

Monthly Forecast

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Overview

South Africa assumes the presidency in October. It has chosen to hold two debates on peace and security in Africa: the first on mobilising youth towards silencing the guns by 2020, and the second on preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

There will also be two regular open debates, on the Middle East and women, peace and security, as well as the last debate on Haiti before MINUJUSTH transitions to the UN Integrated Office in Haiti in mid-October. Another Latin American issue to be discussed is Colombia, with a briefing and consultations on the report on the UN Verification Mission in that country.

A Council visiting mission is planned in late October for the 13th annual consultative meeting with the AU Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The visiting mission will also include South Sudan. Shortly after the return of the visiting mission, the Council will receive a briefing on cooperation between the UN and AU on issues of peace and security in Africa.

Several mandate renewals are expected in October. Early in the month, the Council is expected to renew the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. The Council is also expected to decide by 15 October whether to adopt a resolution extending the support of UNISFA in Abyei for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, established in 2011 to conduct monitoring and verification activities along the Sudan-South Sudan border.

Other anticipated renewals include the mandates of MINURSO in Western Sahara and the UNAMID in Darfur.

Other discussions of African issues this month include:

- Democratic Republic of the Congo, a briefing and consultations on MONUSCO;
- Central Africa Republic, a briefing and consultations on MINUSCA;
- Mali, a briefing and consultations on MINUSMA;
- Sudan, a briefing and consultations on UNAMID in Darfur and on the 1591 Sanctions Committee;
- Sudan/South Sudan, a briefing and consultations on UNISFA; and
- Western Sahara, a briefing in consultations on MINURSO.

Regarding Middle East issues, the Council will receive the semi-annual briefing on the latest report on the implementation of resolution 1559 which in 2004 called for the disarmament of all militias and the extension of government control over all Lebanese territory.

Several other regular Middle East issues will be discussed in October, including:

- Golan Heights, consultations on UNDOF;
- Syria, the monthly briefings on the humanitarian situation, the political process and the use of chemical weapons; and
- Yemen, the monthly briefing on implementation of resolutions 2451 and 2452.

This year's final briefing on Kosovo and the annual briefing by President of the International Court of Justice Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf will take place in a private meeting, also in October.

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In Hindsight: Striking the Balance between Transparency and Privacy

During different periods of the Council's existence, the pendulum has swung between the need for more open meetings in the spirit of greater transparency, and the wish for closed-door consultations which may bring more effective decision-making. In 2018, the Council held more than twice as many formal, and therefore open, meetings (275) as informal, closed consultations (120). Just six years earlier, there was near-parity in the two types of meetings. The growing proportion of public meetings has again raised questions about the optimum balance the Council should strike.

The Council has considerable freedom in deciding how to meet. The only reference to meeting formats is in Rule 48 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, which provides that "unless it decides otherwise, the Council shall meet in public". In its early years, that was largely how the Council met. Public meetings are formal meetings of the Council and are used for open debates, debates, most briefings and adoptions. There is an official record of these meetings, which since the early 2000s have also been webcast. (There are also formal private meetings from which only a communique is issued; these are held infrequently, with fewer than 20 annually for most of the past decade.)

Through practice, the Council developed other meeting formats. Informal consultations were less common in the Council's first few decades. These are closed meetings limited to Council members and briefers from the Secretariat, for which there is no official record.

The Evolution of Public Formats

Starting in the early 1990s, member states' interest in the Council's work and in presenting their views in debates on issues of concern to them, such as apartheid in South Africa or the Balkan wars, prompted them to request meetings on these matters and to press for more meetings to be held in public. Under Rule 37, members with a direct stake in an issue began to participate in debates. Non-members can attend public briefings, and although generally it is only Council members that speak, often the government of the country being discussed—for example, the host government of a peace mission—will participate under Rule 37.

The concept of an open debate, with wide

participation of the UN membership, also developed during this period. The first time the term was used was probably in an 8 February 1994 letter from the ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the president of the Security Council, with a "call for an emergency session of the Security Council with a formal meeting and the opportunity for open debate to the Member States of the United Nations" (S/1994/134).

The Rise of Informal Consultations

The evolution of Council meeting formats is linked to the changes that were taking place in the world. The end of the Cold War sparked a period of intense activity in the Council as relations between the permanent members improved, paving the way for significant decisions on international peace and security issues. Meeting in a private space allowed for frank briefings and discussions. Between 1989 and 1994, the Council authorised 20 peace operations requiring Council oversight and regular renewal. Unlike today when the negotiations and drafting of texts are done at expert level outside the official Council rooms, including by email, informal consultations were used in those years to resolve differences over draft texts face to face. Not surprisingly, the early 1990s saw a rapid rise in informal consultations, which by 1995 had become more common than public meetings.

This development was initially welcomed. Council members linked the confidentiality of informal meetings to greater efficiency. However, by 1994, there were also growing calls for a different balance between privacy and transparency. The wider membership had become increasingly discontented over the fact that interested third parties could not provide information to the Council in informal consultations, where participation is strictly limited. At France's initiative, in December 1994, the Council held its first working methods debate, which focused on transparency. Following the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement calling for "an increased recourse to open meetings, in particular at an early stage in its consideration of a subject" in order to improve the exchange of ideas and information between Council members and other member states.

The Pendulum Swings Towards Public Meetings

Secretariat briefings were also swept up in the spirit of openness. Until 1998, the Secretariat had briefed the Council during informal consultations, which are not open to the wider membership nor a matter of public record. In 1998, in a presidential note (S/1998/1016) addressing several transparency-related issues, Council members agreed that the Secretary-General "is to be encouraged to make statements to the Council, when he deems it appropriate, in public meetings of the Council". This seems to have encouraged public briefings by UN Secretariat officials more generally. The first such public briefing appears to have been held on 10 November 1998, when UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata briefed the Council.

The balance was tilting and shifted decisively towards public meetings starting in 2001. Between 2001 and 2018, the Council consistently held more public meetings than consultations. Since 2014, the gap between the number of public meetings and informal consultations has widened significantly, peaking in 2017 with 282 public meetings, the most since the UN was created, and with informal consultations at their second-lowest level since 2001 (37).

There are a number of reasons for this change. The larger UN membership regularly lobbies for greater transparency in the Council's work. During the last several years, Council members have pushed for more meetings to be held in public. Costa Rica and Uruguay, during their presidencies in November 2008 and February 2017 respectively, attempted to hold all meetings for the month in public, but encountered pushback from some Council members. The US during its presidency in September 2018 started out with a programme of work featuring only public meetings, although it eventually had to add consultations on Yemen. Although it had become the practice for Council members simply to listen during public briefings and then deliver their statements in informal consultations, Uruguay, while on the Council in 2016-2017, made a point of always speaking at the public segment of a meeting. This appears to have had a domino effect on members, and today most Council members make statements during public briefings. As a result, it is not uncommon for situations that used

In Hindsight: Striking the Balance between Transparency and Privacy

to be discussed in a public briefing followed by informal consultations now to omit the closed-door portion of the discussion, even though the latter is intended to serve a different function. The increase in the Council's workload may also have contributed to the desire to eliminate informal consultations in these circumstances.

The formalisation of informal consultations may also account for the decline in their numbers. Informal consultations were conceived as a format for frank discussion of sensitive issues facing the Council. In recent years, there has been criticism that members

largely reiterate their public views behind the closed doors. Attempts at greater interactivity in consultations have been short-lived. It appears, however, that this year more members are moving away from scripted statements in consultations, which may make these informal consultations more attractive and add value to Council decision-making.

There is no magic formula in determining the right balance between the twin demands of openness and privacy. Arguably, at times of tension and difficult Council dynamics, public meetings can encourage playing to the gallery over stolid consensus-seeking. In recent

years the Council has met the demands for more of its work to take place in public. It may be time to reflect on whether there could be a more nuanced use of the public and private settings. There are clearly some politically sensitive issues that would benefit from being discussed out of the spotlight of the media and the wider membership. If the Council elects to hold more informal consultations, greater balance between transparency and confidentiality can perhaps be attained by having the Council president provide remarks to the press following these meetings.

Status Update since our September Forecast

Counter-Terrorism

On 5 September, the 1267/1989/2253 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee met to discuss a de-listing request from the Office of the Ombudsperson and reports by the Monitoring Team. The Counterterrorism Committee met on 19 September for its monthly formal meeting.

Peacekeeping Operations

On 9 September, the Security Council held a debate on peacekeeping reform, which featured a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix (S/PV.8612). Among other issues, Lacroix spoke of the efforts of UN peace operations to help facilitate the pursuit of political solutions, the importance of prioritised and sequenced mandates, and initiatives to improve the safety of peacekeepers. In addition to Council members, Bangladesh, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Italy, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania participated in the meeting in accordance with Rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

Guinea-Bissau

On 10 September, the Security Council held a briefing on Guinea-Bissau (S/PV.8614). Council members were considering the Secretary-General's latest report on developments in the country and the activities of

the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2019/664). Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita and the chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Guinea-Bissau configuration, Ambassador Mauro Vieira (Brazil), briefed. The following day, on 11 September, the Guinea-Bissau 2048 Sanctions Committee met to discuss the Secretary-General's 29 August report on Progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2019/696).

Security Council Annual Report to the General Assembly

On 10 September, the Security Council president, Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia (Russia), presented to the General Assembly the 2018 annual report of the Security Council (A/73/2). The Assembly discussed the report in two sessions (on 10 and 12 September) with 27 speakers, including 14 permanent representatives, participating.

Afghanistan

On 10 September, the Council held a debate on Afghanistan, considering the latest Secretary-General's report on UNAMA. Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA; Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), chair of the 1988 Afghanistan Sanctions Committee; and Yuri Fedotov, head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, briefed (S/PV.8613). On 11 September, the 1988

Afghanistan Sanctions Committee met in informal consultations and heard briefings by Special Representative Yamamoto, along with Afghanistan's permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Adela Raz. On 17 September, Council members unanimously adopted resolution 2489, renewing the mandate of UNAMA until 17 September 2020. On 19 September, Council members issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the "continuing high number of attacks" in Afghanistan (SC/13957). Those attacks include several claimed by the Taliban: in Qalat, Zabul Province, on 19 September, resulting in at least 20 people killed and more than 95 people injured; in Kabul; and in Charikar, Parwan Province, on 17 September, resulting in at least 38 civilians killed and more than 80 civilians injured.

UNOCA (Central Africa)

On 12 September, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the Central African Region (S/PV.8618), expressing its full support for UNOCA and noting the recommendations of the Secretary General's strategic review regarding the scope of UNOCA's mandate and activities. (S/PRST/2019/10).

Children and Armed Conflict

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict met on 16 September for the introduction of the report on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan.

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South Sudan

On 18 September, Special Representative for South Sudan and head of UNMISS David Shearer briefed the Security Council on the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the situation in South Sudan (S/2019/722) and the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/741) on "future planning for the protection of civilians sites" in South Sudan, as requested in resolution 2459 (S/PV.8621). Consultations followed the briefing. "The peace process remains precarious, but progress is being made," Shearer said, emphasising that progress depends on sustained goodwill between the parties and the attention of international partners, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the AU.

Iraq

On 20 September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2490, renewing the mandate of the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed

by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) until 21 September 2020 (S/PV.8624).

Regional Organisations

On 25 September, the Security Council held a ministerial-level debate on cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organisations, focusing on the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in countering threats to peace and security, with a special focus on counter-terrorism efforts (S/PV.8626). Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, chaired the debate. Briefing at the debate were: Secretary-General António Guterres; SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov; acting CSTO Secretary-General Valery Semerikov; and the Vice Chairman of the CIS Executive Committee, Sergey Ivanov.

Peace and Security in Africa

On 26 September, the Security Council

received a ministerial-level briefing on the topic "Peace and security in Africa: partnership to strengthen regional peace and security" (S/PV.8627). Sergey Lavrov, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, presided. The briefers were Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, the Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, and Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AU Commission. Russia (as president of the Council in October) together with the three African members of the Council (Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and South Africa) circulated a concept note ahead of the briefing (S/2019/743). The stated aim of the briefing is "to review the existing mechanisms to effectively support African and regional responses to the current threats to peace and security on the African continent, with a view to enhancing regional and international efforts in addressing these challenges in a strategic, sustained and coordinated manner".

Syria

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold its monthly meetings on the humanitarian situation, the political process, and the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Key Recent Developments

September marked the one-year anniversary of a memorandum of understanding agreed by Russia and Turkey for the demilitarisation of Idlib, which, however, failed to prevent an intensification of hostilities in north-western Syria. There has been a steady increase in attacks since late April. On 30 August, Russia announced a unilateral ceasefire that was confirmed by the Syrian government and appears to have led to a reduction in violence. OHCHR has documented 1,089 civilian deaths as a result of shelling and aerial bombardments in north-western Syria between 19 April and 29 August while OCHA has reported 630,000 displacements—a figure that includes multiple displacements of the

same person—between 1 May and 27 August, as people fled the fighting.

Ten Council members—Belgium, the Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, the UK and the US—met with the Secretary-General on 27 July to deliver a petition asking him to establish an internal UN Headquarters Board of Inquiry (BOI) to investigate the "destruction of, or damage to facilities on the deconfliction list and UN-supported facilities" in north-western Syria. The "deconfliction list" refers to a list of health facilities whose coordinates have been provided to the parties to prevent their targeting, and the démarche urged an investigation into why they continued to be bombed.

On 1 August, the Secretariat announced the establishment of a BOI, and on 13 September, the Secretary-General released a statement through his spokesman announcing its composition and start date. The BOI will be led by Lieutenant General Chikadibia

Obiakor (Nigeria) and will include Janet Lim (Singapore) and Marta Santos Pais (Portugal) as its other members. Two senior experts—Major General Fernando Ordóñez (Peru) and Pierre Ryter (Switzerland), the former head of the ICRC East Asia delegation—will support its work. The BOI is expected to commence its work on 30 September. At his 13 September press briefing, Stéphane Dujarric, the Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said that the "goal of the board is to establish the facts for the Secretary-General", without indicating whether the BOI would assign responsibility for attacks. When asked if the findings would be made public, he replied, "Board of Inquiries...are internal documents and not for public release...That's what I can tell...at this point".

On 29 August, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock and Special Envoy Geir O. Pedersen briefed the Council on the humanitarian and political situations in Syria, respectively. Lowcock

UN DOCUMENTS ON SYRIA Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8623 (19 September 2019) was on the humanitarian situation in Syria. S/PV.8609 (29 August 2019) was on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria. Other S/2019/756 (19 September 2019) and S/2019/757 (19 September 2019) were draft resolutions on Idlib that failed to be adopted.

Syria

described the humanitarian impact of the fighting in Idlib, including the deaths, injuries and displacement of civilians. He also described the difficult conditions facing displaced persons in Al-Hol camp in north-eastern Syria. Pedersen described his consultations with the Syrian government and the opposition Syrian Negotiations Commission regarding efforts to establish “a credible, balanced and inclusive, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned constitutional committee under United Nations auspices in Geneva”.

On 16 September, the presidents of Iran (Hassan Rouhani), Russia (Vladimir Putin), and Turkey (Recep Erdoğan), a configuration referred to as the Astana guarantors, met in Ankara, Turkey, where they released a joint statement “reiterat[ing] their support to the efforts of...Special Envoy...Geir O. Pedersen to achieve agreement between the Syrian parties on the rules of procedure” of the Constitutional Committee.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres announced on 23 September that the Syrian government and the Syrian Negotiations Commission had agreed to form “a credible, balanced and inclusive Constitutional Committee that will be facilitated by the UN in Geneva”.

On 19 September, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Ursula Mueller briefed the Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria. Among other things, she said that further fighting in Idlib would endanger and displace more civilians and described the threat posed to Syria’s population by unexploded ordnance from the conflict.

Following the meeting, the Council voted on competing draft resolutions aimed at a ceasefire in Idlib: one draft produced by the humanitarian penholders on Syria (Belgium, Germany and Kuwait) that Council members have been negotiating since late August, and a second draft, produced by China and Russia, focusing largely on counter-terrorism issues, that was put in blue earlier in the day without prior negotiations among the full Council. China and Russia vetoed the Belgium/Germany/Kuwait draft, while

12 members voted in favour and Equatorial Guinea abstained. China and Russia were the only members to vote for their own draft; nine members voted against it and four (Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Indonesia, and South Africa) abstained.

The Identification and Investigation Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), established to identify perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks in Syria following a June 2018 decision of the Conference of State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, has identified a non-exhaustive provisional list of nine incidents on which it intends to focus its investigative work. The OPCW has made public that Syria has denied visas and refused to submit confidential information to the members of the team.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In her opening statement on 9 September at the 42nd session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said, “[S]ince the launch of the current campaign on 29 April, more than a thousand civilians have been killed, including at least 300 children – mainly due to airstrikes by Government forces and their allies but also, to a lesser extent, attacks by non-state armed groups”. On 17 September, the HRC held an interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria and considered its report (A/HRC/42/51). The report emphasises that “government forces, armed groups and all parties to the conflict must facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians affected by fighting”. It also contains recommendations to member states and, in particular, to those that provide support to the warring parties, “as they bear a shared responsibility for the crimes committed against millions of Syrian women, men and children”.

Key Issues and Options

Key issues for the Council on Syria include how to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Idlib and how to support the next steps in the political process.

The establishment of the constitutional committee appears to be an encouraging step forward in the political process. The Council could welcome this development in

a presidential statement, and members could engage with the Special Envoy in consultations in an open and frank discussion on his ideas for next steps in the political process and how to support them.

Given the impact of the Astana guarantors on political and humanitarian developments in Syria, an informal interactive dialogue could be convened with them in order to exchange action-oriented ideas for de-escalating the conflict in Idlib and encouraging the parties to release larger numbers of detainees and abductees. (Informal interactive dialogues are closed meetings that, unlike consultations, allow for the participation of non-UN representatives.) During his 29 August briefing to the Council, Pedersen expressed the view that meaningful action on detainees, abductees and missing persons—such as “unilateral releases [that] move beyond one-for-one exchanges”—could help open space for political progress.

Council members could also consider inviting the Director-General of the OPCW for an informal interactive dialogue to discuss how best to address the challenges of its work in Syria.

Council Dynamics

Stark divisions continue to colour Council dynamics on Syria and hinder the Council’s ability to play a meaningful role in resolving the conflict or even in mitigating its impact on civilians. While Russia has tended to emphasise the threat of terrorism in Syria, the P3 and others have traditionally focused on violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks on schools and hospitals. In this regard, some members have expressed concern that counter-terrorism operations could mask indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets. Russia continues to call into question the information that the UN provides on attacks on medical facilities in Idlib, including during a 16 September press conference at UN headquarters convened on this issue by Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia (Russia).

Belgium, Germany and Kuwait are co-penholders on humanitarian issues in Syria.

UN-AU Cooperation on Peace and Security

Expected Council Action

In October, Security Council members will hold their 13th annual consultative meeting with the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Members of both bodies will also hold informal consultations ahead of this meeting. Following this, the Security Council will receive a briefing on the Secretary-General's annual report on ways to strengthen the partnership between the UN and AU on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the UN Office to the AU.

Key Recent Developments

Security Council members and PSC members have held annual joint consultative meetings since 2007, alternating between their respective headquarters. A joint communiqué has generally been issued following these annual meetings. The last meeting between members of the two Councils was held in New York on 19 July 2018, at which the situations in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan were discussed. Other issues discussed included progress in further strengthening the cooperation between the two organisations in the area of peace and security, and funding for AU peace and security activities. The joint communiqué was transmitted on 19 July 2018 by then-Security Council member Ethiopia, which took the lead in drafting the communiqué in its capacity as chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. In previous years, there have been difficulties and delays in agreeing on the joint communiqué, with the communiqué for the September 2017 joint meeting transmitted to Council members on 7 June 2018, and that for the joint meeting on 23 May 2016 issued one year later, on 23 March 2017.

The agenda for the upcoming joint consultative meeting may consist of Libya, South Sudan, implementation of the Central African Republic Political Agreement, and the Sahel region, although it was not yet finalised at press time. Also at press time, the informal consultations, which are being held for the fourth consecutive year, are expected to focus on: "Silencing the Guns in Africa"; modalities for joint UN Security Council-AU PSC field

missions; and financing of AU-led peace support operations. The UN Security Council was expected to travel to Juba, South Sudan, following its trip to Addis Ababa. South Africa, as president of the Security Council in October, and the US, as penholder on South Sudan, are expected to co-lead the mission.

On 18 July 2018, the Special Representative to the AU and head of the UN Office to the AU, Sahle-Work Zewde, and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smaïl Chergui, briefed the Security Council on the Secretary-General's 2018 annual report on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU. Zewde underscored the "unprecedented collaboration" between the UN and the AU, including the more regular exchange of information, joint briefings by special representatives and envoys of the two organisations, and joint field visits by senior officials, among other examples. She also identified areas where further collaboration was required, such as the need to align and harmonise early warning indicators. Chergui emphasised the importance of collaboration between the UN and AU in countries such as South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, and the Central African Republic. Both Zewde and Chergui raised the issue of sustainable and predictable financing for AU peace support operations. Zewde said that this issue should be framed within the context of a common political strategy agreed to by the two Councils. Chergui expressed hope that the Security Council will consider providing assessed contributions to AU peace support operations.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue continues to be the need for sustainable and predictable funding for AU peace support operations. An option would be to adopt a resolution on the issue. The African members of the Security Council (A3) circulated a draft resolution in August, which consisted of a revised version of a draft circulated by the then-A3 (Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea) at the end of 2018, which was ultimately never put to a vote. At press time, negotiations were ongoing. On 17 September, a subsidiary body of the AU PSC (the Committee of Experts) considered the

draft resolution. At press time, it seemed possible that the AU PSC could release a statement presenting its views on the issue.

An issue over the years has been the scripted nature of most of the joint consultative meetings. However, the practice of holding an informal session ahead of the meeting has allowed for more substantive discussion, particularly on more controversial topics. Interaction during the formal session may be improved by moving away from reading prepared statements to a more free-flowing discussion.

Sensitivities in the past regarding the agenda of the consultative meeting have related to the inclusion of controversial issues such as Western Sahara. Reaching agreement on the agenda this year appears to have been relatively smooth, but some members may want to raise additional country-specific situations in the informal session. A related issue is how to mutually strengthen the two Councils' work on issues common to both their agendas and allow for mutual reinforcement and more effective and timely interaction on specific African conflicts.

Another difficult issue in the past has been the inability of the two Councils to agree on a joint communiqué in a timely manner, arguably reducing the usefulness of the communiqué. An option would be to take a similar approach to last year and issue the joint communiqué on the day of the meeting.

A further issue is revisiting the option of conducting joint field missions. Last year's meeting communiqué "affirmed the intention to consider joint visits", stating that the "modalities of such visits will be discussed and agreed upon on a case-by-case basis by the two Councils". To date, no joint field mission has been conducted. An option would be to reach agreement on the timeline for a joint visit in the upcoming communiqué.

Council Dynamics

The African members of the Security Council have been proactive about keeping alive matters of importance to the AU despite sometimes having divergent views on specific issues. They have consistently made clear that pursuing a substantive resolution on financing of AU support operations is a priority.

UN DOCUMENTS ON AU-UN COOPERATION Security Council Resolution S/RES/2320 (18 November 2016) welcomed the AU Assembly decision to fund 25 percent of AU peace support operations. **Secretary-General's Report S/2018/678** (6 July 2018) was the annual report on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU. Security Council Letter S/2018/736 (19 July 2018) was the joint communiqué after the 12th annual joint consultative meeting between members of the Council and the AU PSC held in Addis Ababa on 19 July 2018. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8314** (18 July 2018) was a briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU.

UN-AU Cooperation on Peace and Security

Security Council members have expressed divergent views on the financing issue in the past. Those who are major financial contributors, and the US in particular, have concerns about committing UN assessed contributions to AU peace support operations, and are likely to take a cautious position on anything related to financing. In December 2018, following several postponements that month, a vote on a draft resolution circulated by the

then-A3 (Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea) spelling out the conditions for financing AU-led peace support operations through UN-assessed contributions, was cancelled following US indications that it might veto the resolution. (For more details, see our What's In Blue story of 18 December 2018.)

The US has said that it would not consider the use of UN assessed contributions for AU peacekeeping operations without the

demonstrable implementation of benchmarks for financial transparency, conduct and discipline, and human rights. The issue is likely to feature prominently in the meetings between the two Councils in October and in negotiations over the joint communiqué.

South Africa chairs the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

Western Sahara

Expected Council Action

In October, Council members are expected to renew the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) before its 31 October expiry. Prior to this, they will meet in consultations to discuss the Secretary-General's report on MINURSO. Colin Stewart, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and head of MINURSO, is likely to brief on the Secretary-General's MINURSO report, due on 1 October.

Key Recent Developments

On 30 April the Council adopted resolution 2468, renewing the mandate of MINURSO for six months. On the occasion of the adoption, members spoke about a real sense of opportunity for progress and voiced unequivocal support to the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler. Since December 2018, Köhler had held two roundtable meetings, attended by Morocco, the Polisario Front, Algeria, and Mauritania. (Western Sahara has been the subject of territorial disputes since Spain withdrew in 1976. Initially, both Morocco and Mauritania presented claims, but Mauritania renounced its claim in 1979. The independence movement is led by the Polisario Front, which represents the nomadic inhabitants of the Western Sahara region known as the Sahrawis.) A third roundtable was expected to follow, but Köhler resigned his post abruptly on 22 May because of health concerns. Since then, a search for a replacement has been underway,

with no announcements yet made. The personal envoy's mandate rests on being able to establish trust amongst the parties, and he or she must also have Council support. The absence of a personal envoy has meant that there have been no additional roundtables and essentially no progress towards reaching a political agreement.

Meanwhile, the situation on the ground remains tense. On 19 July, there were clashes in Laayoune between Moroccan security forces and Sahrawi protesters after Sahrawis celebrated an Algerian football victory and took that as an opportunity to call for self-determination. The clashes led to the death of one Sahrawi woman and an unverified number injured and arrested. Amnesty International released a statement asking for investigations, and the Polisario Front, through Namibia, sent a letter to the president of the Security Council urging a response.

In July, Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Nasser Bourita reiterated Morocco's long-held position that Algeria is a party, and not simply an observer, to the Western Sahara situation. This runs contrary to Algeria's own previous statements. Also in July, King Mohammed VI of Morocco stressed in a speech that Western Sahara is part of Morocco and urged the international community to work on Morocco's autonomy plan, which was first submitted to the UN in 2007. On 19 September, the Polisario Front sent a letter to the Council president expressing its frustration with the delays in the peace process, highlighting

the lack of a new personal envoy as a stalling factor.

Key Issues and Options

The Council held consultations on the issue in January and April; since May, the lack of a personal envoy has stymied progress on the file. In April, one member apparently suggested that in the future, MINURSO could be closed in favour of a special political mission. This, or other ideas to change MINURSO and its mission, could be discussed during negotiations on the mandate renewal. MINURSO is one of the longest-running UN peacekeeping missions, having been established in 1991 with the key objective of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara but there has been little change, and no referendum has been held. Today, its duties mainly consist of monitoring the ceasefire across the Berm, a 1700-mile-long earthen wall that divides the Moroccan-administered portion of Western Sahara from that held by the Polisario Front.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights continues to be concerned about restrictions on political space, and the promotion and protection of human rights will remain a prominent issue. Past attempts at adding a human rights component to MINURSO's mandate were unsuccessful, but may be revived.

The Council will need to renew MINURSO's mandate before it expires at the end of the month. The Council could negotiate a technical rollover if it believes the process

UN DOCUMENTS ON WESTERN SAHARA [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2468](#) (30 April 2019) renewed MINURSO's mandate for six months, with abstentions by two Council members. [Secretary-General's Report S/2019/282](#) (1 April 2019) was on MINURSO, covering 3 October 2018 to 1 April 2019. [Security Council Letters S/2019/746](#) (13 September 2019) was a letter transmitted by Namibia on behalf of the Polisario Front. Polisario expressed disappointment about the lack of a new personal envoy and regret at the stalled political process. [S/2019/590](#) (22 July 2019) was a letter transmitted by Namibia on behalf of the Polisario Front discussing the recent protests that resulted in several arrests and one death. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8518](#) (30 April 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2468 and statements after the vote

Western Sahara

has been stalled and wishes to wait for a new personal envoy before taking a more substantive approach.

Council Dynamics

Council members would like to see real progress on this nearly 30-year-old file. The current absence of a personal envoy creates additional uncertainty, and Council members may urge the Secretary-General to appoint a replacement as soon as possible so that the momentum achieved by Köhler is not erased.

It was clear from past meetings that some members, the US in particular, are studying the future of MINURSO closely. The US has successfully pushed for shortened six-month renewals of the mandate to put

pressure on the parties to restart the political process. After the adoption of resolution 2468 on 30 April, the US representative said, “[T]he Security Council’s objective should be to advance a timely and mutually acceptable political solution”. However, with the process stalled, it is unclear whether the US will now propose a MINURSO drawdown. Additionally, a principal actor engaged in this issue in US President Donald Trump’s administration, National Security Adviser John Bolton, unexpectedly left office on 10 September.

Other Council members advocate the continuation of MINURSO. In the meeting on 30 April, France spoke of “the essential role played by that peacekeeping operation in ensuring respect for the ceasefire and thereby

contributing to regional stability”. France is also likely to continue to push for an eventual return to a 12-month mandate, as was the case in 2008-2018.

Some members remain concerned by what they consider arbitrary restrictions on the rights of Sahrawis to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, as well as the use of excessive force by Moroccan security forces to disperse peaceful demonstrations. In a statement after the vote, Ambassador Jerry Matjila (South Africa) voiced his support for a human rights monitoring mandate for MINURSO. South Africa has over the years been a strong Polisario Front supporter.

Women, Peace and Security

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council expects to hold its annual open debate on women, peace and security. The Secretary-General’s annual report on the issue is due in October as well. South Africa, as president of the Council in October, is expected to circulate a concept note ahead of the debate. The debate may also be held at a high level. The Secretary-General, a representative from UN Women, and a civil society representative may brief.

Key Recent Developments

Starting with resolution 1325, adopted on 31 October 2000, the Council has continued to develop the normative framework of the women, peace and security agenda. Resolution 1325 acknowledged that armed conflict has a differential and disproportionate impact on women. It further emphasised that equal participation by women in the maintenance of international peace and security, an increase of women’s roles in preventing and resolving conflict, and women’s protection all

contribute to the Council’s mandate of maintaining international peace and security. The aspect of protection against sexual violence was further strengthened with resolution 1888 of 30 September 2009, which established the position of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Resolution 2242, adopted on 13 October 2015, addressed the Council’s own working methods. The Council therein formed an Informal Expert Group (IEG) on women, peace and security and expressed an intention to invite female civil society briefers to country-specific and thematic meetings.

This year’s co-chairs of the IEG, Peru and Germany, are working towards a greater recognition of issues affecting women as peace and security issues. They argue that women, peace and security should not be isolated on the Council’s agenda as a free-standing thematic issue but should rather, as recognised in resolution 2242, be an integral part of the entirety of the Council’s work. Similarly, not only should women, peace and security

experts attend IEG meetings, in the view of the co-chairs, but the respective country expert should take part as well, as reflected in the IEG’s 2016 guidelines. Thus far in 2019, the IEG has held meetings on Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Libya, Myanmar, South Sudan and Yemen. Because of the IEG’s status as an informal group, those meetings are not reflected on the Council’s subsidiary organs programme of work, and there is no obligation for Council members to attend. UN Women acts as the secretariat of the IEG. A summary of every IEG meeting is sent as an annex to a letter from the co-chairs and the penholder to the Secretary-General and published as a document of the Council.

In resolution 1820, the Council also expressed its intention to consider the use of targeted sanctions against perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence. On 5 November 2018, resolution 2441 on Libya sanctions was adopted, with 13 votes in favour and China and Russia abstaining. The

UN DOCUMENTS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2467](#) (23 April 2019) was on conflict-related sexual violence. It was passed with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (China and Russia). [S/RES/2242](#) (13 October 2015) established the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on women, peace and security. [S/RES/1888](#) (30 September 2009) established the position of Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. [S/RES/1325](#) (31 October 2000) was the first resolution on women, peace and security. [Secretary-General’s Reports S/2019/280](#) (29 March 2019) was the latest annual report on conflict-related sexual violence. [S/2018/900](#) (9 October 2018) was the latest annual report on women, peace and security. [Security Council Letters S/2019/275](#) (27 March 2019) was a letter from the Secretary-General to the president of the Security Council, informing the Security Council of his uniformed gender parity strategy 2018-2028, in line with resolution 2242. [S/2019/232](#) (11 March 2019) was the summary of the 28 February meeting on South Sudan held by the IEG on women, peace and security. [S/2018/1139](#) (14 December 2018) was the summary of the IEG’s 28 November 2018 meeting on Libya. [S/2018/1087](#) (6 December 2018) was the summary of the IEG’s 18 October 2018 meeting on the Central African Republic. [S/2018/885](#) (2 October 2018) was the summary of the IEG’s 4 September 2018 meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [S/2018/881](#) (28 September 2018) was the summary of the IEG’s 13 April 2018 meeting on Libya. [S/2016/1106](#) (22 December 2016) were the guidelines for the IEG. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8587](#) (26 July 2019) was a meeting on Afghanistan with a focus on women, peace and security. [S/PV.8514](#) (23 April 2019) was the annual open debate on conflict-related sexual violence and the adoption of resolution 2467. [S/PV.8508](#) (11 April 2019) was an open debate on women in peacekeeping operations. [S/PV.8382](#) (25 October 2018) was the annual open debate on women, peace and security

Women, Peace and Security

resolution introduced a stand-alone designation criterion for sanctioning individuals for acts that “include but are not limited to planning, directing or committing acts involving sexual and gender-based violence”. Also in line with resolution 2242, resolution 2441 contains a request to the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee to include “the necessary sexual and gender-based violence expertise” in their tasks. China and Russia did not support these additions, arguing that they were not relevant in the Libyan context. That led to the two countries’ abstentions.

Resolution 2242 also called on the Secretary-General “to initiate, in collaboration with Member States, a revised strategy, within existing resources, to double the numbers of women in military and police contingents of UN peacekeeping operations over the next five years”. On 11 April, the Council held a high-level open debate on women in peacekeeping. In advance of the debate, the Secretary-General submitted a letter summarising his “Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018–2028”.

Regarding conflict-related sexual violence, the Council held its annual open debate on 23 April. Resolution 2467, drafted by Germany, was adopted during the debate with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (China and Russia), following difficult negotiations, including veto threats by China, Russia and the US. Contentious issues included language on sexual and reproductive health and the establishment of a formal mechanism on conflict-related sexual violence, both of which were not acceptable to some members and

were ultimately not included in the resolution.

On 26 July, the Council held a meeting following a 20–21 July trip to Afghanistan by a high-level UN delegation with a focus on women, peace and security. The delegation was led by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and included Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund Natalia Kanem, and the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. This was the third briefing of its kind, preceded by briefings in July 2018 after a joint UN-AU trip to the Sahel region and in August 2017 after a joint UN-AU trip to the DRC and Nigeria.

Several Arria-formula meetings related to the women, peace and security agenda were also held in the last 12 months. Arria-formula meetings on conflict-related sexual violence took place on 22 October 2018 on conflict-related sexual violence and sanctions; on 26 October 2018 on children born of sexual violence in conflict zones; and on 8 February on accountability for conflict-related sexual violence. On women, peace and security more broadly, Arria-formula meetings were held on 24 January on National Action Plans in the Middle East and North Africa region and on 13 March on inequalities between women and men in political processes.

Key Issues and Options

An ongoing issue for the Council is how to consolidate progress in the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, drawing from the vast existing normative

framework. Such areas of implementation include integrating language in Council products and continuing to invite female civil society representatives and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to brief the Council.

An option for the Council is to look at further ways to utilise the IEG. Members could use the information from IEG meetings to address specific points during Council meetings, including closed consultations. Questioning senior UN staff on these issues may lead to a stronger focus on women, peace and security within the UN system, including missions. Additionally, members could consider ways of following up more systematically on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the IEG co-chair’s letters.

Council Dynamics

Recent efforts to adopt products on women, peace and security or initiatives to include related language in Council products have experienced difficulties, as shown by China’s and Russia’s abstentions on resolutions 2441 on Libya sanctions and 2467 on conflict-related sexual violence. Council members interested in advancing the agenda might therefore avoid aiming for a Council product at this stage. However, both examples show that elected members are often prepared to invest political capital to advance the agenda.

The UK is the penholder on women, peace and security issues in general, and the US is the penholder on conflict-related sexual violence. Germany and Peru are the co-chairs of the IEG.

Youth, Peace and Security

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold an open debate under the agenda item “Peace and Security in Africa: Mobilising the Youth towards Silencing the Guns by 2020”.

Key Recent Developments

During its October presidency, South Africa aims to emphasise the flagship project—“Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020”—of the AU’s Agenda 2063, a 50-year vision and action plan to build a united Africa. This initiative was the topic of an open debate

organised by Equatorial Guinea on 27 February when the Council adopted resolution 2457, which outlined steps leading to the goal of ending conflicts in Africa through “enhanced international cooperation and partnership, as well as robust support for peace operations led by the AU”. With nearly

UN DOCUMENTS ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2457 (27 February 2019) was a resolution adopted during a meeting on “Cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”. S/RES/2419 (6 June 2018) was on youth, peace and security, reaffirming the important role that youth and youth-led civil society can play in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. S/RES/2250 (9 December 2015) was on youth, peace and security, recognising the contribution of youth in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and warning about the rise of radicalisation amongst youth, leading to violence and violent extremism. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV. 8577 (17 July 2019) was a briefing on the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda. S/PV.8277 (6 June 2018) was the adoption of resolution 2419. S/PV.8241 (23 April 2018) was an open debate on youth, peace and security. S/PV.7573 (9 December 2015) was the adoption of resolution 2250. S/PV.7432 (23 April 2015) was a high-level open debate on the “role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace”. Other S/2018/86 (2 March 2018) was the progress study on youth, peace and security.

Youth, Peace and Security

20 percent of the African continent's population aged between 15 and 24, the AU has recognised that youth must be at the core of its initiatives to silence the guns in Africa.

Peru held a briefing during its July presidency to take stock of the implementation of resolutions 2250 and 2419, which are the foundation of the youth, peace and security agenda. During the debate, Council members agreed on the importance of youth having a more significant presence in peace and security matters, with many emphasising the need to address root causes of conflict, combat violent extremism and terrorism, provide better education, promote the rights of women and girls, and address the challenges of climate change.

The Council first addressed the issue of youth, peace and security at the initiative of Jordan during the country's April 2015 presidency when it organised an open debate on the "role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace". On 9 December 2015, the Council adopted resolution 2250, which mandated a progress study on youth, peace and security. The study was discussed during an open debate, convened by Peru in April 2018, and served as a basis for the second resolution on youth, peace and security, adopted in June 2018 as resolution 2419. It recognised the role youth can play in conflict prevention and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of both resolutions no later than May 2020. While the resolution, like its 2015 predecessor, was adopted unanimously, negotiations appeared to have been difficult, with members divided on the usefulness of the Council's addressing youth, peace and security.

Key Issues and Options

Many significant challenges remain with the approach of the December 2020 deadline for the "Silencing the Guns by 2020" initiative.

According to Ramtane Lamamra, the AU's high representative for the "Silencing the Guns" campaign, there is concern "over the challenging security situation in parts of Africa" as well as threats posed by terrorism; maritime piracy; tensions between farmers and herders; transnational organised crime; and persistent violence perpetrated by insurgents, rebels, and armed groups. Peace agreements in South Sudan and the Central African Republic, elections in Madagascar and Congo, and the renewal of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia have resulted in notable progress, but there are a number of African countries still "trapped in a vicious cycle of violent conflict", according to Lamamra.

A key issue is for the Council's focus on youth and violent extremism not to overshadow the positive contribution of youth in situations of armed conflict. It might be useful to have a civil society youth leader brief the Council on the role he or she has played in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, particularly given that resolution 2419 expressed the Council's intention to invite youth representatives to brief during meetings.

An option for briefers and Council members may be to discuss opportunities for the inclusion of young people in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. Issues that could be addressed include the involvement of young people in peace and security activities; initiatives of regional and sub-regional organisations in implementing the youth, peace and security agenda; and opportunities to listen to leaders and youth experts on their expectations from the Council in advancing this agenda. Ahead of the elaboration of the Secretary-General's 2020 report on the implementation of resolutions 2250 and 2419, members could speak about ways they implement the agenda, as well as what partnerships could be formed with the young peacebuilders.

The Council could also designate a penholder to take the lead on youth, peace and security, who would advocate for the inclusion and implementation of activities related to youth, peace and security in Council mandates. It could also call on the Secretary-General to report annually on the implementation of resolution 2250.

An outcome or a presidential summary emphasising points from the open debate may be an option.

Council Dynamics

The Council has welcomed the AU's perseverance to rid the continent of conflict through its "Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020" initiative and expressed its readiness to contribute to that goal during the adoption of resolution 2457. Nevertheless, Council members have differing views on youth, peace and security as an area of Council focus. During the negotiations on resolution 2419, it seemed that mainly China and Russia argued that the matter should be dealt with by other parts of the UN system as it is not directly relevant to the Council's agenda. At the opposite end of the spectrum, it seemed that other members would have preferred even stronger language about the positive role youth can play on peace and security matters.

During the July debate, the Russian Federation's representative agreed that the UN must pay greater attention to youth but underscored that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and their subsidiary bodies are better placed to address the subject. He warned that some external players also use radicalised youth to overthrow legitimate governments and wondered whether discussing this topic in the Security Council for the third time was helpful.

Libya

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council is expected to renew the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking, which is set to expire on 3 October.

The mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expires on 15 September 2020, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee expires on 15 February 2020.

Key Recent Developments

On 12 September, the Council adopted resolution 2486, renewing the mandate of UNSMIL until 15 September 2020. The Council added a provision to UNSMIL's mandate that the mission would support a possible ceasefire. In this regard, the Council requested "the Secretary-General to assess the steps required to reach a lasting ceasefire, the possible role of UNSMIL in providing scalable ceasefire support and the steps required to advance the political process from its current trajectory, and to include a report on progress towards these objectives in his regular reporting".

Libya continues to be the scene of fighting that started on 4 April when General Khalifa Haftar, head of the eastern-based militia known as the Libyan National Army (LNA), launched an offensive towards Tripoli and against the internationally recognised and UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) based there. The conflict is fuelled by support from abroad, including military support channelled to both the GNA and the LNA in violation of the UN arms embargo.

In his latest report on the implementation of resolution 2437 that extended the vessels' inspection authorisation in October 2018, the Secretary-General stated that thousands of persons trying to get to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea "have perished or gone

missing en route or have been returned to situations of grave harm". Citing data from UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration, 82,236 refugees and migrants arrived by sea in Europe between 1 September 2018 and 31 July, marking a 26 percent decrease from the last reporting period. Despite the decreased numbers, the report said, "there is considerable evidence that conditions for those embarking on the journey have worsened". The report emphasised that the death rate of persons trying to get to Europe from Libya via the central Mediterranean Sea has more than doubled in comparison with the previous year. In the first half of 2019, 2,130 people arrived in Europe via the central Mediterranean Sea and 333 people are recorded as having died.

In March, the EU extended the mandate of its military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia) for six months until 30 September. It temporarily suspended the deployment of its surface naval assets, however. It seemed that an extension of the existing mandate was not agreeable to all members of the EU. The Secretary-General's report noted with concern that the suspension of the deployment of the operation's surface naval assets "de facto means that it has not been possible to inspect and seize vessels in international waters off the coast of Libya, on suspicion of smuggling either migrants or arms [...] pursuant to resolutions 2437 (2018) and 2473 (2019), respectively". EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia currently implements the authorisation granted by resolution 2437 using air assets. The operation also continues to train the Libyan coast guard and navy officers and has trained 417 persons since 2016. In February, the operation signed a procedural agreement for information-sharing with the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee.

The Secretary-General's report further elaborated that NGOs are still conducting search and rescue operations with their

vessels on the high seas off the western coast of Libya. However, legal and administrative restrictions by European states as well as constraints on disembarkation of migrants and refugees in Europe have resulted in a reduced number of such operations.

The report stressed that the security situation is still being exploited by organised transnational criminal networks to smuggle migrants and traffic humans, which in turn contributes to instability. According to UNSMIL, there continue to be reports that state and local officials are involved in smuggling and trafficking networks.

Libya is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and irregular migration is criminalised under Libyan law. According to the Secretary-General's report, moreover, Libyan authorities "do not fully recognize the mandate of UNHCR in providing and overseeing the application of international protection". The report concluded that "Libya does not meet the criteria for being designated as a place of safety or as a safe third country for the purpose of disembarkation".

At press time, the UN's 2019 humanitarian response plan for Libya of \$201.6 million was funded at 36.8 percent, with \$127.4 million outstanding.

Women, Peace and Security

In his report, the Secretary-General highlighted that "the risk of sexual and gender-based violence facing refugee and migrant women and girls, as well as men and boys, in detention centres in Libya is reported to be extremely high". Perpetrators act with impunity, including armed groups and guards of the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration. According to the Secretary-General, records show that sexual violence, including rape, is used "as a form of torture"—in some cases resulting in death—and is employed "as a routine method for controlling and humiliating migrants" in detention centres. In the observations in his report, the Secretary-General emphasised that this situation, faced especially by women and girls, is unacceptable.

Key Issues and Options

An immediate issue for the Council in

UN DOCUMENTS ON LIBYA **Security Council Resolutions** S/RES/2486 (12 September 2019) extended UNSMIL's mandate until 15 September 2020. S/RES/2473 (10 June 2019) renewed for 12 months the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya bound to or from the country that they have reasonable grounds to believe are violating the arms embargo. S/RES/2441 (5 November 2018) renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee as well as the measures related to the illicit export of crude oil from Libya until 20 February 2020; it was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions (China and Russia). S/RES/2437 (3 October 2018) renewed for 12 months the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking. It further authorised member states to seize vessels if there is confirmation that they are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking from Libya. **Secretary-General's Reports** S/2019/711 (5 September 2019) was on the implementation of resolution 2437. S/2019/682 (26 August 2019) was on UNSMIL. **Security Council Meeting Records** S/PV.8615 (12 September 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2486. S/PV.8611 (4 September 2019) was the latest briefing by the Special Representative and head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, and the chair of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany Ambassador Jürgen Schulz. **Sanctions Committee Documents** SC/13941 (5 September 2019) was a press release on a meeting of the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee with interested states, including a briefing by the Panel of Experts. S/2018/812 (5 September 2018) was the Panel of Experts' final report.

Libya

October is to adopt a resolution renewing the authorisation for member states, acting nationally or through regional organisations, to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking.

Council and Wider Dynamics

Members continue to be aware that international efforts to combat the smuggling of

migrants and trafficking in persons, including via vessels off the coast of Libya, need to be strengthened. The last three years have seen few changes in the authorisation to support those efforts, which made the negotiations less divisive than the initial discussion in 2015. Discussions around flag state approval, Chapter VII and the authorisation to use force were sources of contention at the time. If the penholder aims for little change to the text, negotiations may again be

uncontentious. Members of the EU will also have to renew the mandate of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia and may consider redeploying its surface naval assets and re-enabling it to inspect and seize vessels again.

The UK is the penholder on Libya, sharing the pen with Germany on the sanctions file. Ambassador Jürgen Schulz, Germany's Deputy Permanent Representative, chairs the 1970 Libya Sanctions Committee.

Colombia

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council will receive a briefing from Special Representative and head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia Carlos Ruiz Massieu on recent developments and the Secretary-General's 90-day report on the mission; consultations are expected to follow the briefing.

The mandate of the verification mission expires on 25 September 2020.

Key Recent Developments

In resolution 2487, adopted unanimously on 12 September, the Council extended the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia for another year. The mission, which started its operations in September 2017, was established in accordance with the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the government of Colombia and the rebel group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), in which the parties, recognising the importance of having an international component to the verification process, decided to request the UN to set up a political mission. The agreement stipulated an initial three-year duration for the mission, "renewable if necessary". Resolution 2487 expressed the Council's willingness to work with the government of Colombia to extend the mission beyond 2020, should the parties desire.

The mandate of the mission has remained unchanged since it was first elaborated in a

30 August 2017 report from the Secretary-General. It will continue to be focused on verifying aspects of the agreement related to the political, economic and social reincorporation of the FARC-EP; personal and collective security guarantees; and comprehensive programmes of security and protection measures for communities and organisations in conflict-affected areas.

On 29 August, two former leaders of the FARC-EP, Luciano Marín (known as Iván Márquez, one of the chief negotiators of the agreement) and Seuxis Pausías Hernández (known as Jesús Santrich), released a video in which they announced a "new phase of armed struggle" in Colombia. Both men had been among the ten former FARC-EP leaders who under the agreement were given parliamentary seats representing the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC), the political party founded by the FARC-EP after the laying-down of weapons. Before he could take his seat in Congress in 2018, Santrich was detained and charged with drug trafficking following a federal indictment in the US and an extradition request. After the arrest of Santrich, Márquez left Bogotá, refused to assume his position as senator, and eventually went into hiding.

Having reviewed Santrich's case, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (SJP), the judicial component of the transitional justice system established by the agreement, decided not to authorise his extradition and ruled that he be freed, citing insufficient evidence. Santrich

was released on 17 May and then re-arrested the same day based on new evidence. Colombia's Supreme Court ordered his release on 29 May, and on 11 June, Santrich took his congressional seat. The Supreme Court, as part of its own investigation, called him to appear at a hearing on 9 July. After he failed to appear at the hearing, the Supreme Court issued a warrant for his arrest.

The two former FARC-ED leaders' call to arms on the video caused great concern about the prospects for peace in Colombia. Since then, both the government and FARC have been adamant about their commitment to the peace process.

On 15 August, the legal status of the 24 Territorial Areas for Training and Reintegration (TATR), where former FARC-EP members were relocated with their families following the peace accord, expired. On 14 August, the government announced that there would be a two-year transition period for all 24 locations and that the government would continue to provide services such as food, health and collective security arrangements. In a move to show his ongoing support for the continuing reintegration through TATR, President Ivan Duque made a visit to the TATR of Miravalle, his fourth visit to a reintegration area. At press time, the 24 TATRs housed about 3,500 persons, with the majority of former combatants and their families, totalling nearly 9,000 persons, now living in various rural and urban settings.

Colombia is in the midst of campaigns

UN DOCUMENTS ON COLOMBIA [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2487](#) (12 September 2019) renewed the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia until 25 September 2020. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2019/530](#) (27 June 2019) was the latest report on the work of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. [S/2017/745](#) (30 August 2017) contained recommendations regarding the size, operational aspects, and mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8581](#) (19 July 2019) was a briefing by Ruiz Massieu. [S/PV.8580](#) (19 July 2019) was a briefing by the co-leads of the 11-14 July visiting mission to Colombia. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13896](#) (23 July 2019) stressed the importance of implementing the peace agreement as an interlocking set of commitments.

Colombia

for local elections, to be held on 27 October. Some 3,000 candidates have registered, about 300 of whom are running for FARC. This is the first time that the party's candidates will compete in an open election. The non-governmental Electoral Observation Mission registered 54 incidents of electoral violence (seven killings, five attacks, two kidnappings and 40 threats) since the registration of candidates closed on 27 July.

Key Issues and Options

The need to implement the peace agreement fully—as opposed to focusing on only select aspects—continues to be a key issue, acknowledged by the Council in its recent statements. During the 11-14 July Council visiting mission, several Colombians stressed their concern about the government's primary focus being on reintegration through TATR at the expense, they felt, of vigorously implementing other aspects of the agreement. An emerging concern is that the reintegration of former combatants living outside the TATRs, whose numbers are now more than double that of TATR inhabitants, does not receive a comparable level of support and attention.

An ongoing concern for the Council has been the high levels of violence, in particular

in areas previously controlled by the FARC-EP where the security vacuum has remained. The local elections planned for 27 October have been an additional factor, with candidates of a range of political parties being targeted in different parts of the country.

Given the important role played by the international element of the verification process provided by the UN, the Council may decide to issue a statement condemning the violence and encouraging full implementation of the agreement, signalling its close and ongoing attention to the process.

Looking ahead, with the Verification Mission now in its third and last year of operations established through the agreement, the Council may start considering options for its engagement with Colombia beyond 2020.

Council Dynamics

Council members are united in their overall support of the peace process. The Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly highlighted Colombia as one of the few success stories in 2018 among several highly divisive and unsolved peace and security issues, as did Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia (Russia) when he introduced the report to the General Assembly on 10 September.

While Council members have generally

been deferential towards the government since Colombia was first brought to the Council's agenda in early 2016, some differences in tone emerged in 2019. Several members have been critical of the government on issues such as the SJP, the continuing security vacuum in areas from which FARC-EP withdrew under the agreement, and an uneven approach to implementing different aspects of the agreement. These differences came up during the negotiations on resolution 2487. While the process was smooth overall, there were differences on whether and how to refer to the outstanding challenges in the agreement's implementation as well as such issues as human rights violations and high levels of violence in several parts of the country. As a compromise, the initial draft circulated by the penholder referred to concerns, including those brought to the Council's attention during its July visiting mission. This formulation, however, was seen as too broad and silence was broken. In the final version of the resolution, the Council welcomed the opportunity to conduct its July visit to Colombia to meet with a range of actors and urged the parties to sustain progress made towards peace and to work together to address challenges.

The UK is the penholder on Colombia.

Sudan (Darfur)

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council is expected to renew the mandate of the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) ahead of its expiry on 31 October. Prior to this, the Council will receive a briefing on the special report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, requested in resolution 2479, assessing the situation on the ground and providing recommendations on the drawdown of UNAMID as well as putting forward a joint AU-UN political strategy with options for a follow-on mechanism to UNAMID. Ambassador Joanna Wronecka (Poland), chair of the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee, is expected to provide the

quarterly briefing to Council members on the committee's work.

Key Recent Developments

On 17 August, the Transitional Military Council (TMC) and the opposition alliance, the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), signed an agreement in Khartoum on the establishment of a new civilian-led transitional government and transitional institutions. Brokered with the involvement of the AU and Ethiopia, the agreement creates a joint military and civilian Sovereign Council to govern the country for just over three years, with elections to be held at the end of this period. The 11-member Sovereign Council

is composed of five members selected by the TMC, five by the FFC, and one agreed upon by both sides. A military leader will head the council for the first 21 months, followed by a civilian leader for the next 18 months.

The agreement also provides for a 300-member legislative assembly to serve during the transitional period, with two-thirds of the members selected by the FFC and the rest by parties not members of the alliance. The FFC was also mandated to nominate a transitional prime minister and a cabinet of ministers, apart from the defence and interior ministers, who will be nominated by the military component of the Sovereign Council.

The members of the Sovereign Council

UN DOCUMENTS ON DARFUR [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2479](#) (27 June 2019) renewed UNAMID's mandate until 31 October 2019. [Secretary-General's Report S/2019/445](#) (30 May 2019) was the strategic assessment of UNAMID. [Security Council Letter S/2019/731](#) (5 September 2019) requested a ten-day extension for the submission of the special report requested in resolution 2479. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8603](#) (26 August 2019) was a briefing on UNAMID. [S/PV.8566](#) (27 June 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2479. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13927](#) (21 August 2019) was on the signing of the 17 August agreement on the formation of a civilian-led transitional government in Sudan.

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were sworn in on 21 August, as was the FFC-nominated prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok. On 6 September, the AU Peace and Security Council issued a communiqué that lifted the suspension of Sudan's participation in AU activities. On 8 September, an 18-member cabinet was sworn in.

Council members issued a press statement on 21 August welcoming the 17 August agreement as well as “the pledge of the parties to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms...[and] the commitment to create a national independent committee to investigate the violent acts committed on 3 June and other incidents of human rights violations and abuses”. Among other things, Council members “underscored that Sudan's stability will depend on an inclusive approach to public life and government, and encouraged the full, effective and meaningful participation of women, youth and marginalized and rural communities” and “stressed the need to swiftly resume negotiations towards peaceful solutions to the conflicts in Darfur and South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and encouraged all parties to engage constructively, immediately and without preconditions in these discussions”.

On 26 August, the Council received an oral update on the issue, as requested in resolution 2479, from Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smaïl Chergui. Lacroix noted that the security situation in Darfur remains largely unchanged, while intermittent clashes continue in the Jebel Marra area and intercommunal tensions have escalated during the current harvest season. “The remaining conflict drivers and armed groups outside the peace process still pose potential risks to sustainable peacebuilding”, he said. Following the formation of the new cabinet, “we will engage relevant interlocutors on a range of issues, including the drawdown of UNAMID, planning for a transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, next steps for the Darfur peace process, and post-UNAMID engagement”, he added.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In her opening statement at the 42nd session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 9 September, High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet welcomed the signing of the 17 August agreement, “which includes many human rights

references, notably the Bill of Rights and its commitment to establish a national investigation committee”. She welcomed “its explicit commitment to facilitate OHCHR's mission to work in Sudan” and hoped that discussions would advance “for a fully mandated OHCHR office in the country”. She also emphasised the importance of addressing protection challenges and supporting civil society and the national human rights institutions in this effort, including in Darfur, as UNAMID withdraws from the area. On 25 September, Bachelet signed an agreement with the government of Sudan to open a UN Human Rights Office in Khartoum and field offices in Darfur, Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan and East Sudan.

On 25 September, the HRC held an interactive dialogue with the independent expert on human rights in Sudan, Aristide Nononsi, and considered his report (A/HRC/42/63). On the situation in Darfur, the report, which covers 28 September 2018 to 30 June, said: “[E]ffective protection of vulnerable populations in Darfur requires urgent attention, especially in light of the planned withdrawal of [UNAMID] by June 2020. Due to security concerns, a substantial part of the population in Darfur require protection, while at least 2 million civilians need humanitarian assistance, with over 25 percent residing in 60 camps and gathering sites for internally displaced persons. Across Darfur, civilians continued to be subjected to killing, assault, abduction, conflict-related sexual violence and arbitrary arrest and detention. Human rights violations and abuses also persisted in localities with no active military operations, including in areas from which UNAMID withdrew in July 2018”. During the period under review, the independent expert was unable to conduct a field visit to Sudan as he did not receive permission from the Sudanese authorities. The HRC also adopted a resolution renewing the mandate of the independent expert.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council is what modifications to make to the UNAMID mandate, force structure and troop levels to reflect the current realities facing the mission, in the context of its reconfiguration and drawdown as set out in resolution 2429, which referred to the mission's exit in June 2020, “provided that there is no significant change in the security situation in Darfur”. An option would be to continue the drawdown of UNAMID as planned. Another option would be to reconsider the mission's timeline for withdrawal, given the significant developments in Sudan this year. A related option would be to extend the mandate for a shorter period of time to allow for further progress on the broader political situation.

A related issue is assessing the potential

effect of further troop reductions on the security and human rights situations. These assessments will be informed by the findings and recommendations of the special report requested in resolution 2479, which members expect to receive by 10 October, following a 5 September letter requesting a ten-day extension for submission of the report.

A further issue is to assess progress on the benchmarks and indicators of achievement for the exit of the mission set out in the Secretary-General's report of 12 October 2018. The Secretary-General's 30 May strategic assessment report recommended that the benchmarks and indicators be streamlined to serve as long-term progress indicators, beyond the departure of UNAMID, in three priority areas: developing an updated strategy on the Darfur peace process; strengthening Sudanese rule of law institutions; and long-term support for stabilisation, including durable solutions for internally displaced persons.

Council Dynamics

In statements following the briefing on 26 August, Council members welcomed the signing of the 17 August agreement as a positive development. The UK highlighted the need for “political support to the peace process, including implementation and monitoring of future peace agreements...human rights monitoring and capacity-building” as well as “humanitarian development support, particularly for Darfur's almost two million internally displaced persons”. It added, “Such support may be best provided through a continued UN-AU presence in Darfur after UNAMID's closure”. Germany referred to “huge challenges ahead for the new government in Khartoum regarding the unresolved conflicts in Darfur and the two Areas [South Kordofan and Blue Nile]” and suggested the option of “a special political mission, jointly led by the UN and the AU with a strong focus on peacebuilding and mediation” to follow UNAMID, while emphasising that the “withdrawal of UNAMID must not be rushed but conducted in a responsible and sustainable manner in order to avoid a security vacuum and, most importantly, a possible relapse into conflict”.

Several other members emphasised the need for the responsible exit of the mission. Russia again stressed it would be “against

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any attempts to change the mission's exit plan", adding that the "challenges facing Darfur today are of a peacebuilding, not a peacekeeping, nature." Members such as

Belgium, the Dominican Republic, France and South Africa stressed the need to address the root causes of the conflict in Darfur.

The UK and Germany are co-penholders on the issue; Poland chairs the 1591 Sudan Sanctions Committee.

Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

Expected Council Action

In October, South Africa is planning to convene a debate on "Peace and security in Africa: the centrality of preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution." A Council product, such as a presidential statement, is a possible outcome of the meeting.

Key Recent Developments

On 27 February, during the presidency of Equatorial Guinea, the Council held an open debate under the agenda item "Cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations: Silencing the Guns in Africa" on how the AU and UN could cooperate to end conflict in Africa. Equatorial Guinea convened the open debate to address several questions on AU-UN cooperation, such as how to preserve achievements and strengthen tools to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The open debate featured briefings by Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo; AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa Ramtane Lamamra; and the founder and executive director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Vasu Gounden. During the meeting, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2457, which encouraged the UN and AU "to strengthen their efforts to coordinate their engagement" and called on the Secretary-General, in consultation with the AU Commission Chairperson, to provide updates "when appropriate" on the status of implementation measures towards enhancing the UN's support of the AU.

The Council held a briefing on "Conflict prevention and mediation" on 12 June at the initiative of Kuwait during its presidency of the Council. In addition to Secretary-General António Guterres, the briefers were Mary Robinson and Ban Ki-moon, the

chair and deputy chair, respectively, of The Elders, a diverse and independent group of global leaders working to promote peace and human rights. Guterres and Robinson emphasised the role of women in conflict prevention. (See section below on Women, Peace and Security.) Robinson also said that efforts to address climate change should be part of a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, while highlighting the "urgent need to develop global norms and rules around cyberconflict prevention". Ban noted that when the Council is unified it can have a strong deterrent effect; he also spoke about the importance of regional institutions in promoting cooperation between states and the need for denuclearisation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In November 2018, the ten elected Council members (Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland and Sweden) and the five incoming members (Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa) conducted an ambassadorial-level démarche to Secretary-General António Guterres to request early warning/situational awareness briefings from the Secretariat. While held discreetly in the Secretariat in past years, such briefings had lapsed. So far this year, apparently in response to the démarche, two such informal meetings have been held with Security Council members: on 5 March, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo discussed the general theme of elections with members, and on 21 June Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and Americas Miroslav Jenča spoke with members about Central American issues. Permanent Representatives, their deputies or the political coordinator, with one additional diplomat, represented missions at these meetings.

Women, Peace and Security

During the 12 June briefing, the Secretary-General called inclusive sustainable development "one of the most effective tools we have to prevent conflict". He emphasised the importance of integrating women's rights and gender equality across the UN's prevention and mediation work. He further pointed out that "progress on women's participation in formal peace processes is still lagging" and stressed that the UN "will continue to use creative strategies to advance women's participation". Mary Robinson, in her statement, also made that point, saying that she had "felt for a long time that insufficient attention has been paid to the role and voice of women on the ground in terms of conflict prevention", calling upon the Security Council to "redouble its collective efforts to make sure that women's perspectives and experiences are reflected in the mainstream of peacekeeping and conflict prevention policy". She argued that neglecting women's potential exacted a high price on countries affected by conflict.

Key Issues and Options

A key issue is how the Council (and the UN system more broadly) can work most effectively with the AU and sub-regional bodies to prevent and contain conflicts in Africa. In this regard, consideration could be given to ways of strengthening the Council's efforts to support the good offices of the Secretary-General and his representatives in Africa, as well as to others engaged in mediation activities on the continent.

The Council might also consider pursuing a presidential statement encouraging the Secretary-General's good-offices efforts, highlighting the mediation work of the UN's regional offices in Africa (the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the UN Regional Office for Central Africa), and requesting the Secretary-General, in consultation with the AU Commission, to provide recommendations for how the Council could strengthen cooperation with the AU and sub-regional bodies in Africa with regard to preventive diplomacy.

UN DOCUMENTS ON CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN AFRICA Security Council Resolution S/RES/2457 (27 February 2019) was on cooperation between the UN and the AU. Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8546 (12 June 2019) was a briefing on conflict prevention and mediation during Kuwait's presidency of the Council. S/PV.8473 (27 February 2019) was an open debate under Equatorial Guinea's presidency on "Cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations: Silencing the Guns in Africa".

Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

Alternatively, if there is limited interest among Council members in a formal product, South Africa could consider producing a presidential summary of the meeting that is then circulated as a UN document.

Another option is for the Council to hold an informal interactive dialogue with UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs officials and AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui to strategise on ways to build synergies between the mediation structures in the UN system on the one hand and the AU on the other.

It could also be an option for Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Bintou Keita or another senior UN official to engage

informally with members in an early warning/situational awareness meeting on potential crisis situations in Africa and discuss how the Council could most effectively address them.

Council Dynamics

Most Council members emphasise the importance of conflict prevention and mediation at the thematic level. However, the Council continues to struggle to play a meaningful role in preventing or resolving many African conflicts, whose intractability often stems from the involvement of several national and international stakeholders with varying agendas. Nonetheless, political divisions and different understandings of state sovereignty

among members, especially the veto-wielding permanent members, tend to hinder Council action in cases where national interests could be involved or where there are disagreements about the tools to be employed.

Some members may use the debate as an opportunity to express their views on issues that may be discussed later in the month at the annual joint informal seminar and consultative meeting (23–24 October in Addis Ababa) between members of the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council, including, for example, the “Silencing the Guns in Africa” initiative and the financing of AU peace operations.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expected Council Action

In October, Special Representative and head of mission Leila Zerrougui will brief the Council on the latest Secretary-General’s report on the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Consultations are expected following the briefing.

The mandate of MONUSCO expires on 20 December, and the 1533 sanctions regime expires on 1 July 2020.

Key Recent Developments

Recent months have seen several new political developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), while the dire security situation in the east persists. Seven months after the inauguration of DRC President Félix Tshisekedi, a new government was announced on 26 August. The government includes 23 members from Tshisekedi’s Direction for Change party; the remaining 42 are from former President Joseph Kabila’s Common Front for Congo (FCC) coalition. (The presidential election, in which Tshisekedi was declared the victor, was held in December 2018.)

In her last briefing to the Council, on 24 July, Zerrougui expressed optimism about Tshisekedi’s intentions. On the security situation

in eastern DRC, she said that the levels of violence are increasing in several areas. Attacks by the Islamist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) continue to exact an intolerable toll on civilians in the east of the country.

Council members adopted a press statement on 1 August welcoming Tshisekedi’s efforts towards reconciliation, peace and stability. They also expressed concern about the deterioration of the security situation in some areas of eastern DRC, particularly in Ituri and North Kivu provinces, and the worrisome humanitarian situation, and condemned all armed groups in Congo and their violations of international humanitarian law.

Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Marta Hurtado said on 20 September that since 1 June, at least 197 civilians have been killed in Ituri in assaults believed to have been carried out by rebels, also resulting in at least 230,000 people displaced in Ituri since June, with another 20,500 displaced in South Kivu. The great majority are living in a dire humanitarian situation.

Secretary-General António Guterres visited the DRC from 30 August to 2 September. At the end of his trip, Guterres said that MONUSCO will increase cooperation with the Forces Armées de la République

Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) to tackle ADF violence and address wider security concerns. On the future of MONUSCO, Guterres said, “within the framework of MONUSCO’s strategic review, the Security Council will decide on some adjustments that could improve the MONUSCO and its cooperation with the Congolese government, and that in the long run, we will work together with the Government of Congo to create the conditions that will allow, one day, for the UN mission to no longer be necessary”.

Regarding Ebola, as of 24 September, the second-largest outbreak of Ebola on record has surpassed 3,050 confirmed cases and 2,100 deaths in the DRC since August 2018, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which declared the crisis a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 17 July. On 30 July, Belgium, Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany and South Africa organised an informal interactive dialogue on Ebola in the DRC. David Gressly, UN Ebola Emergency Response Coordinator, briefed, and representatives from the WHO, the AU, OCHA and the DRC participated.

On 2 August, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the Ebola outbreak in which it reiterated its grave concern about

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE DRC [Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2478](#) (26 June 2019) renewed the 1533 sanctions regime until 1 July 2020. [S/RES/2463](#) (29 March 2019) renewed the mandate of MONUSCO until 20 December and called for a strategic review. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/6](#) (2 August 2019) referred to the Ebola outbreak in the DRC and the need for international cooperation to address it. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8584](#) (24 July 2019) was the latest meeting on the situation in the DRC. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13907](#) (1 August 2019) welcomed President Félix Tshisekedi’s efforts towards reconciliation, steps he has taken to open political space, and initiatives to promote regional cooperation.

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the outbreak, condemned attacks and threats against medical and humanitarian personnel, and demanded safe and unhindered access for those personnel to patients and others in need. It stressed that these attacks are hampering response efforts and facilitating the spread of the virus in the DRC and the wider region.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 42nd session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an enhanced interactive dialogue on 24 September on the DRC report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/42/32). The report, covering June 2018 to May, said that “[m]any violations and abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms were committed during the electoral process”. It also expressed concern over “the situation in conflict-affected areas, where the defence and security forces and armed groups have continued to commit a large number of human rights violations and abuses, including sexual violence”, as well as concern over the increase in intercommunal conflict and violence against certain ethnic groups.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 27 August, the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee met to discuss the proposed programme of work for the Group of Experts.

Key Issues and Options

The results of the strategic review of

MONUSCO requested in resolution 2463 of 29 March are currently anticipated by November, which will feed into broader discussions among Council members about any necessary adjustments in MONUSCO’s mandate, which expires on 20 December.

The Council will have to consider the impact on MONUSCO’s future of ongoing political developments, including the formation of the government under Tshisekedi’s leadership and its attitude towards the future presence of MONUSCO, and their effect on stability in the DRC. At the same time, there continues to be little change in the security situation in eastern DRC, and the Council will need to reflect on both of these developments in the upcoming mandate discussion.

The ongoing Ebola epidemic is an aspect of the situation that the Council needs to follow closely. In this context, the Council may consider requesting a briefing from the Ebola Emergency Response Coordinator.

Council Dynamics

At present, Council members are united in their positive view of Tshisekedi’s efforts since he became president to reconcile political tensions in the DRC and to improve relations with the DRC’s neighbours, as well as with MONUSCO and the UN. Some Council members are eager to see this translate into

concrete progress on the ground, including in eastern DRC, while others stress the time needed for changes in rhetoric to have a practical impact.

There also seems to be consensus among a wide swath of Council Members on the importance of international efforts to address the Ebola outbreak and the need to prevent the dire security situation in the east from hampering response efforts.

As MONUSCO’s mandate renewal in December approaches, however, it is likely that previous differences in the Council over the appropriate time and pace of MONUSCO’s drawdown will resurface. The conclusions of the strategic review, as well as the stance of the newly formed government on the future of MONUSCO, are likely to play an important role, as will the views of regional actors. At the same time, some Council members, such as the US, have been adamant in the past about their wish to implement an exit strategy for MONUSCO once the electoral cycle is complete.

France is the penholder on the DRC, and Ambassador Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) chairs the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee.

Kosovo

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council is expected to hold this year’s final regular briefing on the situation in Kosovo. The Special Representative and head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Zahir Tanin, will brief on recent developments and the latest report by the Secretary-General. In line with established practice, Serbia is likely to participate at a high level while Kosovo will probably be represented by its ambassador to the US.

Key Recent Developments

In February, the Council reached an

agreement on a note by the president that specified the frequency of meetings on Kosovo, namely, that the Council would hold three meetings on Kosovo in 2019 (February, June, and October) and two meetings annually starting in 2020 (April and October). Resolution 1244, which established UNMIK in 1999, did not specify the reporting cycle or the frequency of meetings. Before this year, the Council has maintained a practice of holding meetings on Kosovo at three-month intervals.

Earlier in the year, Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC) started conducting interviews with some former senior commanders

of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Formally established in 2016, KSC is a special court based in The Hague that operates under Kosovo law and is staffed by international judges, with the mission of investigating alleged war crimes committed by the KLA during the conflict in Kosovo in the 1990s.

In July, the KSC subpoenaed Ramush Haradinaj, Kosovo’s Prime Minister, for questioning. On 19 July, Haradinaj stepped down as prime minister and travelled to The Hague several days later to face the court. Although he appeared before the KSC, Haradinaj did not answer questions and has exercised his right to remain silent as advised by his legal

UN DOCUMENTS ON KOSOVO Security Council Resolution S/RES/1244 (10 June 1999) authorised NATO to secure and enforce the withdrawal of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces from Kosovo and established UNMIK. **Secretary-General’s Report S/2019/461** (3 June 2019) was the report on UNMIK. **Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8541** (10 June 2019) was a meeting on the situation in Kosovo. **Other S/2019/120** (7 February 2019) was a note by the president of the Council on the newly agreed schedule for meetings on Kosovo.

Kosovo

counsel. This was the second time Haradinaj resigned as prime minister to face allegations of war crimes. In 2005, he stepped down after he was indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). He was ultimately acquitted of all ICTY war crimes charges in 2012.

Immediately after he resigned as prime minister, Haradinaj called on Kosovo's President Hashim Thaçi to organise elections so that the new government could be formed. In an extraordinary session held on 22 August, Kosovo's lawmakers voted in favour of dissolving the parliament, triggering new elections. Several days later, Thaçi announced that elections will be held on 6 October. In a 13 September statement, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini announced that the EU had dispatched an Election Observation Mission to Kosovo to focus on all aspects and stages of the electoral process. Mogherini stressed that Kosovo has remained a political priority for the EU. Furthermore, she emphasised that the elections come at a time when Kosovo needs to take decisive steps on reforms and on normalising relations with Serbia.

On the diplomatic front, there continues to be no progress in the EU-facilitated talks between Belgrade and Pristina. The relationship between the two sides was further strained last November when Kosovo imposed 100 percent tariffs on Serbian imports. Then-Prime Minister Haradinaj said publicly that the tariffs would only be lifted after Serbia recognised Kosovo. The EU and the US have since called on Kosovo

to revoke the tariffs and for both parties to resume dialogue. Despite the international pressure, Kosovo has continued to maintain the tariff policy toward Serbia.

Issues and Options

Maintaining stability in Kosovo remains the Council's primary concern. The Council will continue to monitor the diplomatic efforts to advance the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and any efforts towards reaching a final agreement on Kosovo.

While the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina remains stalled, an issue for the Council is the lack of implementation of already existing agreements, especially on the establishment of Association/Community of Serb Municipalities in Serb-dominated northern Kosovo. A related issue is whether UNMIK could play a role in facilitating implementation of the existing agreements.

The Council will follow closely the developments related to the October parliamentary elections in Kosovo and the subsequent process of forming a new government.

Some members of the Council, the P3 in particular, have continued to question the reporting cycle and called for downsizing the mission in light of the relative overall stability on the ground. While the Council reached an agreement on a less frequent reporting cycle in February, it could also request the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of UNMIK to consider the effectiveness of the mission.

Council Dynamics

Due to the active engagement of regional organisations, including the EU, NATO and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Kosovo remains a low-intensity issue for the Council. A few members with a specific interest in the region, however, continue to follow the situation in Kosovo with closer scrutiny.

Nevertheless, deep divisions among permanent members have continued to characterise the Council's consideration of the Kosovo issue. France, the UK, and the US recognise Kosovo's independence and tend to be supportive of its government, while China and Russia do not recognise its independence and strongly support Serbia's position. Earlier this year, the P3 and EU members of the Council eventually prevailed in their months-long effort to reduce the frequency of meetings on Kosovo.

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

The issue of modifying UNMIK's mandate is likely to become more prominent. Alone among missions regularly discussed by the Council, UNMIK's mandate is open-ended. Any attempt to change it would require a new resolution, which Russia would strongly oppose and most likely block.

Sudan/South Sudan

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council expects to receive a briefing on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), as requested in resolution 2469. The Council is also expected to decide by 15 October whether to adopt a resolution extending the mission's support for the Joint

Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), established in 2011 to conduct monitoring and verification activities along the Sudan-South Sudan border.

The mandate of UNISFA expires on 15 November. The mission's support to the JBVMM expires on 15 October.

Key Recent Developments

The overall security situation in Abyei, the disputed territory along the Sudan/South Sudan border, has remained generally stable. However, on 16 July a group of unknown armed men attacked UNISFA peacekeepers who were providing security at the Amiet market, which lies approximately eight kilometres north of Abyei city, resulting in the

UN DOCUMENTS ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2469 (14 May 2019) extended UNISFA's mandate until 15 November 2019. S/RES/2465 (12 April 2019) extended UNISFA's support for the JBVMM until 15 October 2019. Secretary General's Report S/2019/319 (16 April 2019) was on the situation in Abyei. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8519 (30 April 2019) was a briefing on Sudan/South Sudan. Security Council Press Statement SC/13890 (18 July 2019) condemned the attack on the Amiet market. Security Council Letter S/2019/598 (25 July 2019) was from Sudan on the attack on the Amiet market.

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death of two peacekeepers and five civilians. The Security Council condemned the attack in an 18 July press statement. On 25 July, Sudan sent a letter to the Council presenting further details about the attack.

On 14 May, the Council adopted resolution 2469, which extended UNISFA's mandate until 15 November and recalled its decision in resolution 2465 to extend the mission's support to the JBVMM until 15 October. Resolution 2469 reduced the authorised troop ceiling from 4,140 to 3,550 and decided that as of 15 October, the troop ceiling will decrease by a further 585 troops unless the Council extends the mission's support to the JBVMM. The authorised police ceiling was increased from 345 to 640 police personnel. The resolution expressed the Council's "intention to reduce the authorized police ceiling as the Abyei Police Service is gradually established and effectively providing rule of law throughout the Abyei area". The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to appoint a civilian Deputy Head of Mission for UNISFA "to further facilitate liaison between and engagement with the parties in a manner consistent with the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, including agreement to establish the Abyei Police Service". At press time, such an appointment had not yet been made. (For more details, see our What's In Blue story of 13 May.)

The Council was last briefed on the issue on 30 April by Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Parfait Onanga-Anyanga. Lacroix told the Council that UNISFA continues to play a stabilising role. He also highlighted that criminality

remains the biggest challenge in the Abyei Area. Referring to the situation in Sudan at the time of the briefing, Lacroix said that "thus far there has been no visible adverse impact on UNISFA's operations". Onanga-Anyanga said that the "current situation in the Sudan does not preclude a consolidation of the recent improvement of bilateral relations between the Sudan and South Sudan".

Key Issues and Options

A key issue for the Council is whether to retain UNISFA's support of the JBVMM. An option is to retain the mission's support for a shorter period as a means of putting pressure on the parties to intensify efforts to fully implement the JBVMM and also to reach a political solution. A further option is for the Council to take no action to extend the mission's support for the JBVMM, which would result in a decrease in UNISFA's troop levels on 15 October from 3,550 to 2,965, as set out in resolution 2469.

A related key issue for the Council to consider ahead of UNISFA's mandate renewal in November is the overall appropriateness of the mission's current mandate in relation to the situation on the ground and what modifications, if any, to make to the mandate and force structure. This assessment is likely to be informed by the Secretary-General's report on UNISFA due by 15 October, as requested in resolution 2469.

Another issue Council members will be following closely is the situation in Sudan, given significant recent political developments, including the signing of an agreement on the establishment of a new civilian-led transitional government on 17 August, and the impact this may have on the situation

in Abyei. An option would be to encourage Sudan and South Sudan to intensify their engagement to advance towards a political resolution of the border issues between the Sudan and South Sudan.

Council Dynamics

As in previous years, the Council's focus on the situation in Abyei remains limited, largely overshadowed by its ongoing engagement on South Sudan and Sudan (Darfur). However, the upcoming expiration of UNISFA's support for the JBVMM in October and the renewal of the mission's mandate in November present opportunities for Council members to direct attention to the issue.

During negotiations in May on resolution 2469, the three African members, supported by China and some other members, called for a rollover of the mission's mandate, given the evolving internal political situations in Sudan and South Sudan. However, the US and others opposed such a rollover. Along with troop and police levels, another recurring issue around the renewal of UNISFA's mandate has been the matter of the appointment of a civilian Deputy Head of Mission. It seems that the request to name a deputy head was included in resolution 2469 as Sudan was no longer opposed to the appointment.

In statements following the adoption of resolution 2469, the US said that increasing the number of police while decreasing the number of troops "helps to address criminality, which is the primary security concern in Abyei". Russia said that "it is essential to maintain the presence of peacekeepers in the region with a view to ensuring security on the border between the Sudan and South Sudan".

The US is the penholder on Abyei.

Mali

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council is expected to hold a briefing on the situation in Mali, followed by consultations.

The mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) ends on 30 June 2020.

The Mali sanctions measures expire on 31 August 2020, and the mandate of the Panel of Experts expires on 30 September 2020.

Key Recent Developments

On 28 June, the Council adopted resolution 2480 renewing MINUSMA's mandate.

While the mission's primary strategic priority remains to support the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, the resolution created a second strategic priority for MINUSMA focused on the situation in the centre of Mali, which has experienced worsening intercommunal

UN DOCUMENTS ON MALI Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2484 (29 August 2019) renewed the Mali sanctions measures until 31 August 2020 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 30 September 2020. S/RES/2480 (28 June 2019) renewed the mandate of MINUSMA until 30 June 2020. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8547 (12 June 2019) was a briefing on developments in Mali by Mahamat Saleh Annadif, the Special Representative and head of MINUSMA. Sanctions Committee Document S/2019/636 (7 August 2019) was the final report of the Mali Panel of Experts.

Mali

violence fuelled by terrorist groups. In particular, MINUSMA is “to facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive politically-led Malian strategy to protect civilians, reduce intercommunal violence, and re-establish State authority, State presence and basic social services in Central Mali”.

Frustrated by the limited implementation of the 2015 peace and reconciliation agreement, the resolution specified the progress the Council expects to see in the next year. The identified areas are constitutional reform; decentralisation; security sector reform; development of the north; and the full, effective and meaningful participation of women.

While attacks by extremist groups and militias continued in the centre and north, central Mali experienced a reduction in violence in recent months amidst several local peace initiatives. On 3 August, ethnic Fulani and Dogon militias in the Mopti and Ségou regions signed a peace agreement in the presence of Prime Minister Boubou Cissé, who was conducting his second visit to central Mali since July.

Critical to implementing the 2015 peace agreement is the government’s planned “inclusive political dialogue” to reach consensual decisions on the major challenges facing Mali and on political reforms, including the revision of the constitution, decentralisation legislation, and new timelines for a referendum and legislative, regional and local elections. To prepare for the dialogue, consultations were launched with civil society, political parties and religious leaders, leading to the adoption of its terms of reference in mid-September. As part of the accelerated disarmament, demobilisation and integration process, around 1,000 former combatants from the armed groups that signed the peace agreement recently completed training and were integrated into the Malian armed forces. However, they have yet to be deployed.

Regarding the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S), resolution 2480 expressed the Council’s support for expanding MINUSMA’s provision of “life support consumables” to all contingents operating in the framework of the FC-G5S rather than just those on Malian territory, on the condition that the joint force or other partners deliver this assistance and that units receiving such assistance strictly comply with the UN human rights due diligence policy.

On 25 September, a high-level meeting on Mali and the Sahel brought together leaders of Mali and other Sahel countries, representatives of member states, and international and regional organisations, including the AU, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the UN. The Malian government provided an update on progress in implementing the peace agreement and preparations for the national dialogue, and participants reviewed the decisions of ECOWAS from a recent 14 September summit that assessed regional counter-terrorism approaches.

Sanctions-Related Developments

The 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee on 10 July imposed a travel ban on five individuals, including members of the Coordination and Platform coalitions of armed groups and a member of Parliament from the ruling political party. The committee highlighted the involvement of some of these individuals in activities to destabilise Mali, including activities funded by organised crime. On 29 August, the Council adopted resolution 2484 renewing the Mali sanctions, which also include an asset freeze against individuals and entities engaged in actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Mali.

Key Issues and Options

Following the renewal of MINUSMA’s mandate with the addition of a second strategic priority regarding central Mali, the challenge will be to implement this mandate while continuing to devote close attention to the north

without additional troops and with fewer resources than those originally proposed by the Secretary-General to the Fifth Committee.

Progress in implementing the 2015 peace agreement, particularly in the priority areas identified in resolution 2480, is a key issue. Council members could continue to pursue bilaterally ways of increasing pressure on the parties to advance the implementation of the agreement. In pushing for progress in the priority areas identified in resolution 2480, Council members are likely to be mindful that these developments depend as much or more on the engagement and good faith of the parties as on the mission itself.

As the sanctions committee considers additional designations or delisting requests, a related issue is assessing whether sanctions are having the intended effect in changing the behaviour of spoilers.

Council Dynamics

During negotiations on resolution 2480, there were some discussions among members about distinguishing between “primary” and “second” strategic priorities or having two strategic priorities of equal significance. In the end, the distinction between primary and second priorities was retained.

While members want to see faster implementation of the peace agreement, they have diverging views on the use of sanctions. Some members are more inclined to impose sanctions for non-implementation of the peace agreement, which they note can always be lifted following substantial progress in implementation, while others are more cautious, expressing concerns about potentially alienating parties in the peace process and being too one-sided in their use against the armed groups.

France is the penholder on Mali and Ambassador José Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) chairs the 2374 Mali Sanctions Committee.

Haiti

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold its last debate on the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) before it transitions to the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), a special political mission (SPM), on 16 October. It will also be briefed on the Secretary-General's final 90-day report on MINUJUSTH. Members could adopt a Council product welcoming the transition.

Key Recent Developments

In a 13 May letter to the president of the Security Council, the Secretary-General submitted operational details of the proposed SPM, including objectives, structure and size. In response, the Council established BINUH through resolution 2476 on 25 June for an initial period of 12 months. BINUH's mandate will include advising the government on issues related to promoting and strengthening political stability and good governance, the rule of law, an inclusive inter-Haitian national dialogue, and protecting and promoting human rights. The resolution changed the reporting period from 90 to 120 days. It also requested that the Secretary-General provide strategic benchmarks for BINUH to achieve its tasks.

Haiti continues to be beset with political and economic challenges. On 22 July, President Jovenel Moïse nominated Fritz-William Michel, a relative unknown in Haitian politics, as his fourth prime minister since assuming the role of president in February 2017.

Michel, who must form a government and receive Parliament's approval for his political program, has been facing difficulties with opposition leaders, who have continued to call on Moïse to resign due to accusations of corruption. On 6 August, Moïse urged Parliament to ratify Michel and his cabinet. On 3 September, the lower house of Parliament approved Michel and his proposed cabinet in a stormy session where at one point some furniture was covered in oil and chairs broken in the chamber. At press time, a Senate vote has been postponed because of a senator's explosive claim on 13 September that, in exchange for his vote in favour, he accepted a

\$100,000 bribe from Michel. There have also been allegations of other bribes.

Elections were due to be held in October, but have been postponed indefinitely because of the continued absence of an electoral law. Without elections, in January the terms of one-third of the Senate, the entire lower chamber, and all locally elected officials will expire.

On 25 August, Moïse announced that he had decided not to reappoint Haiti National Police (HNP) Director Michel-Ange Gédéon after the completion of his contract. On 27 August, Moïse appointed Normil Rameau as acting HNP director. Rameau is the former head of Haiti's Central Directorate of the Judicial Police. Some have criticised this decision as a risky one, coming as MINUJUSTH begins to transfer more responsibilities to the HNP and less than two months before mission transition.

Haiti continues to feel the economic impact of the PetroCaribe corruption scandal. Some \$4 billion saved from deferred payments for Venezuelan oil was supposed to be used on social programmes and infrastructure improvements in Haiti, but recent government investigations reportedly show that it was embezzled. There is an extreme gasoline shortage in Haiti. Protests have occurred on and off for months, contributing to calls for Moïse to resign.

The 2019 humanitarian response plan for Haiti, with \$126 million required, is currently 20 percent funded.

Council members most recently met on Haiti in closed consultations on 22 July. The Special Representative stressed that the ongoing problems in Haiti are political in nature and not related to peacekeeping, underlining that it was appropriate for the UN's presence to transition into an SPM.

Key Issues and Options

The key issue for the Council will be to monitor how developments on the ground align with the benchmarks approved by the Council for the withdrawal of MINUJUSTH. It will be important to hear if BINUH is ready to start operations and how the transition of tasks is being achieved. Additionally, Council

members will want to carefully consider the Secretary-General's proposed benchmarks for the first year of BINUH, which are due to be submitted with his final MINUJUSTH report in October.

An additional issue is the further indefinite postponement of Haiti's elections and the effect this will have on the ground.

It seems likely that the Council will adopt an outcome marking the UN's transition in Haiti. This was done with previous transitions and closures of peacekeeping missions, such as Sierra Leone in 2005, Côte d'Ivoire in 2017 and Liberia in 2018.

Council and Wider Dynamics

In October's meeting, members may spend some time reflecting on the gains made in Haiti after 15 years of a UN peacekeeping presence in Haiti (the previous mission, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, was established in 2004). They are likely to acknowledge the challenges that remain, and some may express their worry about the lack of strong governance in Haiti. Concerns raised by some members during April's final renewal of MINUJUSTH may be voiced again, namely, that the withdrawal process was being rushed despite increased criminality in the country, deteriorating economic conditions, and continued protests. This view was heard particularly from Council members from the region, the Dominican Republic and Peru.

Looking ahead, some members have emphasised the need for an objectives-based SPM, without what some have termed "artificial deadlines" and with any further transition based on ground realities.

As Haitian institutions take over more responsibilities and the UN downsizes, the role of the region in supporting Haiti will be important, and Council members may want to hear further from those invited to the debate on their plans to assist Haiti during this time. Members from the region and parties significantly involved in Haiti are usually invited to participate. In the last debate on Haiti, representatives from Argentina, Canada, and the EU spoke.

The US is the penholder on Haiti.

UN DOCUMENTS ON HAITI Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2476 (25 June 2019) established BINUH, an SPM that will continue the UN presence in Haiti following the conclusion of MINUJUSTH. S/RES/2466 (12 April 2019) was the final six-month renewal of MINUJUSTH. Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8510 (12 April 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2466, with explanations of votes by some countries. Security Council Letter S/2019/387 (13 May 2019) contained expanded recommendations from the Secretary-General for the SPM.

UNDOF (Golan Heights)

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council is expected to receive a briefing on the activities of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). A representative from the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) is expected to brief Council members in consultations on the Secretary-General's latest 90-day report on UNDOF and on the most recent developments.

The mandate of UNDOF expires on 31 December.

Key Recent Developments

UNDOF was established following the conclusion of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria, which ended the Yom Kippur War, and is mandated to maintain the ceasefire between the parties and supervise the disengagement of Israeli and Syrian forces as well as the so-called areas of separation and limitation. The implementation of the mandate entails observing any violations of the 1974 agreement, reporting them, and liaising with both sides. The mission's observation role has been limited since its September 2014 relocation from the Bravo (Syrian) to the Alpha (Israeli-occupied) side because of the armed conflict in Syria. As of July, UNDOF comprises 1,042 personnel.

As noted in the Secretary-General's report of 6 June, the situation in the UNDOF area of operations has remained generally calm. The Secretary-General has, however, expressed concern over continued violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The

report stressed the importance of UNDOF's full return to the area of separation for the mission to be able to implement its mandate.

Over the past several weeks, Israel has taken more active measures in countering the threat posed by Iran and its proxies in the region, particularly Hezbollah, which has a strong presence in Syria. On 9 September, the Hezbollah media unit reported that Israeli airstrikes had hit Syrian military targets in eastern Syria. According to media reports, the attacks targeted military barracks and arms depots. There were conflicting reports on the casualties caused by the strikes. The Hezbollah media unit reported no casualties, but other media outlets said that 18 pro-Iranian fighters were killed. Later the same day, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said that several rockets had been launched toward Israel from the outskirts of Damascus. According to the IDF, none of the rockets reached Israeli territory.

In late August, Israel allegedly conducted multiple strikes targeting Iranian proxy forces in Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria. Israel claimed responsibility for only the strikes in Syria, which targeted Iranian-operated sites that were allegedly preparing a major drone attack on Israel. According to reports, at least two Hezbollah fighters were killed in the strikes. The Syrian military said that it detected the Israeli strikes in its early stages and intercepted most of the Israeli missiles.

On 26 June, the Council adopted resolution 2477, which extended the mandate of

UNDOF in its current configuration for a further six months.

Key Issues and Options

The Council continues to face several related issues on UNDOF. Most prominent among these are frequent violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and challenges in UNDOF's ability to implement its mandate, including the deployment of appropriate technologies as recommended by the Secretary-General. Given Syria's reassertion of control over the areas of separation and the reopening of the Qunaytirah crossing point, UNDOF may be getting close to an eventual full return to the Bravo side. The return of the situation to pre-2014 conditions may cause the Council to consider requesting the Secretary-General to resume a six-month reporting cycle, as had been the practice until December 2012, instead of the current 90-day cycle.

Council and Wider Dynamics

The Council remains largely united in its support for UNDOF, as evidenced by the unanimous reauthorisation of the mandate in June. Negotiations on the draft were relatively straightforward and technical. There was little apparent disagreement by members, the vote was unanimous and no states felt the need to give explanations of their votes.

Russia and the US are the co-penholders on UNDOF.

Yemen

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council will hold its monthly briefing on Yemen with Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock is also likely to brief. The Secretary-General is further expected to submit a review of the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) to the Council by 15 October, as requested in resolution 2481. The mandate of

UNMHA expires on 15 January 2020.

Key Recent Developments

The war in Yemen between the Houthi rebel group and the government, supported by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition, has been at risk of being drawn into a wider regional conflict. On 14 September, strikes against the Abqaic and Khurais oil facilities in Saudi Arabia—which process more than half of Saudi Arabia's daily

crude oil production, or 5 percent of the global market—caused heavy damage to the sites. The Houthis claimed they had launched the attack using ten drones. The scale, precision and range of the strikes, about 500 miles from Yemeni territory, raised doubts about this claim. The US charged that Iran had been responsible and that the operation had not originated from Yemen.

On 16 September, Griffiths told the

UN DOCUMENTS ON UNDOF [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2477](#) (26 June 2019) renewed the mandate of UNDOF until 31 December 2019. [Secretary-General's Report S/2019/467](#) (6 June 2019) was on UNDOF. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8562](#) (26 June 2019) was the adoption of resolution 2477, renewing UNDOF's mandate until 31 December 2019. [S/PV.8493](#) (27 March 2019) was a briefing by Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacekeeping Affairs, and Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations.

UN DOCUMENTS ON YEMEN [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2481](#) (15 July 2019) renewed the mandate of UNMHA until 15 January 2020. [Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2019/9](#) (29 August 2019) was on developments in southern Yemen and efforts to resume comprehensive political negotiations. [Security Council Meeting Record S/PV.8619](#) (16 September 2019) was a briefing on Yemen.

Yemen

Council during its monthly briefing on Yemen that it was “not entirely clear who was behind the attack” but that the developments, along with the risk of Yemen’s south breaking away, showed that there was “no time to waste” on working towards a political solution to end the war. “In parallel, therefore, to the continued efforts to implement the Stockholm Agreement...the Yemeni parties must move forward to resume an inclusive political process to reach a comprehensive political solution to end the conflict, and that must be done without delay”, he said.

Regarding the stalled December 2018 Stockholm Agreement, Griffiths reported on the activation one week earlier of a mechanism for tripartite monitoring of the Hodeidah ceasefire and preventing military escalation in the port city. He acknowledged the continued lack of progress with the agreement’s other two elements—the prisoner exchange and alleviating the humanitarian situation in the city of Taiz.

Lowcock highlighted the continued toll of the war on civilians. Coalition airstrikes on a prison in Dhamar governorate, formerly a university, killed more than 100 people on 4 September, and Houthi shelling on 13 September in Hodeidah killed 11 civilians, including seven children. Speaking of the humanitarian response, Lowcock said, “the operating environment for aid agencies has perhaps never been worse”, mostly because of bureaucratic impediments primarily in Houthi-controlled areas. He highlighted that the Houthis had backed out of their agreement to allow a UN assessment of the SAFER oil tanker, an offloading facility in the Red Sea which, because of its age and lack of maintenance since 2015, risked causing a major environmental disaster. Lowcock cited government and coalition obstructions as well, including regulations of oil imports that were blocking ten vessels with commercial fuel imports from entering Hodeidah.

After flagging for months that relief efforts were being imperilled by a lack of funding (due primarily to unfulfilled pledges by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates [UAE]), Lowcock reported that the UAE had just disbursed \$200 million. On 25 September, Saudi Arabia provided \$500 million, to coincide with a conference on the humanitarian situation in Yemen during General Assembly high-level week.

On 20 September, the Houthis announced that they would halt all attacks against Saudi Arabia, expecting that the coalition would end air strikes in exchange. Making the announcement, Mehdi al-Mashat, the head of the Houthis’ supreme council, called on all parties to engage in negotiations for a political solution. A 23 September joint statement by France, Germany and the UK blamed Iran for the 14 September attack on the oil facilities, while expressing support for ongoing investigations to establish further details.

In Yemen’s south, there has been a lull in fighting—described as “an eerie calm” by Griffiths during his briefing—between government forces and those of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) since the end of August when the UAE, a coalition member which, nevertheless, supports the STC, conducted airstrikes on government soldiers, preventing their attempt retake control of Aden. On 9 September, Saudi Arabia and the UAE asserted in a joint statement that they were working in close coordination with the various parties to implement a ceasefire in preparation for Saudi Arabia’s proposed dialogue in Jeddah to resolve the crisis.

On 26 September, during high-level week, Kuwait, Sweden and the UK hosted a foreign minister-level meeting with the P5, Germany and the Special Envoy to consider ways to advance the political process.

Earlier in the month, the Secretary-General appointed Lieutenant General (retired) Abhijit Guha of India as the new UNMHA head and chair of the Redeployment and Coordination Committee. Guha succeeds General Michael Lollsgaard, who left at the end of July.

Human Rights-Related Developments

On 10 September, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue during its 42nd session on the report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts (A/HRC/42/17). The report covers incidents and patterns of conduct since September 2014 not covered in the previous report (A/HRC/39/43), as well as between July 2018 and June. The report “found patterns of continued violations by all parties to the conflict, as civilians continued to be killed and injured by the fighting and to suffer violations of their most basic human rights”. On 26 September, the HRC considered the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of technical assistance to Yemen (A/HRC/42/33). On 26 September, the HRC

adopted a resolution renewing the mandate of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts for one year.

Key Issues and Options

A key concern is that wider regional tensions and the situation in the south will deepen Yemen’s war. The risks have given new impetus to efforts aimed at resuming peace talks on a comprehensive political solution that have been postponed while awaiting the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. However, advancing the deal on Hodeidah has been blocked over the controversial issue of the composition of “local security forces” to replace Houthi and government forces in Hodeidah, which, as Griffiths has acknowledged, is unlikely to be resolved in the absence of a broader political process.

Progress in the Saudi-led mediation between the government and the STC is important. A related issue is how to make peace talks more inclusive of other sectors of Yemeni society, including the south—which until 1990 constituted a separate state, the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen, and where a diversity of views other than those of the STC exists. Resolution 2216, adopted at the outset of the coalition intervention in 2015, has been cited by the Yemeni government as limiting the parties in UN-led negotiations to the government and the Houthis. A counter-argument to this position is the resolution’s often overlooked demand in operative paragraph 6 that all Yemeni parties adhere to resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation.

Some Council members initially suggested that the Council call for a de-escalation following the attack on the Saudi oil facilities. But at press time, possible Council action appeared dependent on Yemen-related meetings during high-level week and the findings of the Yemen Panel of Experts and the Secretariat that supports the Security Council in implementing resolution 2231 on the Iran nuclear deal, whose representatives travelled to Saudi Arabia to investigate the attack.

The humanitarian crisis—the largest in the world, with 24 million people requiring assistance—remains severe. In its monthly updates, OCHA usually briefs on a number of key priorities to mitigate the situation, which the Council has acknowledged in several products: respect for international law, unhindered humanitarian access, a

Yemen

fully funded aid operation, and support for Yemen's struggling economy. One option is to organise a briefing on the recent report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts as a way of increasing pressure on the parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Council Dynamics

Members have sought to support Griffiths' efforts and have welcomed Saudi Arabia's initiative to mediate a resolution to the crisis in the south. Most members now vocally express

support for restarting inclusive peace talks, to occur in parallel with efforts to implement the Stockholm Agreement. The Council's 29 August presidential statement on Yemen welcomed the Special Envoy's efforts to resume comprehensive negotiations, without delay, on the security and political arrangements necessary to end the conflict.

Kuwait, which is part of the coalition, often highlights the importance of full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement for the parties to return to peace talks. Russia occasionally raises concerns about singling

out the Houthis at the expense of maintaining greater balance in Council products. Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Peru and Poland sometimes coordinate their positions, especially on humanitarian issues. The US shares the coalition's concerns about—and often seeks to highlight—Iran's role, which it views as destabilising.

The UK is the penholder on Yemen. Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru) chairs the 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee.

Lebanon

Expected Council Action

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

This briefing, usually conducted by the Special Coordinator for Lebanon or an official from the Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs, has traditionally been held in consultations.

Key Recent Developments

Over the past several weeks, there were numerous security-related incidents along the Israel-Lebanon border followed by escalatory rhetoric between Israel on one side and Lebanon and Shi'a militia group Hezbollah on the other. However, no major escalation of violence threatened the relative calm in the area of operations of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

On 25 August, Lebanon alleged that two Israeli drones had crashed in the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut. The next day, Lebanese President Michel Aoun said that the attacks represented a declaration of war by Israel and that Lebanon had the right to defend itself. Lebanon has claimed that the incidents represent a clear violation by Israel of resolution 1701. Israel has not formally

claimed responsibility for the alleged incidents.

On 28 August, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) said they had fired on two of three Israeli drones that Lebanon claims violated its airspace in the southern part of the country. Israel confirmed that its drones were fired upon from Lebanese territory but did not say whether the drones had entered Lebanese airspace. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah vowed retaliation for the alleged attacks. On 1 September, Hezbollah launched several missiles targeting Israel Defense Forces (IDF) south of the Blue Line, a border demarcation between Israel and Lebanon. In a press statement issued the same day, UNIFIL declared that this incident represented a clear violation of resolution 1701 and urged the parties to exercise restraint.

In a 3 September statement, the IDF said that Iran has been assisting Hezbollah in constructing a factory for precision-guided missiles in the Bekaa Valley. The IDF claimed that Hezbollah has moved some of the crucial equipment from the alleged factory to civilian areas in Beirut. Hezbollah did not comment on these specific allegations, but has previously denied having precision-guided missile factories in Lebanon.

On 29 August, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2485, which extended UNIFIL's mandate for another year. While it did not alter the mission's mandate and size, the resolution asked the Secretariat to

conduct an assessment by 1 June 2020 of the continued relevance of UNIFIL's resources and options for improving efficiency and effectiveness between the mission and the Special Coordinator for Lebanon, taking into consideration the troop ceiling and UNIFIL's civilian component. The resolution contains strengthened language about the need for freedom of movement and access for the mission as well as a request for the Secretary-General to enhance his reporting on the implementation of the arms embargo to the Council.

Women, Peace and Security

On 12 September, the government of Lebanon endorsed the country's first National Action Plan (NAP) on resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The National Commission for Lebanese Women developed the plan with the support of the UN, including UNIFIL. The NAP establishes a costed, targeted framework for action, committing Lebanon to increasing the engagement of women in peacebuilding, their representation in the country's security forces and promoting women's participation in governance structures, among other things.

Issues and Options

While there has been no major deterioration of the security situation in UNIFIL's area in over a decade, the Council shares concerns over recent incidents of heightened rhetoric between Israel and Hezbollah. A related issue for the Council is the absence

UN DOCUMENTS ON LEBANON Security Council Resolutions [S/RES/2485](#) (29 August 2018) renewed UNIFIL's mandate for another year and asked the Secretary-General to conduct UNIFIL's assessment by 1 June 2020. [S/RES/1559](#) (2 September 2004) urged withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, extension of the Lebanese government's control over all Lebanese territory, and free and fair presidential elections. [Secretary-General's Reports S/2019/574](#) (17 July 2019) was on the implementation of resolution 1701. [S/2019/343](#) (25 April 2019) was on the implementation of resolution 1559. [Security Council Press Statement SC/13696](#) (8 February 2019) welcomed the formation of the new unity government in Lebanon.

Lebanon

of progress towards implementing the main objectives of resolution 1701, including a permanent ceasefire.

A primary problem for the Council is that Hezbollah and other non-state actors still maintain significant amounts of weaponry. This inhibits the government's ability to exercise full authority over its territory, poses a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and stability, and contravenes its obligations under resolutions 1559 and 1701, the latter of which called for a cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006. A related issue is Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war and the movement of arms from Syria to Hezbollah.

Council Dynamics

There is a strong consensus among Council

members in their support for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. In this context, the Council has also stressed the critical role of the LAF in addressing security challenges in the country.

Council members' positions differ, however, on the security dynamics in the region and the role of the mission. Over the past several years, these differences have been especially evident during negotiations on UNIFIL's mandate renewal. The US has taken the view that the mission should play a more active role in confronting the threats it considers most serious in this context: those posed by Iran, Hezbollah and the proliferation of weapons in southern Lebanon. The US entered the latest mandate renewal negotiations advocating for a significant reduction of the troop ceiling and a comprehensive strategic review

of the mission. These proposals encountered strong opposition from most Council members. The US has argued that the mission's role should be reconsidered, given that UNIFIL is unable to fulfil part of its mandate because it lacks access in its area of operations. On the political front, the US has raised concerns about Hezbollah's growing role in the new Lebanese government.

Other members—including France (the penholder), and Russia—have emphasised that no changes should be made to the mandate of the mission. These members are cautious about such changes because of their potential impact on the fragile calm that has been maintained in southern Lebanon for over a decade.

France is the penholder on Lebanon.

Middle East (Israel/Palestine)

Expected Council Action

In October, the Security Council is expected to hold its quarterly open debate on the Middle East, focusing on Israel/Palestine. Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov is likely to brief.

Key Recent Developments

On 28 August, Jason Greenblatt, co-architect of the US peace plan and the US special representative for international negotiations, said on Twitter that “we have decided that we will not be releasing the peace vision (or parts of it) prior to the Israeli election”. There has been little public follow-up to the Bahrain “Peace to Prosperity” Conference held in June. On 5 September, Greenblatt announced his resignation. Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's senior adviser and son-in-law, will reportedly continue with negotiations, assisted by his adviser Avi Berkowitz, and Brian H. Hook, the State Department's special representative for Iran.

On 17 September, Israel held its second election in less than six months after current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was unable to form a government following

the April elections, and dissolved the Knesset. Netanyahu's Likud party was engaged in a very tight race with the Blue and White Alliance, led by Benny Gantz, former Chief of General Staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and a former Netanyahu ally, who in December 2018 established a new political party, Israel Resilience. Israel Resilience, along with the Blue and White Alliance in which it plays a leading role, is considered a more centrist option to the right-leaning Likud. It has suggested reforms such as term limits for the post of Prime Minister and various anti-corruption measures. Gantz himself has not explicitly stated his position on a two-state solution with Palestine. In terms of international relations, he has taken a firm line against Iran and Hamas.

Earlier this year, Netanyahu took several steps aimed at shoring up conservative and right-wing support. In January, he announced Israel's decision not to renew the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, an intergovernmental civilian observer mission which, on and off since 1994 but consistently since 1997, helped with conflict resolution between the Israeli and

Palestinian communities in the city, as well as reporting on what it viewed as violations of international law and human rights abuses. On 7 April Netanyahu announced that he would annex all Israeli settlements located in Palestinian territories if he won the election, a promise he restated on the eve of the elections, on 16 September. On 10 September he stated that he would annex the occupied Jordan Valley in the West Bank.

Early results released on 19 September showed the Blue and White alliance with a very slim lead over Likud. Negotiations over a coalition to lead the government, anticipated to be difficult and possibly acrimonious, are likely to take several weeks. Gantz has heavily criticised Netanyahu's role in three separate corruption cases and on 19 September seemingly turned down any possibility that Blue and White would serve in a coalition with Netanyahu, though the Blue and White alliance has left open the possibility of a secular unity government with Likud but without Netanyahu. On 22 September, the Arab Joint List—an alliance that includes 13 incoming Knesset members—chose for the first time in 27 years to speak out in favour of Gantz

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST (ISRAEL/PALESTINE) [Security Council Resolution S/RES/2334](#) (23 December 2016) condemned Israeli settlements and called for the Secretary-General to brief the Council quarterly on implementation of the resolution; it was adopted with 14 votes in favour and a US abstention. [Secretary-General's Report S/2019/251](#) (20 March 2019) was the most recent written report on the implementation of resolution 2334. [Security Council Meeting Records S/PV.8625](#) (20 September 2019) included the 11th report on the implementation of resolution 2334. The report was delivered orally. [S/PV.8604](#) (27 August 2019) was the monthly briefing by Mladenov and included statements from several Council members.

Middle East (Israel/Palestine)

to be the first to attempt to form a coalition. Critically, though, the Arab Joint List said it would not enter into a government coalition with Gantz's Blue and White alliance. On 25 September, President Reuven Rivlin announced that Netanyahu will have 28 days to attempt to form a majority coalition to lead the government.

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) came under fire for allegedly corrupt practices with reports of past and ongoing investigations by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services, which was looking into accusations of widespread corruption and unethical operations. Belgium, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland have suspended their funding pending further investigation. Danny Danon, the Israeli ambassador to the UN, has called on the international community to completely defund UNRWA. The UN investigation into the alleged misconduct is expected to be completed in November.

The Council discussed the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, during its regular monthly meetings in August and September. On 27 August, Mladenov emphasised the complete political deadlock and the threat of escalating violence. He cited several examples of violent incidents.

During the 27 August briefing, Mladenov also discussed recent developments regarding Palestinian tax revenues. He informed the Council that the Palestinian Authority and Israel came to an agreement on 22 August that Israel would turn over a portion of the approximately \$568 million that it had collected. Israel had held the money, claiming that the Palestinians' practice of giving money to the families of those killed or imprisoned during conflicts with Israel rewards violence. The Palestinian authorities argue that this is an essential welfare policy that takes care of its citizens. The August agreement is a temporary solution, however; the fundamental disagreement regarding the recipients of the money remains.

In September, the Council received its

quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 of December 2016, which condemned Israeli settlements. While several Council members had requested that the September report be written like the March report, it was oral and delivered by Mladenov during the monthly briefing on Israel/Palestine issues. Mladenov said that no steps had been taken to cease settlement activity.

Human Rights-Related Developments

In her opening statement at the 42nd session of the Human Rights Council, High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said on 9 September, "The continued expansion of settlements across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law, and has severe impact on the human rights of Palestinians". She also expressed concern over "very high levels of settler violence", the increased demolition of homes and "reports of unlawful killings and injuries of Palestinians by Israeli security forces", as well as increased "targeting of human rights defenders...by Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the de facto authorities in Gaza". In a 12 September statement, the special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk, denounced comments by Netanyahu that he would order the annexation of the Jordan Valley if re-elected prime minister. "Annexation is strictly prohibited under international law under any circumstances, let alone for political or electoral considerations," he said in the statement. "[I]f realized, [it] will effectively end the illusion of a meaningful two-state solution, and will instead further entrench a one-state reality of separate and vastly unequal legal systems, political rights and social opportunities".

Key Issues and Options

Key issues that continue to face the Council include the blockade on Gaza, worries about the Gaza humanitarian situation, the importance of progress on the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process, and the viability of the two-state solution in the current political and security context. In the near future, other issues will include the impact of the Israeli elections on the political dynamics between Israel and the Palestinians and how to respond to the US peace plan when it is released.

It seems unlikely that any outcome will be forthcoming from the open debate. Council members could choose to hold an Arria-formula meeting or an informal interactive dialogue to highlight specific issues facing the region. A recent Arria-formula meeting was held in May 2019 on Israel's construction of settlements. Additionally, a civil society representative could be invited to brief at the open debate, as was the case in April under the German presidency. Finally, Russia and Kuwait could once more propose a Council mission to the region, but it would likely face heavy resistance from the US. During the meeting on 20 September, South Africa suggested a mini-Security Council Mission to the region comprised of those members that wish to join. It said that such a trip would show that the Council remains engaged on the issue.

Council and Wider Dynamics

In the past few months, Indonesia, Kuwait and South Africa have emerged as a coalition to push for increased discussion and outcomes on this issue, focusing especially on promoting Palestinian rights. The three members have co-chaired meetings on the subject and proposed outcomes. The overall divergences within the Council were illustrated when these three members co-sponsored a draft press statement in July. While two drafts were proposed and most of the Council agreed in principle that demolitions of Palestinian residences should be addressed, the US refused to consider any statement. Since President Trump assumed office in early 2017, the US has been unwilling to consider any Council product critical of Israel.

Meetings may be held on the margins of the General Assembly to reaffirm adherence to previously agreed-upon international parameters on how to create peace between Israel and Palestine. Council members and other member states may reiterate their commitment to these during the open debate.

Central African Republic

Expected Council Action

In October, the Council will be briefed on the latest report on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), due by 15 October.

The mandate of MINUSCA expires on 15 November and the Central African Republic (CAR) sanctions regime expires on 31 January 2020.

Key Recent Developments

The Political Peace Agreement in the CAR was signed by the CAR government and 14 armed groups in Bangui on 6 February, following negotiations in Khartoum that began on 24 January under the auspices of the AU. A new cabinet, in which all 14 armed groups are represented, was formed on 22 March.

This is the latest of several peace agreements that have been signed in the CAR, over some years, between the government and armed groups, and it remains to be seen if and how it will be fully implemented. According to the Secretary-General's latest MINUSCA report, military confrontations have subsided, but armed groups have been violating the agreement through violence against civilians, illegal taxation, and obstruction of the deployment of state institutions and security forces. In addition, some armed groups have attempted to obtain further concessions in the peace process through violent means.

The 30 July midterm report of the Panel of Experts assisting the CAR Sanctions Committee pointed out that the most serious incident since the signing of the February agreement was committed by the 3R (Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation) rebel group in Ouham-Pendé Prefecture on 21 May 2019, with targeted attacks against civilians killing at least 42 persons. In an incident in Birao near the Sudanese border on 14–15 September, at least 23 rebels were killed when fighting broke out between two groups that are signatories to the peace agreement. The fighting caused the displacement of 13,000 people. In comments made on 16 September following her visit to the CAR, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator

Ursula Mueller noted that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance stands at 2.9 million, an increase of 400,000 in the last year.

On 27 September, a MINUSCA helicopter crashed in the western town of Bouar, killing three Senegalese peacekeepers.

Human Rights-Related Developments

During its 42nd session, the Human Rights Council (HRC) held an interactive dialogue on 26 September with the independent expert on human rights in the CAR, Marie Thérèse Keita-Bocoum, and considered her report (A/HRC/42/61). The report, covering July 2018 to June 2019, said that "the number of violations remained high until the end of 2018 and then fell sharply in the first half of 2019...[with] this decrease attributable in part to the absence of major confrontations between rival armed groups or attacks on the civilian population, and to the signing of the Peace Agreement on 6 February". The HRC is expected to adopt a resolution renewing the mandate of the independent expert.

Sanctions-Related Developments

On 31 January, in resolution 2454, the Council renewed the CAR sanctions regime until 31 January 2020. The resolution expressed the Council's intention to establish "clear and well-identified key benchmarks...that could serve in guiding the Security Council to review the arms embargo measures on the Government of the CAR", based on an assessment of progress on the benchmarks, to be carried out by the Secretary-General. The Council enumerated the benchmarks in a presidential statement on 9 April.

The Secretary-General's 31 July assessment of progress found that the CAR is committed to achieving the necessary progress against the benchmarks. At the same time, considerable challenges remain. The assessment also noted that armed groups continue to receive weapons trafficked illegally through countries in the region. While the CAR security forces can receive weapons and ammunition for its forces under the exemption and notification requirements of the arms embargo, the rebels possess new and higher-calibre weapons than those of the security forces. This disparity in weaponry contributes to a perception in the country that the arms embargo is prejudiced against the government, according to the assessment.

On 12 September, the Council amended the arms embargo in resolution 2488. Most of the arms embargo, including on the CAR security forces, remains in place, but there are now exemptions, after notifying the committee, for supplies of

non-lethal military equipment intended solely for humanitarian or protective use and supplies to the CAR security forces of weapons with a calibre of 14.5 mm or less that are intended solely for support of or use in the CAR process of security sector reform. Under the previous regime, these supplies to the CAR security forces required prior approval by the committee.

The chair of the Sanctions Committee, Ambassador Kacou Houadjia Léon Adom (Côte d'Ivoire), intends to visit the CAR in October.

Women, Peace and Security

In his latest report on the CAR, the Secretary-General said reports about armed groups perpetrating conflict-related sexual violence have continued. Most violations were attributed to ex-Séléka groups. The Secretary-General noted that MINUSCA partnered with women's organisations on the monitoring and reporting of sexual- and gender-based violence and also with regard to awareness-raising events in different communities.

On 26 March, MINUSCA conducted training on the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence and respect for international human rights law with several combatants—the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique, Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and anti-Balaka fighters in Batangafo, Ouham prefecture. These groups are listed in the annex of the Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence as "parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the agenda of the Security Council".

Key Issues and Options

Monitoring the implementation of the peace agreement is a key priority as violence continues and signs grow of half-hearted commitment by rebel groups. A credible threat of targeted sanctions might provide an incentive for armed groups to truly commit to the process, and sanctions against those responsible for attacks against civilians, MINUSCA and humanitarian workers might also help to curb violence. Furthermore, targeting actors who enable the economic activities of armed groups and the flow of arms might further pressure them to adhere to the agreement.

In the longer term, the Council will need to assess whether the situation on the ground requires changes in MINUSCA's mandate.

On the arms embargo, the Council may

UN DOCUMENTS ON THE CAR Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2488 (12 September 2019) amended the CAR sanctions regime for CAR security forces. S/RES/2454 (31 January 2019) renewed the CAR sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the CAR Sanctions Committee. S/RES/2446 (15 November 2018) extended the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 December. **Security Council Presidential Statement** S/PRST/2019/3 (9 April 2019) established benchmarks for suspending or progressively lifting arms embargo measures on the government of the CAR. **Secretary-General's Report** S/2019/498 (17 June 2019) was on MINUSCA. **Security Council Letters** S/2019/608 (30 July 2019) contained the midterm report of the Panel of Experts assisting the CAR Sanctions Committee. S/2019/609 (26 July 2019) contained the Secretary-General's assessment of progress achieved on the key benchmarks the Council established on arms embargo measures in the CAR. S/2019/145 (14 February 2019) was the Secretary-General's letter containing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR. **Security Council Meeting Record** S/PV.8617 (12 September 2019) was the meeting at which resolution 2488 was adopted.

Central African Republic

continue to monitor progress in order to make possible adjustments when the current sanctions on the CAR expire.

Council and Wider Dynamics

All Council members share the hope that the peace agreement will improve the situation and restore peace and security in the CAR, and agree that without MINUSCA's presence there would be a serious security vacuum in the country. Some Council members also see MINUSCA's presence as a vital element in helping to keep rebel groups committed to the political process. MINUSCA's mandate renewal will be an opportunity for the Council to consider whether MINUSCA can play a greater role in supporting the wider political process, including by providing technical and logistical support for the scheduled legislative and presidential

elections in 2020-2021.

On sanctions, while there was not much disagreement on easing the arms embargo on the CAR security forces in resolution 2488, Council members seem to diverge on the possibility of further adjustments when the regime expires on 31 January. After the adoption of the resolution, France, for example, stated that the resolution reflects the will of the CAR while Russia said that the CAR government expects more adjustments to the regime, which Russia supports. The representative of the CAR called the easing of the sanctions a step towards the possible lifting of the arms embargo in its entirety.

France is the penholder on the CAR, and Ambassador Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoué (Côte d'Ivoire) chairs the 2127 CAR Sanctions Committee.

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