



United Nations

## SECURITY COUNCIL ROUND-UP RELEASE

SC/13162  
11 JANUARY 2018

### **Security Council Stands United in 2017 against Nuclear Testing on Korean Peninsula, Yet Members Veto Drafts Addressing Syrian Crisis, Middle East Peace**

#### **Delegates Highlight Humanitarian Impact of Protracted Conflicts, New Ways to Combat Terrorism, Among Other Urgent Challenges**

The Security Council united in 2017 to enact increasingly stringent sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in response to Pyongyang's ongoing development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, but failed to come together over the ongoing crisis in Syria, as it addressed a myriad of international peace and security challenges.

The 15-nation body convened 282 public meetings in 2017, an increase from 237 in 2016, adopting 61 resolutions and issuing 27 presidential statements. Most of its actions were taken by consensus, but six texts — dealing with Middle East issues — were vetoed by permanent members.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was the focus of 12 meetings, 5 consensus resolutions, 6 press statements and 1 presidential statement, as the Council reiterated its strong condemnation of the country's nuclear weapons programme. Through resolution 2397 (2017) on 22 December, it reinforced earlier sanctions by severely restricting fuel imports and other trade, as well as the ability of its citizens to work abroad.

Consensus proved elusive vis-à-vis the Middle East, however, with the Russian Federation notably vetoing draft resolutions on 24 October, 16 November and 17 November that would have renewed the mandate of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, which was investigating cases of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. In multiple statements, the Russian Federation's delegate called for correcting flaws in the investigation and that reports had contained unproven accusations directed at the Government of Syria.

On the question of Palestine, the Council — owing to a veto cast by the United States — failed on 18 December to adopt a text that would have called upon all States to refrain from

establishing diplomatic missions in Jerusalem. The draft resolution, supported by all other Council members, followed an announcement by the President of the United States that his country would recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and locate its embassy there. Its Council representative said her President supported the two-State solution, but that her country had a sovereign right to decide where to put its embassy.

Setbacks on the battlefield inflicted on Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) — particularly the liberation of the Iraqi city of Mosul — were welcomed by Council members, amid concern over potential terrorist attacks by returning foreign fighters. During his briefings, Ján Kubiš, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), emphasized that Iraq would still require substantial international support and assistance going forward.

As in years past, the humanitarian impact of protracted conflicts loomed large on the Council agenda. "The bloodshed and destruction of Yemen has to end," the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to that country, Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed, told Council members on 10 October, with millions of Yemenis facing famine and cholera. In its only Yemen-related action, the Council on 23 February renewed for one year a targeted arms embargo, travel ban and assets freeze on designated individuals and entities. Throughout the year, the Council also expressed alarm over the situation in South Sudan, with 4 million people displaced and 6 million facing food insecurity.

The Council renewed the mandate of the Organization's biggest peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), on 31 March for a further 12 months, through a resolution that reduced its troop ceiling by 3,600 military personnel. At the same time, the Council condemned the murders of two members of its Group of Experts monitoring the sanctions regime in the Kasai-Central region. Relatives of Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp were present when the Council took up the Group of Experts' final report on 17 August.

On the non-proliferation front, the Council dedicated three meetings to the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme, with Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, stating on 19 December that a decision by the President of the United States not to certify the agreement did not, for the moment, affect its validity.

In his first year as Secretary-General, António Guterres went before Council members on several occasions, using his first briefing on 10 January to underscore the need for "a whole new approach" to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. He also outlined his Secretariat reform initiatives and called on the Council and the General Assembly for their support. Among other meetings, the Secretary-General addressed the Council's first-ever thematic debate on human rights, peace and security.

While it authorized no new United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Council, responding to positive developments, acted to replace the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) with the smaller United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) that would help the country strengthen the rule of law. Similarly, it replaced the United Nations Mission in Colombia with the United Nations Verification Mission, tasked with overseeing the next phase of the Latin American nation's peace agreement. In addition, the Council witnessed the end, after 14 years, of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, always a prominent topic, assumed concrete form in 2017 when the Council, through resolution 2359 (2017) on 21 June, welcomed the deployment of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which would address terrorism and transnational organized crime in the region. In doing so, it urged the joint force, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and French forces in that country to coordinate and to share information within their respective mandates.

Meeting independently from but concurrently with the General Assembly, the Council — over three meetings in November — elected five candidates to the International Court of Justice for nine-year terms, beginning on 6 February 2018.

The Council welcomed Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Peru and Poland as non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly on 2 June to serve two-year terms beginning on 1 January 2018. They replaced Egypt, Japan, Senegal, Ukraine and Uruguay, which completed their terms at the end of 2017. Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Sweden retain their seats until 31 December 2018, with the Netherlands taking the place of Italy after they agreed in 2016 to split their two-year term. China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States are permanent Council members.

Following are summaries of public meetings held in 2017:

### **Middle East**

#### **Syria**

Meetings: 26 January, 22 February, 28 February, 30 March, 5 April, 7 April, 12 April, 12 April, 27 April, 22 May, 23 May, 30 May, 15 June, 27 June, 29 June, 27 July, 30 August, 27 September, 24 October, 26 October, 30 October, 7 November, 16 November, 17 November, 27 November, 29 November, 19 December, 19 December, 21 December.

Press Statements: 20 January, 31 January, 10 March, 18 April.

Resolutions: [2361](#), [2393](#), [2394](#); Rejected: 28 February ([S/2017/172](#)), 12 April ([S/2017/315](#)), 24 October ([S/2017/884](#)), 16 November ([S/2017/962](#)), 17 November ([S/2017/970](#)); Not Adopted: 16 November ([S/2017/968](#)).

Unity eluded the Security Council as it sought to address the Syria conflict, in a year marked by more fighting, fatal chemical weapons attacks, fitful intra-Syrian talks in Geneva facilitated by the United Nations and the protracted humanitarian crisis. In total, the Council held 29 meetings on Syria, featuring briefings by the Special Envoy for Syria, the outgoing and new Under-Secretaries-General for Humanitarian Relief and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, among others.

Five draft resolutions fell to vetoes, including texts that would have extended the mandate of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. Only one conflict-related text was adopted — resolution 2393 (2017) — on **19 December**, by a vote of 12 in favour to none against, with 3 abstentions (Bolivia, China, Russian Federation), through which the Council renewed the authorization for cross-border and cross-conflict-line humanitarian access for a further 12 months, until 10 January 2019.

China and the Russian Federation vetoed a text on **28 February** that would have imposed sanctions on those involved in the production or use of chemical weapons in Syria. Another draft resolution that would have condemned a chemical weapons attack on Khan Shaykhun was vetoed by the Russian Federation on **12 April**.

The Russian Federation went on to veto two more texts, on **24 October** and **16 November**, that would have renewed the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism — set to expire on 17 November — by one year. It also vetoed a final attempt to renew the mandate, for 30 days, on **17 November**.

The year began with humanitarian officials on **26 January** describing reports of severe suffering, starvation and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. “The eyes of all Syria, and the eyes of the world, are looking to Geneva,” Stephen O’Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs added on **22 February**, drawing a link between the peace process and prospects for easing humanitarian suffering. Following a briefing by the Special Envoy, the Council issued a press statement on **10 March** welcoming the conclusion of the latest Geneva round. On **30 March**, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs urged the Council to exert influence over the parties, stressing that 13.5 million Syrians were in dire need of aid.

Briefing the Council on **5 April**, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs said the reported use of chemical weapons in Khan Shaykhun, if confirmed, would constitute the largest single such attack in Syria since 2013. In the ensuing debate, delegates expressed unanimous

outrage, but disagreed over what had actually happened and over the Council's course of action. In the wake of United States air strikes on a Syrian military base, some delegates warned on **7 April** that the Council could lose its "remaining credibility" if unity on Syria remained out of reach. Syria's delegate said his Government had no chemical weapons nor would it ever use them. On **12 April**, the Special Envoy urged the United States and the Russian Federation to come together and stabilize the situation in support of the peace process. At a **27 April** meeting, speakers expressed frustration over the Council's inability bring any real pressure on the parties to the conflict.

Despite persistent fighting in some areas and the lingering threat posed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), a memorandum on de-escalation zones — signed on 4 May by Iran, the Russian Federation and Turkey, in Astana, Kazakhstan — was "a promising step", the Special Envoy said on **22 May**. Briefing on **23 May**, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs said the OPCW analysis of samples collected in relation to the alleged Khan Shaykhoun incident had revealed exposure to sarin or a sarin-like substance. "This is an issue about which the United Nations cannot be neutral," she said. "We need to see a step-change in access to the increasingly dire situation in north-eastern Syria," the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs said on **30 May**. Returning on **15 June**, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs reported some progress in the ongoing investigations of chemical weapon use.

On **27 June**, the Special Envoy said the international community must build on new developments in the Syria negotiation process. On **29 June**, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs said the conflict had shocked and enraged people worldwide "who can't understand why you, the Security Council, cannot fix it", while on **27 July**, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs said the humanitarian and protection situation remained very difficult. Briefing the Council on **30 August** for the last time as Under-Secretary-General, Mr. O'Brien said "none of us can escape a share in the shame" of not having ended the tragedy in Syria. At the same meeting, the Special Envoy advocated "fresh thinking" on the part of the Government and opposition.

On **27 September**, the Special Envoy said that, despite progress on the political front, the situation was highly susceptible to backsliding. Mark Lowcock, the new Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, meanwhile said that as front lines shifted, so too did humanitarian access. The Special Envoy announced on **26 October** his intention to convene an eighth round of intra-Syrian talks. On **30 October**, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs said that, while fighting had decreased in some areas, civilian suffering and impediments to aid remained.

On the chemical weapons front, Edmond Mulet, Head of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, presented that body's seventh report on **7 November**, stressing that ISIL/Da'esh was responsible for the use of sulfur mustard at Umm Hawsh, while Syria was accountable for the use of sarin at Khan Shaykhun. At the same meeting, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, reporting on

implementation of resolution 2118 (2013), said long-standing issues related to Syria's declaration on chemical weapons and subsequent amendments were unresolved.

The Special Envoy called on the Council on **27 November** to support meaningful progress in an eighth round of talks that would begin in Geneva the following day. Some 13.1 million people in Syria were still in urgent need of aid, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs reported on **29 November**. On **19 December**, the Special Envoy expressed disappointment with the outcome of the eighth round, while the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs described access as difficult in all besieged and hard-to-reach areas.

Through press statements, the Council expressed alarm on **20 January** over the destruction of cultural heritage in Palmyra; recognized on **31 January** the International Meeting on Syria in Astana as an important step towards the resumption of the Geneva talks; and condemned on **18 April** a terrorist attack in Rasheedin three days earlier in which at least 126 people had been killed.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2361 (2017) on **29 June** and resolution 2394 (2017) on **21 December**, the Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights, first for six months ending 31 December, and then until 30 June 2018.

### The Question of Palestine

Meetings: 17 January, 16 February, 24 March, 20 April, 26 May, 20 June, 25 July, 22 August, 25 September, 18 October, 20 November, 8 December, 18 December, 18 December.

Press Statement: 8 January.

Resolution Rejected: 18 December (S/2017/1060).

Calls to uphold the two-State solution — heightened following the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016) — echoed through the Council's 14 formal meetings on the Israel-Palestinian conflict, culminating with the United States on **18 December** vetoing a draft resolution that was prompted by its decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and to locate its embassy there.

Briefing the Council two days after an international conference in Paris that reaffirmed support for an independent State of Palestine alongside Israel, Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said on **17 January** that divisions among Israelis and Palestinians risked destroying peace prospects. During the open debate, the Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine said resolution 2334 (2016) marked an opportunity to salvage the two-State solution, but Israel's delegate said it had "set us back in the pursuit of peace". Many speakers

expressed support for the text, with Jordan's delegate emphasizing that it would, in fact, reduce tensions and bolster Israel's security.

The Special Coordinator on **16 February** urged Israelis and Palestinians to contemplate the future they envisioned. He reported on **24 March** that Israeli settlement activity had increased notably in the previous three months, as had provocations from both sides. On **20 April**, at the outset of an open debate, he said a "perfect storm" had engulfed the region, opening the door to foreign intervention and manipulation. On **26 May**, the Special Coordinator welcomed the President of the United States' personal engagement in Israel-Palestine issues, warning, however, of an "explosive environment" developing on the ground.

Fifty years after the Six-Day War, achieving a negotiated two-State outcome was the only way to lay the foundations for an enduring peace, the Council heard during a **20 June** briefing that featured the Special Coordinator; Lakhdar Brahimi, Member of The Elders; Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; and Michael Doran, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute, who called on the Council to advance Israeli-Palestinian relations in a way that avoided giving advantage to Iran and its proxies.

An open meeting on **25 July** was dominated by a crisis in Jerusalem involving the killing of two Israeli police officers, the closure of holy sites, a deadly terrorist attack and the Palestinian Authority's decision to freeze all contact with Israel. Updating the Council on that crisis, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs said on **22 August** that it demonstrated the need for a political horizon and a re-commitment by both the parties and the international community to realizing a two-State solution. The Special Coordinator cautioned on **25 September** that settlement expansion was making that outcome "increasingly unattainable".

More than 40 speakers joined an all-day debate on **18 October** on the situation in the Middle East, during which the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs said there were reasons for cautious optimism about the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Speaking on the heels of an intra-Palestinian reconciliation agreement, he said on **20 November** that a genuine change in Gaza, including full Palestinian Authority control over security, would help restore confidence in the feasibility of a comprehensive peace agreement.

The United States President's 6 December announcement that the Administration would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move its embassy to that city from Tel Aviv prompted a special Council meeting on **8 December**. "It is now more important than ever that we preserve the prospects for peace," the Special Coordinator said, affirming the United Nations' abiding position that Jerusalem was a final status issue to be determined through a comprehensive, just and lasting solution negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions and agreements. The Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine said

the United States had disqualified itself from its leadership role in the quest for Middle East peace. Israel's delegate applauded the United States for righting historical wrongs and recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The representative of the United States called it "common sense" to locate foreign embassies in Jerusalem, stressing that her country would not be lectured by others that had not treated both sides fairly.

On **18 December**, the Special Coordinator, briefing on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), expressed concern over the future of international efforts to achieve peace, pointing to a risk that parties could revert to more unilateral actions. The representative of the United States said that, given the chance to vote on resolution 2334 (2016) again, her country would exercise its veto power.

Also on **18 December**, owing to a veto cast by the United States, the Council failed to adopt a draft that would have called on all States to refrain from establishing diplomatic missions in Jerusalem. Rejected by a vote of 14 in favour to 1 against (United States), it would have stressed that Jerusalem was a final status issue to be resolved through negotiations in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions. It would also have demanded that all States comply with Council decisions on the issue, express deep regret over recent decisions in that regard, and reiterated calls to reverse "negative trends on the ground that are imperiling the two-State solution".

In a press statement on **8 January**, the Council condemned in the strongest terms a terrorist attack in Jerusalem in which 4 Israelis were killed and 15 injured.

## Yemen

Meetings: 26 January, 23 February, 30 May, 15 June, 12 July, 18 August, 10 October.

Resolution: 2342.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/7.

Briefing the Council on **26 January**, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed, said heavy fighting — notably around Sana'a, Taiz and the Saudi border — was all the more tragic because a viable peace proposal was within reach of both parties to the conflict. He pressed both sides to show political courage to stop the nearly two-year-long war. Unanimously adopting resolution 2342 (2017) under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Council on **23 February** renewed for one year a targeted arms embargo, travel ban and assets freeze against individuals and entities designated by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) on Yemen.



Radhya Almutawakel, Chairperson of the Mwatana Organization for Human Rights, emphasized on **30 May** the need for a long-term commitment to promote peace in the face of hostile extremist groups, impending famine and the outbreak of cholera. She urged the Council to establish an independent international commission of inquiry to investigate human rights violations, stop the sale of weapons to those involved, and demand an end to aerial and ground attacks targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. At the same meeting, the Special Envoy recounted an attack on his convoy in Sana'a on 22 May, while the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs described Yemen as the world's largest food-security crisis, and Yemen's representative likened the situation to a scene from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, with the terrorism of the Houthi movement and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) — controlled by “hidden hands” and Iranian intelligence — “leading our lives to a nightmare”.

In a presidential statement, the Council, on **15 June**, expressed grave concern about the humanitarian situation and called on all parties to engage in good faith to find a peaceful solution. “This is unfortunately a war that is being ignored,” said Bolivia's representative at a **12 July** meeting during which senior United Nations officials warned of intensifying conflict, famine and a fully fledged cholera outbreak. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs said on **18 August** it grieved him that, in the last two years, despite his best efforts, he had been unable to make any significant improvement in Yemen.

“The bloodshed and destruction of Yemen has to end,” the Special Envoy reiterated on **10 October**. “There are no excuses. There are no justifications.” With parties pursuing a futile and cruel military conflict, of benefit only to a powerful few, millions of citizens were enduring the worst suffering in the nation's history, he said.

### Iraq

Meetings: 2 February, 22 May, 14 July, 17 July, 22 November, 8 December.

Press Statements: 14 June, 13 July.

Resolutions: 2367, 2390.

Briefing the Council on **2 February**, Ján Kubiš, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), said Iraq would continue to require substantial international support once Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) was ousted. With the liberation of Mosul imminent, he added on **22 May** that the

international community must maintain a dual focus on defeating remaining Islamic State forces, and working towards post-conflict security and reconstruction.

The Council welcomed news of Mosul's liberation in a **13 July** press statement, calling it an important milestone in the global effort to defeat ISIL/Da'esh. On **14 July**, it unanimously adopted resolution 2367 (2017), extending UNAMI's mandate until 31 July 2018, and three days later, on **17 July**, heard from the Special Representative, who said Iraq must now address the long-standing grievances, needs and aspirations of its people. "Da'esh's ultimate defeat can only be secured through inclusive solutions," he said.

Returning to brief on **22 November**, the Special Representative said victory over ISIL/Da'esh had come at a very high cost, with thousands of civilians killed or wounded, hundreds of thousands of children brainwashed, entire cities in ruins, and some 6 million people displaced. He drew attention to tensions between the central Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government after a decision by the Kurdistan region of Iraq to hold a unilaterally declared independence referendum.

On **8 December**, the Council concluded that all the measures imposed in resolutions 1958 (2010) and 2335 (2016) related to the Iraq oil-for-food programme had been fully implemented. Unanimously adopting resolution 2390 (2017), it welcomed that the remaining \$14.28 million in escrow accounts established pursuant to resolution 1958 (2010) had been transferred to Iraq pursuant to resolution 2335 (2016). The representative of the United States applauded that Iraq had fully carried out measures under the oil-for-food programme, although it still faced many challenges.

Through a press statement on **14 June**, the Council called on Iraq to continue to work towards the return of all missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains, in addition to Kuwaiti property, including the national archives.

### Lebanon

Meeting: 30 August.

Resolution: 2373.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2373 (2017), the Council on **30 August** extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for one year and authorized it to take all necessary action to ensure that southern Lebanon was not used for hostile activities. It also called for full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and commended UNIFIL's role in helping to establish, with the Lebanese Armed Forces, a new strategic environment in the south of the country.

## Africa

### Sudan-South Sudan

Meetings: 12 January, 8 February, 4 April, 25 April, 15 May, 24 May, 24 May, 14 June, 21 June, 29 June, 24 August, 14 September, 26 September, 17 October, 26 October, 15 November, 15 November, 28 November, 7 December, 7 December, 12 December, 14 December.

Resolutions: 2340, 2352, 2353, 2363, 2386, 2392.

Presidential Statements: S/PRST/2017/4, S/PRST/2017/25.

Press Statements: 5 May, 1 June.

Throughout the year, the Council expressed alarm over the situation in South Sudan, beginning with a presidential statement on **23 March** in which it stressed there was no military solution to the conflict and condemned reported human rights violations and attacks on humanitarian workers. David Shearer, Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), said on **25 April** that virtually no part of South Sudan was immune from conflict. There had been no concerted effort by any party to adhere to a ceasefire. On **24 May**, the Security Council renewed until 31 May 2018 a raft of sanctions, including a travel ban and asset freeze imposed by resolution 2206 (2015) on those blocking peace, security and stability in South Sudan. Unanimously adopting resolution 2353 (2017) under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, it also extended until 30 June 2018 the mandate of the Panel of Experts overseeing sanctions. Also on **24 May**, the Head of UNMISS said a national dialogue just launched by President Salva Kiir would only be credible if opposition groups participated. Citing a lack of progress towards ending hostilities and resuming dialogue, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on **21 June** recommended no changes to the UNMISS mandate as set out in resolution 2327 (2016).

Briefing on **20 July**, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations said the success of an Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) proposal to revitalize the 2015 peace agreement in South Sudan would hinge on the degree to which the Government and opposition embraced it. He encouraged the Council to reiterate its full support for the IGAD-led process and urge all stakeholders in South Sudan to embrace it. On **24 August**, however, noting that “little meaningful progress” had been made, the Assistant Secretary-General called on warring parties to negotiate and “bring the country back from the impending abyss”. The Head of UNMISS on **26 September** urged the Council to speak with one voice in persuading parties to lay down their arms, return to negotiations and address the humanitarian crisis. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, who became Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on 1 April, echoed that view on **17 October**.

Bintou Keira, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, described on **28 November** the humanitarian situation as dire, with 4 million people displaced and 6 million facing food insecurity. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on **7 December** urged the Council to demand a change of course from leaders and parties to the conflict, while the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, conveying the findings of the South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview, said half of the population would require emergency food in the new year. Unanimously adopting resolution 2392 (2017), the Council on **14 December** extended the UNMISS mandate until 15 March 2018. Through a presidential statement, also on **14 December**, it endorsed the IGAD-sponsored High-Level Revitalization Forum that would be convened by the end of December.

In press statements on **5 May** and **1 June**, the Council condemned attacks on UNMISS peacekeepers, including one in which a Nigerian blue helmet was killed.

The Council also dedicated several meetings to the situations in Darfur and Abeyi. Briefing on **12 January**, Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, said that, despite a decline in armed conflict, civilians still faced violence and criminality, while long-term solutions for 2.6 million displaced persons remained elusive. Unanimously adopting resolution 2340 (2017) on **8 February**, the Council extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts charged with monitoring sanctions in Darfur until 12 March 2018. Jeremiah Mamabolo, Joint Special Representative of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), briefing on **4 April**, suggested that the mission's mandate be amended. In that vein, El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, on **14 June** presented the findings of a strategic review recommending that UNAMID's focus should be adjusted.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2363 (2017), the Council on **29 June** renewed UNAMID's mandate until 30 June 2018. It endorsed the strategic review's recommendations, including a two-phase restructuring of the mission that would lower troop and police levels to 8,735 and 2,500 respectively. Briefing on **14 September**, the Joint Special Representative said UNAMID was focused on its strategic priorities as it moved forward with its reconfiguration. Yet, on **15 November**, Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, said positive developments had not prompted a sustainable return of internally displaced persons. Volodymyr Yelchenko (Ukraine), Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), on **7 December** described work carried out from July to December.

Fatou Bensouda, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, meanwhile presented her twenty-sixth report on **12 December**, as Council members discussed approaches concerning arrest warrants issued by the Court in the case of Darfur.

On **15 May**, the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force for Abyei (UNISFA), unanimously adopting resolution 2352 (2017). In doing so, it decided to reduce its authorized troop ceiling from 5,326 to 4,791 — the first such change since 2013. It also urged both sides to resume negotiations towards a final settlement of the Abyei question. Briefing on **26 October**, Alexander Zuev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, said UNISFA had played a stabilizing role and recommended a six-month extension. The Council duly responded on **15 November** by unanimously adopting resolution 2386 (2017), extending the Force's mandate to 15 April 2018, but limiting support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism to a further five months.

### Liberia

Meetings: 27 June, 24 July.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/11.

Liberia's future as a stable democracy hinged on successful elections and a smooth transition of power, Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), told the Council on **27 June**. Liberia's representative credited UNMIL for enabling and catalysing political and economic change. Through a presidential statement on **24 July**, the Council commended Liberia's commitment to peace and to developing democratic processes. It welcomed a new peacebuilding plan and noted the importance of upcoming presidential and legislative elections.

### Guinea-Bissau

Meetings: 14 February, 23 February, 24 August, 13 September.

Press Statement: 11 May.

Resolution: 2343.

Briefing the Council on **14 February**, Modibo Touré, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), said any breakthrough in that country's institutional crisis would be short-lived if the structural causes of instability were not addressed. He urged national actors to implement the 2016 Conakry Agreement and called for a well-coordinated approach going forward. Unanimously adopting resolution 2343 (2017) on **23 February**, the Council extended the Mission's mandate for one year. In a **11 May** press statement, it expressed deep concern over the protracted political and institutional crisis.

Three months later, on **24 August**, the Special Representative called for better coordinated and sustained international involvement. Only by fulfilling the minimum conditions of the Conakry Agreement could Guinea-Bissau make progress, he said. Expressing deep concern about the political impasse, the Council on **13 September** called on Guinea-Bissau's leaders to engage in dialogue, find common ground and implement the Agreement, including by appointing a consensus Prime Minister. It also welcomed the three-month extension of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) mission.

### Mali

Meetings: 18 January, 6 April, 16 June, 21 June, 29 June, 15 August, 5 September, 5 October, 30 October, 8 December.

Press Statements: 18 January, 24 January, 4 May, 23 May, 14 August.

Resolutions: 2359, 2364, 2374, 2391.

A car bomb that killed more than 50 people in Gao was a stark reminder of the obstacles hobbling Mali's peace process, Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, told the Council on **18 January**. The suicide attack was aimed directly at derailing progress in stabilizing Mali's security situation and restoring peace, he said. His successor, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, welcomed on **6 April** a decision by the "Group of 5" Sahel countries (G5 Sahel) to establish a regional force that would combat transnational crime and terrorism. He also suggested that the Council consider adjusting the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and impose sanctions on "spoilers" who threatened to undermine the peace accord. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA, reported on **16 June** significant progress in implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, adding however that terrorists and extremists were gaining ground. At the same meeting, Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, emphasized that only the Council's authority was required to deploy the new joint counter-terrorism force involving the G5 Sahel States — Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2359 (2017) on **21 June**, the Council welcomed the deployment of the Group of Five Sahel Joint Force to address the threat of terrorism and the serious challenges posed by transnational organized crime. It urged the G5 Sahel States to continue to make the joint force operational in a sustainable, viable and effective manner.

On **29 June**, the Council, unanimously adopting resolution 2364 (2017), extended MINUSMA's mandate for one year, until 30 June 2018.

The Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping told the Council on **15 August** that the Joint Force could make a significant contribution to stabilizing the region by working in tandem with other initiatives. Success would depend on deeper regional partnership, as well as work with African Union and United Nations strategies for the Sahel, the peace process in Mali and support from MINUSMA. With a projected €423 million first-year budget, the Joint Force would need international support, over and above pledges made by France and the European Union, to be fully funded. For its part, MINUSMA was making its own preparations, he said, adapting coordination mechanisms to include the Joint Force. Following his briefing, Mali's representative, on behalf of G5 Sahel countries, said mobilizing funds for the Joint Force was a major priority. France's delegate emphasized the crucial need for United Nations support, while Senegal's delegate called for international solidarity in providing "massive and swift" financial and logistical support to the Joint Force.

Targeting actors derailing the peace process in Mali, the Council decided unanimously on **5 September** to impose sanctions and create a new committee and panel of experts to examine alleged violations. Adopting resolution 2374 (2017), it also decided to impose a travel ban on and freeze the assets of designated individuals and entities stymying progress in implementing the Agreement of Peace and Reconciliation. On **5 October**, the Head of MINUSMA called for faster progress. With the security situation a major obstacle, he said deployment of the Joint Force was an opportunity to pursue a holistic approach to creating conducive conditions in Mali, beyond military action.

Emphasizing that the situation in the Sahel was a challenge for all, the Secretary-General said on **30 October** that innovative actions would be needed to support both the Joint Force and development efforts. Echoing that view, Mali's Minister for Foreign Affairs said that to reach full deployment of the Joint Force by the March 2018 deadline, robust international support was required. Also participating in the ministerial-level meeting was African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, who pressed the Council to provide content to the idea of conflict prevention.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2391 (2017) on **8 December**, the Council welcomed steady and rapid progress achieved in making the Joint Force functional and requested the Secretary-General to conclude a technical agreement among the United Nations, the European Union and G5 Sahel States with a view to providing operational and logistical support through MINUSMA. Mali's representative, on behalf of the G5 Sahel States, said the unanimous adoption was part of a favourable dynamic of greater international support for the Joint Force. He expressed regret, however, that the resolution did not include a more robust mandate under Chapter VII. Nor did it offer greater logistics, communications, equipment and infrastructure assistance by the United Nations; predictable and sustainable financing; or extended support for MINUSMA deployment channels.

In press statements on **18 January**, **24 January**, **4 May**, **23 May** and **14 August**, the Council condemned the attack in Gao against the camp of the Operational Coordination Mechanism, as well as attacks on MINUSMA camps.

### Central and West African Region

Meetings: 12 January, 13 January, 19 January, 20 January, 31 March, 13 June, 13 July, 24 July, 10 August, 15 August, 13 September, 13 December.

Presidential Statements: S/PRST/2017/2, S/PRST/2017/10.

Press Statement: 1 February.

Resolutions: 2337, 2349.

Despite gains made against Boko Haram by countries in the Lake Chad Basin region, the extremist group remained a threat, senior United Nations officials told the Council on **12 January**, stressing that only a concerted international approach would help repair the damage inflicted on communities.

Briefing on **13 January**, Mohammed ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), said that, amid a “rising tide of democracy” across Africa, the Organization must support regional efforts to ensure that results of the 1 December 2016 election in the Gambia were upheld. On **19 January**, the Council, unanimously adopting resolution 2337 (2017), endorsed decisions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union to recognize Adama Barrow as President-elect. In doing so, it asked that former President Yahya Jammeh peacefully transfer power to the President-elect by 19 January 2017, in accordance with the Constitution.

In a presidential statement on **20 January**, the Council strongly condemned all terrorist attacks in West Africa, notably those carried out by Boko Haram. Going further on **31 March**, it unanimously adopted resolution 2349 (2017) — its first addressing Boko Haram’s presence in the Lake Chad Basin — expressing concern about the protection needs of civilians. It strongly condemned all terrorist attacks, violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses by Boko Haram and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh) in the region, and encouraged Governments to enhance regional military cooperation.

The threat posed by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Central Africa should not be underestimated, said the Special Representative in the subregion on **13 June**, particularly now with Ugandan and South Sudanese troops, as well as United States special forces having disengaged from



the African Union Regional Task Force. “I am concerned about the impact of this withdrawal as it will create a security vacuum that may be exploited by the LRA and other armed groups operating in the region,” said François Louncény Fall, also Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), during a briefing that touched on developments in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic.

Briefing the Council again on **13 July**, Mr. Chambas expressed concern over the security situation in West Africa and the Sahel, with instability in Mali spilling into Burkina Faso and Niger. A presidential statement on **24 July** welcomed recent political developments in some West African countries, but expressed concern over the threat of terrorism in the region — including attacks by Boko Haram and ISIL/Da’esh. The Council also welcomed a peaceful transition of power in the Gambia, as well as progress in Côte d’Ivoire following the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) on 30 June 2017.

Amina Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General — and 1 of 4 women leading an African Union-United Nations mission to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — briefed the Council on **10 August**, noting that its work focused entirely on women, peace and security. Recent progress against Boko Haram notwithstanding, the Lake Chad Basin continued to suffer a “staggering” and underfunded humanitarian crisis, said Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on **13 September**, warning that Governments had been forced to divert already scarce resources to fight terrorism and other security challenges. Fatima Sheu Imam, Director of the Network of Civil Society Organizations in Borno State, Nigeria, described the situation as tense and fragile, with recent reports of stability fostering a false sense of security.

François Louncény Fall, Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, told the Council on **13 December** that, despite positive developments, concerted action was still needed to address sociopolitical tensions, economic difficulties and abuses by armed groups.

In a press statement on **1 February**, the Council condemned a fatal attack a day earlier against a United Nations monitoring team near the Nigeria-Cameroon border.

### Great Lakes Region

Meetings: 12 April, 8 December.

Resolution: 2389.

Said Djinnit, Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, described on **12 April** efforts to implement the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. Unanimously adopting resolution 2389 (2017), the Council on **8 December**

reiterated its call for States which had signed the Framework to abide by the commitment to non-interference in the internal affairs of neighbours and the prohibition against abetting armed groups or war criminals. Among its other terms, it encouraged enhanced cooperation among all signatory States and urged enhanced regional cooperation in countering armed groups.

### Democratic Republic of the Congo

Meetings: 4 January, 11 January, 21 March, 31 March, 21 June, 11 July, 26 July, 17 August, 11 October, 7 November.

Presidential Statements: S/PRST/2017/1, S/PRST/2017/12, S/PRST/2017/23.

Press Statements: 24 February, 29 March, 4 May.

Resolutions: 2348, 2360.

A presidential statement on **4 January** welcomed the 31 December 2016 signing of a political agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In his **11 January** briefing, Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, urged the Council to keep calling on all political actors to endorse that accord and put a transitional Government of national unity in place.

Following a **24 February** press statement strongly condemning violence in the Kasai region, the Council on **21 March** heard from Maman Sidikou, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), who said that delays in holding elections and implementing the agreement were prolonging political uncertainty. At the same meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration Leonard She Okitundu said the Government had no intention of delaying implementation of the peace agreement. It was unacceptable that MONUSCO was unable to end the crisis, he said, condemning the abduction of two members of the Security Council Group of Experts and explaining that national security forces were trying to find them.

In a **29 March** press statement, the Council condemned the killing of the two experts, Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán, who were monitoring the sanctions regime in the Kasai-Central region. Unanimously adopting resolution 2348 (2017) under Chapter VII on **31 March**, the Council extended MONUSCO's mandate until 31 March 2018, while reducing its troop ceiling by some 3,600 military personnel to 16,215 troops. It requested that the Secretary-General conduct a strategic review of the Mission and examine the relevance of its mandated tasks, in order to provide advice on a further troop-level reduction, as well as an exit strategy.

Through a **4 May** press statement, the Council took note of the 7 April appointment by President Joseph Kabila of a new Prime Minister, Bruno Tshibala, and responses by national stakeholders. Unanimously adopting resolution 2360 (2017) under Chapter VII, the Council on **21 June** extended its arms embargo, asset freeze and travel ban on the Democratic Republic of the Congo until 1 July 2018, expanding those sanctions to cover individuals and entities engaging in or providing support for acts that included planning, directing, sponsoring or participating in attacks against MONUSCO peacekeepers or United Nations personnel. It also extended the mandate of the Group of Experts assisting the Sanctions Committee through 1 August 2018, and by two months — to 15 August — the deadline for the Group’s final report, given the extraordinary circumstances under which it was operating, including the killing of Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán.

Several Council members insisted on **11 July** that the Government hold free, fair and inclusive elections by year-end. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations expressed concern that implementation of the 2016 political agreement had stalled amid fighting, human rights violations and a rising number of displaced people. Through a presidential statement on **26 July**, the Council stressed the urgent need for swift implementation of the 2016 political agreement.

Relatives of Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán were present as Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta (Egypt), Council President for August, introduced the Group of Experts’ final report on **17 August** on their deaths. Summarizing its findings, he said the dynamic of the conflict was changing, with fragmented armed groups operating in a more decentralized yet heavily networked manner, and with growing links between foreign and local armed groups. The country’s Deputy Prime Minister said the Congolese people and Government felt the pain of the slain experts’ families and pledged that the perpetrators would be severely punished.

Briefing the Council on **11 October**, the Head of MONUSCO urged international and regional stakeholders to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo advance progress on elections and other stalled components of the recent political agreement. “It is only by working together in synergy that the obstacles facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be overcome,” he said. Deputy Prime Minister Okitundu said the Government was committed to the elections, but it equally wished to avert turmoil, he added.

A presidential statement on **7 November** reiterated the need for the Government to fully investigate the killing of Ms. Catalán and Mr. Sharp and to bring the perpetrators to justice. It noted the conclusions of a United Nations Board of Inquiry into the murders, while deciding that no further adjustments to the sanctions regime outlined in resolution 2360 (2017) were necessary.

Somalia and Eritrea

Meetings: 27 January, 10 February, 23 March, 13 April, 17 May, 26 May, 14 June, 30 August, 13 September, 7 November, 14 November.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/3.

Press Statements: 20 February, 15 June, 3 August.

Resolutions: 2346, 2355, 2358, 2372, 2383, 2385.

The election of a new Parliament in Somalia marked a milestone in its post-conflict transformation, Michael Keating, Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), told the Council on **27 January**. A presidential statement on **10 February** called on Somalia's new President to focus on the immediate risk of famine and address the consequences of severe drought. Unanimously adopting resolution 2346 (2017) on **23 March**, the Council extended UNSOM's mandate until 16 June.

Given the threat posed by Al-Shabaab, drought and the humanitarian crisis, the Council Committee on sanctions in Eritrea and Somalia announced on **13 April** a possible future visit to the Horn of Africa. The region demanded a peacekeeping presence, said Kairat Umarov (Kazakhstan), Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. Speaking afterwards, Eritrea's representative said it was time to lift sanctions.

Peaceful presidential elections in Somalia had created a unique opportunity to forge a functional State, Raisedon Zenenga, the Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Somalia, added on **17 May**. Unanimously adopting resolution 2355 (2017) under Chapter VII, the Council on **26 May** authorized member States of the African Union to maintain the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) until 31 August. Through resolution 2358 (2017), adopted unanimously on **14 June**, it extended UNSOM's mandate until March 2018.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2372 (2017) under Chapter VII, the Council on **30 August** extended its authorization of AMISOM until 31 May 2018, approving a reduction of its uniformed personnel amid a transition of responsibilities to Somali security forces. The Council heard warnings on **13 September** that hard-won gains could be swept away without predictable funding for AMISOM. Unanimously adopting resolution 2383 (2017) on **7 November** under Chapter VII, the Council renewed for another year authorization for international naval forces to help fight piracy off Somalia's coast. A week later, on **14 November**, it extended the modified arms embargo on Somalia and authorization for maritime interdiction of illicit arms imports and charcoal exports until 15 November 2018, also renewing the arms ban on Eritrea for that same period. Adopting resolution 2385 (2017) by a vote of 11 in favour to none against, with 4 abstentions (Bolivia, China,

Egypt, Russian Federation), it extended the mandate of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group until 15 December 2018.

In press statements on **20 February** and **15 June**, the Council condemned terrorist attacks in Mogadishu. Another press statement on **3 August** condemned a fatal attack by Al-Shabaab against the Ugandan contingent of AMISOM.

### Western Sahara

Meeting: 28 April.

Resolution: 2351.

On **28 April**, the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April 2018. Unanimously adopting resolution 2351 (2017), it called on the parties to the Western Sahara conflict to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith. It also called on the parties to cooperate fully with the Mission and to resume cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

### Côte d'Ivoire

Meetings: 8 February, 2 June, 30 June.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/8.

With a transparent constitutional referendum, credible legislative elections in December 2016 and improved security paving the way for a transition to sustainable peace, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was on track to leave after 14 years, Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Cote d'Ivoire and Head of that mission, told the Council on **8 February**. In her final briefing on **2 June**, she said Côte d'Ivoire had taken responsibility to return to its role as a standard-bearer for peace and security in West Africa. The country's Minister for Foreign Affairs stressed that "UNOCI leaves behind it a country which is stable and has peace." In a **30 June** presidential statement, the Council welcomed Côte d'Ivoire's progress, adding that "there is important work ahead" in tackling remaining challenges.

### Burundi

Meetings: 9 March, 20 June, 26 July, 2 August, 20 November.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/13.

Press Statement: 13 March.

Senior officials, briefing the Council on **9 March**, said any attempt by President Pierre Nkurunziza to seek a fourth term risked undermining collective efforts to find a sustainable solution to the political crisis in Burundi. Through a press statement on **13 March**, the Council expressed deep concern over the political situation, a lack of progress in implementing resolution 2303 (2016) and the Government's lack of engagement. On **20 June**, Assistant Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun emphasized the need for confidence-building steps. Updating the Council on **26 July**, Michel Kafando, the new Special Envoy for Burundi, put a spotlight on the worsening socioeconomic situation. In a presidential statement on **2 August**, the Council again expressed deep concern over the political situation, while on **20 November**, Mr. Kafando said the United Nations must continue supporting the political process. Burundi's delegate, at the same meeting, said his country's people must lead in determining the way forward.

### Central African Republic

Meetings: 27 January, 15 February, 16 March, 4 April, 12 June, 13 July, 6 November, 15 November.

Presidential Statements: S/PRST/2017/5, S/PRST/2017/9.

Press Statements: 4 January, 6 January, 10 May, 15 May, 24 July, 26 July.

Resolutions: 2339, 2387.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2339 (2017), the Council on **27 January** extended the arms embargo and other sanctions imposed on the Central African Republic. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, reported on **15 February** that the security situation in Bangui had stabilized, but remained a matter of concern elsewhere. On **16 March**, President Faustin Archange Touadera detailed a national reconciliation plan aimed at rebuilding the security sector, restoring justice and reaching out to armed groups. Council members welcomed his initiative, but voiced concern over the humanitarian situation.

Through a presidential statement on **4 April**, the Council urged the Front patriotique pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique to honour their commitments to the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process. Briefing the Council on **12 June**, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), said violence in the Central African Republic — including attacks on minority groups and peacekeepers — harkened back to the darkest days of its history. The country's

delegate said armed groups had infested the entire nation and that an African-led effort must forge the way ahead.

A presidential statement on **13 July** condemned violence by armed groups, called on all their leaders to cease hostilities and welcomed an agreement in Brussels on 21 June to develop a joint road map to continue mediation. The Head of MINUSCA returned before the Council on **6 November**, saying urgent and decisive action was needed to reverse a new spiral of violence. “We count on your support,” he said. Unanimously adopting resolution 2387 (2017) on **15 November**, the Council extended MINUSCA’s mandate until 15 November 2018, increased its troop limit by 900 to 11,650 and renewed its authorization for French forces to provide operational support to MINUSCA when under serious threat.

In addition, the Council issued six press statements strongly condemning attacks on MINUSCA personnel and convoys.

### Libya

Meetings: 8 February, 19 April, 8 May, 7 June, 12 June, 29 June, 28 August, 14 September, 5 October, 10 October, 8 November, 16 November, 7 December, 14 December.

Presidential Statements: S/PRST/2017/19, S/PRST/2017/24, S/PRST/2017/26.

Press Statements: 26 May, 27 July.

Resolutions: 2357, 2362, 2376, 2380.

Despite important advances in Libya, not nearly enough progress had been made in implementing the Libyan Political Agreement forged in 2015, Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), told the Council on **8 February**. Terrorism remained a threat, living conditions were poor and armed groups continued to abuse human rights with impunity. He cautioned on **19 April** that the country risked a return to wide-spread conflict and urged parties to adhere to the landmark political accord. “There is no plan B,” he said. “There is no need for one.”

On **8 May**, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, said Libya’s cooperation was crucial to ensure justice for victims of mass atrocity crimes committed in 2011. “We all have our respective roles to play and we must deliver on our joint commitment to end impunity for Rome Statute crimes in Libya,” she said. By **26 May**, a Council press statement condemned the military escalation in southern Libya, including the 18 May attack at Brak al-Shati, which reportedly had resulted in summary executions of combatants and civilians.

“The people of Libya desire peace,” Mr. Kobler told the Council on **7 June** via videoconference from Tunis. While the 2015 Political Agreement — laying out the formation of a national unity Government — was changing facts on the ground, parallel institutions persisted. The transition had not been fully carried out, he said, and the situation remained tense. On **12 June**, the Council adopted resolution 2357 (2017), reauthorizing States to inspect vessels on the high seas off Libya’s coast believed to be violating the arms embargo. It extended until 15 November 2018 sanctions related to illicit petroleum exports— adding “attacks against United Nations personnel” to criteria for ongoing travel bans and asset freezes — through resolution 2362 (2017) on **29 June**.

A month later, on **27 July**, the Council welcomed in a press statement the appointment of Ghassan Salamé as the Secretary-General’s new Special Representative for Libya, who, by his **28 August** briefing, described a “window of opportunity”, notably to address governance problems and support the 2015 Agreement. Secretary-General António Guterres would hold a high-level meeting during the General Assembly’s seventy-second session, he said, to unveil an action plan for the country. The Council, meanwhile, on **14 September** extended the UNSMIL mandate for a year as an integrated special political mission, through resolution 2376 (2017), with Libya’s delegate lamenting that the text did not mention the concept of national ownership, as his country had requested.

The Council also reauthorized States to intercept and inspect vessels suspected of being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking for another year, and to seize those confirmed as having engaged in such activities, through resolution 2380 (2017), adopted unanimously on **5 October**. Chief Prosecutor Bensouda on **8 November** said the International Criminal Court had issued arrest warrants for Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf al-Werfalli, a commander in a special forces unit of the Libyan National Army, and Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled, former Head of the Internal Security Agency under Muammar Qadhafi.

One week later, on **16 November**, Special Representative Salamé briefed the Council on the two-month-old Action Plan for Libya and UNSMIL efforts to amend the Political Agreement, organize a national conference, prepare for elections and provide humanitarian assistance. Libya was divided at an “atomic level”, he said, emphasizing the need to rebuild the national policy, without which effective institutions could not form. Libya’s delegate replied that the Government of National Accord was committed to working within the United Nations framework to end the crisis.

Reports of migrants being sold into slavery in Libya were also of grave concern to the Council, which in a **7 December** presidential statement condemned such actions as heinous human rights abuses and possible crimes against humanity. It called for perpetrators to be held accountable. The political agreement was the only viable framework to end the political crisis, it reiterated in a **14 December** presidential statement, and its implementation was essential for holding elections and



finalizing the transition. The Council also welcomed the launch of a registration campaign by the High National Elections Commission.

## Asia

### Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Meetings: 23 March, 28 April, 2 June, 5 July, 5 August, 29 August, 4 September, 11 September, 21 September, 29 November, 15 December, 22 December.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/16.

Press Statements: 13 February, 7 March, 6 April, 20 April, 15 May, 22 May.

Resolutions: 2345, 2356, 2371, 2375, 2397.

Throughout the year, the Council held one dozen meetings, addressing grave concerns about a range of missile-related activities and heightening tensions on the Korean Peninsula. During a **15 December** meeting, the Secretary-General expressed concern that the risk of an accidental escalation of tensions leading to conflict was being multiplied by misplaced overconfidence, dangerous narratives and rhetoric. He told the Council it was time for the immediate re-establishment and strengthening of communications channels, including inter-Korean and military-to-military ones. "Diplomatic engagement is the only pathway to sustainable peace and denuclearization," he added, underlining also the essential role of Council unity in achieving denuclearization.

Council members echoed the Secretary-General's call for unity and avoidance of military conflict, while also expressing sympathy for the plight of the citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Most delegates stressed the severity of the threat posed by Pyongyang in light of its continued flouting of Council resolutions, its accelerated development of dangerous weapons and its bellicose rhetoric. Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State of the United States participated in the meeting.

The Council further tightened sanctions on **22 December** through its unanimous adoption of resolution 2397 (2017), severely restricting fuel imports and other trade, as well as the ability of its citizens to work abroad. Condemning, in the strongest terms, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of a ballistic missile on 28 November 2017, the Council limited its imports of refined petroleum, called for the repatriation of all its nationals earning income abroad and targeted new individuals for the asset freeze and travel ban imposed in previous measures.

At the outset of 2017, the Council, in a press statement on **13 February**, strongly condemned ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 11 February 2017 and 19 October 2016, calling on States to redouble efforts to fully implemented measures imposed through resolutions 2321 (2016) and 2270 (2016). Another press statement, on **7 March**, strongly condemned that country's ballistic missile launches two days earlier.

On **23 March**, the Council, unanimously adopting resolution 2345 (2017), extended until 24 April 2018 the mandate of the Panel of Experts for the committee monitoring sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and expressed its intent to take appropriate action on a further extension no later than 24 March 2018.

Continued ballistic missile launches, on 4 April and 15 April, led the Council to express its strong condemnation through press statements on **6 April** and **20 April**, respectively, emphasizing that country's international obligations under several Council resolutions.

"I am alarmed by the risk of a military escalation in the region," the Secretary-General told the Council on **28 April** as it debated the best way to address rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula. "We need to avoid miscalculation and misunderstanding," emphasizing the need for immediate action with the onus on Pyongyang to comply with its international obligations. Foreign ministers and senior officials participated in the meeting, including the Secretary of State of the United States, who said all options, including military action, must remain on the table. The Russian Federation's Deputy Foreign Minister warned that one ill-thought move or misinterpretation could result in the most frightening and lamentable situation. China's Minister for Foreign Affairs, meanwhile, emphasized that his country should not be the focal point for the problem. Responsibility for resolving the crisis did not rest in Chinese hands. "Our goal is not to bring North Korea to its knees, but to bring it back to the negotiation table for genuine denuclearization," said the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

In a **15 May** press statement, the Council strongly condemned ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 28 April and 13 May 2017. A **22 May** press statement did likewise for such a launch the previous day.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2356 (2017) under Chapter VII on **2 June**, the Council extended the number of individuals and entities targeted by sanctions first imposed under resolution 1718 (2006) — an asset freeze and travel ban for those involved in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear-weapon programme. In doing so, it condemned in the strongest terms Pyongyang's recent nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile-development activities, including a series of launches and other related activities conducted since 9 September 2016, in violation of various Council resolutions. It reaffirmed its decision that the Pyongyang must abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible

manner, and immediately cease all related activities. It further decided to apply measures specified in paragraph 8(d) and 8(e) of resolution 1718 (2006) to individuals and entities listed in Annexes I and II of the adopted text. The text was sponsored by the United States, whose representative said her country, while supporting a diplomatic resolution, would defend itself “by other means if necessary”.

Condemning the launch on 4 July of a ballistic missile with possible intercontinental capability, Council members urged Pyongyang on **5 July** to immediately cease all provocative actions. Warning that her country was prepared to use the full range of its military and other capabilities to defend itself and its allies, the representative of the United States said she would soon submit a draft resolution aimed at raising the international response in proportion to Pyongyang’s escalation. “If we act together, we can rid the world of a grave threat,” she said. The Republic of Korea’s delegate urged Pyongyang to “no longer test” his country, while his counterpart from Japan said Tokyo would never accept a nuclear-armed Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The Russian Federation’s representative pressed Pyongyang to declare a moratorium on nuclear and ballistic missile testing, and for the United States and Republic of Korea to refrain from conducting full joint military exercises. China’s delegate strongly urged the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to abide by Council resolutions and stop any action that would exacerbate tensions. He also called on all concerned to avoid provocative acts, demonstrate the will for unconditional dialogue and work together to diffuse tensions.

Illustrating the gravity of the situation, Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, called on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to stop actions that violated Council resolutions and allow space for dialogue. Channels of communication, particularly military-to-military channels, must be reopened to lower the risk of miscalculation or misunderstanding, he said, adding that in addressing the challenge, Council members must distinguish between political and humanitarian concerns.

On **5 August**, the Council further strengthened its sanctions regime against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Unanimously adopting resolution 2371 (2017) under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the Charter, it decided that Pyongyang shall not supply, sell or transfer coal, iron, iron ore, seafood, lead and lead ore to other countries. By other terms, the Council prohibited States from opening new joint ventures or cooperative entities with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea entities and individuals, or expanding existing joint ventures through additional investments. It decided that Pyongyang shall not deploy or use chemical weapons and urgently called for the country to accede to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction. The Council named nine individuals and four entities to be subject to a travel ban and asset freeze already in place, requesting that the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) issue special notices in that regard.

Several speakers said the revised sanctions would have a \$1 billion impact on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States' representative said the Council had put the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's dictator on notice by increasing the penalty of its ballistic missile activity to a new level. China's delegate said that, while the resolution imposed further sanctions, it did not intend to negatively impact food and humanitarian aid. The Russian Federation's representative said sanctions must be a tool for engaging Pyongyang in constructive talks rather than for seeking the country's economic asphyxiation. The Republic of Korea's delegate said the additional sanctions would significantly cut the inflow of hard currency that would otherwise have been diverted to illicit weapons programmes.

Through a presidential statement on **29 August**, the Council strongly condemned as "outrageous" the launch the previous day of a ballistic missile that flew over Japan, as well as multiple launches conducted on 25 August. It expressed grave concern that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was deliberately undermining regional peace and stability and causing security concerns around the world. Once again, the Council demanded that Pyongyang immediately cease such actions and comply with all relevant Council resolutions.

In an emergency session on **4 September**, two days after the Democratic People's Republic of Korea carried out a sixth underground nuclear test, the Council discussed options for promptly reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. "Enough is enough," the representative of the United States said, adding that the strongest possible measures must be adopted immediately. Senegal's delegate urged the Council to speak with one voice, while his counterpart from China highlighted a proposal made by his country and the Russian Federation to establish a peace mechanism that would require Pyongyang to suspend its nuclear programme. Many delegates agreed that sanctions alone would not solve the problem. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs called the underground nuclear test an alarming and dangerous provocation by the only State that continued to break the norm against such explosions.

The Council went on to unanimously adopt resolution 2375 (2017) on **11 September**, imposing a raft of new sanctions while condemning in the strongest terms the 2 September nuclear test and demanding that Pyongyang immediately suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile and nuclear programmes. Among the new measures was a ban on the supply, sale or transfer of all condensates and natural gas liquids to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as a ban on textile exports. The Council further decided that all Member States would prohibit the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to Pyongyang of all refined petroleum products beyond 500,000 barrels during an initial period of three months — beginning on 1 October 2017 and ending on 31 December 2017 — and exceeding 2 million barrels per year during a period of 12 months beginning on 1 January 2018 and annually thereafter.

By other terms, Member States would not supply, sell or transfer crude oil to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over the amount supplied, sold or transferred by that State in the 12-month period prior to the adoption of resolution 2374 (2017). Following the text's adoption, Council members emphasized that its "robust" measures were commensurate with the serious and escalating nature of the threats posed by Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme. The representative of the United States, a co-sponsor of the resolution, said the text built upon what were already the deepest-cutting sanctions ever levelled against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. For his part, the Russian Federation's representative, rejecting Pyongyang's claim to nuclear-weapon status, insisted that his country's joint initiative with China be considered.

The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was the focal point of a ministerial-level Council briefing on **21 September** on the threat posed by the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the best ways to halt the flow. Kazakhstan's Minister for Foreign Affairs said the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme had placed that country on a nuclear-free path, adding that "we should, therefore, convincingly show Pyongyang the right 'road map'". China's Minister for Foreign Affairs underscored the importance of promoting the resumption of talks and dialogue with the Pyongyang, while the Russian Federation's delegate said it would be short-sighted to ignore the reason behind the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's weapons programme. During the debate, speakers also discussed several non-proliferation initiatives, from Council resolution 1540 (2004), aimed at preventing non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and related materiel, to the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, at Headquarters on 20 September.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's missile launch prompted a same-day Council meeting on **29 November** with delegates calling for urgent measures. "Given the grave risks associated with any military confrontation, in exercise of its primary responsibility, the Security Council needs to do all it can to prevent an escalation," said Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, calling for Council unity. "The solution can only be political." The representative of the United States said Pyongyang should be treated as an international pariah and urged China to do more. China's delegate recalled a joint statement between his country and the Russian Federation that offered a road map to resumed negotiations.

### Afghanistan

Meetings: 10 March, 17 March, 21 June, 25 September, 21 December.

Resolutions: 2344.

Press Statements: 11 January, 7 February, 1 March, 8 March, 31 May, 24 July, 31 July, 2 August, 17 October, 28 December.

Terrorist attacks across Afghanistan had blunted opportunities for political engagement in efforts to institute electoral, educational and other reforms, leaving a convincing Afghan-owned peace process, by year end, unassured after four decades of fighting.

On **17 March**, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2344 (2017), extending for another year the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which supported the country's full assumption of leadership and ownership of security, governance and development, in line with the Transformation Decade (2015-2024). The move followed a **10 March** briefing by Special Representative Tadamichi Yamamoto, who described the challenge of pursuing economic growth and an inclusive peace process against the backdrop of a worsening security situation. War and threats by terrorist groups had obstructed children's access to education, said Sima Samar, Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, while the Taliban continued to kill, stone and mutilate women.

Three months later, by **21 June**, the Special Representative warned that a tide of terrorist attacks had brought underlying political tensions to the surface. "Without enhanced efforts by the National Unity Government to increase political inclusiveness, strengthen accountability and improve the Government's credibility, particularly in the security sector, we are likely to face more crises in an increasingly fragile environment," he asserted. Reversing those trends, said Afghanistan's delegate, hinged on eliminating support centres outside the country that produced, nurtured and empowered terrorists. Pakistan's delegate pointed to an agreement reached earlier that month as evidence of efforts to re-energize counter-terrorism cooperation between the two neighbours.

In his next briefing, on **25 September**, the Special Representative outlined steps being taken to prepare for the most important electoral reforms since 2001, with progress already made in organizing parliamentary and district council elections, slated for July 2018. However, security conditions had grown more complex, with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) active in eastern Afghanistan, and growing in influence in the north and in Kabul. Afghanistan's Foreign Minister said the Taliban's exaggerated claims of control over territory amounted to psychological warfare, while Pakistan's delegate decried the more than 20 terrorist groups operating on Afghan soil, many of which were orchestrating attacks inside her country. The United States delegate said her country would continue to support peace talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban without preconditions. A negotiated settlement was available, but the Taliban must choose that path.

By year end, the Special Representative on **21 December** said the holding of parliamentary elections in 2018, and presidential elections in April 2019, was the crucial issue at hand, and the Independent Election Commission must demonstrably advance preparations to regain its credibility. Wazhma Frogh, Founding Member of Women and Peace Studies Organization, and Member of

Afghanistan's High Peace Council, said that 2017 had seen more than 5,000 cases of severe violence against women, according to the Afghan Human Rights Commission. Lasting peace could only be achieved if women sat at the negotiating table.

Throughout the year, the Council issued 10 press statements condemning in the strongest terms terrorist attacks committed in Kabul, Ghazni, Herat and Paktia.

## Iran

Meetings: 18 January, 29 June, 19 December.

Council members called on **18 January** for the continued implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme. "It will help realize the long-awaited aspirations of the Iranian people to be reconnected to the global economy," Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, told the Council during its semi-annual briefing on implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), which endorsed the Joint Plan of Action. Mr. Feltman returned before the Council on **29 June**, stating that the agreement remained on track. On **19 December**, he urged the Council to maintain strong support for the Joint Plan of Action, adding that a decision by the President of the United States not to certify the agreement did not, for the moment, affect its validity.

## Americas

### Colombia

Meetings: 11 January, 5 April, 11 May, 16 May, 30 June, 10 July, 14 September, 5 October.

Presidential Statements: S/PRST/2017/6, S/PRST/2017/18.

Resolutions: 2366, 2377, 2381.

Public Statement: 3 March.

Despite many challenges, the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) were determined to ensure the successful implementation of the 2016 peace agreement, Jean Arnault, Head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, told the Council on **11 January**. In a public statement on **3 March**, the Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict welcomed provisions in the peace agreement on the reintegration of children. On **5 April**, Mr. Arnault said the first phase in implementing the peace agreement was largely on track.

Following a three-day visiting mission, the Council on **11 May** adopted a presidential statement paying tribute to the people of Colombia for embarking on a path to peace after more than 50 years of conflict. Recapping the visiting mission on **16 May**, its co-leads, the representatives of the United Kingdom and Uruguay, said that, despite many challenges, parties to the peace agreement were committed to staying the course.

Hailing the handover of FARC-EP's remaining weapons to a United Nations-backed team, Council members on **30 June** pledged to support Colombia during its transition to peace. Colombia's representative emphasized the need for strong United Nations support in that regard. Accordingly, the Council on **10 July** unanimously adopted resolution 2366 (2017), authorizing the creation of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia to oversee the next phase of the peace agreement. It would begin its work on 26 September, immediately after the current United Nations Mission in Colombia had completed its mandate.

Updating the Council on **11 September**, Mr. Arnault cited FARC-EP's formal transformation into a political party as a measure of the momentous developments taking place in Colombia. On **14 September**, the Council, unanimously adopting resolution 2377 (2017), approved the size, operational aspects and mandate of the new Mission. Going further, on **5 October** it unanimously adopted resolution 2381 (2017), through which the Mission would expand its work to include monitoring the ceasefire signed by the Government and the group known as Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). A presidential statement on **5 October** marked the end of the outgoing Mission's mandate by welcoming progress on the peace agreement.

## Haiti

Meetings: 11 April, 13 April, 18 July, 12 October, 17 October.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/20.

Resolution: 2350.

Building on political progress and a relatively stable security situation, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) should prepare to transition into a smaller peacekeeping operation focused on strengthening the rule of law, institutions and the national police force, Sandra Honoré, Special Representative and Head of MINUSTAH, told the Council on **11 April**. Accordingly, the Council on **13 April** unanimously adopted resolution 2350 (2017) under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, extending MINUSTAH's mandate for a final six months and replacing it with a follow-up presence to be known as the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) for an initial six months, from 16 October 2017 until 15 April 2018.



Briefing the Council on **18 July**, the Special Representative said that with MINUSTAH making way for its justice support successor, the onus was on Haitians themselves to shape their future. Haiti's representative told the Council on **12 October** that the new Mission's mandate should no longer be carried out under Chapter VII of the Charter, with respect to threats to international security, but under Chapter VI. Through a presidential statement, the Council on **17 October** welcomed Haiti's progress towards stability and democracy, and recognized MINUSTAH's contribution to restoring security and stability.

## Europe

### Ukraine

Meetings: 2 February, 21 February.

Press Statement: 31 January.

Council members, in a press statement on **31 January**, expressed grave concern about the dangerous deterioration of the situation in eastern Ukraine and its impact on local civilians. Expressing full support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, they underlined the need for strict compliance with resolution 2202 (2015), which endorsed the "Package of measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements". A briefing on **2 February** by Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, was followed by an open debate on **21 February** during which speakers emphasized that peace must never be taken for granted in Europe.

### Cyprus

Meetings: 26 January, 27 July.

Resolutions: 2338, 2369.

The Council on **26 January** unanimously adopted resolution 2338 (2017), extending the mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) until 31 July 2017 and encouraging the divided island nation's leaders to "grasp the current opportunity" of recent progress in negotiations to secure a comprehensive settlement of the dispute between them. The Force's mandate was renewed on **27 July** until 31 January 2018 through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2369 (2017), which also requested the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of the mission.

### Kosovo

Meetings: 27 February, 16 May, 16 August, 14 November.

Heightened tensions between Serbia and Kosovo had reduced the space for political dialogue, Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), told the Council on **27 February**. At the same meeting, Tomislav Nikolić, President of Serbia, emphasized the importance of regular quarterly Council meetings on Kosovo and for UNMIK to be appropriately resourced. Vlora Çitaku of Kosovo said the time had come to move on, adding that resources spent on UNMIK could go to better uses.

Returning before the Council on **16 May**, the Special Representative said the situation in Kosovo was “generally stable”. Serbia’s Minister of Justice, Nela Kuburović, highlighted Belgrade’s dialogue with Pristina, while Ms. Çitaku said it was cynical to come to the Council Chamber every three months for political reasons.

Briefing the Council on **16 August**, Mr. Tanin said June’s parliamentary elections in Kosovo had shifted its political landscape significantly. Ivica Dačić, Serbia’s First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Ms. Çitaku also spoke. The representative of the United States said that UNMIK, while a success story, had outlived its reason for existing. The Russian Federation’s representative, however, said the Mission remained essential.

Briefing on **14 November**, the Special Representative said municipal elections on 19 October had been peaceful and orderly, with a significant increase in participation by ethnic Serbs in areas where they formed the majority. The ensuing debate centred on the UNMIK’s role. Mr. Dačić said the fact that 200,000 internally displaced persons who had been forced to flee Kosovo and Metohija still lived in Serbia after 18 years was a powerful argument for keeping the Mission’s scope intact. Ms. Çitaku said the Mission’s downsizing and withdrawal should be discussed.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

Meetings: 18 May, 7 November.

Resolution: 2384.

The Council on **7 November** unanimously adopted resolution 2384 (2017), renewing its authorization of the European-led multinational stabilization force, known as EUFOR ALTHEA, for one further year. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, briefed the Council on **18 May** and **7 November**, emphasizing that continued progress must not be taken for granted.

### Non-Proliferation

## Weapons of Mass Destruction

Meetings: 16 March, 28 June.

The risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-State actors remained high, said Council members at a **16 March** meeting on the issue. Sacha Sergio Llorenty Solíz (Bolivia), Chair of the Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), said that body sought to build on momentum generated by resolution 2325 (2016) in that regard. The Council returned to the topic in an open debate on **28 June**, with participants highlighting the relevance of resolution 1540 (2004) and expressing alarm over the reported use of chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria.

## International Justice

### International Criminal Tribunals

Meetings: 7 June, 6 December.

A worrying denial of war crimes, glorification of convicted perpetrators and a lack of cooperation with some national authorities had hampered the work of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, senior officials from those bodies told the Council on **7 June**. Those and other challenges were highlighted alongside progress reports on developments in the Mechanism and efforts being made ahead of the closure of the Tribunal on 31 December 2017.

Addressing the Council on **6 December**, Carmel Agius, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, noting that the Tribunal had completed its judicial work on 29 November, said he was disturbed by the numerous crimes yet to be prosecuted before domestic courts. Also speaking were Theodor Meron, President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals; Serge Brammertz, Prosecutor of that Mechanism; the President of Croatia; and the Minister for Justice of Serbia.

### International Court of Justice

Meetings: 9 November, 13 November, 20 November.

The Council, meeting independently from but concurrently with the General Assembly on **9 November**, **13 November** and **20 November**, elected five candidates to the International Court of Justice for nine-year terms, beginning on 6 February 2018: Ronny Abraham (France), Dalveer Bhandari (India), Nawaf Salam (Lebanon), Antônio Augusto Cançado Trindade (Brazil) and Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf (Somalia).

## Threats to International Peace and Security

Meetings: 7 February, 13 February, 11 May, 24 May, 8 June, 20 July, 2 August, 24 August, 21 September, 27 September, 28 September, 17 November, 28 November, 21 December, 21 December.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/15.

Resolutions: 2341, 2354, 2368, 2370, 2379, 2395, 2396.

Presenting the Secretary-General's fourth report on Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said that terrorist group was on the defensive militarily in Iraq and Syria. However, its fighters — fleeing beyond those borders — were expanding their attacks to Europe and Africa. Unanimously adopting resolution 2341 (2017), the Council on **13 February** called upon Member States to address the danger of terrorist attacks against critical infrastructure. The chairs of three terrorism-related Security Council subsidiary bodies briefed members on **11 May**. The Council unanimously adopted resolution 2354 (2017) on **24 May**, urging Member States to follow guidelines set out in the Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives in an effort to, among other things, amplify positive and credible alternatives to audiences vulnerable to extremist messages.

At a meeting on **8 June**, speakers told the Council that, while ISIL was being hobbled by lost territory and shrinking financial resources, collective efforts must be intensified to finally put an end to its attacks and to eradicate its online propaganda. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council on **20 July** adopted resolution 2368 (2017), a sweeping 33-page text detailing the types of sanctions imposed on ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals and groups. Through resolution 2370 (2017), unanimously adopted on **2 August**, the Council called upon Member States to counter threats posed by improvised explosive devices. Having reviewed the implementation of resolution 2255 (2015) regarding sanctions against Taliban affiliates, the Council said in a presidential statement on **24 August** that no further adjustments were necessary “at this time”.

By the terms of resolution 2379 (2017), adopted unanimously on **21 September**, the Council asked the Secretary-General to set up an independent investigative team to support domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable for its actions in Iraq. Fang Liu, Secretary-General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), briefed the Council on **27 September** on the Global Aviation Security Plan. Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, Head of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, told Council members on **28 September** that strengthening coordination and coherence would be the new entity's top priority.

Stability in the Mediterranean region was the focus of a Council debate on **17 November**, with the Secretary-General warning that violence and hatred were threatening its dynamic mix of mutually enriching cultures, societies and economies. Returning before the Council on **28 November**, Mr. Voronkov said the complex problem of foreign terrorist fighters was “a truly global challenge” that called for an urgent multilateral response. Unanimously adopting resolution 2395 (2017) on **21 December**, the Council renewed the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate until December 2021. Also on **21 December**, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2396 (2017), expressing grave concern over risks posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters and urging Member States to strengthen their efforts to address that threat.

### Cooperation with Regional Organizations

#### African Union

Meetings: 15 June, 19 July, 12 September.

The United Nations must move towards a more institutionalized approach for the joint planning, mandating, financing and supporting of African Union peace-support operations, speakers told the Council on **15 June** as it took up proposals in that regard. Following the 19 April signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, the Secretary-General told the Council on **19 July** that the two organizations had a shared interest in strengthening mechanisms to defuse and manage conflicts. “I firmly believe the international community needs to change the narrative about the African continent,” he added. Extolling the virtues of a strong partnership, Council members on **12 September** suggested ways to enhance peace and security efforts, following a briefing by Haile Menkerios, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union.

#### European Union

Meeting: 9 May.

Describing the European Union as an indispensable partner of the United Nations, Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said on **9 May** that the bloc was ready to join the Organization in building a more cooperative world order. “The European way is the United Nations way,” she said, emphasizing the Union’s growing role as a security provider, with member States contributing almost 40 per cent of the United Nations peacekeeping budget.

#### Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Meeting: 22 February.

Voicing deep concern over regional conflicts, radicalization and violent extremism, the Chair-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), in his annual briefing to the Council, stressed on **22 February** the need to foster open and constructive dialogue in seeking common solutions.

## **Thematic Issues**

### **Peacekeeping Operations**

Meetings: 6 April, 23 May, 29 August, 20 September, 5 October, 6 November, 21 December, 21 December.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/27.

Resolutions: 2378, 2382.

United Nations peacekeeping was at a crossroads, the Secretary-General said on **6 April**, pressing the Council to keep such operations relevant through clear mandates with well-identified priorities, adequate sequencing and the flexibility to evolve. In an ensuing debate, delegates underlined the Council's essential role in making operations more adaptable to their respective environments, notably through early political engagement.

The commanders of four United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa and the Middle East briefed the Council on **23 May**, emphasizing the need to “go beyond the traditional peacekeeping box” and overcome bureaucratic hurdles. A day-long open debate on **29 August** gave Member States the opportunity to share their views on the potential contributions of missions to the Sustaining Peace Agenda.

By the terms of resolution 2378 (2017), unanimously adopted on **20 September**, the Council stated that the “primacy of politics” — including through mediation, ceasefire monitoring and assisting in the implementation of peace accords — should be the hallmark of the United Nations approach to resolving conflict. It went on to debate strategic force generation at a **5 October** meeting, during which Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, emphasized the role of Council leadership, as well as a shortage of specialized capabilities.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2382 (2017), the Council on **6 November** resolved to include, on a case-by-case basis, policing as an integral part of peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

A presidential statement on **21 December** reaffirmed the Council's commitment to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in addressing conflict at all stages. Also on **21 December**,

Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, said partnership and resources were key to ensuring that every peacekeeping mission was supported by properly trained, well-equipped and motivated troops and police, as the Council discussed how best to fill critical capability gaps.

### Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

Meeting: 19 June.

Building upon the progress it had made in 2016, the Peacebuilding Commission would seek to review its working methods to enhance efficiency and flexibility, Cho Tae-Yul (Republic of Korea), Chair of the Commission, said on **19 June** during the Council's regular briefing on the work of its intergovernmental advisory body.

### Protection of Civilians

Meeting: 25 May.

An open debate on **25 May** focused on attacks against medical personnel and facilities. The Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said about 50 million people in urban areas were now bearing the brunt of conflict, while the Deputy Director for Advocacy at Human Rights Watch said little had been done to investigate attacks on health facilities or to hold those responsible to account. Many delegates voiced support for resolution 2286 (2016) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and for the Secretary-General's recommendations for its implementation.

### Human Rights

Meeting: 18 April.

The Council held its first-ever thematic debate on human rights, peace and security on **18 April**, with the Secretary-General stating it was critical to ensure better and less politicized action on human rights, which in turn would complement progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the ensuing debate, many delegates recommended closer collaboration between the Council and the Human Rights Council, as well as more frequent briefings by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

### Refugees

Meeting: 2 November.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, addressed the Council on **2 November**, saying a sharp rise in the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide — to more than 66 million — reflected a weakness in international cooperation and response to the crisis. In an ensuing debate, Japan's representative said lasting solutions could not be achieved solely through emergency humanitarian assistance, while the Russian Federation's delegate said responsibility for refugee flows rested with those States that had intervened in the Middle East and Africa. Several speakers addressed the issue of Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar into Bangladesh.

### Women, Peace and Security

Meetings: 15 May, 27 October.

Shame and stigma were integral to the logic of using sexual violence as a tool of war, torture or terrorism, the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide told the Council on **15 May**. He pressed the Council to redirect the stigma of sexual violence from victim to perpetrator and for sexual violence to be addressed in efforts to curb financial flows to terrorist groups. The Deputy Secretary-General said sexual violence was now seen globally as a legitimate threat to peace that required an operational security and justice response.

More than 85 delegates participated in the Council's annual debate on **27 October** on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, with participants calling for more funding for gender expertise in peacebuilding and prosecution. Briefing were Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and Charo Mina Rojas, a civil society representative from Colombia, who said her country's peace agreement had become a new source of hope for women's empowerment.

### Children and Armed Conflict

Meeting: 31 October.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/21.

Issuing a presidential statement at its debate on children and armed conflict, the Council on **31 October** reiterated its strong condemnation of the recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict, as well as their killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence used against them. Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, said there were more than 20,000 violations against children documented by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) alone during 2016, with 2017 not seeing improvements.



Mubin Shaikj, of the non-governmental organization Child Soldiers Initiative, described his own six-year period of radicalization as a teenager following a trip into Taliban-controlled parts of Afghanistan.

### Maintenance of International Peace and Stability

Meetings: 10 January, 10 March, 15 March, 24 March, 6 June, 13 June, 30 June, 9 August, 12 October, 21 November, 28 November, 30 November, 20 December.

Presidential Statement: S/PRST/2017/14.

Resolutions: 2347, 2365, 2388.

Opening a day-long Council debate on **10 January** on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, the Secretary-General called for “a whole new approach” that would make prevention a priority. Reforms he intended to set in motion aimed at achieving that goal, he stated, adding that United Nations response to crises was fragmented while Member States mistrusted each other’s motives. In the ensuing debate, in which representatives of more than 90 Member States participated, a number of delegates emphasized the need for an open and mutually reinforcing relationship between the Secretary-General and the Council.

Briefing on **10 March**, Stephen O’Brien, Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, said 20 million people across four countries he had recently visited — Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen — faced starvation and famine if the international community failed to act quickly. During an open debate on **15 March**, delegates recommended that the Council pursue cooperation in efforts to fight wide-spread impunity for human traffickers.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2347 (2017) on **24 March**, the Council deplored the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage, religious sites and artefacts, and the smuggling of cultural property by terrorist groups during armed conflict, affirming that such attacks might constitute a war crime and that perpetrators must be brought to justice. Stressing that Member States had the primary responsibility to protect their cultural heritage, it encouraged them to take preventive steps through documentation and consolidation of their nationally owned cultural property in a network of “safe havens”.

The Council took up the issue of water and security on **6 June**, with the Secretary-General emphasizing the need for effective resource management to avert disputes. A briefing on mine action on **13 June** was followed by the Council’s unanimous adoption on **30 June** of resolution 2365 (2017), its first stand-alone text on the issue. Through that text, the Council called on the international community to accede to relevant treaties and support mine removal, among other

things. Delegates welcomed the adoption as a significant step in mitigating the terrible threat of explosive devices, with most calling for universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Issuing a presidential statement on **9 August**, the Council — calling upon all parties in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen to urgently take steps that would enable a more effective humanitarian response — expressed its grave concern about the unprecedented level of global humanitarian needs and the threat of famine currently facing more than 20 million people in those countries.

Sounding the alarm on famine exacerbated by conflict, the Secretary-General, appearing before the Council on **12 October**, urged the international community to step up efforts to end violence, ensure humanitarian assistance and foster long-term development in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen and other areas of instability-rooted starvation.

Through resolution 2388 (2017), unanimously adopted on **15 November** ahead of a day-long debate on the issue, the Council reiterated its condemnation of trafficking in human beings today, particularly the sale of people by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), as well as other violations and abuses by Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Lord's Resistance Army and other such groups for the purpose of sexual slavery, sexual exploitation and forced labour.

Mr. Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, briefed the Council on **28 November**, emphasizing that slavery and other grave human rights abuses affecting migrants and refugees travelling to North Africa and beyond constituted an abomination that could no longer be ignored.

The looting and trafficking of cultural heritage to fuel armed conflict and terrorism was the topic of a Council debate on **30 November**. Delegates called on Governments to combat impunity and deepen cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

Prevention and development must be at the centre of all efforts to address quantitative and qualitative changes emerging in threats worldwide, the Secretary-General told the Council on **20 December** as some 60 Member States participated in an all-day debate tackling complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security. He said the perils of nuclear weapons were once again front and centre, with climate change a threat multiplier and technological advances making it easier for extremists to communicate.

### Sanctions Regimes

Meeting: 3 August.

The Council reflected on the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions on **3 August** with Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, emphasizing that “sanctions are not an end in themselves” — a view shared by many delegates. In the ensuing discussion, Council members noted that each sanctions regime was unique, yet required the full support of Member States to be effective.

### Small Arms

Meeting: 18 December.

The spread of small arms, light weapons and their ammunition was the topic of an **18 December** meeting that considered efforts to halt their illicit trade on the “dark web”. “The human cost of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms runs deep,” said Izumi Nakamitsu, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, introducing the Secretary-General’s report on the matter.



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