place on 7 October. Ahead of the elections, ethnic and political divisions among Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs remained prevalent. Divisive and destabilising rhetoric by political figures on

UN DOCUMENTS ON BIH Security Council Resolution S/RES/2384 (7 November 2017) renewed the authorisation of EUFOR ALTHEA. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8248 (8 May 2018) was the semi-annual debate. Security Council Letter S/2018/416 (2 May 2018) was the High Representative’s report.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

all sides continued, with several political parties seeking to consolidate power among their respective voting bases. Preliminary results published on 10 October, based on about 95 percent of votes counted, indicated that the three elected members of the BiH presidency will be Šefik Džaferović as the Bosniak representative and Željko Komšić as the Croat representative, both elected by voters in the Federation of BiH, and Milorad Dodik as the Serb representative, elected by voters in Republika Srpska (RS). Dodik, who has been president of the RS since 2010, has been a frequent and vocal proponent of RS's independence from BiH and an advocate for its eventual secession. Komšić previously served two terms as a member of the presidency from 2006 to 2014. In the town of Mostar, several thousand Bosnian Croat nationalist supporters protested the election following the announcement of Komšić's victory over the incumbent Croat representative in the presidency, Dragan Čović.

According to the preliminary findings and conclusions of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Election Observation Mission, the elections "were genuinely competitive but characterized by continuing segmentation along ethnic lines...[and] important long-standing shortcomings remain, as constitutional and electoral reforms were stalled by political deadlocks". Regarding the election law, the Constitutional Court ruled in December 2016 that several provisions for electing members to the Federation House of Peoples were unconstitutional, and after the court's six-month deadline for the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to amend the law expired, the court removed the unconstitutional provisions in July 2017. To date, these provisions have yet to be replaced. Without them, the election of delegates to the Federation House of Peoples, following the general elections, will be problematic. If the Federation House of Peoples cannot be constituted, the election of the new federation president and vice presidents, who are responsible for nominating the new federation government, cannot take place, and neither can the election of Bosniak and Croat delegates to the BiH House of Peoples, one of the two houses of the state-level parliament.

In an 8 October joint statement, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and

Security Policy Federica Mogherini and European Commissioner Johannes Hahn said political authorities "will have to work through the many challenges ahead and take the country forward on the path towards the EU". The statement emphasised the importance of swiftly forming the Federation House of Peoples, in line with rulings by the Constitutional Court. The "effective implementation of the general elections will be taken into account" in the EU Commission's upcoming opinion on BiH's application for EU membership, the statement said.

On 8 May, the Council held its last semi-annual debate on BiH. Inzko said he was "deeply concerned about the more recent readiness among some politicians to refer to the possibility of a renewed conflict", noting "a general trend of armament under way", on which he would report further in November. He reiterated "the risk of a deeper political crisis" following the October elections if the parties failed to agree on the rules regulating the election of delegates to the Federation House of Peoples. He also emphasised that "the risks of nationalism and extremism on all sides, combined with a growing sense of socioeconomic stagnation" required the international community urgently to increase efforts to promote reconciliation in the country and region.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a 17 August press statement, then-High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein condemned the decision of the RS National Assembly to revoke its endorsement of the 2004 Srebrenica Commission Report. The report found that from 10 to 19 July 1995, between 7,000 and 8,000 Bosniaks went missing in the area of Srebrenica and more than 1,000 Bosniaks were killed. The High Commissioner warned that the revocation would only contribute to divisive and nationalistic rhetoric and disrupt attempts to work towards reconciliation among communities. On 23 August, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted its concluding observations and recommendations on BiH (CERD/C/BIH/CO/12-13), including concerns about persisting ethnic tensions, ethno-religious divisions, and the need for reconciliation; discriminatory provisions in some local laws and regulations; reports of racist hate speech and discriminatory statements by public and political figures; persistent discrimination and marginalisation of Roma; and the very limited representation of ethnic minority groups, Roma in particular, in decision-making bodies and in public office.

Key Issues and Options

Political gridlock, lack of respect for the rule of law and ethnic divisions remain key issues. The urgent need to amend laws regarding the Federation House of Peoples and the smooth implementation of the results of the general election are also key issues. Slow progress in advancing socio-economic reforms linked to BiH's EU integration and fulfilling the criteria and objectives for closing the OHR are recurring issues. Council members expect to receive Inzko's latest report by 31 October, which will likely inform their assessments of these key issues.

Another issue is how to reflect recent developments in the country and the general elections in the resolution re-authorising EUFOR ALTHEA in November. The Council may call on BiH parties to take steps towards improving the overall political atmosphere and to prioritise the need for compromise and dialogue. The resolution could further reiterate that the parties must, as a matter of urgency, address the outstanding decisions of the Constitutional Court, including its 1 December 2016 ruling concerning elections to the Federation House of Peoples. It could also call for meaningful progress towards implementing commitments on economic and governance reforms and the criteria for closing the OHR, known as the "5+2 agenda".

Council Dynamics

Council members largely share concerns over BiH's divisive ethnic politics and the need for parties urgently to take the necessary steps to amend the election laws following general elections in October. Most members are also critical of the rhetoric of RS leaders, which they view as challenging BiH's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia, however, tends to be more supportive of the positions of the RS and is critical of the High Representative, contending that his reporting is not objective. During the debate in May, where all 15 Council members made statements, Russia called for "further reducing the budget and personnel of the [OHR] with the aim of closing it," adding that "[t]he time for this special instrument is over". Referring to the role of the international community, Russia criticised "steps aimed at interfering directly in the work of the Bosnian authorities".

Negotiations on resolution 2384 to re-authorise EUFOR ALTHEA, adopted on 7

Bosnia and Herzegovina

November 2017, proved less challenging compared to previous years. While Council members support maintaining EUFOR ALTHEA, difficulties have emerged in the past, with Russia objecting to efforts to include a description of the High Representative's powers and any reference to "Euro-Atlantic" integration—language ultimately not incorporated in

previous resolutions. There were no attempts to include such language in November 2017, making the negotiations more straightforward. It is unclear whether this will be an issue during negotiations in November, which is likely to include discussion about how to reflect the outcome of the general elections and the current situation in the country.

The Contact and Drafting Group on BiH, comprises France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UK, the US and current elected Council members Netherlands, Poland and Sweden. Its penholder rotates monthly in English alphabetical order. The UK will be the penholder in November.

UN Peacekeeping

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council will receive a briefing on UN policing from Under-Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and the heads of police components of three UN peacekeeping operations: Unaisi Lutu Vuniwaqa, UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Police Commissioner; Awale Abdounasir, UN Organization Stabilization Operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) Police Commissioner; and Serge Therriault, UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) Police Commissioner. No formal outcome is anticipated from the meeting.

Key Recent Developments

Briefings with the heads of police components have been held in the Council annually since 2014. The most recent of these, held on 6 November 2017, featured a briefing from Lacroix and the heads of police components from the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), MINUJUSTH, and the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

During the meeting, Lacroix outlined how UN police components work to achieve mission mandates. First, he noted that UN police employ the Strategic Framework for International Police Peacekeeping, which strives to "focus not only on the transfer of basic skills but also on strengthening host-State police institutions". Second, he underscored the role of UN police in protecting civilians

through physical protection and community engagement and information-gathering that inform responses to threats. Third, Lacroix highlighted the collaboration between UN police and host-state authorities in fighting organised crime. Fourth, he emphasised the key role that women play in UN policing by mentoring future police leaders, "increas[ing] access to justice for women and children at risk and improv[ing] information gathering and analysis by reaching vulnerable groups". The other briefers highlighted many of the points made by Lacroix.

Resolution 2382, adopted at the 2017 meeting, stressed the important role of UN policing with respect to the protection of civilians, capacity-building, and the development efforts of host-state police services. It further called on the Secretary-General to provide a report on UN policing by the end of 2018, focused on "strengthening the operational and policy coherence of UN policing across the UN system", among other issues. The report is expected to be finalised before the end of the calendar year, but likely not in time for the briefing.

Key Issues and Options

One key issue that may be addressed by some members is the role of UN policing in the context of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations, currently signed by 150 member states. This could include, for example, a focus on how UN policing can most effectively advance political solutions to conflict, protect civilians,

and strengthen peacekeeping's impact on sustaining peace.

In past years, the briefings with the heads of police components have included interaction between briefers and Council members. If that is the case this year—a matter yet to be determined at press time—members may pose questions directly to the heads of the police components, an opportunity usually not available in Council briefings. It seems that the briefings will focus on strategic priorities of UN police components (Lacroix), protection of civilians through gender-responsive policing by UNMISS (Vuniwaqa), preventing and addressing serious and organised crime by MONUSCO (Abdounasir), and strengthening the rule of law through police reform by MINUJUSTH (Therriault).

Council Dynamics

There is widespread support for UN policing in peace operations for such matters as helping host states to promote the rule of law, strengthen their national policing capacities, and fight organised crime. Some members note the role of policing across the entire peace continuum (encompassing prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development), but Russia has underscored that UN policing should be restricted to conflict situations where missions are deployed. Some members may emphasise the importance of enhancing women's participation in UN policing during the briefing.

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council will renew the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and the authorisation for French forces in the CAR to use all means to support MINUSCA at the request of the Secretary-General, which expires on 15 November.

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) is dire. Self-proclaimed self-defence groups, loosely connected to some members of the anti-Balaka movement, have continued to operate in south-eastern CAR, targeting Muslims. Ex-Séléka armed factions, which are largely Muslim, have retained, if not strengthened, their positions and influence in their respective strongholds and continue to benefit from illicit taxation and illegal exploitation of natural resources. The government, led by President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, remains largely unable to establish state authority, thus undermining its legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

According to the latest MINUSCA report, the number of security incidents has decreased since 15 June, and civilian deaths linked to the conflict have decreased since January, primarily owing to a decline in intercommunal violence. Documented human rights violations and abuses by armed groups and security forces have increased considerably, however. Since 15 June, MINUSCA has documented 597 new cases of grave human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law, with 1,077 victims. On 16 October, open media sources reported that at least 30 civilians were killed in August and September by armed groups in and around Bria.

Intercommunal violence between pastoralists and farmers continued in some areas, with frequent attacks on civilians and MINUSCA, which has been severely hampered by its absence from some of those areas and the extremely difficult road and logistics conditions, the MINUSCA report said. It noted record levels of displacement, with more than 616,000 internally displaced persons and 572,062 refugees in neighbouring countries on 1 October.

On 23 October, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, the Special Representative and head of MINUSCA; Ambassador Léon Houadja Kacou Adom (Côte d'Ivoire), the chair of the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee; Special Representative of the AU to the CAR Bédializoun Moussa Nèbié; and Koen Vervaeke, the managing director for Africa of the European External Action Service, briefed the Council. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix participated in the consultations that followed.

Onanga-Anyanga presented the latest MINUSCA report, which includes the main findings and recommendations of the recent strategic review of MINUSCA initiated by the Secretary-General. It suggests that the UN, and MINUSCA in particular, should have a stronger role in the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR, led by the AU and attended by 14 armed groups, and that the mission's efforts should be closely aligned to the initiative. The report further notes that "an inclusive and transparent electoral process leading up to the 2020–2021 elections can serve as an integral part of the political process", adding that such "support also remains essential for the eventual exit of MINUSCA."

The report thus recommends that MINUSCA's mandate be renewed at current troop levels, maintaining the current priority mandated tasks of MINUSCA, "to support the political process, protect civilians and facilitate the creation of a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance...while strengthening its mandate related to its political support" for reconciliation efforts and security strategy. The report recommended that the Council authorise MINUSCA to support the electoral process through providing good offices; technical, operational, logistics and security support; and capacity-building, "particularly to the National Election Commission for the planning and conduct of the next presidential, legislative and local elections" and coordination of international electoral support.

Furthermore, the report recalls and asks the Council to approve the 15 May request of the Secretary-General that the Council authorise MINUSCA to provide limited

operational and logistical support for the CAR security forces trained by the EU Military Training Mission for a period of 12 months, under certain conditions, including that the security forces be vetted and would uphold the principles of accountability and the rule of law. It asserts that MINUSCA is overstretched and will shift to a more dynamic posture in order to enhance its security efforts without a troop increase.

Sanctions-Related Developments

Adom, the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee chair, visited the CAR from 2 to 5 October, accompanied by experts from France, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, the US and Russia. He met with government officials and other stakeholders to discuss the sanctions regime and its implementation. The main issue discussed was the CAR's continuing request to lift the arms embargo, a step the Council has been reluctant to take because of lack of progress in security sector reform and vetting of the Forces Armées Centrafricaines (FACA). During the visit, Council members were told that while CAR security forces are insufficiently equipped, lack of implementation of the arms embargo by neighbouring states has allowed for a regular flow of arms and ammunition to rebel groups, creating an imbalance of firepower. He updated the Council on his visit during the 23 October briefing.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 28 September, the Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted without a vote a resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the CAR, (A/HRC/RES/39/19). The resolution renewed the mandate of the independent expert on human rights in the CAR, Marie-Thérèse Keita Bocoum, for one year and requested an oral update from her at the HRC's 41st session in June 2019 and a written report at its 42nd session in September 2019. It also decided to "organise, at its 40th session in March, a high-level interactive dialogue to assess the human rights situation in the CAR with an emphasis on the participation of civil society, especially women's organisations and representatives of victims, in the peace and reconciliation process." The independent expert and representatives of the government of the CAR, the UN, the AU and civil society are expected to participate.

Issues and Options

The main priority for the Council will be to renew MINUSCA's mandate. The Council may mandate MINUSCA to provide limited operational and logistical support to the

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2399 (30 January 2018) renewed the CAR sanctions regime until 31 January 2019 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 28 February 2019. **S/RES/2387** (15 November 2017) renewed the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 November 2018. **Secretary General's Report S/2018/922** (15 October 2018) was the latest report on MINUSCA, including the findings of the Secretary-General's strategic review of the mission. **Security Council Letter S/2018/463** (15 May 2018) was on MINUSCA's support for the CAR security forces. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8378** (23 October 2018) was a briefing on the latest MINUSCA report.

Central African Republic

CAR security forces, as recommended by the Secretary-General. It may further strengthen MINUSCA's political mandate, in particular on electoral assistance.

To curb violence, the Council could consider acting through the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee, listing those with links to recent attacks on civilians, including individuals who have incited ethnic or religious violence. A credible threat of sanctions might also incentivise armed groups to commit to reconciliation.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The deteriorating security situation, with

its intercommunal undertones, has slowed reconciliation efforts, and the government's inability to project its control beyond Bangui and Bambari has been a continuing matter of concern for the Council.

The likely sticking point for Council members in negotiating MINUSCA's mandate renewal is the issue of support for the CAR security forces, as security sector reform, including the vetting of personnel, has gone slowly. The EU members of the Council would like to see MINUSCA cooperate with FACA units trained by the EU Training Mission. As the Secretary-General has noted that MINUSCA is already

overstretched, some Council members question MINUSCA's ability to expand its tasks when it is already experiencing difficulties in fulfilling its mandate. On top of this, the US is pushing for austerity and efficiency in peacekeeping rather than expanding existing mandates. At the same time, MINUSCA support for vetted and trained FACA units could assist in mitigating FACA's shortage of weapons and equipment.

France is the penholder on the CAR, and Côte d'Ivoire chairs the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee.

Iraq

Expected Council Action

In November, the Special Representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ján Kubiš, is scheduled to brief the Council on the latest Secretary-General's report on UNAMI and the most recent developments.

UNAMI's mandate expires on 31 May 2019.

Key Recent Developments

Parliamentary elections were held on 12 May in a mostly peaceful and orderly manner, but they were marked by a voter turnout of just 44.5 percent, the lowest since 2005. No party managed to gain a majority of seats, and following allegations of fraud, a partial manual ballot recount was conducted in July. On 2 October, the Iraqi parliament elected as president Barham Salih (a Kurdish politician who has previously held regional and federal office); he named Adel Abdul Mahdi (an independent Shi'a politician) as prime minister the same day. The constitutional deadline for Mahdi to form a new government is 30 days.

Starting in early July and continuing for almost three months, protests took place in the south of Iraq and spread to cities in other regions, including Baghdad. Protesters voiced long-standing frustration over a lack of basic services and infrastructure, including water and electricity, as a result of government neglect as well as corruption.

In September 2017, the Council adopted resolution 2379, which requested the Secretary-General to establish an investigative team to support Iraqi domestic efforts to hold Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) accountable for crimes it committed in the country by collecting, storing and preserving in Iraq evidence of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. (Iraqi government forces defeated ISIL in December 2017 after three years of fighting that resulted in massive destruction and the internal displacement of over two million people.) On 31 May, the Secretary-General appointed Karim Asad Ahmad Khan of the UK as Special Adviser and head of the investigative team. Since then, Khan has

formed a core team, held meetings in New York, and conducted a visit to Iraq from 6 to 14 August to meet with interlocutors. On 17 October, he briefed the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. The first report to the Council is expected in mid-November in line with the 90-day deadline set out in resolution 2379. During its main session before the end of this year, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly is scheduled to decide on assessed contributions from the regular budget of the UN for the team.

On 8 August, Philip Spoerri, then-head of the ICRC delegation to the UN, briefed the Council on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals. He reported that 1,080 cases of missing persons remain unsolved and fieldwork, along with excavation missions, was to be continued.

In a 31 August letter, the Secretary-General informed the Council of his intention to appoint Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert as the new head of UNAMI. Kubiš, who had been

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAQ [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2421](#) (14 June 2018) extended the mandate of UNAMI for ten months. [S/RES/2390](#) (8 December 2017) indicated that the measures imposed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter regarding the oil-for-food programme had been fully implemented. [S/RES/2379](#) (21 September 2017) established an investigative team to collect, store and preserve evidence of ISIL crimes in Iraq. [Secretary General's Reports S/2018/683](#) (10 July 2018) was the 19th report on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. [S/2018/677](#) (9 July 2018) was on UNAMI. [Security Council Letters S/2018/808](#) (29 August 2018) was from the Secretary-General to the Council, informing the Council of his intention to appoint Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert as his Special Representative for Iraq and head of UNAMI. [S/2018/773](#) (15 August 2018) was from the Secretary-General to the Council, notifying the Council that the investigative team would begin its work on 20 August. [S/2017/966](#) (15 November 2017) contained the executive summary, observations and full set of recommendations of an independent external assessment of the structure and staffing of UNAMI submitted by the team of experts. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8324](#) (8 August 2018) was the latest briefing on Iraq. [Sanctions Committee Documents SC/13527](#) (1 October 2018) was a press release on the removal of one entity from the sanctions list. [SC/13526](#) (28 September 2018) was a press release on the removal of one entity from the sanctions list. [SC/13521](#) (24 September 2018) was a press release on the removal of three entities from the sanctions list. [SC/13512](#) (19 September 2018) was a press release on the removal of two entities from the sanctions list. [SC/13474](#) (28 August 2018) was a press release on the removal of one entity from the sanctions list. [SC/13447](#) (7 August 2018) was a press release on the removal of one entity from the sanctions list. [SC/13432](#) (23 July 2018) was a press release on the removal of four entities from the sanctions list. [S/2017/1078](#) (22 December 2017) was the annual report of the 1518 Sanctions Committee.

Iraq

in the post since early 2015, had been asked by the Secretary-General to stay on until the creation of the new government.

Human Rights-Related Developments

At a press briefing on 11 September, a spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern about the situation in the southern Iraqi governorate of Basra following protests over a lack of basic services. According to the Ministry of Health, at least 11 people were killed between 1 and 8 September in connection with the protests, bringing the number of people who have died since demonstrations began on 8 July to at least 20, the spokesperson said. In addition, more than 300 people have been injured in Basra since July.

Issues and Options

The Council will follow closely Iraqi progress in forming a new government. A statement to

express support for the new government is an option. Furthermore, the Council could consider conducting a visiting mission to Iraq to get a better understanding of current challenges on the ground.

As for efforts to hold members of ISIL accountable for international crimes, the Council will continue to monitor developments regarding the investigative team. Some members, especially those opposed to the death penalty, continue to have concerns about the possibility that evidence shared by the team might be used in criminal proceedings in which capital punishment could be imposed. This may continue to affect member states' willingness to contribute to the trust fund established by the Secretary-General, the sole source of financing for the team until the end of 2018.

Council Dynamics

Council members are unanimous in their support for UNAMI. Despite diverging views on how to address the recommendations of the November 2017 independent external assessment, the US secured language encouraging the UN to take action on these recommendations in resolution 2421, renewing UNAMI's mandate in June.

Considering that Kuwait is currently an elected member of the Council, a formal Council product on the Iraq-Kuwait file may be a possibility at some point.

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

Sudan/South Sudan

Expected Council Action

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

Key Recent Developments

The security situation in Abyei, the disputed territory along the Sudan/South Sudan border, remains unpredictable, with persistent intercommunal clashes, incidents of violence around the Amiet common market, weak rule of law, and the absence of significant progress on establishing temporary arrangements for Abyei's administration and security pending resolution of the territory's final status. The status of Abyei was supposed to be decided through a referendum in January 2011 but the vote was postponed indefinitely due to disagreements as to voters' eligibility. In the context of growing tensions between Sudan and South Sudan, UNISFA was established in June 2011 as a temporary measure. Its mandate has since been renewed repeatedly and, as set out in the Secretary-General's most recent report, it continues "to enhance peace and stability...through a

robust military presence and by supporting local-level dialogue".

On 11 October, the Security Council unanimously renewed until 15 April 2019 the support of UNISFA to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), established in 2011 to conduct monitoring and verification activities along the Sudan-South Sudan border. Resolution 2438 decided to maintain UNISFA's troop ceiling of 4,500 until 15 November, the expiration date of the current UNISFA mandate. As of 15 April 2019, however, the authorised troop ceiling will decrease by 541 troops—the number of troops required for the mission's support to the JBVMM—unless the Council decides to extend such support. As in previous resolutions, it decided that this will be the final extension of support to the JBVMM unless both parties demonstrate measurable progress on specific border demarcation measures set out in the resolution. (For more details, see our What's In Blue story of 11 October.)

The most recent Secretary-General's report highlights the recent improvement in relations between Sudan and South Sudan,

along with Sudan's role in facilitating talks in Khartoum between the warring South Sudanese parties, and urges the Security Council "to build upon that momentum by supporting both parties...to work towards a political resolution". It also states that UNISFA "must adapt to the situation on the ground and work proactively to create the space needed for a viable political process". The report recommends that UNISFA's mandate be extended for one year in line with the Secretary-General's 20 August letter on UNISFA reconfiguration. The letter recommended that the mission play an enhanced and more proactive role in support of a political solution to resolving the final status of Abyei, including implementation by Sudan and South Sudan of two agreements concluded in 2011 on border issues and security arrangements. Acknowledging that the mission "has lacked the civilian tools to keep the parties engaged", the recommendations included appointing a civilian deputy head of mission to function as the main focal point on political matters and expanding UNISFA's civilian component. (A 2015 decision by the Secretary-General to appoint a civilian head

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2438 (11 October 2018) extended UNISFA's support for the JBVMM until 15 April 2019. S/RES/2416 (15 May 2018) extended UNISFA's mandate until 15 November 2018. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/923** (16 October 2018) was on the situation in Abyei. **Security Council Letter S/2018/778** (20 August 2018) transmitted the Secretary-General's recommendations about the reconfiguration of UNISFA's mandate. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8357** (20 September 2018) was a briefing on Sudan/South Sudan.

Sudan/South Sudan

of mission was never implemented, following objections from Sudan and assertions that the role of the Special Envoy on Sudan and South Sudan was sufficient. The position of the Special Envoy is currently vacant following the departure of Nicholas Haysom at the end of September.)

The 20 August letter also recommended changes to the mission's military component, including transferring troops to the JBVMM so it can be deployed fully, based on the reduced need for a large military presence and the assessment that the JBVMM "remains vital" in contributing to preventing conflict between the two countries and that its full deployment is of "paramount importance". A larger police component was also recommended in the 20 August letter, including the addition of specialised police officers to provide advisory support and the transfer of some tasks from the military to the police. These proposed changes would represent an overall decrease in troop numbers.

The Council was briefed in consultations on 29 October, on UNISFA and Sudan/South Sudan issues.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council to consider ahead of the mandate renewal in November is the appropriateness of UNISFA's current mandate in relation to the situation on the ground and what modifications, if any, to make to the mandate and force structure. This assessment is likely to be informed by the Secretary-General's 20 August recommendations and his latest report.

Council Dynamics

Unlike previous negotiations on resolutions to extend UNISFA's support to the JBVMM, the US in October did not initially seek either to reduce the mission's authorised troop ceiling (as it did in April) or to suspend the mission's support to the JBVMM (as it did in November 2017), both of which Ethiopia and some other members successfully resisted. As a result, negotiations ahead of adopting resolution 2438 proceeded comparatively smoothly.

However, at the 20 September Council briefing, the long-standing divide between the US and Ethiopia was still apparent. In its statement, the US supported the

Secretary-General's 20 August reconfiguration recommendation for "a reorientation towards a police-style mission" with a strong civilian component, saying that the recommendations "are a good start to align UNISFA with realities on the ground, but they do not go far enough" and questioning whether all UNISFA's tasks "remain appropriate and necessary". Ethiopia emphasised that "the continued presence of UNISFA is absolutely critical", agreeing that "it makes sense to consider reconfiguring the mission to increase its ability to assist the parties in fully implementing their agreements". It disagreed, however, with the Secretary-General's 20 August recommendation to transfer troops from Abyei to the JBVMM to make it fully operational, saying that reducing troop levels in Abyei would have "serious implications". Ethiopia also disagreed with deploying additional police "at the expense of troop levels" while agreeing with the recommendation for a strengthened civilian component.

The US is the penholder on Abyei.

Kosovo

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council expects a briefing on the situation in Kosovo. The Special Representative and head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Zahir Tanin, will brief on recent developments and the latest report by the Secretary-General. Serbia is likely to participate at a high level while Kosovo will probably be represented by its ambassador to the US.

Key Recent Developments

Resolution 1244, which established UNMIK in 1999, did not specify the Secretary-General's reporting cycle, but the Council has established the practice of holding meetings on the situation in Kosovo at three-month intervals. During its presidency in August, the UK decided to omit the meeting on Kosovo, which would have been due according to past practice. At the presidency briefing to the media, UK Ambassador Karen Pierce

emphasised that Kosovo did not require such regular Council consideration, given that the situation has improved significantly since 1999. She further noted that the Council should focus on other, more pressing, issues of international peace and security.

In a 9 October letter to the Secretary-General, Ambassador Nikki Haley (US) urged the Secretariat to initiate a strategic review of the mission and develop an exit strategy. Haley said that these actions would serve the Council in assessing and evaluating the UN presence in Kosovo. Haley's letter drew a strong rebuke from the Serbian government, which stressed that it would oppose this initiative on legal and political grounds. Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić pointed out that UNMIK's withdrawal and the possibility that Kosovo would form its own armed forces would leave Serbia no choice but to protect its people in Kosovo.

For several months, the media have widely reported that Vučić and Kosovo President

Hashim Thaçi were holding talks on reaching a final agreement on Kosovo. The agreement would include territorial adjustments including Serbia's control of the Serb-dominated municipalities in northern Kosovo while Kosovo would absorb the mainly Albanian-populated Preševo Valley in southern Serbia.

During the European Forum Alpbach late August session in Austria, both Vučić and Thaçi confirmed publicly that they have been working on a possible agreement and called for support from the EU and the wider international community. They have not revealed any specific details of the plan, however.

The international response to the possible agreement has been mixed. At a press conference on 31 August, following the informal meeting of the EU foreign ministers in Vienna, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said that the EU would support any mutually agreed outcome as currently discussed if it

Kosovo

is in line with international law. US National Security Adviser John Bolton said that the US would not stand in the way should both parties reach a mutually acceptable agreement even if it would involve territorial adjustments. German Chancellor Angela Merkel rejected any possibility of a border change, however, saying that “the territorial integrity of the states of the Western Balkans has been established and is inviolable”. In both Serbia and Kosovo, the possible agreement has been met with opposition by the local population.

Mogherini had been scheduled to host a meeting between Vučić and Thaçi within the framework of an EU-facilitated dialogue on 7 September. Instead, she held talks with each separately because Vučić refused to meet with Thaçi amid renewed tensions between Belgrade and Pristina.

Key Issues and Options

Key among several issues facing the Council on Kosovo is maintaining stability and reducing tensions between Belgrade and Pristina. Another issue for the Council is what role UNMIK can play in facilitating the implementation of the existing agreements between Belgrade and Pristina.

The Council will continue to closely follow developments related to the possible agreement between Belgrade and Pristina, including the potential for territorial adjustments. An issue for the Council is whether

this could have a destabilising effect on neighbouring countries and spark ethnic tensions in the region.

Several Council members, and the P3 in particular, have continued to question the usefulness of the current reporting cycle, and have also called for downsizing the mission in light of the relative stability on the ground. Given the growing number of Council members who share those concerns, an option for the Council would be to consider more formal proposals for changing the reporting cycle, including possibly changing the format of the meeting to consultations. In addressing the effectiveness of the mission, the Council could request the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review to explore ways to increase UNMIK’s efficiency.

Council Dynamics

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

Deep divisions among permanent members have continued on the Kosovo issue. France, the UK and the US recognise Kosovo’s independence and tend to be supportive of Kosovo’s government while China and Russia do not recognise its independence

and strongly support Serbia’s position. The P3 and some other members have become increasingly outspoken in advocating a lengthening of UNMIK’s reporting cycle and thus reducing the frequency of meetings on Kosovo. The UK’s decision to remove the Kosovo meeting from the August programme of work (POW) demonstrated that there is substantial support among members for lengthening the reporting cycle. While Russia and China opposed the omission of Kosovo from the August POW, it seems that they would not have been able to secure the necessary support to challenge the decision through a procedural vote.

The US has been the most vocal proponent of a drawdown and eventual withdrawal of UNMIK, citing the level of stability in Kosovo. It has also asserted that the mission remains overstuffed and over-resourced considering its limited responsibilities and that these resources could be put to better use in more pressing situations on the Council’s agenda.

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

AU-UN Cooperation

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council will hold an open debate on enhancing African capacities in peacekeeping operations. Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to brief, as is a representative from the AU.

Key Recent Developments

There has been an ongoing discussion about enhancing African peace and security capacities, particularly around a 26 May 2017

Secretary-General’s report that outlined options through which the UN could provide financial support to AU peace support operations, considering the limitations of current structures.

This issue featured prominently at a 19 July 2017 open debate that China organised during its Council presidency on African capacities in the maintenance of peace and security. AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui, who briefed along

with Guterres, outlined ways to best support African capacities in prevention of conflict and response to peace and security challenges. He stressed the importance of joint AU and UN assessment and analysis, supporting efforts to develop the African Standby Force, working together on sustainable post-conflict reconstruction and development initiatives, and more predictable and sustainable funding for AU peace operations, including through assessed contributions.

UN DOCUMENTS ON AU-UN COOPERATION [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2378](#) (20 September 2017) was on UN peacekeeping reform. [S/RES/2320](#) (18 November 2016) welcomed the AU Assembly’s decision to fund 25 percent of AU peace support operations, to be phased in over five years. [Secretary-General’s Reports S/2018/678](#) (6 July 2018) was on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU on issues of peace and security. [S/2017/454](#) (26 May 2017) was on options for authorisation and support for AU peace support operations. [Security Council Letters S/2018/736](#) (19 July 2018) was the joint communiqué following a consultative meeting between the members of both Councils. [S/2017/574](#) (5 July 2017) was the concept note for an open debate on enhancing African capacities in the areas of peace and security. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8314](#) (18 July 2018) was on ways to strengthen the partnership between the UN and AU on issues of peace and security. [S/PV.8006](#) (19 July 2017) was an open debate on enhancing African capacities in the areas of peace and security.

AU-UN Cooperation

On 20 September 2017, the Council adopted resolution 2378, expressing its intention to further consider practical steps to establish a mechanism through which AU peace support operations could be partly financed through UN assessed contributions on a case-by-case basis.

On 18 July, the Council discussed the Secretary-General's annual report on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU. The report highlighted the strengthened cooperation between the UN and the AU since the signing in April 2017 of a UN-AU framework agreement for enhanced partnership. Among other points, it described AU progress towards fulfilling its commitment to fund 25 percent of its peace operations

through increased contributions to the AU Peace Fund.

The next day, the members of the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council held their annual consultative meeting. A joint communiqué reflected the ongoing discussion regarding the strengthening of AU capacities, including the financing question.

Council Dynamics

China has used its Council presidency to advance policies that can provide support for building African countries' capacities in the field of peace and security. African Council members have repeatedly stressed the importance of securing a resolution to establish

that UN assessed contributions should, on a case-by-case basis, finance Security Council-mandated AU peace support missions. The US has objected to such use of assessed contributions, with the exception of the AU Mission in Somalia through a UN support office established in 2009. During the 18 July briefing, the US said it would not consider using assessed contributions for AU-led operations without the demonstrable implementation of benchmarks for financial transparency, conduct and discipline, and human rights. This is a debate that has also played out in the Council's consideration of how to support the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In November, the Council expects to receive the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701, which called for a cessation of hostilities between the Shi'a militant group Hezbollah and Israel in 2006. Briefings are expected from Pernille Dahler Kardel, Acting Special Coordinator for Lebanon, and possibly from a representative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) expires on 31 August 2019.

Key Recent Developments

Gridlock among the major political factions has continued to hinder the formation of Lebanon's new government nearly six months after general elections. There are growing concerns, within Lebanon and internationally, that the ongoing political stalemate will have a damaging effect on the socio-economic situation in the country. Both Saad Hariri, the prime minister in charge of forming a government, and Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri, have emphasised the severity of the country's current economic situation. Lebanon is also facing pressure from the International Monetary Fund to make fiscal adjustments to address its public debt, a task that would require a functioning government.

Hariri has indicated on several occasions that the formation of the new government is within reach. In early October, Hariri told the media that he expected the new government to be formed by mid-October. Days later, Berri expressed pessimism that the new government would be formed within that timeframe. At press time, the major political blocs had not reached agreement on the formation of the government.

In his address during the General Debate of the UN General Assembly on 27 September, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Hezbollah of running a site for conversion of regular missiles into precision-guided missiles near Beirut International Airport. To corroborate his claims Netanyahu showed satellite images of the alleged missile sites. The Lebanese government has denied these allegations. On 1 October, Lebanese Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil invited foreign ambassadors and other diplomats to join him on a tour of the alleged sites in an effort to counter Netanyahu's allegations. Although the tour included only two of the three alleged sites, the Lebanese government has said that it is certain there are no missiles at the third site. Briefing the diplomats in the presence of the media, Bassil accused Israel of trying to provoke another conflict with Lebanon, using the UN as a platform.

Addressing his supporters in September, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah declared that the group has acquired precision-guided missiles despite Israel's efforts to prevent it. According to some estimates, Hezbollah currently has more than 100,000 missiles that could target Israel. Nasrallah reiterated that Hezbollah fighters would remain in Syria as long as they are needed by the Syrian government.

The US State Department announced on 31 August that it would cut all funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The current US administration has been highly critical of the agency and has said that the US would not carry "the disproportionate share of the burden of UNRWA's costs". The US had been UNRWA's single largest contributor, providing some 30 percent of its budget. The agency helps Palestinian refugees originally displaced by the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. According to UNRWA, Palestinian refugees constitute some 10 percent of Lebanon's population.

In other developments, on 11 October, UNIFIL's Maritime Task Force assisted the Lebanese Navy in the successful rescue of 32 persons, mainly from Syria, whose boat ran out of fuel en route to Cyprus. Those rescued were subsequently transported to Beirut.

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2433 (30 August 2018) extended the mandate of UNIFIL for another year. S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006) increased UNIFIL by 15,000 troops and expanded its mandate. Secretary-General's Report S/2018/920 (15 October 2018) was on implementation of resolution 1559.

Lebanon

Key Issues and Options

The situation in UNIFIL's area of operations has remained generally calm; the Council remains concerned, however, that more than a decade after the adoption of resolution 1701, there has been little progress towards implementing its main objectives, including a permanent ceasefire.

A principal problem for the Council is that Hezbollah and other non-state actors still maintain significant amounts of weaponry. This inhibits the government's ability to exercise full authority over its territory, poses a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability, and contravenes its obligations under resolutions 1559 and 1701. A related issue is Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war and the movement of arms from Syria to Hezbollah.

On the political front, the Council will continue to follow closely developments related to the formation of the new government in Lebanon. Council members are aware that a protracted period of political instability in Lebanon could have implications for the security situation in the country and the wider region.

Council Dynamics

The Council continues to demonstrate unity in its support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security, and its efforts to insulate itself from the damaging effect of the Syrian conflict. The Council has also recognised the decisive role of the Lebanese Armed Forces in responding to security challenges.

Members are divided, however, in their view of the security dynamics in the region

and the role of the mission. This was particularly evident during the mandate renewal negotiations both in 2017 and again this year. The US has continued to emphasise the threat posed by Iran, Hezbollah, and the proliferation of weapons in southern Lebanon and has promoted a more active role for UNIFIL in confronting these threats. On the mission's configuration, the US has strongly advocated for the reduction of UNIFIL's Maritime Task Force, leading towards eventual termination. Most other members, however, share the view that the mission's mandate and tasks should remain unchanged. These members are cautious about drastic changes in the mission's mandate and their potential impact on the fragile calm that has been maintained in southern Lebanon for over a decade.

France is the penholder on Lebanon.

DPRK (North Korea)

Expected Council Action

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

Key Recent Developments

On 17 September, the US organised an open briefing on the implementation of sanctions on the DPRK. The meeting was held amid growing tensions between the US and Russia related to the publication of the mid-term report of the 1718 Committee Panel of Experts. The US has blocked the publication of the report because of what it perceives as Russian interference in the panel's work.

During its presidency in September, the US maintained a strong emphasis on non-proliferation issues, including the DPRK. US President Donald Trump chaired the summit-level meeting on 26 September on the broader theme of countering proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. During the meeting,

most Council members welcomed the ongoing diplomatic efforts on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, among other issues. Trump called on member states that have been violating UN sanctions on DPRK to stop. He commended the diplomatic efforts and cooperation by South Korea, China and Japan while also calling for the full commitment of Council members on the issue.

A day later, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo presided over the ministerial-level meeting on efforts to denuclearise the DPRK. Pompeo stressed that the recent diplomatic breakthrough in US-DPRK relations was a direct result of the international pressure campaign, including Council sanctions on the DPRK. He cautioned Council members that enforcement of DPRK sanctions must continue until the DPRK achieves full, final and verifiable denuclearisation. On the other hand, foreign ministers Wang Yi (China) and Sergey Lavrov (Russia) emphasised that the Council should consider easing sanctions amid the current positive developments on the diplomatic front.

The third inter-Korean summit took place in Pyongyang from 18 to 20 September. DPRK leader Kim Jong-Un committed to dismantling the Dongchang-ri missile test site and launch platform, with international inspectors permitted to observe. Kim expressed a willingness to take additional measures as the US takes unspecified corresponding steps.

In early October, Pompeo travelled to Japan, South Korea and North Korea and held high-level talks with the leaders of those countries on DPRK denuclearisation efforts and arrangements for a possible second summit meeting between Trump and Kim.

Key Issues and Options

Over the course of this year, tensions on the Korean peninsula have declined significantly. Given the still volatile environment, the primary concern for the Council is maintaining stability on the peninsula. The ongoing diplomatic efforts have provided the Council with some optimism about reaching this goal. Most of the diplomatic activity continues to

UN DOCUMENTS ON DPRK Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2407 (21 March 2018) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee until 24 April 2019. **S/RES/2397** (22 December 2017) further tightened sanctions on the DPRK. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2017/16** (29 August 2017) condemned the launch of a missile over the territory of Japan and urged the DPRK to comply with previous Council resolutions and presidential statements. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8363** (27 September 2018) was a ministerial-level meeting on efforts to denuclearise the DPRK. **S/PV.8362** (26 September 2018) was a high-level meeting on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. **S/PV.8353** (17 September 2018) was a briefing on the implementation of sanctions on the DPRK. **Sanctions Committee Documents SC/13505** (14 September 2018) was a press release about an update of one designated vessel on the sanctions list. **SC/13449** (8 August 2018) was a press release on amending one entity on the sanctions list. **SC/13445** (6 August 2018) was a press release on the committee's approval of an implementation assistance notice on humanitarian exemption for the DPRK.

DPRK (North Korea)

take place outside the Council's purview, and the role of the Council is likely to depend on how the broader geopolitical developments play out. Taking into consideration the relative success of the recent inter-Korean and US-DPRK summits, an option for the Council is to consider a formal product encouraging further similar engagements.

An increasingly prominent issue for the Council is finding the right balance between applying sanctions and simultaneously exploring the diplomatic track. The Council could possibly consider whether a new approach towards sanctions would be appropriate in light of the relative progress in the diplomatic arena. An option for the Council is to explore ways to modify the sanctions on the DPRK to encourage further engagement on the diplomatic front.

A prevailing issue for the committee, however, remains weaknesses in the implementation of the sanctions on the DPRK. The Council could adopt an outcome urging full sanctions implementation. A related issue is the inability of Council members to reach agreement on publishing the midterm report of the Panel of Experts. Another related issue for the Council is how to preserve the independent nature of the panel and safeguard it from pressures by Council members.

Some Council members share concerns about the impact of sanctions on the humanitarian situation in the DPRK. The Council could consider working with OCHA to obtain the information it needs for humanitarian exemptions. Another option would be to consider adding to the monitoring panel assisting the committee an expert on humanitarian issues who could analyse the impact of sanctions on the civilian population.

Council Dynamics

During the first half of 2018, the Council maintained a low profile on the DPRK, letting diplomatic efforts outside the Council

play out. Over the past several months, the Council has become more active in trying to address the implementation of sanctions on the DPRK and in the process exposing deep tensions among permanent members, mainly the US and Russia. The US has accused Russia of deliberately violating the sanctions on the DPRK by engaging in the illicit trade of petroleum products through ship-to-ship transfers. The tensions were further exacerbated over the midterm report of the Panel of Experts, publication of which was blocked by the US citing Russian interference allegedly to conceal its violation of the sanctions regime.

While most Council members remain cautious in their optimism about the DPRK's denuclearisation, they continue to support diplomatic efforts between the US and the DPRK as well as between the two Koreas. Some members are starting to question whether a new approach is needed in the Council's relationship with the DPRK, including a greater response to positive developments through Council outcomes and other possible means of showing support for serious dialogue on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Some members, such as China and Russia, are becoming increasingly interested in considering some form of sanctions relief for the DPRK. During the 27 September ministerial meeting on the DPRK, Lavrov emphasised that positive actions by the DPRK must be rewarded by the easing of sanctions and that further tightening of sanctions would have negative consequences on the humanitarian situation and other areas not related to denuclearisation. He further urged the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee to explore ways to exempt some inter-Korean joint projects from sanctions.

The US is the penholder on the DPRK, and the Netherlands chairs the 1718 DPRK Sanctions Committee.

Security Council Report Staff

Karin Landgren
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

Vladimir Sesar
Policy Analyst

Eran Sthoeger
Policy Analyst

Vanessa Tiede
Policy Analyst

Benjamin Villanti
Policy Analyst

Robbin VanNewkirk
Website Manager

Audrey Waysse
Operations Manager

Maritza Lopez
Administrative Assistant

Joëlle Santos
Research Assistant

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Design Point Five, NY

Security Council Report
711 Third Avenue, Suite 1501
New York NY 10017

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