

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

France will hold the presidency of the Security Council in March. An open debate is planned on [children and armed conflict](#), with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expected among the briefers. Also planned is a debate on [Haiti](#), with a briefing by the head of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, Sandra Honoré. There will also be a debate on [Afghanistan](#), during which the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and receive a briefing from its head, Nicholas Haysom.

Briefings are planned on:

- [UN cooperation with the EU](#) by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini;
- the work of the [1737 Iran Sanctions Committee](#), by its chair, Ambassador Román Oyarzun (Spain); and
- the Council [visiting mission to Africa](#), by its leads.

Briefings, followed by consultations, are expected on:

- the situation in [Libya](#), by Bernardino León, the head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the work of the [1970 Libya Sanctions Committee](#), by its chair, Ambassador Hussein Haniff (Malaysia);
- the [humanitarian situation in Syria](#), by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos;
- the [Middle East](#), by Special Coordinator Robert Serry;
- developments in the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) by the head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Martin Kobler, and Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region Said Djinnit;

- two Secretary-General's reports on the [AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur](#), by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous; and
- possibly, the situation in [Liberia](#).

Briefings in consultations are likely on:

- developments in [Yemen](#), by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser, Jamal Benomar;
- [Syria's chemical weapons](#), by High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane;
- implementation of resolution 2046 on [Sudan-South Sudan](#) relations, most likely by Special Envoy Haile Menkerios (by video teleconference);
- the implementation of resolution 1701, which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah in [Lebanon](#) and Israel in 2006, by Special Coordinator Sigrid Kaag; and
- activities of the [UN Disengagement Observer Force](#), by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Formal sessions will be needed to adopt resolutions to renew the mandates of:

- [UNSMIL](#);
- [UNAMA](#);
- [MONUSCO](#); and
- the Panel of Experts assisting the [1718 Democratic People's Republic of Korea Sanctions Committee](#).

The Council is also likely to undertake a [visiting mission to CAR, Burundi and the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa](#).

Throughout the month members will be following closely developments in [Mali](#) and [Ukraine](#) and additional meetings may be scheduled. •

27 February 2015
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Status Update since our February Forecast

Counter-Terrorism

Council members condemned the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) for the murder of a Japanese journalist on 1 February (SC/11762) and the murder of a Jordanian air force pilot on 3 February (SC/11764). On 12 February, the Council adopted resolution 2199 targeting some of the sources of funding of ISIS and Al-Nusra Front. The resolution focuses on the way in which illegal oil exporting, traffic of cultural heritage, ransom payments and external donations improve the operational capacity of ISIS and Al-Nusra. It also imposed the obligation on neighbouring countries to report to the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee on the interdiction of vehicles used to transfer economic resources departing from or going to ISIS or Al-Nusra held areas of Syria and Iraq.

Boko Haram

In February, Council members issued three press statements condemning Boko Haram attacks: SC/11763 on 2 February, SC/11768 on 5 February and SC/11780 on 13 February. In addition, the 2 February statement urged enhanced regional cooperation to combat the group and commended Chad's assistance. The 5 February statement also welcomed the expert meeting being held in Cameroon to complete the concept of operations for the Multinational Joint Task Force.

Somalia

On 4 February, the Council was briefed by Special Representative Nicholas Kay, the head of the UNSOM, on the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/51) (S/PV.7375). Maman Sidikou, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission for Somalia and head of AMISOM, briefed the Council via video teleconference from Mogadishu. The briefing was followed by consultations with Kay. Council members issued three press statements during the month. The 5 February statement expressed concern at the ongoing political crisis in Somalia, particularly delays in the formation of a government (SC/11769). On 10 February, Council members welcomed the approval of the cabinet by the federal parliament of Somalia (SC/11773). On 20 February, Council members strongly condemned the terrorist attack by Al-Shabaab on the Central Hotel in Mogadishu, which caused the death of

dozens of people, including members of government (SC/11791). At press time, Council members were due to hold consultations on 26 February with Ambassador Rafael Dario Ramírez Carreño (Venezuela), chair of the 751/1907 Somalia-Eritrea Sanctions Committee. They are expected to discuss recommendations due on 27 February from the Monitoring Group regarding exemptions to the arms embargo for commercial ships in Somali ports.

Guinea-Bissau

On 5 February, the Council was briefed (S/PV.7376) by Special Representative Miguel Trovoada on the Secretary-General's latest Guinea-Bissau report and strategic assessment of UNIOGBIS (S/2015/37). Statements were also made by Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota (Brazil) as chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country configuration for Guinea-Bissau, and representatives of Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries. The briefing was followed by consultations with Trovoada. The Council adopted resolution 2203 on 18 February, renewing UNIOGBIS until 29 February 2016.

Mali

On 6 February, the Council adopted a presidential statement ahead of the start of the fifth round of the inter-Malian negotiation process in Algiers scheduled for 8 February (S/PRST/2015/5). The statement expressed the pressing need to reach a comprehensive and inclusive peace agreement that addresses the root causes of the crisis in Mali. It underlines the need for the government of Mali and the armed groups that are party to the June 2013 Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement to engage with sustained political will, a spirit of compromise and in good faith through senior and fully empowered representatives in the inter-Malian negotiation process in Algiers.

Kosovo

On 6 February, Special Representative and head of UNMIK Farid Zarif briefed the Council on the most recent UNMIK report (S/2015/74) and latest developments (S/PV.7377). First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia Iвица Dačić and First Deputy Prime Minister

and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi also addressed the Council.

Burkina Faso

During 10 February consultations, under "any other business", Council members were briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman on Burkina Faso. Feltman had been in Burkina Faso on 4 February, the same day that members of the presidential guard called for the resignation of the interim prime minister. He told Council members that Burkina Faso's transition is still fragile and stressed the need for the Council to support the transition, which envisages elections to restore constitutional order in October. Feltman also briefed on his visits to Ghana and Togo and said there are political tensions in Togo ahead of presidential elections in March.

Abyei

On 10 February, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous briefed Council members in consultations on UNISFA. Ladsous reiterated key recommendations outlined in the Secretary-General's 30 January UNISFA report (S/2015/77). He underscored the recommendation that the mission engage more systematically in disarming individuals and armed groups. He also highlighted that the mission's mandate could be adjusted to enable UNISFA police to engage in community protection committees—which have been established to fill the vacuum created by the lack of legal and security institutions in Abyei—and are particularly important given the rising criminality in the area. On 26 February, the Council adopted resolution 2205 and renewed the mandate of UNISFA until 15 July 2015.

Yemen

On 12 February, the Council was briefed by Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon, his Special Adviser on Yemen Jamal Benomar and Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani (Qatar) on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council (S/PV.7381). The briefing was followed by consultations. Three days later, the Council adopted resolution 2201 on 15 February in response to the political crisis. The resolution strongly deplored the Houthis's actions to dissolve parliament on 6 February and take over government institutions,

Status Update since our February *Forecast* (con't)

urged the acceleration of negotiations to reach a consensus solution regarding the political impasse, and placed a number of demands on the Houthis. It further requested the Secretary-General to report back on implementation of the resolution while declaring the Council's readiness to take further measures in the case of non-implementation by any Yemeni party. On 20 February, the 2140 Yemen Panel of Experts transmitted its final report (S/2015/125) to the Council. On 24 February, the Council adopted resolution 2204, renewing the assets freeze and travel ban until 26 February 2016 and extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 25 March 2016. In a 25 February press statement, Council members welcomed the release of President of Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi from house arrest and demanded that the Houthis immediately release the prime minister and members of the cabinet (SC/11798).

Iraq

On 17 February, the Council held its regular quarterly briefing and consultations on Iraq (S/PV.7383). Special Representative Nickolay Mladenov presented the most recent UNAMI report (S/2015/82) and the report on Iraq/Kuwait missing persons and property (S/2015/70). It was Mladenov's last briefing as the head of UNAMI, and he delivered several messages to the Iraqi government. He said it was important to reign in fighters acting outside the constitution (a reference to Shi'a militias carrying out revenge attacks on Sunnis); rebuild the security forces on a truly national basis; revise the laws related to de-Baathification and finalise national guard legislation to empower provinces to be responsible for their own security and bring arms under the control of the government.

Israel/Palestine

On 18 February, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed

the Council in the regular monthly meeting on the Middle East (S/PV.7386). Feltman remarked that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians continues to threaten further escalation, which could potentially have irreversible consequences for both parties and for the two-state solution. He also reported that the Palestinians are facing acute fiscal challenges that must be urgently addressed and that in February, the Israeli government announced that, for a second month, it would withhold the transfer of the tax revenues it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority in retaliation for the Palestinian accession to the ICC. Feltman also reported that the Middle East Quartet met on 8 February to prioritise the urgent resumption of negotiations and a strengthening of its engagement to prepare for a revival of the peace process. Turning to Gaza, he stated that the Secretary-General continues to be very concerned about the fragile security situation, the volatile political dynamics and the persistently slow pace of reconstruction.

Burundi

On 18 February, the Council adopted a presidential statement marking the termination of the mandate of BNUB on 31 December 2014 (S/PRST/2015/6). The Council welcomed the significant progress achieved in Burundi while noting that several challenges remain to ensure that progress is not reversed, including reports of intimidation, harassment, political violence, arbitrary arrest and detention and other curtailments of the rights of freedom of peaceful assembly and expression of political actors. The Council also stressed the crucial need for a free, transparent, credible, inclusive and peaceful electoral process in 2015.

UN Charter

On Monday (23 February), the Security Council held a ministerial-level open debate on the UN Charter presided over by China's

Foreign Minister Wang Yi (S/PV.7389). Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon briefed and 78 member states spoke. The open debate, which was held to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the UN and to commemorate the end of World War II, focused on the history of the Charter and how the world has changed since it was adopted and reaffirmed members' commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter. China circulated a concept note prior to the debate (S/2015/87).

OSCE

On 24 February, the Council was briefed by Serbian First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ivica Dačić, the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (S/PV.7391). Dačić presented the main objectives of the OSCE in 2015 and addressed the crisis in Ukraine.

South Sudan

On 24 February, the Council was briefed on the situation in South Sudan by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović (S/PV.7392). Ladsous highlighted the main findings of the Secretary-General's report on UNMISS (S/2015/118), while Šimonović discussed his visit to the country in early February. In the consultations that followed the briefing, a draft resolution was circulated to members calling for the establishment of a sanctions regime on South Sudan.

Central African Republic

On 26 February, Council members were briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous under "any other business" at the request of the Secretary-General for a troop increase for MINUSCA contained in his 29 January letter to the Council (S/2015/85).

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Bernardino León, the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, is expected to brief on developments and the Secretary-General's latest report.

The Council will also likely renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, and expects a briefing by its chair, Ambassador Hussein Haniff (Malaysia).

The mandates of UNSMIL and the Panel expire on 13 March and 13 April, respectively.

Key Recent Developments

Following the 15 February beheading of 21 Coptic Christians, including 20 Egyptians, in Sirte by a Libyan branch of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), León briefed the Council on 18 February along with representatives from Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Italy and Algeria. While Libyan Foreign Minister Mohamed El Hadi Dayri called for the lifting of the arms embargo for the government, León emphasised how the success of the political dialogue and the formation of a national unity government are essential to combat terrorism.

Despite the growing threat of terrorism, continuous violence on the ground and outstanding political divides, León pursued the efforts to facilitate a political dialogue. On 14-15 and 26-27 January, two rounds of talks were held in Geneva, although the former parliament, the General National Congress (GNC) refused to participate. (The GNC does not accept the legitimacy of the House of Representatives, which is the internationally recognised parliament.) On 17 January, Council members welcomed the first round of talks and strongly urged all relevant Libyan stakeholders to attend the next round. The next day the GNC agreed to participate in the talks on the condition that they take place in Libya. On 11 February, a new round of talks, which included the GNC, was held in the Libyan city of Ghadames, where León held separate meetings with the parties. On 23 February, the

House decided to suspend its participation.

Despite some preliminary talks, violence persists between Misrata-based and Islamist militias (collectively known as Libya Dawn) and Zintan-based militias and elements of the army commanded by rogue General Khalifa Haftar (Operation Dignity).

Although fighting appears to have moved away from Tripoli, the situation in the capital continues to be extremely fragile. On 27 January, Council members condemned a deadly terrorist attack against the Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli claimed by ISIS. Despite the slight improvement in the humanitarian situation in Tripoli, political and human rights activists, media professionals and other public figures have been targeted since the takeover of the city by Libya Dawn forces, according to a 23 December 2014 report issued by UNSMIL and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Fighting continues in Benghazi, where forces loyal to Haftar are still conducting a military operation targeting the Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries—an alliance that comprises Al-Qaida affiliate Ansar al-Sharia along with other armed groups. UNSMIL has received reports of indiscriminate shelling by both sides, as well as indiscriminate airstrikes by the air force aligned with Haftar.

On 13 December 2014, Libya Dawn launched an operation to take Libya's two largest oil export terminals, Es-Sider and Ras Lanuf. The fighting shut down the terminals' operations, resulting in a reduction of Libya's overall oil production from 900,000 barrels per day last October to 325,000 barrels per day in January.

According to UNSMIL, many of the violations and abuses described in the 23 December 2014 report "potentially fall under the jurisdiction of the ICC, which is continuing to investigate the situation in Libya." However, the cooperation between Libya and the ICC has been contentious. Following the 10 December 2014 ICC decision on the non-compliance of Libya with the Court on the case against Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the matter was referred to the Security Council.

On 13 February, the Secretariat circulated

a strategic assessment of the UN presence in Libya, with recommendations to focus on mediation, support to key institutions (such as the electoral commission, the central bank or the Constitutional Drafting Assembly), provision of essential services, human rights reporting and advocacy as well as coordination of international engagement on Libya.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee members discussed the final report of the Panel of Experts on 20 February. The report highlights how arm transfers to Libya, exempted by the Committee or not, have contributed to the consolidation of militias on the ground. The report also provides recommendations to make the sanctions regime more effective.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The Human Rights Council will consider the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on Libya and on related technical support and capacity-building needs (A/HRC/28/51), during its 28th session in March. The report finds that Libya is facing the worst political crisis and escalation of violence since the 2011 armed conflict, with a multitude of heavily armed groups exercising effective control on the ground, committing violations of international human rights and humanitarian law with impunity amid the broadening political crisis. The report documents that during 2014, civilians were victims of indiscriminate artillery and air attacks as well as numerous incidents of targeted violence, with cases of harassment, intimidation, torture, numerous abductions and summary executions of human rights defenders, civil society activists, journalists and other media professionals, as well as members of the judiciary, politicians and law enforcement officers. Hospitals, schools, as well as airports and other public infrastructure were attacked and damaged, or used for military purposes. The report also highlights the extremely vulnerable situation of migrants in Libya and the thousands of people in detention with no access to justice. It finds little progress on the establishment of a new fact-finding and reconciliation commission or measures of redress for victims and emphasises the need to strengthen state institutions, ensure accountability for human rights violations and support the ongoing political dialogue. While the continuing violence has had a disastrous impact on the running of some key institutions, in particular the justice system, others continue to function but need support, most notably the Constitution Drafting Assembly, according to the report.

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2174](#) (27 August 2014) imposed sanctions on those undermining the completion of the political transition. [S/RES/2146](#) (19 March 2014) imposed measures on vessels transporting crude oil illicitly exported from Libya. [S/RES/2144](#) (14 March 2014) extended the mandates of UNSMIL and the Panel of Experts. [Security Council Press Statements SC/11792](#) (20 February 2015) condemned a bomb attack in al-Qubba claimed by ISIS. [SC/11782](#) (15 February 2015) condemned the murder of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya. [SC/11754](#) (27 January 2015) condemned the terrorist attack against the Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli. [SC/11738](#) (17 January 2015) strongly urged all relevant Libyan stakeholders to attend the next round of talks. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7387](#) (18 February 2015) was a briefing focused on counter-terrorism in Libya with the participation of Libya, Egypt, Italy, Algeria and Tunisia. [S/PV.7345](#) (17 December 2014) was a briefing on the work of the 1970 Sanctions Committee. [Security Council Letter S/2014/953](#) (29 December 2014) transmitted the ICC decision on the non-compliance of Libya to the Security Council. [Secretary-General's Report S/2015/113](#) (13 February 2015) was a strategic assessment of the UN presence in Libya.

Libya (con't)

Key Issues

A key issue in Libya is how to achieve a ceasefire between warring parties. Stopping continual violations of international humanitarian law by the parties is a related issue.

An overarching issue is bridging the political divisions in Libya and ending the current standoff between institutions in Tripoli and Tobruk/al-Bayda in order to avoid a de facto partition of the country. Supporting the dialogue process facilitated by León is a related issue.

The growing threat of terrorist groups with regional reach in Libya is an urgent issue.

An urgent issue is the role of regional and international actors that are contributing to the escalation of conflict in Libya.

Options

The Council could adopt a resolution:

- urging all parties to agree on a ceasefire;
- expressing concern about attacks against civilians in Libya that can amount to

international crimes;

- authorising member states to enforce the arms embargo on the high seas or in the air and to prevent the illicit export not only of crude oil but of its derivatives and other natural resources;
- establishing control mechanisms to ensure the neutrality of the Central Bank of Libya;
- threatening all member states violating the arms embargo with secondary sanctions;
- further specifying the designation criteria for spoilers undermining the political process in Libya; and
- refocusing UNSMIL's mandate as suggested by the Secretary-General.

An additional option for the Council is to impose measures under resolution 2174 (travel ban and assets freeze) against armed militias and other spoilers that threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The tension between countering terrorism

and the need for a political solution to the conflict in Libya is framing discussions in the Council. As a response to recent terrorist attacks, the position of the internationally recognised Libyan government, supported by Egypt and echoed in the Council by Jordan, has been to push for lifting the arms embargo for the government. At press time Council members were negotiating such a resolution drafted by Jordan, although it was unclear if it would garner enough support given the opposition of some Council members worried about the impact of lifting the arms embargo on conflict dynamics on the ground and their preference to wait for the political dialogue to yield results. Earlier, a UK-drafted press statement, reiterating that there is no military solution to the political crisis in Libya, had been dropped following Jordan's concerns over its possible interpretation as questioning Egyptian airstrikes targeting ISIS in Derna on 16 February.

The UK is the penholder on Libya.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council will be briefed by Martin Kobler, Special Representative and head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, will also brief on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework Agreement.

The Council is expected to renew the mandate of MONUSCO, including its intervention brigade, which expires on 31 March 2015.

Key Recent Developments

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in recent weeks has

been turbulent on several fronts. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Ugandan rebel group, continues to wreak havoc in the area of Beni, North Kivu, where 17 people were hacked to death with machetes on 4 February. Regarding the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), MONUSCO suspended its support for the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) operation against the FDLR after the DRC refused to remove two generals suspected of human rights abuses. A DRC government spokesperson said that the DRC would not remove the two generals unless they were convicted. MONUSCO's action does not to affect other joint operations. Meanwhile, the DRC has stated that operations against the FDLR commenced unilaterally, yet so far no

combat has been reported.

On the political front, violence erupted on 19 January for several days in Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu and Lubumbashi during protests against a proposed electoral law. Clashes between protesters and government forces left between 27 and 42 people dead. The proposed law included a clause that called for a census before holding presidential elections scheduled for 2016. The protesters claimed that because conducting a census would take several years, the provision was an attempt by President Joseph Kabila to extend his presidency beyond the two terms allowed in the constitution. On 15 February, the DRC senate adopted the legislation without the disputed clause, and presidential and legislative elections have been scheduled for 27 November 2016.

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2198](#) (29 January 2015) renewed the DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts. [S/RES/2147](#) (28 March 2014) renewed the mandate of MONUSCO, including its intervention brigade. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/1](#) (8 January 2015) reiterated the need for the DRC, together with MONUSCO, through its intervention brigade, to neutralise the FDLR by commencing military operations immediately. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7367](#) (22 January 2015) was a briefing by Ladsous and the chair of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee, Dina Kavar (Jordan). [Security Council Letter S/2015/9](#) (6 January 2015) was from the DRC expressing its commitment to undertake military action against the FDLR. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2014/957](#) (30 December 2014) was the strategic review of MONUSCO. [S/2014/956](#) (30 December 2014) was the latest MONUSCO report.

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS [Special Representative of the Secretary-General](#) Martin Kobler (Germany) [MONUSCO Force Commander](#) Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz (Brazil) [MONUSCO Size, Composition and Cost of Mission](#) *Strength as of 31 January 2015*: 21,060 troops (including 484 military observers and 1,101 police), 920 international civilian personnel, 2,751 local civilian staff and 429 UN volunteers. [Approved budget \(1 July 2014–30 June 2015\)](#): \$1.46 billion Mission duration: July 2010 to present

Democratic Republic of the Congo (con't)

The Council has received several recent briefings on the situation in the DRC. Kobler briefed members via video-conference under “any other business” on 5 January at the request of France. He updated them with statistics about the surrender of members of the FDLR and confiscated weapons. He added that MONUSCO was ready to commence operations against the FDLR once Kabila approved the MONUSCO-FARDC Joint Directive for military operations (an operational plan for joint military engagement).

The DRC said in a 6 January letter that military action against the FDLR is inevitable and that all necessary operational measures will be taken to that effect. In a telephone conversation with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 7 January, Kabila assured him that the DRC was ready to take action, with the available assistance of MONUSCO. (The FARDC, however, has reportedly cooperated with the FDLR in the past.)

On 8 January, the Council adopted a presidential statement taking note of the DRC’s statement that military action is “inevitable” and reiterating the need for the DRC, together with MONUSCO, through its intervention brigade, to neutralise the FDLR by commencing military operations immediately. To that end, it called on Kabila to immediately approve the Joint Directive.

On 22 January, the Council was briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous on the strategic review of MONUSCO and on MONUSCO’s latest report. Ladsous noted criticism from national interlocutors regarding the poor performance of some of MONUSCO’s contingents. He said a change of behaviour is required by some contingents and that they all must be willing to use force to protect civilians. He conveyed the review’s key recommendation that the force level be decreased by 2,000 troops, based on the relative improvement in security in some parts of the DRC, improvements in the capacity of the FARDC and MONUSCO’s transformation into a more agile and flexible force. He stated that Kabila had voiced his wish to see MONUSCO reduce its troop numbers more significantly but Ladsous warned that any such decrease could have negative implications on the ability of MONUSCO to fulfil its mandate. As for future reductions and an exit strategy, Ladsous said that these should

depend on the DRC’s capacity to progressively take over the mission’s functions and achieve specific targets and criteria that are to be developed jointly with the government.

He added that neutralising armed groups is a key priority for MONUSCO and operations against the FDLR must commence immediately. Such operations, he said, will require both resources and time, and measures should be taken to avoid humanitarian consequences for the population in the areas concerned.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The chair of the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee, Dina Kawar (Jordan), briefed the Council on the report and recommendations of the Committee’s Group of Experts (S/2015/19) on 22 January. She informed the Council of her intention to visit the Great Lakes Region in 2015 and the Committee’s intention to meet with the DRC’s neighbouring countries in March. She also suggested that Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos, Kobler and the chair of the African Group of UN member states should brief the Committee.

On 29 January, the Council adopted resolution 2198 renewing the DRC sanctions until 1 July 2016 and the mandate of the Group of Experts until 1 August 2016. During the negotiations on the resolution, a permanent member (with the support of some other Council members) wanted to change the language referring to FDLR leaders as including perpetrators of “the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda” to “the genocide in Rwanda” (the latter wording was used in UN documents until resolution 2136 of January 2014, when Rwanda insisted on adding the words “against the Tutsi” from that point onward). However, other Council members opposed the proposed change, and resolution 2198 refers to the genocide against the Tutsi.

Key Issues

An immediate issue is to oversee MONUSCO’s operations in neutralising rebel groups, including the ADF, ensuring, in particular, that the DRC follows through on its statements concerning military action against the FDLR, and MONUSCO’s role in these operations, while limiting any humanitarian consequences for civilians.

A related issue is maintaining a productive working relationship between MONUSCO and the government, which is crucial for the overall success of the mission and achieving progress in the DRC.

Another key issue is to follow closely the implementation of the PSC Framework, in

particular the disarmament and reintegration of combatants by the DRC, including the deplorable living conditions in some of the pre-disarmament demobilisation and reintegration camps (one example being the Kotakoli site where a 1 October 2014 Human Rights Watch report indicates that over 100 combatants and their dependants have died from starvation and disease).

Options

In the renewal of MONUSCO’s mandate, the Council might:

- call on the DRC and other countries to improve implementation of their commitments under the PSC Framework, including the neutralisation of armed groups;
- reduce MONUSCO’s troop numbers by 2,000 in accordance with the recommendation of the strategic review;
- call on the DRC to remove commanders suspected of human rights violations from positions of power and cooperate with MONUSCO in its operation against the FDLR (if this issue has not been resolved by the time the Council adopts the renewal);
- indicate that MONUSCO is authorised to act against the FDLR unilaterally without the cooperation of the FARDC; and
- authorise MONUSCO to conduct a joint assessment with the government to define a clear benchmark and goal-oriented eventual exit strategy for MONUSCO.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Council members continue to be concerned about the need to neutralise the FDLR, with no indication that the DRC has taken any action on the ground against the group at press time. For some Council members, the public friction between MONUSCO and the DRC over the leadership of the operation must be understood in the wider context of the DRC’s questionable commitment to neutralising the FDLR. The rift also raises concerns over the possibility that Rwanda could resort to unilateral action in DRC territory against the FDLR, as it has done in the past. If joint MONUSCO-DRC operations are not feasible, some Council members may reconsider their opposition to unilateral anti-FDLR operations by MONUSCO’s intervention brigade.

Council members are also concerned

Democratic Republic of the Congo (con't)

that the friction between MONUSCO and the DRC concerning the FDLR operation may reflect a more general rift. At this point in time, however, it is too soon to tell if this reflects a low point in a fluctuating relationship with the Kabila regime that has more

to do with internal politics than an actual change in the DRC's attitude towards the UN presence.

At the recent consultations, it seemed that Council members were in general agreement with the recommendations of the strategic

review to downsize the mission by 2,000 troops. At the same time, some would like more information about how MONUSCO's operations will adapt with its remaining resources and troop numbers.

France is the penholder on the DRC.

Afghanistan

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council will hold its quarterly debate on the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Nicholas Haysom, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNAMA, is expected to brief. The Council also plans to renew UNAMA's mandate, which expires on 17 March.

Key Recent Developments

The Council held its last quarterly debate on Afghanistan on 18 December 2014. Haysom and Yuri Fedotov, the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, briefed. Haysom said that Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah were to be commended for their commitment to the national unity government. (In September 2014, the two rival political leaders signed an agreement setting out a power-sharing arrangement by which Ghani became president and Abdullah became his chief executive officer, responsible for management of day-to-day government operations.) Haysom also urged "the political leaders to conclude the process for the appointment and approval of senior government officials". Fedotov said that in 2014 the estimated area of opium cultivation in Afghanistan was the highest it has ever been. He further argued that more needed to be done "to ensure that action to weaken the stranglehold of drugs and crime goes hand in hand with efforts to strengthen the licit economy".

The presidential palace announced on 12 January that Abdullah and Ghani had agreed on 25 nominees for their cabinet after three months of negotiations on the composition of the national unity government. However, a number of the nominees, who require

approval by the Wolesi Jirga (the lower house of the parliament), had to withdraw because they held dual citizenship, which disqualified them from serving as cabinet ministers under the Afghan constitution. On 28 January, the Wolesi Jirga approved eight nominated ministers and the proposed director general of the National Directorate of Security. Ghani indicated that he would present the remaining cabinet nominees to the Wolesi Jirga in the near future, but at press time, this had yet to be done.

On 12 December 2014, the Council adopted resolution 2189 to welcome "the agreement between NATO and Afghanistan to establish the post-2014 non-combat Resolute Support Mission, which will train, advise and assist the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces". The Resolute Support Mission (RSM) consists of approximately 13,000 troops. While other NATO countries contribute to the mission, the large majority of these troops are from the US.

The security situation remains very fragile and continues to take a heavy toll on Afghan security forces and civilian populations. As the NATO-led combat mission in Afghanistan (International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF) drew down its forces in 2014, Afghan security personnel were able to rely less on NATO's combat troops and close air support, which enabled insurgents to conduct large scale conventional attacks that heightened the death toll of Afghan security forces and civilians caught in the cross-fire. Meanwhile, insurgents continued to employ suicide attacks and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) with devastating effect. More than 5,000 Afghan security personnel were killed in 2014, the highest number since

the conflict began in 2001, while the nearly 3,700 civilians who died as a result of the fighting last year represented a 25 percent rise from 2013.

In recent months, the heightened violence in Afghanistan has continued without signs of abating. On 31 December 2014, up to 25 civilians were killed and 45 wounded in an apparent accident when a mortar fired from an Afghan military checkpoint landed on a wedding party in Sangin district, Helmand province. A suicide bombing at a funeral in Mihtarlam, the capital of Laghman province in eastern Afghanistan, claimed the lives of 15 people and injured an additional 39 on 29 January; Afghan authorities have accused the Taliban of this attack. On 20 January 2015, eight civilians died when an IED blew up their vehicle in Ghazni province, while another two civilians were killed in Washir district, Helmand province, on 6 February when an IED set by insurgents exploded. Over 20 Afghan police were killed in Logar province when four Taliban suicide bombers attacked their police station on 17 February.

Insurgents have also attacked a number of schools recently. In eastern Afghanistan, a girls' school was set on fire in Naray district, Kunar province, on 8 February. On 10 February, militants torched a co-educational school, also in Kunar province. Other attacks against schools were also reported in Nangahar province in late January and early February.

On 9 February, a US drone killed Mullah Abdul Rauf Khadim. Khadim was one of a handful of former Taliban commanders in Afghanistan to announce his loyalty to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham.

On 4 December 2014, Afghanistan and the UK co-hosted the London Conference

UN DOCUMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2189 (12 December 2014) welcomed the agreement establishing the RSM. **S/RES/2145** (17 March 2014) renewed the mandate of UNAMA until 17 March 2015. **Secretary-General's Report S/2014/876** (9 December 2014) was the UNAMA report. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7347** (18 December 2014) was the most recent UNAMA debate. **Sanctions Committee Document S/2015/79** (2 February 2015) was the report of the 1988 Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

Afghanistan (con't)

on Afghanistan, which included the participation of 59 states, international organisations and members of Afghan civil society. At the conference, Afghanistan and its international partners recommitted to the Tokyo mutual accountability framework of 2012. Through this framework, Afghanistan's international partners promised to maintain significant financial support for Afghanistan through 2017 in exchange for Afghanistan's on-going efforts to make progress in meeting commitments to good governance, the rule of law, human rights and effective financial management.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted its final report to the 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee in December 2014, and the Committee subsequently transmitted the report to the Council on 2 February. The report notes an apparent rise in the Taliban's involvement in "criminal activity, including narcotics trafficking, illicit mining, collusion with 'transport mafias' and kidnapping for ransom". It also warns that this trend has negative implications for peace and security in Afghanistan, as it "encourages those within the Taliban...who have the greatest economic incentives to oppose any meaningful process of reconciliation with the new government".

Human Rights-Related Developments

In February, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNAMA jointly published "Afghanistan: Annual Report 2014 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict." According to the report, if the current trend of more frequent and larger ground engagements between large numbers of Afghan security forces and anti-government elements continues, including indiscriminate shelling and the use of mortars, rocket propelled grenades, IEDs and other weapons in civilian-populated areas, it is highly likely that civilian casualties will continue to rise in 2015.

The Human Rights Council will consider the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation in Afghanistan and on the developments in technical assistance in the field of human rights in 2014 (A/HRC/28/48) during its 28th session in March.

Key Issues

A key issue is how well Afghan security forces will be able to maintain stability in the country, considering that the RSM is a non-combat mission.

A related issue is the high number of civilian casualties caused by the ongoing conflict.

Another related issue, moving forward, is what can be done to curtail the heightened violence in the country, given the apparent reluctance of the Taliban to engage in reconciliation with the government at the present time.

How effectively Ghani, Abdullah and their supporters will be able to work together in the government of national unity is also an important issue. The importance of filling the remaining cabinet positions in a manner that is mutually acceptable to the Ghani and Abdullah camps is a related issue.

Another important issue is the preparations for the Wolesi Jirga elections planned for 2015. Originally scheduled to be held by 23 May, it now appears unlikely that the elections can take place this soon for political, economic and other reasons. Abdullah has already indicated that electoral processes should be reformed before another Afghan election is held. Most notably, he has called for the country's election commissioners to be replaced.

Options

The most likely option is for the Council to renew UNAMA for an additional year. In renewing the mandate, the Council could decide to:

- underscore the heightened impact of the fighting on civilians and urge the government to bolster security at military and police facilities;
- highlight the importance of electoral reforms, given the irregularities in last year's presidential elections and the fact that parliamentary elections are upcoming; and

- emphasise the linkages between extremism and natural resource exploitation, in keeping with the findings of the recent report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

Other options include:

- streamlining the text by removing non-essential language to produce a shorter, more concise resolution, as last year's resolution was 17 pages; or
- renewing the mandate for a shorter period of time while signalling to Ghani and Abdullah the need to finalise the formation of their government.

Council Dynamics

Council members are broadly supportive of UNAMA's mandate to promote the rule of law, to provide good offices, to monitor human rights, to facilitate humanitarian assistance, to coordinate international assistance and to provide electoral support. There is likewise ongoing consternation about the violence in Afghanistan and the impact of the conflict on civilians. A number of members also emphasise the importance of ensuring that the gains in the rights of women since 2001 are consolidated and built upon. Several members, but most notably France and Russia, consistently highlight their concerns about drug cultivation, production and trafficking and the ways in which the illicit funds generated by drugs support terrorism. China, which has substantial oil and mineral interests in Afghanistan and is reportedly concerned about a potential security vacuum to its west given the departure of the NATO-led ISAF, appears keen to play a growing mediation role between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Spain is the penholder on Afghanistan (including UNAMA), while New Zealand is the penholder on the 1988 Taliban Sanctions Committee.

Ukraine

Expected Council Action

As in previous months, the Council is likely to follow the events in Ukraine closely. At press time no specific meetings were planned but, depending on the developments on the ground, it is possible Council members may decide to hold briefings or other types of meetings.

Key Recent Developments

Despite the Minsk agreements of September 2014 mandating a ceasefire and the 9 December 2014 truce imposed by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, the fighting in eastern Ukraine has continued with greater intensity in 2015. On 13 January, after the shelling of a passenger bus in Volnovakha, Donetsk, in which 11 civilians were killed and 17 injured, Council members issued a press statement condemning the act and calling for an investigation of the incident.

In Donetsk, the fighting between the government forces and rebels for the control of the Donetsk airport has been particularly intense. For several months the Ukrainian army held the airport and resisted continuous attacks by the rebels. The airport fell under rebel control on 21 January. The same day the Council held its first meeting in 2015 on the situation in Ukraine. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed, reporting that Ukraine was experiencing the worst upsurge of violence since the signing of the Minsk agreement on 5 September 2014.

In the deadliest attack in Ukraine since the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in which 298 lives were claimed, on 24 January, 30 people were killed and more than 100 were injured in a rocket attack on the city of Mariupol. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the attack while noting that appearing to launch rockets indiscriminately into civilian areas could constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. After crater analysis, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission reported that rockets came from rebel-held areas in the Donetsk region. Lithuania, the UK and the US drafted a press statement condemning the attack

on Mariupol. However, the Council failed to adopt the statement because of Russia's disagreement with the proposed language.

On 26 January, Feltman briefed the Council on the situation in Ukraine following reports of continuous violations of the Minsk agreements and the increasing number of civilian casualties. On 31 January, in an attempt to revive diplomatic efforts, the trilateral contact group—comprised of Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE—was scheduled to meet with the signatories of the Minsk agreements. However, according to the OSCE, representatives of Donetsk and Lugansk rebels did not appear and the meeting was cancelled.

In February, there was a renewed push by France and Germany for a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Ukraine. On 5 February, French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to Kiev, where they met with Poroshenko and presented him with a peace plan for Ukraine. The following day in Moscow, Hollande and Merkel met with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss the peace proposal for Ukraine.

On 12 February, Hollande, Merkel, Poroshenko and Putin met in Minsk, where after extended negotiations they agreed on the “Package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk accords”. The main points of the agreement include a ceasefire starting 15 February, withdrawal of heavy weapons, prisoner release and amnesty for those involved in fighting, as well as a constitutional reform aimed at greater autonomy of Donetsk and Lugansk.

This agreement resembles the September Minsk agreements but leaves out numerous issues that will have to be addressed in further negotiations. Most significantly, the 12 February agreement leaves control of the Ukraine-Russia border unresolved, which is conditioned on complete political settlement in Donetsk and Lugansk. The September Minsk agreements had envisaged that the OSCE would take control of the border between Ukraine and Russia.

On 17 February, the Council unanimously adopted the Russian-drafted resolution 2202,

endorsing the 12 February “measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements” and calling on all parties to implement these measures. In addition, the draft reaffirmed resolution 2166 regarding the downing of flight MH17 and made references to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, while not mentioning Crimea and Sevastopol.

Just before the vote on resolution 2202, Council members issued a press statement expressing concern over ceasefire violations and continued fighting in the town of Debaltseve. The statement also called on all parties to adhere to the commitment made in Minsk and allow the OSCE to monitor and verify compliance with the Minsk agreements.

On 18 February, after weeks of intense fighting, rebel forces took control of Debaltseve after Ukrainian troops withdrew from the town. Though small, Debaltseve has significant strategic importance because it serves as a railway and highway hub connecting rebel-held Donetsk and Lugansk.

At press time, the ceasefire continues to be violated throughout eastern Ukraine.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In a statement issued on 3 February, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein urged all sides to halt the dangerous escalation in the fighting in eastern Ukraine, which is proving catastrophic for civilians. Bus stops and public transport, marketplaces, schools and kindergartens, hospitals and residential areas have become battlegrounds in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in clear breach of international humanitarian law. There has been indiscriminate shelling of residential areas in both government-controlled territory and in areas controlled by the armed groups, said the High Commissioner. He also expressed concern about the implications of the harsh winter months on civilians in conflict-affected areas, with shortages of food and water and power cuts and the plight of these civilians being compounded by government decisions that have resulted in further restrictions on the freedom of movement and in socio-economic isolation. The prolongation of the conflict would make the humanitarian situation untenable for millions of people.

The statement also highlighted worrying developments in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, particularly multiple violations of the rights of Crimean Tatars. On 26 January, the premises of ATR in Simferopol, the only television

UN DOCUMENTS ON UKRAINE Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2202 (17 February 2015) endorsed the agreements reached in Minsk on 12 February. S/RES/2166 (21 July 2014) condemned the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 and called for an investigation of the crash. Security Council Press Statements SC/11784 (17 February 2015) expressed concern over ceasefire violations and continued fighting in Debaltseve. SC/11733 (13 January 2015) condemned the shelling of a passenger bus in Volnovakha. Security Council Letters S/2014/264 (13 April 2014) was from Russia, requesting urgent consultations on the situation in Ukraine. S/2014/136 (28 February 2014) was from Ukraine, requesting an urgent meeting and citing the situation in Crimea as a threat to the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7384 (17 February 2015) was the vote on resolution 2202. S/PV.7368 (26 January 2015) and S/PV.7365 (21 January 2015) were on the situation in Ukraine.

Ukraine (con't)

channel broadcasting in the Crimean Tatar language, were raided by armed, masked men in unmarked military clothing. On 29 January, the deputy head of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis, Ahtem Ciygoz, was detained by the Russian occupying authorities. He faces up to ten years in prison for creating "mass disturbances".

The Human Rights Council will consider the report of the Human Rights Mission to Ukraine on the situation in the country, including Crimea, during its 28th session in March (A/HRC/28/64/Add.1).

Key Issues

Defining the role the Council could play in responding to the crisis in Ukraine remains the key issue, including in what way the Council can reinforce the implementation of the ceasefire and remaining provisions of the Minsk agreements.

The role of the UN in investigating the downing of flight MH17 in accordance with resolution 2166 remains an ongoing issue for the Council.

Finally, dealing with the humanitarian situation in Ukraine is an increasingly important issue for the Council, specifically the way the UN and its agencies can address the issue in light of the harsh winter conditions and the large number of affected civilians in eastern Ukraine.

Options

The Council could consider getting more information on the implementation of the Minsk agreements, requesting a briefing by the OSCE, which remains the organisation with the leading role in Ukraine, especially

through its role in the trilateral contact group.

An option for the Council would be to explore possible ways of establishing a political mission and monitoring mechanism for Ukraine which would work closely with other organisations on the ground, primarily the OSCE.

Another option for the Council would be to request a briefing by the UN Department of Political Affairs on the latest political developments in Ukraine.

In addition, the Council could consider a briefing on human rights and the humanitarian situation in Ukraine by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, given that it received its last briefing addressing the humanitarian situation in October 2014.

Should the ceasefire collapse and the Minsk agreements not be implemented, the Council could consider addressing the situation in Ukraine through a Chapter VI resolution by either working with Russia or insisting on its obligation to abstain from voting, in line with article 27(3) of the UN Charter, which requires a party to a dispute to abstain from voting.

Council Dynamics

Towards the end of 2014, the Council seemed to be less involved in the situation in Ukraine, which led to a gradual decrease in the frequency of Council meetings on the issue. This trend could be attributed to Council members' exhaustion with Ukraine and the inability to take action due to the wide rift between permanent members on the issue. In addition, most Council

members share the view that the solution to the crisis does not lie in the Council but rather through other diplomatic avenues that facilitate high-level talks between Russia and Ukraine. However, in the first two months of 2015 the Council seems to be more active on the issue. At press time, the Council had held three meetings on Ukraine, issued two press statements and adopted resolution 2202 since the beginning of 2015.

Despite the adoptions of resolutions 2166 and 2202, the Council failed to adopt any resolution that would focus on the wider political context of the situation in Ukraine due to a rift between Russia and the P3. Russia tried to introduce three draft resolutions on the wider political and humanitarian situation in Ukraine during its presidency of the Council in June 2014. Due to disagreements, these drafts were never voted on. This rift was also manifested on 17 February when resolution 2202 was adopted. Prior to the vote, the Council issued a press statement that contained the main elements the P3 and Lithuania had tried to include in the resolution but which Russia declined to include as amendments during the negotiations.

The Council has been deeply divided on the issue of Ukraine since the beginning of the crisis in early 2014. Russia will not accept any Council outcome that would question the legal status of Crimea and Sevastopol, now de facto part of the Russian Federation, while the P3 and Western countries continue to insist on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine in line with General Assembly resolution 68/262.

Syria

Expected Council Action

In March, Council members expect to receive their regular monthly briefings on the chemical weapons and humanitarian tracks.

At press time, Special Envoy for Syria Stefan de Mistura was in Damascus for further discussions on a possible cessation of hostilities in Aleppo. It was unclear whether he would report back to Council members in March.

Key Recent Developments

De Mistura briefed Council members on 17 February on his efforts to secure a UN-mediated freeze zone for Aleppo to de-escalate violence and to allow the entry of humanitarian aid. He announced that, following his 11 February meeting with President Bashar al-Assad, Syria had indicated a willingness to halt all aerial bombardment over Aleppo

for a period of six weeks. (The same day de Mistura met with Assad, the government and allied foreign militias launched a new offensive south of Damascus against mainstream opposition fighters in Daraa and Al-Nusra Front in Quneitra.) De Mistura could not say when such a freeze would go into effect, reporting that a date would be announced from Damascus. In addition, he asked Syria

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2191 (17 December 2014) renewed cross-border humanitarian access. S/RES/2139 (22 February 2014) was on humanitarian access, along with demands regarding human rights and protection of civilians. S/RES/2118 (27 September 2013) was on chemical weapons. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7394 (26 February 2015) was on the humanitarian situation. Security Council Letter S/2015/95 (6 February 2015) transmitted the decision of the OPCW decision on chlorine bombs. Secretary-General's Reports S/2015/124 (19 February 2015) was on the humanitarian situation. S/2015/56 (26 January 2015) was on chemical weapons.

Syria (con't)

to allow a humanitarian surge in the UN-identified district of Salah al-Din in Aleppo.

On the same day of de Mistura's briefing, government forces launched a surprise offensive north of Aleppo near a strategic road that is the opposition forces' last remaining supply line from Turkey—setting the stage for a government siege of Aleppo. De Mistura said he feared it was an attempt to solidify gains before the freeze went into effect and that he was returning to Damascus to bring the government and opposition into agreement on a freeze plan. Some opposition groups have condemned de Mistura's proposals as favourable to the government. At press time, opposition groups had recaptured territory north of Aleppo from the government.

On 20 February, Council members held a closed Arria-formula meeting with the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry on Syria. The Commission said that the inability of the Council to refer Syria to the ICC has contributed to the environment of impunity in which the Syrian government operates. In this context, the commissioners said they were considering whether to publicly release a list of alleged perpetrators when the Human Rights Council considers their latest report on 17 March (A/HRC/28/69). The report noted that keeping the names confidential would only reinforce the impunity the Commission was mandated to combat. (In the past, the Commission has always transmitted a confidential list of alleged perpetrators to the High Commissioner for Human Rights.)

The Commission's investigations have reinforced that the main causes of civilian casualties are due to deliberate targeting of civilians, indiscriminate attacks, attacks on protected objects—such as schools, hospitals and mosques—and the punitive imposition of sieges and blockades. The scale of government violations continues to outpace that of opposition and extremist groups with widespread reports of aerial bombardment, deaths, sexual violence and torture in government detention centres and extra-judicial killings, beatings and enforced disappearances.

On 26 February, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyungwha Kang and High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres briefed the Council on the devastating humanitarian situation. Those requiring humanitarian assistance in Syria number 12.2 million. Of those needing

assistance, 7.6 million are internally displaced, 4.8 million are in hard-to-reach areas and 212,000 are besieged, largely by government forces. The death toll in Syria is conservatively estimated at 220,000 people.

Kang reported that there had been 66 cross-border aid deliveries but cross-line deliveries within Syria remain difficult. She reported on the intensified clashes in eastern Ghouta, south of Damascus, during the reporting period—echoing media reports of a government offensive there that left hundreds dead over the course of ten days. Kang also identified five areas that require urgent progress: lifting the siege on 212,000 people, ensuring medical and surgical supplies reach all parts of the country, ending the practice of denying key services as a weapon of war, rebuilding the education system and ending relentless and indiscriminate attacks, including the use of barrel bombs.

Guterres briefed on the plight of the 3.8 million refugees who have fled Syria and the importance of supporting the funding needs of the UN's 2015 Syria response plan at the Kuwait Donor Conference in March. He also highlighted the needs of Syria's neighbouring countries where Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey have restricted the refugee influx due to concerns about the destabilising impact on their own security and economic situations.

Earlier in the month, on 6 February, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane, briefed on the chemical weapons track. The major focus of these consultations was the 4 February decision of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) that created a reporting line back to the Council on the reports of the OPCW's fact-finding mission on the use of chlorine bombs. (These reports concluded that chlorine has been used as a weapon and had been repeatedly delivered in barrel bombs dropped from helicopters. While the report does not attribute blame, only the government has aerial capacity and only rebel-held areas were targeted.)

Regarding the US-led coalition against the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), Jordan carried out dozens of airstrikes in February against ISIS targets in Raqqa in response to the murder by immolation of a Jordanian pilot. Further strikes were carried out in Hassakeh province in support of Kurdish troops attempting to cut off an ISIS supply route

from Iraq. Hassakeh province is also where ISIS has recently abducted hundreds of Assyrian Christians.

On 17 February, the US and Turkey said they had agreed in principle to a train-and-equip program for moderate Syrian opposition fighters to confront ISIS, reflecting Washington's focus on ISIS versus Ankara's priority of toppling Assad.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 4 February, the 1737 Iran Sanctions Committee reviewed a list of pending issues that includes a US proposal to designate Jaysh Al-Shabi, a pro-government Syrian militia that has allegedly received arms from Iran. Council members' positions remained unchanged and no progress was made.

Key Issues

The key issue for the Council—as this violent civil war heads into its fifth year—is to find ways to show greater leadership, particularly in supporting a cessation of violence and resuscitating efforts for a political solution. Regarding the immediacy of a potential Aleppo freeze, an issue for Council members will be whether it is implemented in line with international humanitarian law as government forces seem poised to besiege the city.

In light of the Commission of Inquiry's pending decision on whether to publicise a list of alleged perpetrators, the pressure for the Council to respond to the widespread impunity in Syria may re-emerge.

Ongoing issues include when to follow-up the violations of resolutions 2139 and 2191 on the humanitarian situation and 2118 on the destruction of chemical weapons—in particular aerial bombardment and the use of chlorine bombs.

Options

If an Aleppo freeze is successfully negotiated Council members could issue a statement supporting the plan, calling for it to be scrupulously implemented in adherence to international humanitarian law and set out expectations for how the freeze could be monitored and expanded to other areas.

The Council is likely to give de Mistura space to achieve a freeze in Aleppo but could request more regular briefings from the Special Envoy, including through video-teleconference from Damascus, in order to follow developments more closely.

Syria (con't)

However, if his efforts fail to gain traction, options for Council members who are concerned that elements of resolution 2139, such as demands regarding human rights and protection of civilians, are being flagrantly ignored is to follow-up the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry to:

- invite the Commission or the High Commissioner for Human Rights to give periodic briefings;
- attempt to seek accountability through an international justice mechanism, either through an ICC referral or the creation of an ad hoc tribunal; and
- follow through on previous threats to adopt targeted measures against persons and groups credibly implicated in egregious violations.

An option, albeit unlikely, for Council members who are concerned about the government's use of chlorine bombs would be to put forward a resolution (avoiding the consensus requirement of a press or presidential statement) determining that Syria has breached resolution 2118. In addition, given that chlorine is delivered in barrel bombs, such an outcome could be an opportunity to address the broader and more pervasive issue of indiscriminate aerial bombardment.

Council Dynamics

Despite overwhelming indications that resolutions 2118 and 2139 have been continually breached, it is unclear when Council members may push for follow-up measures against the Syrian regime or other actors on the ground, such as targeted sanctions or another go at an ICC referral. The assumption that Russia would veto any effort specific

to the government remains a deterrent to such attempts.

Aside from rare moments of consensus that allowed for the adoption of humanitarian-focused resolutions, counter-terrorism is the only other area where the Council has a degree of unanimity of purpose on Syria, as demonstrated by the adoption of resolution 2199 on 12 February which addressed the funding of ISIS and Al-Nusra via illegal oil exports, traffic of cultural heritage, ransom payments and external donations.

On the political track, overall Council members see value in de Mistura's incremental approach given the inability of previous envoys to overcome the government's intransigence to a negotiated political settlement. Russia is fully supportive of freeze zones. Other Council members had initially been wary about whether a freeze zone would be anything more than the opposition's agreement to surrender as the result of the government's siege and starvation tactics. However, this worry seems to have subsided, not because of a new confidence in the Syrian regime which, at press time, was actively attempting to besiege Aleppo. Rather, it represents a tacit acknowledgement by Council members of two things. First, no one has been able to devise a better alternative to the freeze proposal. And second, since the ISIS lightning offensive in June in Iraq, there has been a subtle shift in the US and UN position vis-à-vis the Assad regime. While the US still condemns the regime, such statements no longer include the standard US tagline that Assad must go. Meanwhile, the most recent Secretary-General's report on the humanitarian situation said a political solution will

require everyone putting aside their preconditions for launching talks.

On the accountability track, the Commission of Inquiry's list of alleged perpetrators is a sensitive issue given the gap between Russia's support of the government and the view of a significant number of other Council members that the regime has committed the overwhelming majority of violations. Council members speculate that such a list might include Assad. In December 2013, then High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said that the Commission had produced massive evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity and indicated responsibility at the highest level of government, including the head of state.

On the chemical weapons track, the US and Russia, in their capacity as members of the OPCW Executive Council, reached agreement on 4 February regarding the issue of chlorine bombs. Nevertheless, the agreement reached at The Hague did not transfer to New York and deep divisions remain within the Council. At the 6 February chemical weapons consultations, Russia offered a long rebuttal against the findings of the OPCW fact-finding mission.

France is the penholder on Syria overall, though the last text it put forward was the vetoed ICC referral in May 2014. Jordan, New Zealand and Spain lead on humanitarian issues. In practice, however, most texts need to be agreed between Russia and the US prior to agreement by the broader Council.

Council members France, Jordan, Lithuania, New Zealand, Spain, the UK and the US are part of the anti-ISIS coalition—though not all directly participate in air strikes.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

Expected Council Action

In late March, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) will brief Council members in consultations on the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). A report on the mission's activities is due on 18 March.

UNDOF was established in 1974 to

monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria. Its current mandate expires on 30 June.

Key Recent Developments

Due to the escalating spillover of the Syrian civil war into UNDOF's area of operations, the mission—which has experienced relative

calm for most of its life—has significantly altered how it carries out its mandate.

The Council adopted resolution 2192 on 18 December 2014 renewing the UNDOF mandate for six months. It was the first resolution adopted following the relocation of the majority of UNDOF peacekeepers on 15 September

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNDOF [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2192](#) (18 December 2014) renewed UNDOF for six months. [Security Council Letter S/2015/65](#) (28 January 2015) was from Israel regarding a rocket attack from Syria. [Secretary-General's Report S/2014/859](#) (1 December 2014) was the most recent UNDOF report.

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS (as of 31 January 2015) **Force Commander:** Major General Purna Chandra Thapa (Nepal) **Size of Mission:** 930 troops **Troop Contributors:** Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands

UNDOF (Golan Heights) (con't)

2014 from the Bravo (Syrian) side to the Alpha (Israeli) side of the area of operations after the Al-Qaida affiliated Al-Nusra Front overran Syrian government forces last August in Quneitra—a Syrian district close to the Israeli-occupied Golan. During this increase in hostilities, Al-Nusra detained 117 peacekeepers, all of whom later escaped safely or were released. Some peacekeepers are still deployed on the Syrian side at Mt. Hermon and at two other positions that are extremely close to the Israeli side of the armistice line. The UNDOF command is now headquartered in Damascus.

The upcoming UNDOF report is expected to include information on the 18 January Israeli airstrike that targeted two vehicles in Quneitra. (The report will not attribute responsibility but will describe how UNDOF observed two drones flying from the Alpha side that crossed the ceasefire line and how, several minutes after the drones disappeared from sight, it observed smoke and the drones returning to the Alpha side.)

The strike killed an Iranian general and six senior fighters from Hezbollah, the Tehran-backed Lebanese militia. This incident was unlike previous Israeli airstrikes in Syria that destroyed Hezbollah weaponry en route to Lebanon from Iran. It seems this time the target was Hezbollah and Iranian Revolutionary Guard General Mohammed Allahdadi and not a weapons convoy, and led to retaliatory attacks between Israel and Hezbollah in southern Syria and in southern Lebanon.

On 27 January, rockets from a Syrian military position were launched into the Israeli-occupied Golan, and Israel returned fire the next day. Israel said that it will exercise self-defence when faced with the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah threat.

On 28 January, two Israeli soldiers and a Spanish peacekeeper serving in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon were killed as Hezbollah traded fire with Israel in the Sheba'a Farms area (a disputed area between Syria and Lebanon that is occupied by Israel). These attacks were apparently related to the incidents in the adjacent Golan Heights. (See the Lebanon brief in this Monthly Forecast for further details.)

On 30 January, the head of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, said that the Golan and south Lebanon were now a single front against Israel. However, other analysts peg Hezbollah's presence in the Golan to strategic

goals that have little to do with an aggressive posture towards Israel. The first is to assist the Syrian government in retaking the restive areas south of Damascus from mainstream opposition fighters in Darra and from Al-Nusra in Quneitra, as demonstrated in an 11 February offensive by government and Hezbollah forces. Second, Hezbollah suspects Israel of aiding Al-Nusra in the south. For more than a year, UNDOF has observed the transfer of people and cargo trucks across the ceasefire line as well as Israeli forces interacting with members of armed groups. Israel characterises these transfers and interactions as humanitarian in nature. Nevertheless, Hezbollah wants to secure the Golan against any perceived cooperation between Israel and Al-Nusra and avoid any possible Al-Nusra infiltration into Hezbollah's stronghold in neighbouring southern Lebanon.

Mt. Hermon straddles this border area between Syria and Lebanon, and UNDOF has observed increased movements between Lebanon and the Golan since the Syrian crisis began. Mt. Hermon's location makes it a strategic position requiring a sustained UNDOF presence. If UNDOF were to abandon it, there would be unimpeded access across the border.

Key Issues

The spillover of the Syrian crisis into UNDOF's area of operations and escalating ceasefire violations will be of primary concern to the Council.

Given the deteriorating security situation in the Golan, the full return of UNDOF to the Syrian side seems unlikely in the foreseeable future, significantly constraining the mission's ability to carry out its monitoring tasks. In that respect, there are two key issues for the Council:

- whether new technologies, such as unmanned, unarmed aerial vehicles or satellite imagery, should be used to carry out observation tasks; and
- whether UNDOF should be allowed more mobility for its patrolling tasks on the Israeli side of the ceasefire line.

Regarding risk mitigation, an issue is how the safety of remaining peacekeepers on the Syrian side of the ceasefire line will be guaranteed. Mt. Hermon is strategically important for Israel, and if there were no UNDOF security presence there, Israel might feel compelled to man the position itself. This would be an

especially difficult challenge to regional security and the 1974 disengagement agreement.

Options

UNDOF was established as a Syria-based mission and how it operates is subject to the 1974 disengagement agreement and any changes require agreement by Israel and Syria. The majority of personnel are now based on the Alpha (Israeli) side which has restricted the mission's mobility and operational capacity. DPKO is in active conversations with both parties on ways it can continue its observation tasks. An option for the Council could be to adopt a statement:

- supporting DPKO's efforts;
- reiterating the need for all parties to exercise restraint;
- urging Israel and Syria to allow the use of new technologies so UNDOF could better fulfil its mandate in the current challenging security environment (both parties have been reluctant to agree to this); and
- urging Israel to allow UNDOF to establish more positions west of the ceasefire line on the Alpha side, given the mission's limited mobility there.

Council Dynamics

Council members are concerned about the increasing clashes in the area of operations, both in number and intensity, as well as the tension between Israel and Syria along the armistice line, which has been tremendously exacerbated by the overt presence of Hezbollah and senior members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

The Council has always generally agreed that UNDOF contributes to stability in the region in the absence of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria. However, its liaison function is particularly important now in order to avoid further negative security implications for the region. For that reason, most Council members are keen to maintain good relationships with troop-contributing countries to ensure UNDOF's ability to operate, even in its currently constrained configuration.

Though the US is the penholder on the Golan Heights, resolutions renewing UNDOF have been jointly authored with Russia since June 2012, suggesting consensus on an aspect of the Syria file that is otherwise defined by highly divisive P5 dynamics.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In March the Security Council is due to hold its semi-annual debate on Haiti, with a briefing by the Special Representative and head of mission, Sandra Honoré. The Council is expecting a report from the Secretary-General on the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in early March.

MINUSTAH's mandate expires on 15 October.

Key Recent Developments

On 23–25 January, the Council sent a visiting mission to Haiti co-led by Ambassadors Samantha Power (US) and Cristián Barros (Chile). The visit took place during an acute political crisis resulting from the failure to hold timely elections, with demonstrations continuing against the government of President Michel Martelly.

Despite the urging of the international community, Haitian politicians were unable to overcome their differences and make the necessary compromises for elections to take place before the expiry on 12 January of the terms of all the members of the Chamber of Deputies and a second third of the senators. (The terms of the first third expired in January 2012.) In a final attempt to avoid the dissolution of parliament, Martelly announced on 11 January that he had reached a deal with the opposition (later referred to as the Kinam accord) involving the appointment of a new Conseil Electoral Provisoire (CEP) and adoption by parliament, in an extraordinary session, of an amended electoral law that would extend the deputies' terms until 24 April and senators' terms until 9 September. The parliament failed to reach the necessary quorum to hold a meeting before the 12 January deadline, however, thus leading to its dissolution and Martelly's ruling by decree.

According to the terms of reference for the Council mission, a key objective was to “underscore the importance of inclusiveness and constructiveness” to political stability and development and to “urge Haiti's political actors to work cooperatively and without further delays to ensure the holding of free, fair, inclusive, and transparent legislative, partial senatorial, municipal and local elections” in accordance with Haiti's constitution.

When the Council delegation arrived in Port-au-Prince on 23 January, the members of the new CEP had just been sworn in. This followed the 16 January installation of Evans Paul, a long-term moderate opposition leader and former Port-au-Prince mayor, as prime minister and the formation on 19 January of a new cabinet comprising 36 ministers. Council members met with Martelly, Paul and other government officials along with the newly appointed members of the CEP and representatives of the opposition and civil society, including women's groups.

The Council mission also aimed to assess ongoing efforts to strengthen the Haitian National Police and the authorities' capacity to maintain stability and security throughout the country, as well as implementation of resolution 2180. This resolution, which was adopted on 14 October 2014 and extended MINUSTAH's mandate for another year, authorised a reduction in the mission's military component from 5,021 personnel to 2,370 by June 2015. (The police contingent remained unchanged at 2,601.) At the same time, it called on the Secretary-General to ensure that the reductions would only take place after the submission of his upcoming March report to the Council and also to alert the Council in this report of any “major changes” in the situation. Furthermore, the Council emphasised that if conditions changed, it would adapt MINUSTAH's mandate and force levels to safeguard progress already made towards security and stability in Haiti.

To assess progress in strengthening the police, the Council delegation visited the Haitian National Police Academy in Port-au-Prince. The Council also travelled to the MINUSTAH base in Cap-Haïtien where the force commander, Lieutenant General Jose Luiz Jaborandy Jr. (Brazil), briefed the delegation on the activities of the military component of MINUSTAH and the implications of the planned drawdown.

On 29 January, Power and Barros briefed the Council on the trip. Power focused on the political crisis and said the key message delivered by Council members was that all sides must redouble their efforts to engage in a constructive dialogue and come to an

agreement on a framework for free, fair and inclusive elections as soon as possible. She also noted that members had been encouraged by Martelly's commitment to use his executive authority to ensure the continuity of the state and to organise elections, but she stressed the importance of maintaining political checks and balances. Barros highlighted among other things how the trip had provided Council members an opportunity to assess ongoing efforts to strengthen the police. While noting that progress had been achieved, he also underlined that promoting greater responsibility for the maintenance of stability and security by national authorities was a remaining challenge. With regard to the planned drawdown of MINUSTAH, Barros noted that Council members had an opportunity “to express their different views” in the meeting with the force commander.

Demonstrations against the government continued in February, and there were also several strikes, including a two-day general strike on 9 and 10 February. Principal demands focused on the lowering of gas prices and the resignation of both Martelly and Evans. It was not clear how widespread the protests were (some reports suggested demonstrators were being paid to participate), but they appeared to be largely peaceful.

On 10 February, the CEP presented a tentative electoral calendar with three electoral rounds between July and October 2015—two legislative and one presidential—followed by local elections and the second round of presidential elections in January 2016.

Human Rights-Related Developments

At press time, the independent expert on the human rights situation in Haiti, Gustavo Gallón, was to visit the country from 22 February to 3 March to evaluate the human rights situation, in particular civil and political rights, as a follow-up to his July 2014 mission. He was to focus on five key areas: social inequality, detained persons, the rule of law, human rights violations committed in the past and the impact of natural disasters on human rights. The Human Rights Council will consider Gallón's report during its 28th session in March.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is whether recent developments in Haiti have impacted

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI Security Council Resolution S/RES/2180 (14 October 2014) renewed MINUSTAH's mandate until 15 October 2015. **Secretary-General's Report S/2014/617** (29 August 2014) was the most recent MINUSTAH report. **Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.7372** (29 January 2015) was the briefing on the Council visiting mission to Haiti. **S/PV.7277** (14 October 2014) was the adoption of resolution 2180 with explanations of vote by several Council members. **Security Council Letter S/2015/40** (19 January 2015) were the terms of reference for the Council visiting mission to Haiti.

Haiti (con't)

conditions on the ground in such a way that the decision authorising the drawdown of MINUSTAH beginning in March needs to be revisited. In particular, an important question is whether the timing is right for a drawdown in light of the recent political unrest, continuing uncertainty surrounding the elections and the current capacity of the Haitian police.

A further key issue is whether the Council can do more to encourage Haitian political leaders to reach consensus on a framework that will allow elections to be held this year.

Options

Main options for the Council include:

- adopting a resolution requesting the Secretary-General to delay the drawdown authorised in resolution 2180; or
- adopting a presidential statement as a follow-up to the recent visiting mission to reiterate the Council's concern about the electoral crisis and its impact on the stability and socio-economic development of

Haiti, urge politicians to resolve their differences and call for fair, just and transparent elections to be held as soon as possible.

Taking no action seems to be the most likely option.

Council and Wider Dynamics

It seems that Council members are now less divided with regard to the planned reconfiguration of MINUSTAH than at the time of the adoption of resolution 2180. Although the resolution was adopted by consensus, Latin American members of the Council only reluctantly supported it, as was evident in their explanations of vote. Argentina, an elected member at the time, and Chile expressed regret that they had not been in a position to co-sponsor the resolution, as their concerns about the accelerated drawdown had not been fully taken into account. While most Council members supported the Secretary-General's proposal for the drawdown to start right away, Argentina and Chile initially wanted to keep troop levels unchanged

during the current mandate period, hence the compromise provision in the resolution calling for the drawdown not to start until March.

During the recent visiting mission to Haiti, Latin American countries, including both Council members and some troop-contributing countries, appeared still to have some concerns about the planned reduction of MINUSTAH's military contingent, given current security challenges and continuing uncertainties surrounding the elections. However, at press time there were no indications that any Council member would push for a reopening of the drawdown decision. Most Council members seem confident that the mission will be able to handle the situation with a reduced military presence. In particular they note that most of the current security challenges are handled by the police. (There is no disagreement on the continued need for UN police.) It is expected that the Secretary-General's report will also conclude that there is no reason to change the drawdown plan.

Children and Armed Conflict

Expected Council Action

In late March the Council will hold an open debate on children and armed conflict. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, will brief, along with representatives from UNICEF and the NGO community. Other actors from the field, including possibly a child victim of a non-state armed group, may also participate.

The open debate is expected to focus on child victims of non-state armed groups. A concept note will be circulated by France, which as president of the Council in March has chosen to highlight this issue. The concept paper is expected to outline the tools available to the Council and the types of pressure that could be exerted on different non-state armed groups.

At press time, no formal outcome was expected but a summary of the main points of the debate may be circulated and used in preparing another debate expected in June during Malaysia's presidency. (Malaysia is

the chair of the Working Group for Children and Armed Conflict.)

Key Recent Developments

The last debate on children and armed conflict was held on 8 September 2014. The report of the Secretary-General was presented by Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Leila Zerrougui with briefings by Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF Yoka Brandt and Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous. Forest Whitaker, UNESCO's Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, and Sandra Uwiringiyimana, a victim of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, also spoke. In presenting the Secretary-General's 2014 report on children and armed conflict, Zerrougui highlighted the impact of activities of groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in Iraq and Boko Haram in Nigeria on children, as well as the

toll on children as a result of the conflict in Gaza. Many member states also focused on emergent threats, such as ISIS and Boko Haram and the situations in Syria and Gaza.

A joint initiative—Children, Not Soldiers—was launched in March 2014 by the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF and aimed to end and prevent recruitment and use of children by government armed forces in conflicts by 2016. At the start of the campaign, six of the eight situations listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's 2014 report for violations against children in situations of armed conflict had signed action plans to end recruitment of children. In May 2014, Yemen signed an action plan while the UN continues to be in active dialogue with South Sudan. There have been some signs of progress in the implementation of the action plans since the start of the campaign. The Chadian armed forces were delisted from

UN DOCUMENTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7259](#) (8 September 2014) was the most recent open debate. [Secretary-General's Report S/2014/339](#) (7 March 2014) was the most recent annual report on children and armed conflict. [Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict Reports S/AC.51/2014/3](#) (18 September 2014) was the DRC conclusions. [S/AC.51/2014/4](#) (26 November 2014) was the Syria conclusions.

USEFUL ADDITIONAL RESOURCE [Protect Schools and Hospitals](#), Guidance Note on Resolution 1998, UNICEF, May 2014

Children and Armed Conflict (con't)

the Secretary-General's 2014 report annexes. In early August the Afghan government endorsed a road map towards compliance with its action plan. In Myanmar, government forces released 91 children and the government promised to review its action plan and develop a work plan. The government of South Sudan recommitted to implementing its action plan and endorsed a work plan for ending grave violations against children.

The 2014 Secretary-General's report listed 59 parties in the Secretary-General's annexes, 51 of which were non-state armed groups. Over the years eleven non-state armed groups have signed action plans, leading to six being delisted following implementation of the action plans. However, no action plans have been signed with non-state armed groups since 2009.

Developments in the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Members of the Working Group travelled to the Democratic Republic of Congo from 30 November to 4 December 2014, where they visited Kinshasa and Goma. The delegation was led by Luxembourg, the then-chair of the Working Group, and included eight other member states. The aim of the visit was to acknowledge progress made in protecting children affected by conflict in the DRC, get a better understanding of the situation on the ground and reinforce the Working Group's recommendations to the DRC government and other parties contained in its 18 September 2014 conclusions on the situation of children and armed conflict in the DRC. In meetings with the government, the members of the delegation welcomed progress in relation to recruitment of children but more progress was needed to stop sexual violence. In 2014, the Working Group also adopted conclusions on the situation of armed conflict in Syria on 26 November following complex negotiations, as well as conclusions on Mali in July and the Philippines in January. In February, the Working Group began discussing the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict in South Sudan.

Human Rights-Related Developments

The Human Rights Council will consider Zerrougi's annual report, during its 28th session in March (A/HRC/28/54). It is also scheduled to hold an interactive dialogue with Zerrougi and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Marta Santos Pais. This coincides with the Human Rights Council's annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child.

Key Issues

A key issue is engaging with non-state armed groups victimising children. A related issue is being able to exert pressure on such groups to stop violations against children.

A closely connected issue is the reluctance of governments to allow contact between non-state armed groups and the UN and how to overcome this. Focusing on groups that are part of an ongoing peace process like in the Central African Republic and Mali may be a possible avenue.

An emerging issue is how to deal with extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISIS, which do not operate in just one country, are difficult to approach and are unlikely to respond to the usual forms of pressure. A related issue is how to ensure that military strikes against extremist groups take into account protection of children.

A related issue is ensuring child protection is mainstreamed into the Council's thematic work on counter-terrorism and country-specific situations where these terrorist groups operate.

Also an issue is the increasing difficulty in monitoring and reporting in situations in the Secretary-General's annexes that have deteriorated rapidly in the last year such as Iraq, Libya and Yemen. This may be a problem for future reports on these situations.

A continuing issue is the reluctance of some members to use sanctions to pressure persistent perpetrators, i.e., groups that have been in the Secretary-General's annexes for more than five years. A connected issue is ensuring all relevant sanctions committees include all four violations that could trigger a listing in the Secretary-General's annexes (recruitment of children, killing and maiming, sexual violence and attacks on and use of schools and hospitals).

Also an issue is how to ensure inclusion of more substantive references to attacks on and military use of schools and hospitals in relevant documents on country-specific issues on the Council's agenda. (This is the most recently added violation that could trigger a listing in the Secretary-General's annexes.) A related issue is encouraging the parties on the list for this violation to sign action plans.

A continuing issue is ensuring that armed forces listed in the Secretary-General's annexes wanting to serve as peacekeepers, are properly screened and go through the appropriate

UN due-diligence process.

Finally, an issue is how to take forward any concrete recommendations from this debate to the June debate.

Options

An option is to request a report from the Secretary-General identifying non-state armed groups that might be more amenable to complying with international law related to children and armed conflict, for example non-state armed groups seeking political legitimacy. Given the complexity of the non-state armed groups, a better understanding of these groups is needed to develop appropriate strategies for persuading them to stop violations against children in situations of armed conflict.

One option is to create, together with the relevant governments, incentives to persuade non-state armed groups that potentially could be listed in the Secretary-General's annexes to stop violations in order to not get listed.

An option in dealing with terrorist non-state armed groups is to request the UN missions in countries where these groups are operating to pay particular attention to the conditions that may allow for violations against children and to work with the relevant governments to provide a safer environment for children.

Despite the difficulties in the past, sanctions continue to be a tool for putting pressure on armed groups that are sensitive to arms, financial or travel restrictions. Options related to listing parties for situations not on the Council's agenda (Colombia, Philippines and Nigeria), as well as situations with no sanctions committee, include creating a general sanctions committee or having the Working Group act as a sanctions committee.

Council Dynamics

The issue of non-state armed groups has been a controversial one for Council members, particularly in relation to how to approach them. A fundamental shift in some members' positions would be needed in order to see much movement on this issue. However, given the number of non-state armed groups listed in the Secretary-General's annexes and lack of progress in getting them to sign an action plan, some members see this as an issue worth focusing on again.

Some members may see this debate as

Children and Armed Conflict (con't)

an opportunity to tackle the highly relevant emerging threat of violent extremism and its impact on children. Malaysia might be keen to ensure that there are some concrete

proposals that could be taken up during their proposed debate in June. Keeping in mind the possibility of adding abductions as a violation that could lead to listing during that

debate, some members may want to more fully explore the issue of non-state armed groups who have been abducting children.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

In March, newly appointed Special Coordinator for Lebanon Sigrid Kaag will brief Council members in consultations on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701, which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006. Kaag's briefing is likely to include an update on investigations into the 28 January death of a peacekeeper serving in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

UNIFIL's mandate expires on 31 August.

Key Recent Developments

On 28 January, two Israeli soldiers and a Spanish peacekeeper—Lance Corporal Francisco Javier Soria Toledo—were killed and seven Israeli soldiers were wounded as Hezbollah militants traded fire with Israeli forces. Hezbollah struck Israeli forces with anti-tank missile fire, to which Israel responded by firing shells into southern Lebanon. During the incident, UNIFIL had observed six rockets launched towards Israel from the vicinity of Wazzani north of Maysat in the UNIFIL area of operations.

Kaag strongly urged all parties to abide by their obligations under resolution 1701. UNIFIL Force Commander Major General Luciano Portolano was in immediate contact with the parties to help control the situation and prevent further escalation. Portolano strongly condemned this serious violation of resolution 1701. UNIFIL bolstered its presence by increasing ground patrols and launched an investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding the event. Israel and Spain announced on 30 January that they had agreed to carry out their own joint investigation into the death of the peacekeeper. On 4 February, UN peacekeeping head Hervé Ladsous

announced that an independent panel of inquiry was being appointed to establish the sequence of events, determine culpability and potentially demand financial compensation.

The exchange of fire followed an attack the day before, in which Israel struck Syrian army posts following rocket attacks from the Syrian Golan Heights. Iranian officials said those attacks were in retaliation for the 18 January air strike in the Golan Heights, widely believed to have been conducted by Israel, that killed six Hezbollah fighters and Iranian Revolutionary Guard General Mohammed Allahdadi. (For further details please see the Golan Heights brief in this *Monthly Forecast*.)

Lebanon's prime minister said Lebanon is committed to abiding by resolution 1701 and criticised Israel for causing an escalation in tensions. On 1 February, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused UN peacekeepers of failing to report on the smuggling of weapons into southern Lebanon. (UNIFIL is mandated to assist Lebanon in securing its borders to prevent the entry of arms without the government's consent, but does not have a specific monitoring task.)

On the day of the incident, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Edmond Mulet briefed Council members in consultations. Following the meeting, Council president in January, Cristián Barros (Chile), read elements to the press in which Council members condemned the death of the Spanish UNIFIL peacekeeper that occurred in the context of an exchange of fire along the Blue Line. When reporters asked if there had been any discussion on whether the fire that killed the peacekeeper came from the Israeli side or from Hezbollah, Barros said there had been a long discussion about the issue and that the Council

would soon produce a press statement. In his comments to the media, Spanish Ambassador Román Oyarzun told reporters that the lethal fire was “because of the escalation of the violence and it came from the Israeli side”.

Two days later, France, the penholder, circulated a press statement on the death of the peacekeeper, but there was insurmountable disagreement among Council members as to how to characterise the context in which the peacekeeper was killed and apportion blame for the incident. After a week of negotiations and the threat of continuing deadlock on the issue, Council members on 4 February agreed to a press statement that merely “condemned in the strongest terms” the killing of a UNIFIL peacekeeper that “occurred in the context of fire exchanges along the Blue Line on 28 January 2015”.

In mid-February, Kaag made her first official visit to south Lebanon since assuming the role on 1 December 2014. On 17 February, she met with members of parliament in the southern city of Tyre and, the following day, with former Prime Minister Saad Hariri to discuss the presidential election stalemate, the Syrian refugee crisis and other developments in the country and region.

The war in Syria continues to embroil Lebanese elements and have damaging social and political effects on Lebanon. On 17 February, Hezbollah aided Syrian government forces in capturing several villages near Aleppo in heavy fighting that left more than 100 dead on both sides. On 3 February, Hezbollah and, in a separate operation, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), both attacked militant hideouts along the Syrian-Lebanese border, on the outskirts of the eastern town of Nahleh in Baalbek. Lebanese security sources say that militants had reinforced their positions

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2172](#) (26 August 2014) extended the mandate of UNIFIL for one year. [S/RES/1559](#) (2 September 2004) urged disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias and extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2014/10](#) (29 May 2014) urged Lebanon to hold elections quickly and called on all parties to refrain from any involvement in the Syrian crisis – a reference to Hezbollah's fighting in Syria. [Secretary-General's Report S/2014/784](#) (5 November 2014) was the latest 1701 report. [Security Council Press Statements SC/11766](#) (4 February 2015) condemned the killing of a UNIFIL peacekeeper. [SC/11731](#) (11 January 2015) expressed outrage at a terrorist attack in Tripoli for which Al-Nusra Front claimed responsibility. [Security Council Letters S/2014/949](#) (23 December 2014) and [S/2014/950](#) (26 December 2014) was an exchange of letters to extend the mandate of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon for a further three years on 1 March.

Lebanon (con't)

on the outskirts of the Lebanese border town after having engaged in clashes with Hezbollah a week earlier.

In a speech on 16 February, Hezbollah's chief, Hassan Nasrallah, revealed for the first time that, in addition to fighting in Syria, Hezbollah is also engaged in combat in Iraq, saying that the Shi'a group has a "limited presence because of the sensitive phase that Iraq is going through".

On 11 January, Council members issued a press statement expressing outrage at a terrorist attack carried out a day earlier in Tripoli for which Al-Nusra Front claimed responsibility.

On 8 February, France announced that it would begin delivering within two months weapons purchased with a \$3 billion grant from Saudi Arabia to the LAF. When making the announcement during a meeting with Prime Minister Tammam Salam, Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius conveyed France's desire to preserve the stability, national unity and state institutions of Lebanon. The same day, a \$25 million shipment of US weapons pledged to the LAF arrived in Beirut. The US ambassador to Lebanon, David Hale, said in a statement that "recent attacks against Lebanon's army only strengthen America's resolve to stand in solidarity with the people of Lebanon, adding that the two countries were "fighting the same enemy".

On 23 December 2014, Secretary-General

Ban Ki-moon sent a letter to the Council announcing his intention to extend the mandate of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon—mandated to try those accused of carrying out the February 2005 attack that killed 22 people, including former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri—for a further three years on 1 March.

Key Issues

The key issue for the Council is the need to prevent the recurrence or escalation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon.

A related issue is the weaponry that is in the hands of Hezbollah and other non-state actors, which continues to restrict the ability of the state 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.

Several pressing issues arise from the conflict in neighbouring Syria, including the engagement of Lebanese elements in the war there and the immense burden of hosting growing numbers of Syrian refugees.

Options

One option is for the Council to receive the briefing and take no action.

Another option would be to issue an outcome, such as a resolution, addressing the plethora of political and security issues facing

Lebanon. Such a resolution could reiterate the need for calm along the Blue Line. Given the lack of progress towards electing a president, the resolution could also encourage the election to take place in an expeditious manner in order to maintain stability. It could also reiterate support for the government of Lebanon, including in its fight against terrorism, and stress the need for all Lebanese parties to abide by its policy of dissociation from the Syrian conflict, outlined in the Baabda Declaration of June 2012.

Council Dynamics

There is consensus in the Council that UNIFIL contributes to stability between Israel and Lebanon and has become even more crucial in the context of the ongoing Syrian crisis. The Council remains united in its support for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. The Council is also united in its concern about the continued vacancy in the presidency, particularly given the extreme challenges facing Lebanon at this time.

However undivided the Council is on supporting Lebanon's stability, the recent difficulty encountered in issuing what should have been a fairly routine press statement concerning the death of a peacekeeper demonstrates that, like in other contexts, the Council is often constrained in its ability to react to crises involving Israel.

Sudan and South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In March, Council members will hold their quarterly meeting on implementation of resolution 2046 on Sudan-South Sudan relations, as outlined in a 21 August 2014 presidential note. At press time, no outcome was anticipated on this issue during the month.

Key Recent Developments

Heavy fighting between Sudanese government forces and SPLM-N rebels was reported in South Kordofan from early December 2014 through mid-January, especially near the state capital of Kadugli and the town of Talodi. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

reported that Sudan's air force bombed Fradala hospital in South Kordofan on 20 January, dropping 13 bombs. According to the aid organisation, two of the bombs landed inside the hospital grounds, wounding one patient and one staff member. The Belgian branch of MSF suspended its operation in Sudan on 29 January, citing "the Sudanese government's systematic denial of access to people trapped in conflict areas". On 5 February, the UN High Commission for Refugees announced that since December 2014 more than 500 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan state had arrived at refugee camps in South Sudan escaping the violence in Sudan.

Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) commenced a new round of negotiations in Addis Ababa on 12 November 2014, mediated by Thabo Mbeki, chair of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel. In his opening remarks, SPLM-N head negotiator Yasir Armin said that there should be "a credible national constitutional conference" in Sudan, with elections taking place under the auspices of a national transitional government. He also underscored the need for humanitarian access in conflict areas of Sudan, saying that "denying it is a war crime in international humanitarian law". Ibrahim Ghandour, who

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2046 (2 May 2012) provided a roadmap for Sudan, South Sudan and the SPLM-N to resolve outstanding issues; it also threatened Article 41 measures. Security Council Press Statement SC/11694 (11 December 2014) reiterated concern about the humanitarian situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Other S/2014/613 (21 August 2014) indicated that the Council would meet on a quarterly basis to discuss implementation of resolution 2046.

Sudan and South Sudan (con't)

is leading the Sudanese delegation, said that the government was committed to resolving its conflicts through dialogue and negotiation, citing the country's "national dialogue process" as a means to "reach consensus on... solutions for [Sudan's]...major problems".

The talks ended in early December, as the parties made no headway. Sudan insists on the disarmament of the SPLM-N and a ceasefire, while the SPLM-N demands that the humanitarian needs of inhabitants in South Kordofan and Blue Nile be addressed after the declaration of a cessation of hostilities.

Despite President Omar al-Bashir's promise to create a "conducive environment" for a national dialogue process in Sudan, government repression has continued. On 3 December 2014, the Sudan Revolutionary Front rebel alliance, key opposition political parties and civil society groups in Sudan signed the "Sudan Call" agreement in Addis Ababa, calling for an end to civil war and the country's transition to democracy. Upon returning to Sudan from Addis Ababa, two of the key signatories—Farouk Abu Issa, who heads a group of opposition political parties called the National Consensus Forces, and civil society activist Amin Mekki Madani—were arrested by Sudanese authorities. At press time, they remain in prison and are being tried in Khartoum for charges that include instigating war against the state. If convicted, they could face the death penalty.

On 4 January, Sudan's parliament approved amendments to the constitution that allow the president to appoint state governors (who were previously elected through popular suffrage) and expands the power of the National Intelligence and Security Services.

Sudan's National Elections Commission announced that general elections—i.e. for the presidency and the national assembly—will be held from 13 to 15 April. Bashir, who has been in power since 1989, has decided to run for president again despite previously declaring that he would step down at the end of his current term. Several opposition parties have vowed to boycott the elections, citing the government's repressive policies and believing that a broad-based transitional government that will draft a constitution that results in the democratic transformation of the country

should be established instead.

Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission reported on 5 January that it had extended for an additional six months its June 2014 deal with South Sudan to allow humanitarian aid to be shipped from Sudan to South Sudan in an initiative facilitated by the World Food Programme. On 29 December 2014, approximately 450 tonnes of food reached Renk and Wadakona in Upper Nile state, South Sudan, having been transported by barge from Kosti in Sudan's White Nile State.

Council members last held consultations on Sudan/South Sudan on 8 December 2014 with a briefing by Haile Menkerios, Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and Special Representative to the AU. During the meeting, members expressed frustration that the two countries have been unable to implement provisions of resolution 2046. On 11 December 2014, the Council issued a press statement in which it called on Sudan and South Sudan to implement fully the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) along the Sudan-South Sudan border in compliance with resolution 2046. In the statement, members also reiterated "their grave concern about the dire humanitarian situation" caused by the ongoing conflict in Sudan's South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. They further called on the parties to "refrain from any acts of violence against civilians and to expedite safe and unhindered humanitarian access".

Key Issues

One key issue is whether and how the Council can promote constructive negotiations between Sudan and the SPLM-N, especially given the recent surge in fighting between the government and the rebel group.

Another key issue is the ongoing repressiveness of the government in Khartoum and what implications this has for political stability in the country, especially in light of the upcoming presidential and national assembly elections.

Also an important issue is whether and how the Council can play a role in protecting civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile and enabling humanitarian assistance to penetrate rebel-held areas.

Options

One option for the Council is to adopt a presidential statement that:

- expresses concern over recent violence in Abyei;
- reiterates its call for the parties to reconvene the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, which is designed to provide administrative and political oversight of the region but has not met since May 2013; and
- calls on the government of Sudan to adhere to its commitment to provide a "conducive environment" for the national dialogue process in Sudan.

Another option for the Council is to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate allegations that war crimes have been committed in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Also an option is for the Council to consider the humanitarian crisis in South Kordofan and Blue Nile during the annual joint meeting that Council members will hold with the AU Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa in March and try to come up with new ways of addressing it.

Council Dynamics

Council members remain frustrated at the lack of progress made by Sudan and South Sudan in resolving the outstanding issues facing them, such as border demarcation, the establishment of temporary administrative bodies in Abyei and the region's final status. On the other hand, there is recognition among members that both Sudan and South Sudan are preoccupied with their own domestic crises, which remain the primary focus of their attention.

After more than three years of fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, divisions on the Council continue to prevent it from playing a constructive role in alleviating the suffering of civilians in these areas, as the government continues to prevent humanitarian aid from reaching rebel-held territories and carries out indiscriminate aerial bombardments. Some members have expressed strong concerns about this violence against civilians, while others have asserted Sudan's sovereign right to defend itself against rebel movements.

The US is the penholder on Sudan/South Sudan issues.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council will consider two reports on the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), both were expected to be released before the end of February. These are the quarterly report on UNAMID and a special report that analyses the implementation of the strategic review of the mission conducted last year and includes “recommendations for the future mandate, composition, configuration and exit strategy of UNAMID” per resolution 2173 of 27 August 2014.

The mandate of UNAMID expires on 30 June.

Key Recent Developments

Since late last year, there has been significant tension between the UN and the government of Sudan. First, the government has restricted UNAMID’s access to Tabit, a village in North Darfur where more than 200 girls and women were reportedly the victims of a mass rape perpetrated by the Sudan Armed Forces in late October 2014. Second, in November 2014, Sudan transmitted a note verbale to the mission indicating that UNAMID needed “an exit strategy”. Finally, Sudan announced its decision to expel UNDP Country Director Yvonne Helle (Netherlands) and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Ali al-Zaatari (Jordan) on 24 and 25 December 2014, respectively.

In December 2014, a joint AU/UN assessment mission visited Sudan in keeping with the request in resolution 2173 that the Secretary-General “conduct an analysis of the implementation of the Council’s review of UNAMID” in close consultations with the AU. It appears that the assessment team concluded that UNAMID needs to adapt its approach to protecting civilians while also noting ongoing challenges facing the mission with regard to facilitating humanitarian access. (The review of UNAMID’s mandate was requested in resolution 2113, which renewed the mission on 30 July 2013 in the context of a deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Darfur and a lack of progress in implementing the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur.)

When Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous

briefed the Council on 4 December 2014, he stated that while Sudan had called for the departure of UNAMID, it had also “clearly established that this is not about leaving tomorrow” and that “we need to agree on a strategy”.

Fighting continues to result in thousands of additional internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Central and North Darfur. On 8 February, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that since the start of 2015, more than 38,500 displaced people had entered IDP camps in North Darfur. It also noted a high number of recently displaced people in parts of Central Darfur, including Golo, Jebel Marra and Rokero.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 6 February, Ambassador Rafael Ramírez (Venezuela), chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, provided the quarterly briefing on the Committee’s work in consultations. (This broke with the recent practice of holding sanctions committee briefings in a public session, followed by consultations.) Ramírez told Council members that the Committee recognised the quality of the final report by the Panel of Experts. He added that the Committee was concerned about attacks on civilians and UN personnel while noting that several Committee members had underscored continued violations of the arms embargo.

On 12 February, the Council adopted resolution 2200, renewing the Panel of Experts’ mandate for an additional 13 months until 12 March 2016. The resolution built largely on last year’s resolution 2138 to renew the Panel’s mandate. However, some adjustments were made. For example, the resolution strengthened the language regarding restrictions against the movement of weapons and ammunition by Sudan and government-affiliated armed groups into Darfur. It also requested that the Panel of Experts share any evidence of potential non-compliance with the assets freeze and travel ban with the Committee as soon as possible.

Human Rights-Related Developments

Human Rights Watch released a report on 11 February titled “Mass Rape in Darfur: Sudanese Army Attacks Against Civilians in Tabit”, which documents 27 first-hand accounts of rape and credible information about an additional 194 incidents of rape perpetrated by members of the Sudanese Armed Forces in Tabit over 36 hours beginning on 30 October 2014. The findings of the report are based on more than 130 interviews conducted by telephone, as Human Rights Watch was not able

to visit Tabit due to government restrictions on access. The report contains recommendations for the Security Council, such as adopting a resolution demanding that Sudan allow UNAMID immediate and unrestricted access to Tabit, including the establishment of a permanent presence in the town, and imposing travel bans and asset freezes on individuals responsible for the attacks. Other recommendations call for the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to conduct investigations into the alleged abuses in Tabit.

Key Issues

The underlying issue is the on-going security and humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur, which is marked by widespread violence, impunity and displacement and shows no signs of improving, despite the fact that UNAMID has been deployed for more than seven years.

Given the political, logistical and financial challenges of the hybrid peacekeeping model, a related issue is whether and how this model can be improved.

Another key issue is the future of UNAMID, given requests by the government for the mission to develop an exit strategy despite the difficult environment on the ground.

Also an important issue is how the Council decides to respond to the recommendations proposed by the Secretary-General in his special report.

Options

One option is for the Council to consider the Secretary-General’s reports but to take no concrete action at the present time. This would provide members with the time to think strategically about the Secretary-General’s recommendations and how to respond to them prior to the expiration of UNAMID’s mandate on 30 June.

Another related option would be for the Council to direct the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations to study the Secretary-General’s special report and convey its views back to the Council regarding the mission’s future.

The Council could also consider establishing a commission of inquiry to investigate the allegations of mass rape in Tabit.

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN (DARFUR) Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2200 (12 February 2015) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts. S/RES/2173 (27 August 2014) renewed the mandate of UNAMID. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7326 (4 December 2014) was a quarterly briefing on the situation in Darfur. Security Council Press Statement SC/11658 (19 November 2014) called on Sudan to provide access to Tabit and throughout Darfur. Sanctions Committee Document S/2015/31 (19 January 2015) was the final report of the Sudan Sanctions Committee Panel of Experts.

Sudan (Darfur) (con't)

Council Dynamics

The Council is divided on its approach to Darfur. Some members are critical of Khartoum for what they see as a consistent pattern of attacks against civilians and antagonistic behaviour toward the UN presence in the country. Other members tend to be more supportive of the government and focus the blame for the situation in Darfur primarily on the rebel groups.

Regarding the allegations of mass rape in

Tabit, some members, such as Lithuania, the UK and the US, have argued that UNAMID needs to be provided unfettered access to the town for further investigations. This is in keeping with the 19 November 2014 press statement in which Council members “noted that proper access to Tabit and its population for UNAMID...is essential to conducting a full investigation into the allegations in order to determine their veracity and, if verified, to ensure accountability”. Chad likewise has

stated that there needs to be “a more thorough, independent and impartial investigation”. On the other hand, Russia has stated that the allegations are “scurrilous”, as they were initially made by the “anti-Khartoum broadcasting of Radio Dabanga” and Khartoum’s own investigation failed to uncover evidence of rape.

The UK is the penholder on Darfur while Venezuela is the chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

DPRK (North Korea)

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council is due to renew the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1718 Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) Sanctions Committee.

The Committee is expected in March to continue its consideration of the Panel of Experts’ final report under resolution 2141.

Key Recent Developments

As in the past, the DPRK seemed to increase its hostile rhetoric in anticipation of the annual joint military exercises between the US and the Republic of Korea (ROK) that are scheduled to begin in early March.

On 25 January, the DPRK National Defence Commission said in a statement transmitted to the Security Council that “even a basic climate for dialogue” with the ROK had not been created. Referring to the planned military exercises, the statement accused the ROK of “souring the atmosphere for the improvement of relations with sabre rattling” and warned of “stern punishment”. At the same time, it called on the ROK to respond sincerely to the DPRK’s call for “the opening up of a broad avenue for independent reunification by concerted efforts”.

In a 4 February statement, also transmitted to the Council, the National Defence Commission turned its attention to the US, denouncing Washington’s “hostile policy”, including new sanctions imposed on 2 January in response to the cyber-attack against Sony Pictures Entertainment and the joint

US-ROK “war drills”. Referring also to a 22 January YouTube interview with US President Barack Obama in which he said that a regime like the one in Pyongyang “would eventually collapse”, the statement said that the DPRK “has neither need nor willingness to sit at the negotiating table with the US any longer”.

On 8 February the DPRK test-fired a missile described as a new type of cutting-edge, anti-ship rocket. Pyongyang boasted that it was the most sophisticated rocket developed by the DPRK so far, but some observers said the missile appeared to be Russian. In a cautiously worded response, China called for “all relevant parties” to make efforts to safeguard peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Meanwhile, the US reiterated that it would be willing to restart negotiations with the DPRK based on credible indications that Pyongyang would abide by its past commitment to denuclearisation.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The Sanctions Committee met on 11 February to discuss the Panel of Experts’ final report. The report concludes that violations of the sanctions regime have continued, with no sign of any change in the DPRK’s behaviour that would indicate greater willingness to engage with the international community on the nuclear issue. A major part of the report apparently focuses on the activities of the Ocean Maritime Management Company (OMM), which was designated by the Sanctions Committee on 28 July 2014 for its involvement in the Chong Chon Gang case. (OMM played a key role in arranging the shipment of

arms from Cuba to the DPRK on board the Chong Chon Gang in July 2013.) The report documents how the OMM has been able to evade sanctions by changing the registration and ownership of vessels controlled by the company and makes several recommendations aimed at better targeting OMM’s activities, including updating the sanctions listing to include aliases and revising the Implementation Assistance Notice on the Chong Chon Gang case to clarify implementation of the asset freeze. The Panel also suggests additional listings and makes a number of recommendations directed at member states.

On 26 February, the new chair of the Committee, Ambassador Román Oyarzun (Spain), briefed Council members in consultations on its work. At press time the meeting was still underway, but he was expected to talk about the three Committee meetings that were held during the reporting period, recent activities of the Panel of Experts and an exchange of letters with the ICRC regarding an exemption request related to a demining project in the DPRK.

Human Rights-Related Developments

With regard to the human rights situation, the DPRK noted in a 2 February joint letter to the Council and the General Assembly that Shin Dong-hyok, one of the witnesses for the Commission of Inquiry on the human rights situation in the DPRK, had retracted parts of his testimony and that the resolution on the DPRK adopted by the General Assembly was therefore “based on falsehood from A to Z”. The letter went on to say that all member states should be informed that the resolution was “unlawful” and called on the EU and Japan, which drafted it, to apologise.

On 16 February, at a press conference organised by the DPRK permanent mission to the UN, the DPRK said it had asked the US State Department to cancel a conference at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington,

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DPRK Security Council Resolution S/RES/2141 (5 March 2014) extended until 5 April 2015 the Panel of Experts’ mandate. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7353** (22 December 2014) was the meeting on the human rights situation in the DPRK. **Security Council Letters S/2015/90** (4 February 2015) was a DPRK letter transmitting the National Defence Commission statement on the US. **S/2015/84** (2 February 2015) was the DPRK letter denouncing the Commission of Inquiry report. **S/2015/64** (27 January 2015) was a DPRK letter transmitting the National Defence Commission statement on the ROK.

DPRK (North Korea) (con't)

DC to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Commission of Inquiry report but that the request had been denied. (The State Department noted that the conference was a privately organised event.) The DPRK also said it was not worried about a referral to the ICC since it was not guilty of any crimes.

The Human Rights Council will consider the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, Marzuki Darusman, during its 28th session in March. The report is expected to focus on abductions and enforced disappearances. The DPRK announced on 21 February that its foreign minister would attend the session.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is the DPRK's continued flouting of all relevant resolutions and its stated rejection of any dialogue aimed at denuclearisation.

An additional issue is what kind of follow-up action the Council should consider on the human rights situation in the DPRK.

At the Sanctions Committee level, a key issue is considering the implementation of the Panel of Experts' recommendations.

Options

One option for the Council would be to issue a statement following the Committee chair's briefing, welcoming the Panel of Experts' report, condemning the DPRK's missile launches and other violations and calling on Pyongyang to demonstrate commitment to the dismantling of its nuclear program and return to the six-party talks involving China, Japan, the ROK, Russia and the US.

For the Committee, the main option is to continue its consideration of the Panel's report and implementation of relevant recommendations.

Council and Wider Dynamics

At the 11 February Sanctions Committee meeting, Council members had an initial exchange of views on the Panel of Experts' report. Comments were fairly general, however, with most members welcoming the report and praising the Panel's work. Overall, statements reflected traditional dividing lines between China and others advocating in favour of a cautious approach versus the P3 and like-minded countries that are supportive of measures aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the

sanctions regime. A more detailed discussion of the report's recommendations is expected at the next Committee meeting in March.

With regard to the latest signals from Pyongyang, most Council members see little reason for optimism and point to the Panel's conclusion that it had seen no change in the DPRK's behaviour.

While there are no plans for any immediate follow-up action in the Council on its 22 December 2014 meeting on the human rights situation in the DPRK, it appears that some Council members have started to engage in very preliminary discussions on possible next steps. Discussions focus on both the format and timing of any follow-up. It seems generally agreed that the timing will depend on whether there are any new developments or new information that merit the Council's attention. In this regard, the new field-based office that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is setting up in Seoul to continue monitoring the human rights situation in the DPRK as mandated by the Human Rights Council is seen as a welcome development.

The US is the penholder on the DPRK.

Iran

Expected Council Action

In March, the chair of the 1737 Iran Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Román Oyarzun (Spain), is due to brief the Council on the work of the Committee. This will be Oyarzun's first briefing since taking over the chairmanship from Ambassador Gary Quinlan (Australia) on 1 January.

Key Recent Developments

Iran and the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the US) continued negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme following the announcement on 24 November 2014 that the Joint Plan of Action (JPA) initially agreed on 24 November 2013 would be extended until 30 June 2015. (The JPA, which came into effect on 20 January 2014, had an initial duration of six months and was

first extended in July 2014.) The parties are working towards an end-of-March deadline to agree on a political framework containing the main elements of a final accord, leaving time for technical details to be worked out during the remaining three months.

While few details have emerged from the negotiations, it seems the main sticking points still centre on Iran's uranium-enrichment capacity, the conditions and timetable for the lifting of sanctions and the duration of the agreement. In addition to the meetings with Iran involving all P5+1 partners, there have been several bilateral meetings between the US and Iran, including at the level of US Secretary of State John Kerry and Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javed Zarif. Following meetings on the margins of a security conference held in Munich on 7 and 8

February, both Kerry and Zarif seemed to rule out an extension of the agreed deadline. On 9 February, US President Barack Obama said differences in the negotiations had been "sufficiently narrowed and sufficiently clarified" for Iran to decide whether it wanted a deal. At the end of the most recent bilateral round of meetings on 22 and 23 February, both sides said there was still a lot of work remaining. At press time, negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran were scheduled to resume on 2 March.

There was no further progress under the Framework for Cooperation agreed between the IAEA and Iran on 11 November 2013 involving a series of practical measures aimed at ensuring international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. In a 19 February report

UN DOCUMENTS ON IRAN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2159 (9 June 2014) extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts and requested a final report by 9 May 2015. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7350** (18 December 2014) was the most recent quarterly briefing. **Sanctions Committee Document S/2014/932** (17 December 2014) was the Committee's 2014 annual report. **Human Rights Council Document A/HRC/28/12** (22 December 2014) was the report on Iran by the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. **IAEA Document GOV/2015/15** (19 February 2015) was the latest IAEA report on Iran.

Iran (con't)

to the Council, the IAEA Director General said that Iran had still not implemented two of the five practical measures agreed in May 2014, namely sharing information about its research into high-explosive detonators that could be used to trigger a nuclear weapon and about neutron transport studies that could be relevant to calculate the explosive yield of a nuclear weapon. The IAEA had repeatedly invited Iran to propose additional practical measures but had received no response. The report noted, however, that Iran had continued to comply with the provisions of the JPA, as extended.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 18 December 2014, Quinlan presented his final quarterly briefing on the Sanctions Committee's work. Quinlan welcomed the continued commitment of Iran and the P5+1 to reach agreement on a comprehensive solution but emphasised that the sanctions imposed by the Council remained fully in effect and that the Committee also remained fully committed to their implementation. He encouraged Iran to engage with the Committee and respond to its letters. (The Committee has sent four letters to Iran but has so far received no replies.) The Committee's annual report was issued on 17 December.

On 4 February, the Committee held its first meeting under the new chair. It was briefed by the coordinator of the Panel of Experts, Salomé Zourabichvili (France), who said the Panel had received no further reports of violations. Referring to the P5+1 negotiations, she asked for some flexibility with regard to the deadline for submitting the final report to the Committee, due in May

under resolution 2159, in order to fully reflect relevant developments. The Committee also reviewed the list of pending issues but Council members' positions remained unchanged and no progress was made. (Pending issues include a US proposal to designate Jaysh Al-Shabi, a pro-government Syrian militia that has allegedly received arms from Iran, a proposal to send a letter to Iran concerning public statements by Iranian officials seemingly confirming its involvement in illicit arms transfers and a draft Implementation Assistance Notice on the Great Prophet exercise conducted by Iran in July 2012.)

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its upcoming 28th regular session in March, the Human Rights Council will consider the report on Iran by the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, which contains 291 recommendations (A/HRC/28/12). Reports on the human rights situation in Iran from the Secretary-General (A/HRC/28/26) and another from the Special Rapporteur (A/HRC/28/70) will also be considered.

Key Issues

A key issue for the Council is how it can best support the negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 to ensure a positive outcome.

If there is a breakthrough in the negotiations by the March deadline, a further issue is what the implications will be for the Iran sanctions regime, in particular with regard to the timetable for the lifting of sanctions, including the provisions on conventional arms and ballistic missile technology.

Options

As long as the P5+1 talks with Iran are ongoing, options for the Council remain limited. The chair's briefing will offer another opportunity for individual Council members to express their views on the talks and the role of the Committee in supporting the process.

In addition, elected members could request the P5 to brief them on the status of the negotiations. This would be particularly appropriate if there is a breakthrough that will require Council action at some point later this year.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Because of the delicate stage of the negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran, access to information is limited for Council members, and few are willing to speculate about the outcome or possible implications of a breakthrough for future Council action, although there are expectations that sanctions will be lifted in a gradual and reversible way.

With regard to the work of the Sanctions Committee, the P3 and like-minded members continue to emphasise that the Committee must remain focused on sanctions implementation and that member states should be reminded that the sanctions remain fully in effect. The main focus of Council members, however, seems to be on the P5+1 negotiations with Iran.

The US is the penholder on Iran.

Liberia

Expected Council Action

In March, the Council is expected to receive a briefing from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), assessing the impact of Ebola on stability in Liberia and presenting options for resuming the drawdown of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Key Recent Developments

The Council last addressed Liberia in December, when it adopted resolutions 2188 and

2190. Resolution 2188 concerned Liberia sanctions; it reaffirmed the asset freeze (which was not time-limited), renewed the travel ban and arms embargo on non-state actors for nine months and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts for ten months. Resolution 2190 renewed the mandate of UNMIL until 30 September 2015. In addition to requesting that the Secretary-General provide reporting on UNMIL in the usual six-month cycle (a mid-term report by 30 April

and a final report by 15 August), resolution 2190 also requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim update by 15 March specifically assessing the impact of Ebola on stability in Liberia and providing options for resuming the drawdown of UNMIL.

According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), as of 15 February, there have been 23,253 cases of Ebola and 9,380 deaths, predominantly occurring in Guinea (3,108 cases and 2,057 deaths), Sierra Leone

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBERIA Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2190 (15 December 2014) renewed the mandate of UNMIL until 30 September 2015. S/RES/2188 (9 December 2014) renewed sanctions on Liberia for nine months. S/RES/2066 (17 September 2012) authorised the reduction of UNMIL's military strength in three phases between August 2012 and July 2015. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7310 (12 November 2014) was a briefing on UNMIL. Secretary-General's Report S/2014/598 (15 August 2014) was on UNMIL. Sanctions Committee Document S/2014/831 (19 November 2014) was the final report of the Liberia Panel of Experts.

USEFUL ADDITIONAL RESOURCES *Ebola Situation Report*, WHO, 18 February 2015. Martin Sajdik, *How to Stop the Next Pandemic*, US News and World Report, 5 February 2015.

Liberia (con't)

(11,103 cases and 3,408 deaths) and Liberia (9,007 cases and 3,900 deaths). Among the three countries, Liberia appears to have made the most progress recently in reducing the rate of transmission, with only 11 new cases within the three weeks prior to 15 February (in comparison to 230 new cases in Sierra Leone and 156 new cases in Guinea during the same period). The geographic dispersion of new cases in Liberia has also been decreasing, as only Montserrado county—which includes the capital city, Monrovia—has had any new Ebola cases during the four weeks preceding 15 February. At a briefing on Ebola held in the General Assembly on 18 February, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted the progress made by Liberia and called on donors to maintain their support for fighting Ebola.

Relative to the height of the Ebola outbreak just a few months ago, the political situation seems to be improving. On 20 December 2014, the country held senate elections, which had been postponed since 14 October due to the Ebola outbreak. According to preliminary data by the National Elections Commission (NEC), voter turnout was only about one-quarter of eligible voters, which some observers attributed to voter apathy but others suggested was due to Ebola concerns. On 22 December, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Karin Landgren issued a statement praising the peaceful conduct of the senate elections. On 3 January, the NEC certified the results for 12 of the 15 senate seats that were up for election (the three remaining seats are being contested in the judiciary). In the high profile race for the populous Montserrado county seat, opposition candidate George Weah, a former world soccer player of the year, defeated independent candidate Robert Sirleaf, son of the president, by the wide margin of 78 percent to 11 percent.

While current trends suggest that Ebola-related insecurity in Liberia has decreased significantly, the final report by the Panel of Experts transmitted to the Council on 19 November identified several other risk factors that remain relevant. First, the Ebola outbreak exposed a systematic lack of training and competency in civil-military relations

and human rights among the armed forces. Second, there is an urgent need for a national regulatory framework for arms and ammunition and the development of the state's institutional capacity in this area. Third, as the border regions with Côte d'Ivoire remain highly porous, Ivorian mercenaries and non-state militias continue to pose a risk to the stability of Liberia. Significant resources are required, particularly for increasing the capacity of the border control force and national police. Finally, the Panel remains concerned by the potential for Liberia to become a transshipment country for illicit drugs, similar to Guinea-Bissau and Guinea. Such drug-trafficking could finance non-state armed groups and undermine stability.

Key Issues

In March, the principal issue for the Council will be assessing—after receiving input from DPKO—to what extent Ebola remains a threat to peace and stability. Depending on the conclusions drawn, related issues will be deciding what is required for UNMIL's force structure and the peacekeeping operation's drawdown.

Options

There are essentially two main options for the Council with respect to UNMIL, both of which are largely dependent upon the analyses of DPKO and the Council regarding the current and projected threat to peace and stability posed by Ebola:

- if it is determined that insufficient progress has been made in mitigating the Ebola threat, then the Council could decide to further postpone drawdown of UNMIL (4,299 military, 115 military observers and 1405 police deployed as of 31 January out of 4,811 military and 1,795 police authorised); or
- if it is determined that Ebola no longer presents a significant threat to peace and stability in Liberia, then the Council could decide to resume UNMIL's phased drawdown as outlined in resolution 2066, which would entail a reduction to approximately 3,750 military personnel by July. As the Council stated in resolution 2190,

the “modalities” of resuming the phased drawdown could also need adjusting in light of the upcoming update. In other words, the Council recognised the Ebola outbreak may also affect how UNMIL draws down.

Given that the Ebola outbreak exposed several systemic problems in Liberia, an additional option would be for the Council to stress the need for training and competency in civil-military relations and human rights among the armed forces; the development of national regulatory framework for arms and ammunition; and for increasing the capacity of the border control force and national police.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Ebola outbreak has had a considerable impact on the Council's approach to Liberia. The policymaking momentum has shifted—at least temporarily—from a scheduled drawdown of UNMIL and a probable phasing out of sanctions toward maintaining the force levels of UNMIL and retaining sanctions measures. In resolution 2190, however, the Council clearly signalled its intention to continue the drawdown of UNMIL once the health crisis subsided. Thus, as the intensity of the Ebola outbreak diminishes in Liberia, it is probable that Council members will eventually revert to earlier policy positions on UNMIL. Assuming DPKO's assessment of Ebola's threat to peace and stability is in line with what the latest WHO data regarding declining transmission rates apparently suggest, it seems likely there will be broad support in the Council for resuming UNMIL's drawdown. Under this scenario, what would remain unclear are the specific adjustments to “modalities” DPKO and the Council would deem necessary to adjust the three-phase process outlined in resolution 2066 in light of Ebola's impact on the country. Some members may also insist that the systemic problems in Liberia that came into sharp relief in the context of the Ebola crisis be taken into consideration when formulating the concept of the drawdown.

The US is the penholder on Liberia, and Jordan is the chair of the 1521 Liberia Sanctions Committee.

Visiting Mission to Africa

Council members are set to visit the Central African Republic (CAR); Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Burundi over a four-day period in March. A briefing about the mission is expected later in the month with a written report to follow.

France is expected to lead the mission in the CAR and will co-lead the visit to Burundi with the US, and also possibly Chad. As Council president for March, France will co-lead the Addis Ababa leg with Angola, the chair of the Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. In Addis Ababa, the headquarters of the AU, the Council will hold its annual consultative meeting with the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). A joint communiqué is the expected outcome of the meeting.

Since 2007, Council members and PSC members have met annually, alternating between Addis Ababa and New York.

CAR

The visit to the CAR will be the Council's first to the country and comes only months after the deployment of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) in September 2014.

Members will be keen to observe the security situation and assess progress made in the CAR's stabilisation. They will seek to gain a better understanding of the challenges that MINUSCA faces in carrying out its mandate. Besides visiting Bangui, members may make a trip into the countryside to observe the mission's work beyond the city. In addition to meeting the leadership and personnel of MINUSCA, members may also meet with French forces in the country from Operation Sangaris, as well as the EU Force in CAR. At press time, the Council was considering the Secretary-General's proposal to increase MINUSCA's troop ceiling by 750 military personnel and 280 police, in light of the expected reduction in the number of French forces and conversion of the EU force, whose mandate expires on 15 March, into a training mission. Though the Council will likely approve MINUSCA's increased numbers before the visit, members, while in CAR, will want to learn more about how the expansion

of MINUSCA and reduction of other international forces could impact current efforts. At present, the mission has yet to reach its originally authorised level of 11,800 military and police personnel, and its presence is limited outside of Bangui.

Council members also expect to meet with the transitional authorities and religious leaders, the latter group Council members met with during an Arrria-formula meeting on 14 March 2014. Members will be keen to discuss the political process, including progress in national reconciliation and the prospect for holding presidential and legislative elections by August. The elections had originally been slated for February but were postponed, so members will be keen to learn more about the state of preparations in order for the new timeframe to hold. Likewise, the visit will be an opportunity to observe the humanitarian situation—there are an estimated 438,000 internally displaced persons in addition to the more than 400,000 refugees who have fled the country—and further consider the human rights situation.

Addis Ababa

In Addis Ababa, the Council will hold its annual meeting with the AU PSC, which began in 2007 as a way to strengthen cooperation between the two bodies and the two organisations. The location for the meeting alternates each year between New York and Addis Ababa. Last year's meeting was held on 6 June 2014 in New York.

The session will cover a number of situations on the African continent that are of overlapping interest to and on the respective agendas of the two Councils. At press time, the Council was expecting to receive input to the agenda for the meeting from the PSC. At this point, it seems that there is likely to be a segment on Abyei, including a briefing by the Chair of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel Thabo Mbeki. Last year's session covered the CAR, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia, Darfur and terrorism.

A subject likely to be prominent will be the efforts to address the threat of Boko Haram. The PSC communiqué from its 29

January meeting on Boko Haram authorised the deployment of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) being developed by members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC)—Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria—and Benin to combat Boko Haram. In addition, the PSC reiterated its call from its 25 November 2014 communiqué for a Security Council resolution that authorises or endorses this force and that facilitates financial support for it. Council members have said that before this request, they must receive its concept of operations (CONOPS). The PSC has expressed its intentions to forward the CONOPS to the Council once LCBC countries finalise it. Therefore, the meeting could be an opportunity for the two bodies to discuss the MNJTF and further discuss ways they can collaborate and mutually support efforts to combat Boko Haram.

Burundi

The mission is also expected to include a one-day visit to the capital of Burundi, Bujumbura. The visit is intended to assess and acknowledge progress achieved in Burundi over the last ten years since the deployment of UN missions to the country. At the end of December 2014, the mandate of the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) ended. BNUB was replaced on 1 January by the UN Electoral Observer Mission in Burundi. The trip is an opportunity for the Council to reiterate the importance of Burundi holding free and fair legislative and presidential elections, which are scheduled for May and June, and to signal that it is still closely following developments. The Council is expected to meet with Burundian authorities as well as different stakeholders in the electoral process, including representatives of the Independent National Electoral Commission and political parties. Depending on the time available, the members may also arrange meetings with civil society.

Despite Burundi's progress in achieving security and stability as well as strengthening its democracy, concerns remain among Council members about reports of intimidation and political violence towards opposition parties and human rights activists, as

UN DOCUMENTS ON COUNCIL VISITING MISSIONS [Security Council Presidential Statements S/PRST/2015/6](#) (18 February 2015) recognised progress achieved in Burundi and highlighted remaining concerns over the situation in the country, including the need for a free and inclusive electoral process in 2015. [S/PRST/2015/3](#) (19 January 2015) condemned Boko Haram attacks and urged LCBC countries to complete a concept of operations for the MNJTF. [Security Council Letters S/2015/85](#) (29 January 2015) was from the Secretary-General requesting a troop increase for MINUSCA. [S/2014/400](#) (9 June 2014) was the joint communiqué of the eighth annual consultative meeting between the Council and the PSC.

USEFUL ADDITIONAL RESOURCE [PSC/AHG/COMM.2\(CDLXXXIV\)](#) (29 January 2015) was the communiqué from the AU PSC's 484th meeting on regional and international efforts to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group.

Visiting Mission to Africa(con't)

well as government restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression. These concerns were recently reflected in the Council's 18 February presidential statement. Some members may raise these concerns during the meetings while encouraging the authorities to make further efforts to ensure political space for the opposition.

Moreover, President Pierre Nkurunziza's apparent intention to run for a third term is generating controversy. The opposition has claimed that this move violates the constitution, and a campaign made up of more than 300 civil society groups was launched in February calling for him not to run and warning that such a run could lead to violence. The

visit will provide a possible opportunity for members to further discuss the situation with relevant actors.

The Council last visited Burundi in 2005 after having conducted a series of visits to the country in 1994, 1995, 2001, 2002 and 2004.

EU-UN Cooperation

Expected Council Action

In March the Council is expected to hold a meeting on cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations, focusing on strengthening the partnership with the EU. Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will brief the Council.

No outcome is expected.

Background

The UN Charter establishes the Security Council as the principal organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. In addition, Chapter VIII of the Charter also envisions a role for regional organisations in an effort to achieve peaceful settlement of local disputes, as long as such efforts are subordinate to the Security Council. Furthermore, Article 54 states that the Council should "at all times be kept fully informed of activities undertaken or in contemplation" by regional organisations "for the maintenance of international peace and security".

On 1 November 2014, Mogherini assumed the position of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, previously held by Catherine Ashton. This will be the first time that Mogherini will brief the Council on EU-UN Cooperation. In the last briefing on this issue, held on 14 February 2014, Ashton reiterated the strong commitment of the EU to supporting effective multilateralism with the goal of achieving lasting solutions to international peace and security challenges, using the EU's threefold approach:

- direct involvement in international

negotiations on behalf of the international community;

- ensuring EU's capacity to implement a comprehensive approach to resolving crises; and
- a wide range of tools to solve crises and work closely with the EU's international and regional partners in collective efforts.

This will be the fifth meeting of the Council on cooperation between the UN and the EU. When the last meeting was held during the Lithuanian Council presidency in 2014, the Council adopted its first presidential statement on cooperation between the UN and the EU. The statement emphasised the EU's cooperation with the UN and its role in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the implementation of Council-mandated tasks.

Key Recent Developments

The last four EU briefings were focused primarily on African issues, which also dominate the Council's agenda. At the briefing in March, the EU's response to the crisis in Ukraine will likely rate higher on Mogherini's agenda. In addition to addressing UN-EU cooperation in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and the Central African Republic (CAR), Mogherini might also discuss the EU's response to the new aspects of terrorism threats and the Ebola virus.

In Mali, the EU has cooperated with the UN as a part of the Sahel strategy framework. On 19 January, the EU launched the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy mission in Mali (EUCAP) to help Mali ensure constitutional and democratic order. In cooperation with other international partners,

EUCAP's main role is to train and advise internal security forces in Mali. In the wider region, the EU continues its cooperation with the UN and other regional organisations as part of the Sahel strategy framework.

In April 2014, upon receiving a Council mandate (resolutions 2134 and 2181), the EU deployed 1,000 troops in the CAR in an effort to stabilise the country and relieve pressure on the international troops already there. The mission's mandate is set to expire on 15 March. However, on 19 January the EU decided to establish a new military mission, the EU Military Advisory Mission in CAR, which will provide expert advice on the reform of the security sector, most notably in regards to the management of the CAR armed forces. The CAR is one of the most notable cases of extensive cooperation between the EU and the UN, as well as other regional organisations.

The spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa became another challenging issue for the international community in 2014. The EU has contributed more than \$1.2 billion in aid to help contain the Ebola virus. The EU coordinates its assistance to West Africa with the relevant UN agencies as well as other partners, including regional organisations and NGOs.

The UN has been gradually scaling down its presence in the Balkans as the EU has assumed the leading role. The involvement of the EU has been instrumental to the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, in particular the signing of the 19 April 2013 agreement on normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. On 9 February, after a break of more than ten

UN DOCUMENTS ON EU-UN COOPERATION Security Council Resolution S/RES/1631 (17 October 2005) addressed the issue of cooperation between the UN and regional organisations and stressed the role of regional organisations in addressing the issue of small arms. **Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2014/4** (14 February 2014) was on EU-UN cooperation. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.7112** (14 February 2014) was on EU-UN cooperation.

EU-UN Cooperation (con't)

months, Mogherini resumed the high-level talks between Serbia and Kosovo on the implementation of the agreement.

Since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, the EU has been heavily invested in supporting diplomatic efforts aimed at a solution through peaceful means. Mogherini has held numerous meetings with all relevant actors in the crisis, while the EU continued political, economic and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. Most notably, the EU has imposed a wide range of sanctions on Russian and Ukrainian officials over Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. The sanctions were extended throughout the course of 2014 in response to Russia's role in the conflict in Ukraine. So far the EU has imposed restricted measures (asset freezes and visa bans) on 132 persons and 28 entities deemed directly responsible for actions against Ukraine's territorial integrity and for providing support for Russian decision-makers. In July and September 2014 the EU adopted a series of economic sanctions targeting the Russian financial, defence and energy sectors. Most recently, on 9 February EU foreign ministers adopted further sanctions targeting Russia and pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine.

While addressing the annual Munich Security Conference on 8 February, Mogherini outlined key priorities for the EU's foreign security and policy. Besides the aforementioned issues, Mogherini also emphasised the importance of addressing the crises in Libya, Iraq and Syria, especially with the increasing threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham. In addition, Mogherini addressed the lack of progress on the Iranian nuclear issue and the need to revive the peace process in the Middle East.

Key Issues

The main issue is to have a constructive discussion about the cooperation between the EU and the UN and the ways in which this relationship could be strengthened and more efficient, in particular where there are overlapping agendas.

Council Dynamics

In past years the Council has been generally supportive of the cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations and eager to hold the annual meetings with the EU Foreign Affairs and Security

Policy chief. This year the Council dynamics with the EU could be affected by the rift between Russia and Western Council members over the crisis in Ukraine. While addressing the situation in Ukraine during last year's meeting on EU-UN cooperation, Russia stated that the solution to the Ukrainian crisis must be found by Ukrainians themselves "without the threat of sanctions or competition to promote the European values of external actors". Now that the EU has imposed sanctions on Russia over its role in Ukraine, Russia will likely be considerably critical of the EU role. Russia might voice its concern over EU's use of sanctions, since it has recently argued that any sanctions other than those imposed by the Council are counterproductive and undermine primacy of the Council. Furthermore, Russia is likely to emphasise the subordinate role of other regional organisations based on the provisions of the UN Charter, in particular Chapter VIII.

There are four members of the EU on the Council this year: France, Lithuania, Spain and the UK.

Notable Dates for March

REPORT DUE	REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN MARCH	REQUESTING DOCUMENT
25 February	SG report on UNSMIL (Libya)	S/RES/2144
26 February	SG report on UNAMID (Darfur)	S/RES/2173
26 February	OPCW report on the implementation of resolution 2118 (Syrian chemical weapons)	S/RES/2118
27 February	SG report on UNAMA (Afghanistan)	S/RES/2145
27 February	SG report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (Lebanon, UNIFIL)	S/RES/2172
27 February	Recommendations of the Somalia and Eritrea 751/1907 Monitoring Group and the Federal Government of Somalia regarding a potential exemption to the arms embargo	S/RES/2182
27 February	SG's report on the implementation of UNAMID's review (Darfur)	S/RES/2173
5 March	Final report of the 1718 DPRK Panel of Experts	S/RES/2141
10 March	Final report of the 1970 Libya Panel of Experts	S/RES/2144
10 March	SG report on MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo)	S/RES/2147
11 March	SG report on MINUSTAH (Haiti)	S/RES/2180
12 March	SG report on the PSC Framework for the DRC and the Region	S/RES/2147
18 March	SG report on UNDOF (Golan Heights)	S/RES/2192
20 March	SG report on the humanitarian situation in Syria	S/RES/2139 S/RES/2191

MANDATES EXPIRE	RELEVANT DOCUMENT	
13 March	UNSMIL (Libya)	S/RES/2144
17 March	UNAMA (Afghanistan)	S/RES/2145
18 March	Libya sanctions on the illicit export of oil	S/RES/2146
31 March	MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo)	S/RES/2147
5 April	1718 DPRK Panel of Experts (mandate expires in April but will likely be renewed in March)	S/RES/2141
13 April	1970 Libya Panel of Experts (mandate expires in April but will likely be renewed in March)	S/RES/2144

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Security Council Report Staff

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Deputy Executive Director & Director of Research

Amanda Roberts
Coordinating Editor & Senior Research Analyst

Shamala Kandiah Thompson
What's in Blue Editor & Senior Research Analyst

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Editorial Consultant

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

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

