

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 22 December 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the Argentine Republic in October 2014 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Maria Cristina **Perceval**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 22 December 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Argentina (October 2014)

I. Introduction

During the month of October 2014, the Security Council held 20 public meetings, one private meeting and 14 closed consultations. The Council adopted four resolutions and one presidential statement and issued 17 statements to the press.

II. Africa

Central African Republic

On 21 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2181 (2014), which extended the mandate of the European Union operation described in paragraph 44 of resolution 2134 (2014) until 15 March 2015. According to paragraph 43 of resolution 2134 (2014) and the letter dated 21 January 2014 from the High Representative of the European Union (S/2014/45), the European Union operation was authorized to contribute to the protection of civilians, in coordination with the French forces. This was a request made by Catherine Samba Panza, the Head of State of the Transition (letter dated 3 October) in view of the fact that the situation in the country still constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

On 22 October, under “Other matters”, the Security Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), General Babakar Gaye, on the ongoing political and security situation in the country. The Special Representative informed the Security Council about security incidents that took place in and around the city of Bangui between 7 and 15 October, in which two peacekeepers from Pakistan and Cameroon were killed (the first MINUSCA blue helmets to die in the line of duty). Those incidents, which included lootings and the burning of several homes, also caused more than 20 deaths and nearly 50 injured among the civilian population. The Special Representative also said that it was critical to support the Transitional Government until the elections of 2015 and called upon the Transitional Government and armed groups to respect the compromises made in July in Brazzaville to restore peace and stability in the country.

Côte d’Ivoire (sanctions)

On 29 October, the Security Council discussed in a briefing, followed by informal consultations, the report of the President of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d’Ivoire, Ambassador Cristian Barros of Chile.

At the public briefing, Ambassador Barros referred to the midterm report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire and to the informal consultation meeting held by the Committee on 10 October, summarizing the main findings included in the midterm report (S/2014/729), prepared pursuant to resolution 2153 (2014), and the analysis of the Group's findings discussed during the informal consultations of 10 October. He also reported that he planned to visit Côte d'Ivoire from 2 to 7 November, and that the purpose of the visit, organized in close cooperation with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), was to highlight the importance of fully implementing the provisions in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, to gather first-hand information on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and to establish a sustained dialogue between the authorities of that country and the Committee.

In the informal consultations, the Chair of the 1572 (2004) Committee added that on 26 September he had held a bilateral meeting with President Ouattara, who had expressed his support for the Committee's visit to his country but had also asked for an end of the sanctions regime, given the progress achieved.

Council members stressed the favourable developments in the country, both in terms of security as well as the economic and political situation, but also expressed their concern about the disarmament process, the security sector reform and the actions of some groups still present in Liberia. Most delegations also stressed the importance of continuing efforts to improve the human rights situation in the country. With regard to the trade in diamonds, they welcomed the progress made and asked for the improved management of natural resources. Council members welcomed the improved cooperation between the panel and the Government and called for further improvement. They welcomed the decision of the Committee to visit Côte d'Ivoire. Several delegations called on the Group of Experts to continue investigating the financial networks used by mercenary groups. Several delegations stressed the importance of national reconciliation and stressed the importance of addressing the root causes of the conflict. Council members requested that particular attention be paid to the situation of border security and support for the efforts of Côte d'Ivoire in the electoral process. Several delegations called on the Government to do everything possible to end impunity.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 27 October, the Council was briefed in a public meeting by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Martin Kobler, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Said Djinnit, who introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on MONUSCO (S/2014/698) and on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2014/697).

Special Representative Kobler informed the Council about several attacks perpetrated by the Allied Democratic Forces that took place between 5 and 18 October, which caused the death of more than 40 civilians and hundreds of internally displaced persons near Beni town, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He asked the Council to support a more mobile and robust action by the Mission, stating that this was the best way to neutralize armed groups

and to protect civilians. As for the voluntary disarmament process by the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the Special Representative said that there had been no progress since the midterm analysis at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa and Southern African Development Community joint ministerial summit on 2 October. He warned that if FDLR does not show a major commitment by 2 January 2015, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), with the support of MONUSCO, will have to start military operations for its neutralization. Regarding the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he insisted on the importance of justice, respect and accountability, as well as good governance and respect for human rights, to address the root causes of conflicts and said that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made some progress on those issues in the last years. That is why he regretted the decision made by the Government to declare Mr. Scott Campbell, Director of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, “persona non grata” as well as the order for him to leave the country within 48 hours, as well as the serious intimidation directed towards other human rights staff, a day after the release of a United Nations report detailing serious human rights violations by Congolese security forces (“Report of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office on human rights violations committed by agents of the Congolese National Police”). In this regard, he stated that the respect for human rights paves the road to stability and that impunity weakens security institutions and creates distrust in the country. However he assured the Council that he will continue to work closely with the authorities on human rights issues in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Lastly, he insisted that protection of civilians for MONUSCO is more than a mandate: it is a moral imperative.

The Special Envoy briefed the Council, supporting the desire of all States of the region to implement their commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the Great Lakes Region, even when there is a long history of distrust among them. He called for a complete neutralization of all negative forces in the region, including FDLR and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). With regard to FDLR, he recalled the conclusions of the joint ministerial summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa and the Southern African Development Community and asked all international partners to support the implementation of all regional agreements, in particular the Nairobi and Kampala agreements. He warned the Council of the dangerousness of ADF and insisted on the need for FARDC, with the support of MONUSCO, to neutralize all armed groups under the framework of the protection of civilians. In addition, he made reference to the ongoing initiatives to support women’s empowerment as well as the organization of a workshop in Bujumbura for civil society actors from the Great Lakes region.

The Permanent Representative of Rwanda spoke about the dangerousness of FDLR, a group under United Nations sanctions regime, and insisted on the importance of its neutralization, bearing in mind that it is responsible for terrible crimes against civilians and that it continues to promote genocide and to threaten the stability of Rwanda and the region.

The Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo recalled the efforts made by his Government to implement its national commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Frameworks for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, as well as those approved in Kampala and

Nairobi, and asked for the repatriation of those M23 elements still in Rwanda and Uganda. He warned the Council about the continuing dangerousness of ADF in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and reiterated the commitment of his Government to fight against all negative forces, including FDLR, a group that, by 2 January 2015, should leave the country, disarm voluntarily or face military action by FARDC and MONUSCO. Regarding the expulsion of the Director of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, he stated that the decision was taken based on the fact that Mr. Campbell's report was partial. He also supported the action of the Congolese National Police during "Operation Likofi" in Kinshasa between 15 November 2013 and 15 February 2014. Regarding the intimidation to the United Nations human rights personnel, he said that the Government has launched an investigation to find those responsible.

In closed consultations that followed, the Special Representative and the Special Envoy addressed some issues related to security sector reform and the creation of a rapid reaction force within FARDC, the electoral process and the general elections. The members of the Security Council expressed their concern over the expulsion of the Director of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office and the need for the Government to continue to fight against impunity and to respect and promote human rights, the rule of law and accountability. The members of the Security Council also asked the President of the Council to convey to the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo their concern regarding the expulsion of the Director of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office and to call on the Government to continue to be engaged in the fight against impunity and in the promotion of respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Libya

On 2 October, the Security Council issued a press statement (SC/11585) in relation to the meeting facilitated by the United Nations between members of the Libyan House of Representatives in Ghadames on 29 September.

Mali

On 8 October, the Security Council held a briefing, followed by informal consultations, to address the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2014/692), submitted pursuant to resolution 2164 (2014).

Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, briefed the Council via videoconference from Bamako. Also via videoconference from Bamako, Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of Mali, addressed the Council.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations presented the report of the Secretary-General, noting that he was in Bamako because of sad circumstances, as he was there for the funeral of the nine peacekeepers killed in an ambush on 3 October. He also referred to the attack on the base of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in Kidal on 7 October. Regarding the political process, the Under-Secretary-General stated that in mid-October the dialogue would resume in Algeria through the facilitation of that country. In this regard, he indicated that the parties continued to maintain their positions and that, therefore, greater effort was required to find a solution. In addition, he considered it essential that an agreement be reached in

order to enable the return of the Malian authorities to the north, and hence to ensure the integrity and sovereignty of the country. The security situation was also of great concern since the number of victims at the Mission was one of the highest for a peacekeeping operation. He explained the increase in attacks in the last three months as a result of the reduction of the presence of French forces and the absence in many parts of the north of the defence and national security forces, leaving the United Nations as the only military presence in that area of the country. Given the deteriorating security situation, Ladsous considered that MINUSMA was not performing in a peacekeeping environment and that such a situation required taking measures to address the growing threat. In this regard, he reported that MINUSMA was working actively to strengthen the protection of bases, troops and country teams, and was also working on demining. He stressed that his Department was also contemplating the rotation of troops in the north and doing everything to assure the support to troop-contributing countries.

The Foreign Minister of Mali welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and endorsed its recommendations. He stated that Mali had always responded to the calls of the Security Council, starting with the national dialogue process of 16 July, which representatives of civil society participated in. In this regard, he said that his Government rejected all claims of federation or confederation contrary to the country's constitution. Taking into account the return of terrorist groups, he considered that MINUSMA should have all the necessary equipment to fulfil its mandate and protect the population of the northern region. He called on the international community to deliver a strong message to the terrorists, and for that reason called for a review of the mandate of MINUSMA in order to confront the terrorist threat, including through a rapid intervention force. He underlined the importance of the northern group's collaboration. Finally, he emphasized his faith in the negotiation process initiated in Algeria and the Government's excellent relationship with MINUSMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Albert Koenders.

In the informal consultations that followed the meeting, the Under-Secretary-General, accompanied by the staff of MINUSMA, insisted that the threat was important, real and sophisticated, and that therefore everything had to be done to protect MINUSMA personnel under growing asymmetric threats and to strengthen the Mission's operational capacity in line with its mandate. He indicated that some troop-contributing countries were not prepared for the deteriorating security situation. Whereas the negotiations in Algeria had not yet produced a political solution, he invited the Council to consider how to deal with this crisis.

Council members stressed the importance of a durable political settlement, based on the respect for the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the country, in accordance with Council resolutions and the Ouagadougou agreement. Given the historical opportunity, they considered that the parties should commit fully to the dialogue. Many delegations welcomed Algeria's mediation efforts. Council members unanimously condemned the attacks carried out in asymmetric warfare waged by terrorist groups and expressed concern over the deteriorating security situation. One delegation questioned the representative of MINUSMA and the United Nations with regard to the lack of proper equipment and supplies, although it welcomed the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to respond to particular concerns of troop-contributing countries. Most Council members called for the adoption of all necessary measures to strengthen MINUSMA and considered

that it was necessary to analyse urgently how to respond to the extremist threat. Several delegations called for a proper and just rotation of contingents, especially those operating in the most difficult areas. One delegation suggested that the Council should punish armed groups that continue to occupy positions despite the agreements signed and that any troop-contributing country that does not meet the requirements should be immediately replaced by another that has the ability or the willingness to comply with the mandate. Several delegations referred to the situation in Libya as an additional reason for the deterioration of the security situation. Several delegations called on the Government of Mali to investigate violations of human rights, expressing concern about the release of perpetrators of serious crimes against human rights.

On 3 and 7 October, the Council issued press statements condemning recent attacks on MINUSMA (SC/11587 and SC/11591).

On 17 October, a press statement (SC/11604) referring to the resumption of the national dialogue in Algeria was issued.

Somalia

On 14 October, the Security Council was briefed at an open meeting by Mr. Nicholas Kay, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), and by the Special Representative of the Chair of the Commission of the African Union, Ambassador Maman Sidikou. The Special Representative underlined that since his last report to the Council, Al-Shabaab had suffered significant reverses and that the political process had moved forward. He considered that the landmark visit of the Security Council to Somalia was a signal to the country and to Al-Shabaab that the international community remained committed and that more progress was needed. He underscored that the challenges remained significant and urgent and that coordinated action by the Federal Government of Somalia was needed in the security, development, political and humanitarian fields. He considered that unity of purpose and sustained action between Somali politicians and leaders was necessary. Somalia was living through a moment of unprecedented change and optimism, and it was important to seize the opportunity.

The Special Representative highlighted the important political progress, particularly in the process of State formation, and welcomed the ongoing process of reconciliation and establishment of interim administrations. He encouraged the Government to accelerate the State formation process in the central regions and called on the Federal Government and the Federal Parliament to make the necessary arrangements for more and faster progress in creating the national independent electoral commission and the boundaries and federation commission; he also underlined that the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission should quickly begin its work and that the Parliamentary Implementation Oversight Committee should be established. The Special Representative expressed concern about the risk of political in-fighting and appealed to all of Somalia's political institutions, including the Federal Parliament, to focus on the urgent business of establishing the institutions and processes that will pave the way to longer-term peace, stability and reconciliation. He deemed the upcoming parliamentary session as decisive. If key laws were not passed, Somalis would not adopt a new constitution or have democratic elections in 2016.

He considered that military action would not eradicate the terrorist threat in Somalia and that military gains needed to be consolidated through stabilization. He also expressed concern that efforts to develop security institutions were insufficient and that human rights remained a concern and a priority. Of great concern were the recent allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by some troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and in this regard he welcomed the African Union's commitment to a full investigation in accordance with its zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

He underlined that the humanitarian situation in Somalia had continued to deteriorate. He informed that humanitarian assistance had been stepped up. He stressed, however, that air cargo flights simply could not deliver the quantities of supplies required and that secure road access was essential. He called for an urgent mobilization of sufficient resources, as otherwise another devastating humanitarian emergency could take place, undermining the political and security gains of the previous two years.

The Special Representative of the Chair of the Commission of the African Union, echoed the Special Representative's assessment that the overall political developments in Somalia remained encouraging, with evidence of progress in the State formation process, the constitutional review and the preparations for elections by 2016. He informed the Council that AMISOM and the Somali National Army forces were concluding the second phase of their joint "Operation Indian Ocean" and that eight towns, including Al-Shabaab's stronghold and de facto capital, Baraawe, had been recovered by the Somali National Army, supported by AMISOM forces.

Mr. Sidikou highlighted that, even if Al-Shabaab had suffered military reversals, the group still retained appreciable numbers of its fighters and equipment, mainly in rural areas, and he considered that this was probably designed to maintain a prolonged asymmetrical fight. He underlined that in terms of internal dynamics, there were indications that the group could break up into several factions, with some elements pondering a shift in allegiance from Al-Qaida to the Islamic State in order to attract resources and profit from the Islamic State brand.

The Special Representative also informed the Council that AMISOM would adjust to the asymmetrical warfare and would work with the Somali Government to neutralize the remnant of Al-Shabaab and would continue to work with its partners. He concluded by informing the Council that the Chair of the African Union Commission, Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, had established an independent, multi-country panel to investigate the allegations of rape and sexual exploitation by AMISOM forces made in the report of the Human Rights Watch entitled "The Power These Men Have Over Us: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by African Union Forces in Somalia".

On 15 October, in closed consultations, the Security Council received the 120-days' briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, Ambassador Oh Joon, regarding the activities of the Committee and the final reports of the Monitoring Group. The Chair advised the Council that during the Committee's consultations, the Monitoring Group had presented a brief on its findings regarding the recovery of Somali overseas assets and had discussed the issue of charcoal and weapons interdictions by international maritime forces on the

high seas and within the territorial waters of Somalia. The Chair stressed that the Coordinator of the Monitoring Group had noted that the illicit supply of weapons and the charcoal exports continued due to lack of enforcement and, in that context, he recommended that the Security Council consider mandating interdictions at sea by international maritime forces to stem the flow of such goods. The Chair noted that some Committee members had expressed the need for a careful review of the legal and operational implications of this. Ambassador Oh Joon also reported in his presentation to the Committee on the final reports of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea.

On 24 October, the Security Council adopted resolution 2182 (2014), in which it renewed the mandate of AMISOM, the partial suspension of the arms embargo for the Federal Government of Somalia and the Monitoring Group and authorized, for a period of 12 months, maritime interdiction of illicit weapons and charcoal on the high seas off the coast of Somalia and in Somali territorial waters. In the resolution, the Council affirmed that the authorization applies only with respect to the situation in Somalia and that it shall not affect the rights or obligations or responsibilities of Member States under international law, including any rights or obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including the general principle of exclusive jurisdiction of a Flag State over its vessels on the high seas, with respect to any other situation, underscored in particular that the resolution shall not be considered as establishing customary international law and noted that such authorization was provided only following the receipt of the letter of 8 October 2014 conveying the request of the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The resolution was adopted by 13 votes in favour, with Jordan and the Russian Federation abstaining. The draft resolution had been submitted by Australia, France, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Statements after the voting were made by the United Kingdom, Jordan, the United States, China, the Russian Federation and Argentina.

On 22 October, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, presented the report of the Secretary-General on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia (S/2014/740). He noted that, thanks to coordinated efforts by Member States, organizations and maritime industry, the incidents of piracy reported off the coast of Somalia are at the lowest levels recorded in recent years. However, that progress is fragile and reversible, unless the underlying conditions conducive to the continuation of piracy, including political instability and the lack of alternative livelihoods are addressed. While counter-piracy measures continue to prove effective, the international community must continue to support the Somali Government in its efforts to deliver on its commitments, as outlined in Vision 2016 and the Somali Compact. As the United Nations helps to strengthen the capacity of Somalia and other States in the region to prosecute individuals suspected of piracy and to sanction those convicted, in accordance with international standards, it is imperative that more nations criminalize piracy on the basis of international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. They must also take steps to deter and suppress the financing of piracy and the laundering of ransom money. The Under-Secretary-General encouraged the international community to support regional efforts to implement the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy, adopted by the African Union, the Djibouti Code of Conduct, the maritime initiatives of the

Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Maritime Security Strategy of the Southern African Development Community so that countries in the region bordering the Gulf of Aden and western Indian Ocean can develop their capacity to address piracy and develop their maritime domain. He concluded by stating that counter-piracy efforts should be an integral part of Somalia's State-building process, and that the international community should continue to address piracy across broader fronts, addressing institutional failures and building capacity.

Also on 22 October, in closed consultations, the Security Council received a report by the Emergency Relief Coordinator on Somalia, Mrs. Valerie Amos, on the humanitarian situation in Somalia, at the request of the delegation of Chile. The Coordinator stressed that the humanitarian situation had significantly deteriorated as a result of the drought, continued conflict, restricted flow of commercial goods into areas affected by military operations, increasing food prices and low funding for humanitarian activities. She stressed that humanitarian organizations in Somalia, if provided with adequate resources, continued to prove that they can reach people in need and that, despite the achievements, insecurity and limited funding continued to make the humanitarian response woefully inadequate. The Coordinator underlined that a sustained response and funding were critical to mitigate the worsening situation, and she considered that another serious shock could easily tip Somalia back into a devastating emergency. She reiterated her previous request to help secure additional funding for the humanitarian operation and stressed that donors also need to share the risks of operating in a complex environment. She also called on AMISOM to contribute, in close consultation with humanitarian agencies, to the creation of security conditions conducive to the safe, rapid, unimpeded and civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Sudan

On 16 October, the Security Council issued a press statement (SC/11603) condemning, in the strongest terms, the attack on the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) peacekeepers in Korma, North Darfur, by a group of unidentified armed men on 16 October 2014, which resulted in the death of three Ethiopian peacekeepers.

South Sudan

On 22 October, the Security Council held a briefing followed by informal consultations on the situation in South Sudan. Ellen Margrethe Løj, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), presented the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/708). Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, also briefed the Council, via videoconference from Geneva, referring to her recent visit to South Sudan that ended on 13 October with the signing of a joint communiqué through which the Government of that country pledged to take steps to end sexual violence.

In presenting the report of the Secretary-General, the Special Representative said that small-scale clashes continued between Government forces and rebel forces, and also between communities. She referred to the disastrous humanitarian situation, with one third of the population suffering from food insecurity and over one and a half million people displaced as refugees. In this regard, she considered it

important that the deployment of the additional UNMISS force be completed. The Special Representative also reported that more than 100,000 people are still housed in UNMISS camps and that considerable sums had been invested in improving living conditions. She considered that the arrival of the dry season represented an opportunity to provide a sustainable solution for internally displaced persons and that plans for their voluntary return were being studied. The Special Representative regretted that the situation of human rights continued to be marked by constant violations, and she warned that the situation could get even worse with the adoption and implementation of a new security bill. The Special Representative reported that she was appalled by the lack of respect for life. Regarding the deployment of UNMISS, she noted that the force was making every effort, as the additional deployment was completed, to extend its presence outside the bases. She indicated that the Mission also continued to make all efforts to ensure its free movement. In this regard, although the relationship with the Government had improved, she regretted that it had not put an end to violations of the status-of-forces agreement and condemned the detention of UNMISS staff.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Zainab Bangura, reported that from 5 to 11 October she had visited South Sudan, seeing, particularly in Bentiu, the worst situation she had ever seen, with unthinkable conditions and a shocking violence. The Special Representative detailed the violations by all parties and expressed grave concern over the ethnic impact of such violations.

Stressing that women were living in deplorable conditions without access to health and justice services, the Special Representative considered that it will be very difficult to address such a situation, given, in particular, the culture of silence and the absence of institutions to investigate and prosecute. She announced that she had signed a joint communiqué with President Kiir, and she expressed hope with regard to the commitment of the Government.

The representative of South Sudan considered that there was no point denying how terrible the situation was in his country, and he thanked the Secretary-General for mobilizing the support of the international community. He also thanked both Special Representatives for their work, congratulating Ms. Bangura for visiting and signing the joint communiqué.

The representative stressed that the challenges facing his country were huge, and that sexual violence and the use of child soldiers were against the culture of his people, representing a rupture from tradition. It was therefore necessary to reorient the population to understand that the current situation was contrary to international humanitarian law and also to their own cultural values. In relation to the renewal of the UNMISS mandate, he considered that capacity-building remained essential, particularly for the police and justice sectors.

During the informal consultations that followed, Ms. Bangura reiterated that the situation was extremely serious, but reversible if there was a sincere commitment of the parties. She considered that the joint communiqué was a positive sign, but that it needed to be implemented. She asked for some flexibility in the UNMISS mandate regarding capacity-building in this regard, and considered that the issue of sexual violence should be included in a future peace agreement. She urged the Council to pressure Riek Machar, the opposition leader, to issue a similar statement to the joint communiqué signed by President Kiir.

Council members expressed concern about the fragile situation and lack of progress towards a peace agreement, and expressed their appreciation for the mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Most delegations expressed concern over what appeared to be a commitment to the military option. Most Council members considered the signing of the joint communiqué as a positive step and urged opposition leader Riek Machar to engage in the same fashion. Several delegations noted that if the mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development were unsuccessful, the Council should consider punitive actions for those who impede the peace process, and some delegations insisted on giving due consideration to the position of the States members of the Authority on the issue of Security Council sanctions. One delegation considered that the Council should transmit the case to the International Criminal Court. Several delegations considered that the Council, in particular, was responsible for sending clear messages about accountability. Members expressed concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation.

Following national interventions, Special Representative Løj noted that UNMISS was conducting more frequent and robust patrols, as requested in the mandate, but regretted to say that 10,000 peacekeepers alone, in a country the size of South Sudan, could never stop the violence, including sexual violence. It would be necessary to bring about a change in the current mentality. Concerning the humanitarian situation, she said that in early 2015 the situation of food insecurity would worsen, given the drop in crops, and that for that reason the need for assistance would remain vital in the coming year. She confirmed that a Russian helicopter had been shot down and that a United Nations Board of Inquiry, which had been in the country the previous week, would present a report in early November. She said that no one knew who had attacked the helicopter since the incident occurred near Bentiu, where the armed parties are very close to each other. She reported that the opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army was using the bases for politics and propaganda, creating tensions within the bases. The Special Representative noted that cooperation with the police had not yet started. She underlined that it was not sustainable to keep internally displaced persons in the camps. Finally, she concluded by saying that UNMISS was preparing for two pessimistic scenarios: (a) that the conflict would escalate at the end of the rainy season without an agreement; and (b) that the conflict would intensify, even with a political agreement, since none of the parties could ensure that commanders on the ground would comply with it.

Special Representative Bangura, in turn, considered that in order to provide real protection for civilians, accountability and access to justice must be established, breaking the culture of denial. She called on the Council to pressure the country's leaders to ensure protection of civilians and human rights and for an end to sexual violence. She stated that President Kiir distrusted the United Nations, and that he is aware of the many violations in relation to the status-of-forces agreement.

United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)

On 7 October, the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation in Abyei and the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, presented the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in

Abyei (S/2014/709). Major General Halefom Moges, Officer-in-Charge, Acting Head of Mission and Commander of UNISFA, also participated in the consultations.

Introducing the report, the Assistant Secretary-General emphasized the risk that, despite the prevailing calm in the area, the security situation may deteriorate, in particular as a result of the inclusion of Abyei by the Sudanese authorities as an electoral district for the presidential elections of 2015. He considered that the electoral process, in the absence of transitional institutions in Abyei, could generate higher tensions. The Assistant Secretary-General also expressed concern at reports on the establishment by the Ngok Dinka community, with the support of the Government of South Sudan, of a committee to seek recognition from the international community on the outcome of the October referendum.

The Commander of the Force stressed that the Government of South Sudan must urgently appoint a co-chair for the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, noting that the decision was in the hands of President Kiir. He also reported that the verification mechanism had cancelled several missions because of the resistance presented by South Sudan forces. General Moges concluded his presentation by warning that, with the arrival of the dry season, the risk of renewed hostilities increased, and for that reason UNISFA had increased its patrols, but stressed that without dialogue it would not be possible to prevent the situation from deteriorating at some point. In that regard, he considered it necessary that the Council urge the parties to resume discussions on the outstanding issues.

Council members thanked UNISFA for its efforts to prevent the situation from deteriorating, but many delegations also expressed concern about the impasse in discussions on the final status, the absence of transitional institutions and the administrative vacuum. Most members expressed frustration at the lack of progress and called on the parties to avoid any unilateral action, referring, *inter alia*, to the inclusion of Abyei as an electoral district for the Sudanese presidential election in 2015. Council members urged for the resumption of dialogue in the framework of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee. Several delegations considered the Sudan's decision to include Abyei as an electoral district to be legitimate, since the area is part of the Sudan. Several delegations expressed regret that the verification mechanism was not working as a consequence of the lack of agreement by South Sudan to the establishment of the centre line. Several delegations considered that decisions that advance the outstanding issues can hardly be taken, given the current internal situations, in particular the South Sudan conflict. Council members supported the extension of the mandate for four months, many expressing support for the recommendations of the Secretary-General, including the decision to appoint a civilian in charge of the mission. Several members expressed support for the efforts of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and supported the proposal that a conference at the community level be organized.

Following national interventions, in reference to the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint a civilian as Head of mission for UNISFA, the Assistant Secretary-General stated that it would strengthen political dialogue with the two countries and allow them to concentrate on the inter-communal reconciliation conference, provided that both countries accept the decision. He insisted that any unilateral decision regarding the electoral issue at the present time, in the absence of a joint administration, would be a matter of concern. He also stressed the risk that the conflict might escalate with the resumption of the migration period, elections

and the absence of dialogue. In that regard, he called the Council to urge the parties to avoid unilateral acts and to establish a dialogue.

On 14 October, the Council unanimously adopted its resolution 2179 (2014), extending the mandate of UNISFA for four months. The representatives of the Sudan and of South Sudan delivered statements.

Western Sahara

On 27 October the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation in Western Sahara. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), Kim Bolduc, and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, briefed the Council. They reported on the work of MINURSO and the latest political developments and diplomatic activity, respectively. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, also attended the meeting to introduce the Special Representative and address the issue of her deployment.

The Personal Envoy reported on the status of the facilitation of negotiations by the United Nations. He said the last six months were to have been spent engaging in intensive bilateral engagements and shuttle diplomacy with the parties. He had held numerous exchanges with the Moroccan Government, which, before accepting the resumption of shuttle diplomacy, had requested a meeting to clarify its concerns regarding the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/258), specifying that Morocco considered that this would allow the process to move forward in the best possible manner. He added that these exchanges were ongoing. The Personal Envoy indicated that on a number of occasions the Moroccan Government had expressed its disappointment over the content of the last report and his last briefing to the Council in the informal consultations in April 2014. Given this situation, the Personal Envoy outlined the principles guiding his actions: his mandate was established under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations; the mandate is to facilitate negotiations and promote improved relations between Morocco and Algeria; the negotiations take place under the sole auspices of the Secretary-General, and the African Union was not to be involved but was to be kept informed; his role was that of a facilitator, not a mediator; as a facilitator, his actions required the cooperation of the parties; and the formal parties to the dispute, as identified by the Security Council, are Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario), although he acknowledged that Algeria shares the responsibility in helping to find a solution. The Envoy provided a framework in which the parties could arrive at a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, which would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The Envoy was neither for nor against a side and had no position on the solution, which depended on the parties and could not be externally imposed: no deadline for the current process had been established; natural resources and human rights were not part of his mandate, except when the parties agreed to discuss them; and the situation of refugees has the purview of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), although he offered his good offices regarding the humanitarian dimension. In conclusion, the Envoy, taking into account that insecurity, terrorism, frustration, the humanitarian issue, the separation of families and tensions in the bilateral relations between Morocco and Algeria are factors that should impel the parties to enter a genuine negotiating process, urged

Council members to do their utmost to encourage the parties to enter meaningful negotiations as soon as possible.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations introduced the Special Representative and Head of MINURSO, who reported on exchanges with Morocco and also reported on the delay in her deployment.

In turn, the Special Representative reported on the situation in Western Sahara, commenting that it had remained calm and stable, with no threats to the cessation of hostilities. She reported that MINURSO had not seen large demonstrations, only small-scale ones. Decreased international assistance and lack of opportunities fuelled dissatisfaction. She stated that MINURSO was implementing its mandate, in a context where regional issues remained a concern. She noted the cooperation of both parties with the Mission, despite the divergent positions. She reported that the observers were patrolling intensively and had major concerns regarding security. For that reason, she welcomed the increased number of observers authorized in the last resolution renewing the mandate of the Mission, and requested the completion of the deployment since it had not yet reached the authorized ceiling. In relation to regional threats, she highlighted the cooperation with United Nations missions in Mali and Libya.

Council members expressed support for the United Nations-led political process, stressing the importance of dialogue, and many members underlined the need to overcome differences to move the process forward. Most delegations welcomed the efforts of Morocco on human rights and encouraged their continuation. Members of the Council recalled the importance of finding a solution because the status quo had lasted too long, and they noted that an enabling framework for dialogue could provide a solution to this issue. All members called for a mutually acceptable political situation. Several delegations called for improved dialogue between Morocco and Algeria, particularly considering the deteriorating regional security situation. Several delegations considered the Moroccan autonomy proposal as a good basis for a solution. Council members welcomed the work of MINURSO in implementing its mandate and expressed hope that confidence would be restored so that the Special Representative could deploy to the field. Several delegations stressed their concern about the refugees in the Tindouf camps and called for improving the situation there; while others called for a refugee registration. Several Members expressed support for UNHCR and MINURSO.

Following interventions by Council members, Mr. Ross suggested that it might be preferable if the reports of the Secretary-General were focused solely on the activities carried out by MINURSO, with an oral update on political developments. He insisted that this was a matter under discussion at the Secretariat, in particular regarding the purpose, scope and content of the reports. He also noted that Morocco was frustrated by the multitude of authors and would like to have a single interlocutor. He closed the discussion on the topic, noting that he continued to study the issue so that the report might stop being an obstacle and rather become a contribution to the process. The Personal Envoy also said it was difficult to promote a solution with Morocco and Algeria on bad terms and that improving the bilateral relationship would have a positive impact on the process.

III. Middle East

Lebanon

On 15 October, the Security Council held consultations during which the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Terje Roed-Larsen, presented the twentieth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) concerning Lebanon.

In his presentation, the Special Envoy recalled the provisions of the resolution that have been already implemented, but he also reiterated his frustration and that of the Secretary-General at the lack of further tangible progress in the remaining provisions, which raises the risk of the erosion of the gains that have already been made. He also expressed that the failure of the Lebanese Parliament to elect a new President had undermined Lebanon's stability and its resilience since the beginning of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, the Special Envoy highlighted the fact that Lebanon did not exist in isolation to other countries of the region. Issues relevant to resolution 1559 (2004) must therefore also be understood through the dynamics of the wider regional context.

Council members stressed the need for all parties to focus on all outstanding issues in the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), and urged them to continue upholding their commitment to Lebanon's policy of dissociation, enshrined in the Baabda Declaration, and to withdraw from fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic. They also emphasized that the timely election of the new President of Lebanon was a critical step for ensuring the country's stability.

Iraq

On 17 October, the Security Council issued a press statement (SC/11605) condemning the string of suicide, vehicle-borne and other attacks in Baghdad and the surrounding provinces over the previous several days, perpetrated by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which have killed scores of Iraqis. The members of the Council stressed that ISIL must be defeated and that the intolerance, violence and hatred it espouses must be stamped out. The members of the Council also condemned the systematic persecution of individuals from minority populations, such as Yezidis and Christians, and those who refuse the extremist ideology in Iraq promoted by ISIL and associated armed groups. They urged all parties to stop human rights violations and abuses, ensure humanitarian access and facilitate the delivery of assistance to those fleeing violence.

On 31 October, the Council issued another press statement (SC/11625) condemning the kidnappings and murders, by ISIL, of scores of Sunni tribesmen in Anbar Province, whose bodies were discovered in mass graves. The members of the Council expressed again their deep outrage over all Iraqis, as well as nationals of other States, who have been killed, kidnapped, raped or tortured by ISIL, as well as its recruitment and use of children. The members of the Council also welcomed the appointments of the Ministers of Defence and the Interior, and the swearing in of the Kurdish Ministers, which completed the formation of an inclusive Government that represents all segments of the Iraqi population and that contributes to finding a viable and sustainable solution to the country's current challenges.

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)

On 20 October, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, updated the Security Council on the steps necessary to maintain the ability of UNDOF to carry out its mandate, including options for monitoring the ceasefire and the separation of forces, as requested by the Council in its presidential statement of 19 September 2014 (S/PRST/2014/19). In that regard, the Assistant Secretary-General noted that the main focus of the actions undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was to continue to support UNDOF in its efforts to maintain the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and to ensure that the ceasefire was scrupulously observed by both parties. He said that in the current context the focus of the operations of UNDOF was on Bravo Side and that the activities and posture on Alpha Side were on a temporary basis. He advised that in previous weeks the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDOF had held discussions with the parties to the 1974 Disengagement Agreement on how the Force could best continue to implement its mandate. Both parties expressed their strong commitment to the Disengagement Agreement and the continuation of UNDOF with its present mandate and expressed their desire for the full return of the Force to the area of separation as soon as security conditions, which were being reviewed regularly, made that possible. As a provisional measure, UNDOF headquarters would be in Damascus, and would continue to be deployed on Mount Hermon. The Assistant Secretary-General said that various options were under discussion and consideration so that the Force could maintain its visibility and its capability to exercise its liaison functions with the parties, in order to avoid any escalation of tensions, and to monitor, verify and report any violations of the Disengagement Agreement. The Assistant Secretary-General also provided an update on the vehicles, items and equipment seized by armed opposition groups in the recent incidents with the Force.

Council members expressed their full support for UNDOF and called for a halt to all actions endangering personnel of UNDOF and the Observer Group Golan of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in their area of responsibility, including clashes between the Syrian parties. They also conveyed their support for the efforts and measures of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to adapt the Force to the changing and challenging circumstances and called on the parties to the 1974 Disengagement Agreement to remain committed to the terms of the agreement and to cooperate with those efforts. Council members also agreed that it was important for UNDOF to return to the area of separation as soon as security conditions allow.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 21 October, the Security Council convened its quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East. In his briefing to the Council, the Secretary-General said that it was important that the promises made at the Gaza reconstruction conference quickly materialize into concrete assistance on the ground. He mentioned that more than 100,000 residents of Gaza remained homeless, with over 50,000 still sheltering in United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) school buildings. While fully understanding the security threat to Israel from rockets above and tunnels below, the Secretary-General said that the scale of the destruction in Gaza had left deep questions about proportionality and the need for accountability. Recalling meetings held in

Jerusalem, he reiterated his deep concerns about plans to construct residential housing units in occupied East Jerusalem and reaffirmed that international law stated clearly that settlement activity was illegal and ran counter to the pursuit of a two-State solution. He also remained deeply concerned by unilateral actions, restrictions and provocations at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. The Secretary-General reiterated that there would be no hope for long-term stability in Gaza without addressing the underlying causes of the conflict: an end to the occupation that has ground on for nearly half a century; a full lifting of the blockade on the Gaza Strip; and effectively addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns.

On the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Secretary-General reaffirmed that the long-term strategic objective of the United Nations in the country remained a political solution based on the Geneva communiqué, and he urged the support of the Security Council for the efforts of his Special Envoy to reduce the suffering of the Syrian people and contribute to a political solution.

Council and non-Council members recognized the results of the Gaza reconstruction conference held in Cairo stressing that reconstruction should be accompanied by measures towards establishing a durable ceasefire that would end the recurring cycle of violence.

Many members expressed concern about deteriorating conditions on the ground. Most condemned the decision of Israel to advance settlement plans in the occupied Palestinian Territories. Some Member States also voiced concern about the tensions at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount compound in Jerusalem in previous weeks, and called on the parties to avoid unilateral steps that undermined prospects for peace. Council and non-Council members warned about the dangerous consequences of the impasse in the peace process and the lack of a political horizon to solve the conflict, and they called for renewed efforts by the international community, including the Security Council. Most participants also addressed the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and in Iraq, as well as the situation in Lebanon.

On 29 October, in the light of the deterioration of the situation in Jerusalem, including growing violence and renewed settlement activities, at the request of the delegation of Jordan, the Security Council held a meeting in briefing format.

In his statement to the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, said that the Secretary-General was alarmed by new reports about the advancement of planning for some 1,000 Israeli settlements units in occupied East Jerusalem, which followed Israel's decision at the end of September to accelerate the process of constructing some 2,600 residential units in Givat Hamatos, also in East Jerusalem. He added that, if pursued, these plans would raise grave doubts about Israel's commitment to achieving durable peace with the Palestinians, as the new settlements threatened the very viability of the future State of Palestine. He also reported that heightened tensions over unilateral actions, provocations and access restrictions at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem were continuing and the situation remained volatile. He said that the Secretary-General had reiterated the importance of respect for the religious freedom of all, and for worshippers of all faiths to have access to their holy sites, while noting that religious and other leaders should also refrain from making inflammatory statements. In that regard, he noted the reassurances of the Government of Israel that it has no plans to change long-standing policies governing the Holy Sites. Mr. Feltman stressed that ongoing tensions in East Jerusalem and the West could not

be separated from the larger reality that remains unresolved and that any enduring peace would require initiating dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict, including an end to the occupation that has lasted close to 50 years and effectively addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns.

Security Council members expressed their grave concern about the deteriorating situation in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, including tensions at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount compound. Most Council members deplored the continued Israeli settlement expansion and called on all sides to exercise restraint and to refrain from provocative actions and rhetoric and for the preservation of the status quo at the Holy Sites.

Middle East (Yemen)

On 10 October, the Security Council issued a press statement (SC/11595) condemning the bomb attack of 9 October in Sana'a, Yemen, which killed at least 47 people, including children. The members of the Security Council also condemned the continued attacks against Yemeni security forces in Hadramawt on 9 October, as well as in Bayda on 8 October, which were aimed at undermining Yemen's stability. The members of the Security Council also stressed that the political transition in Yemen must move forward.

On 13 October, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Yemen, Jamal Benomar, briefed the Security Council in closed consultations on the situation in the country. As on previous occasions, the Special Adviser warned about the actions of "spoilers", who were undermining Yemen's transition and threatening its peace, security and stability. He said that the country was at a critical juncture. He described the advance of the Houthi militia, which overran Sana'a, occupying several public buildings. In addition, he reported an increase in attacks by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, some connected to the overall political and security situation, and he expressed concern about the situation in the south of the country. The Special Adviser recalled the commitment of the Council to impose further measures, including sanctions, against those who obstruct the transition, which was now under attack.

Council members expressed concern about the latest developments in Yemen and condemned the growing number of terrorist attacks carried out or sponsored by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, expressing their determination to address this threat. They also reiterated their strong support for President Hadi and his efforts to implement the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, and urged all parties to implement the Peace and National Partnership Agreement in its entirety, in the context of national dialogue and inclusion. Council members welcomed the nomination of Khaled Bahah as the new Prime Minister and urged the Yemeni authorities to expedite the implementation of reforms, consistent with the outcomes of the national dialogue. Council members further discussed the possibility of imposing sanctions against opponents of the transition.

Information to the press was conveyed by the President of the Council at the end of the meeting, reflecting the above-mentioned points.

Middle East (Syrian Arab Republic)

On 3 October, the Security Council issued a press statement (SC/11589) condemning in the strongest terms the twin bomb attacks on a school complex in Homs, Syrian Arab Republic, on 1 October, which killed over 50 people and injured dozens more, a large majority of them children. The Council recalled that such targeting of schools and schoolchildren was a serious violation of international humanitarian law, and reiterated its condemnation of all grave violations and abuses committed against civilians, including children, as well as its demand that all parties desist from attacks directed against civilian objects, in line with Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014). The members of the Council also reiterated their determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations.

On 7 October, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, Sigrid Kaag, briefed the Security Council in closed consultations on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). The Special Adviser focused her intervention on four topics: the closure of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations on 30 September; the progress on the implementation of the plans for the destruction of the remaining 12 chemical weapons production facilities; the issue of discrepancies in the original declaration made by the Syrian Arab Republic; and the allegations concerning the use of chlorine gas in the Syrian Arab Republic.

With regard to the closure of the Joint Mission, the Special Adviser informed the Council that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations had established the necessary arrangements to enable the former organization to continue its remaining inspection and verification activities inside the Syrian Arab Republic. She stated that the Secretary-General would continue to exercise his good offices in furtherance of the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) and that she would continue to assist him in that regard.

In relation to the 12 chemical weapons production facilities, the Special Adviser noted that discussions continued with the companies that would be responsible for the destruction of the hangars and underground structures and that destruction activities would begin in November and last until the summer of 2015, security conditions permitting.

With regard to the third issue, the Special Adviser informed the Council that the Secretariat and the Syrian authorities continue to cooperate on outstanding issues regarding the Syrian declaration. Among other things she noted that, as a result of the activities of the declaration assessment team, a new amendment had been made to the initial declaration to include four chemical weapons facilities: one for production and three for research and development.

In conclusion, the Special Adviser made reference to the second report of the fact-finding mission to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, which had concluded that the information obtained constituted a compelling confirmation that a toxic chemical had been used as a weapon in a number of villages in the Syrian Arab Republic and that chlorine was the toxic chemical in question. She reiterated the condemnation by the Secretary-General of any use of chemical weapons by any party to the Syrian conflict and his call for perpetrators of any such acts to be brought to justice.

In their statements, Council members commended the Special Adviser and her team for their efforts and generally welcomed the progress achieved so far in the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. While supporting the successor arrangements for the continuation of the verification and inspection activities, many members stressed that the Council should continue to receive regular updates until the programme has concluded its activities. Some Council members called for an expeditious completion of the remaining issues, including the clarification of the discrepancies in the original declaration in a satisfactory manner. Many Council members expressed concern over the conclusions of the second report of the fact-finding mission, which contained some testimonies that chlorine had been dropped from helicopters, and some requested that the report be submitted to the Security Council for consideration as it might be a violation of its resolution 2118 (2014). Others expressed the view that the issue should be dealt in the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention to which the Syrian Arab Republic is now a party.

On 30 October, the members of the Council received a briefing by Assistant Secretary-General Kyung-wha Kang and, in closed consultations, by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Staffan de Mistura.

The Assistant Secretary-General presented the monthly statement on the implementation of resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014). She reported that, as armed violence escalated throughout the country, the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to worsen and the level of violence, death and destruction remained unrelenting. In October, nearly 200,000 people had fled the brutal advance of ISIL and had sought refuge in Turkey. She said that ISIL and all other parties to the conflict were killing and injuring people and destroying villages, towns and cities with impunity. In addition, armed opposition groups had intensified their attacks and the aerial bombardments carried out by the Government, including with barrel bombs, had continued. Despite the challenges, the Assistant Secretary-General informed the Council that the United Nations and partners had continued to deliver life-saving assistance to millions of people in need, including across the borders. She stressed, however, that the United Nations was still unable to deliver sufficient quantities of aid to people in the hardest-to-reach areas. Fighting and insecurity continued to hamper their ability to respond. In addition to insecurity, the parties to the conflict continued to place other obstacles in the way of delivering assistance, and the Government's bureaucratic hurdles continue to delay or deny the delivery of aid. A lack of funding had also severely compromised operations, and remained a major obstacle to the Organization's ability to reach more people in need. The consequences were severe: food assistance would be reduced for over 4 million Syrians and 1 million would not receive blankets, warm clothes and fuel ahead of the winter. In closing, the Assistant Secretary-General reiterated that ultimately the answer to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and the region would only come through a political solution that truly addressed the root causes of the crisis.

In closed consultations, the Special Envoy briefed the Council on his priorities, preliminary consultations and ideas on the way forward. He said that the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2014 was still valid, and that it had set the broad parameters for a future negotiated solution. He interpreted his mission as to identify areas of commonality and entry points to advance the three interconnected priorities entrusted to him by the Secretary-General: reducing violence; improving humanitarian

access; and planting the seeds for a political process. He said that while the renewed visibility of ISIL had put the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic back in the public eye, combatting terrorism was but one part of the equation and that defeating ISIL was inextricably linked to a politically negotiated end to the Syrian crisis. He also stressed that as much as regional dynamics were key to safeguarding a solution, the starting point was in the Syrian Arab Republic and that the solution must be found there, among the Syrians themselves. He also said that an enabling environment had to be created for any political initiative to take hold, and, in that regard, proposed to work on identifying incremental opportunities for a strategic de-escalation of violence that could take place locally but have an impact on a national scale. In closing, he said that a Syrian-owned political understanding would also need to be backed by a regional and international dialogue and, in that regard, expressed his hope to convene key stakeholders in an appropriate format to forge a broader consensus from an intra-Syrian negotiated process in search of a political horizon.

In consultations of the whole, Council members expressed concern over the ongoing deterioration of the humanitarian situation and condemned the violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the Syrian conflict. Many stressed the primary responsibility of the Government in that regard. Some noted that resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014) had not been fully implemented and that the Council should therefore consider further measures.

Council members also agreed that the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic would continue to deteriorate further in the absence of a political solution to the crisis. In that regard, they conveyed their readiness to work with the Special Envoy and expressed their support for his efforts and his role. A press statement, adopted on the same day, reaffirmed that support (SC/11624).

On 31 October, the Security Council issued a press statement (SC/11626) expressing outrage at all attacks against civilians, as well as indiscriminate attacks, including those involving shelling and aerial bombardment, such as the use of barrel bombs, which were reportedly dropped on a displaced persons camp in Idlib Governorate on 29 October, leaving many dead and injured, including children. The members of the Security Council recalled that all obligations under international humanitarian law must be respected in all circumstances. They recalled, in particular, the obligation to distinguish between civilian populations and combatants, and the prohibition against indiscriminate attacks and attacks against civilians and civilian objects. They reiterated that the only sustainable solution to the current crisis is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process, with a view to a full implementation of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012.

IV. Americas

Haiti

On 14 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2180 (2014) to extend the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) until 15 October 2015. The Council also: decided that the Mission's overall force levels would consist of up to 2,370 troops and of a police component composed of up to 2,601 personnel, the force levels recommended by the Secretary-General; and called on the Secretary-General to ensure that a force level close to the

current level would remain in the country until his next report to the Council, and to alert in his report of any major changes in the situation.

Following the adoption of the resolution, the representative of Chile explained that it had voted in favour of the resolution as an expression of the country's ongoing commitment to the democratic process, the rule of law and the promotion of human rights and socioeconomic development in Haiti, in which MINUSTAH had had and continued to have an important role. At the same time, he regretted that his delegation had not been in a position to co-sponsor the resolution, as had been the case in the past. He explained that the resolution the Council had just adopted was based on recommendations that led to apprehension on the part of his delegation, as well as on the part of the Latin American community that contributed troops and police to the Mission. He said that in the course of the negotiations, Chile supported a gradual reduction of forces, taking into consideration the electoral timetable, in order to ensure a process that ensures transparency and eventual democratic governance, so as to avoid undermining the achievements of recent years. A drastic reduction in the number of military contingents could diminish the Mission's prevention capacity and, in a crisis, which his country hopes will not occur, it would be obliged to react under operational concepts that are still unclear, with all the risks that that entails. He then reiterated that any decision with regard to an increase or decrease in the number of troops should be adopted in accordance with the situation on the ground, not on the basis of considerations that may vary.

The representative of the United Kingdom highlighted that the unanimous adoption of the resolution sent a strong message of the Council's united support for this important Mission. The representative noted that some concerns had been expressed about the provisions for the drawdown of the Mission. In that respect, the United Kingdom welcomed the balance that had been struck in the text. He recalled that Haiti had seen no military conflict in recent times, and that peacekeepers have been called out only twice in the past 18 months to deal with security incidents. He said that the role of MINUSTAH should be to help Haiti take back responsibility for its security, rather than to perform that task itself indefinitely. He reaffirmed that the resolution provided for a responsible scaling back of the MINUSTAH military component over time, based on a thorough assessment of the security situation.

The delegation of the United States concurred that the situation on the ground should drive the decision-making of the Council. She reaffirmed that this had been the case, thus far, and that it should continue to be the case going forward. She stressed that MINUSTAH would continue to make an important contribution to Haiti's security. She reiterated the appreciation of the United States for the troops, police and other staff who made up MINUSTAH in support of the Haitian people. She added that her delegation looked forward to continuing to work constructively with troop- and police-contributing countries, and with the Haitian people, to help the latter achieve durable peace, security and democracy.

The delegation of Argentina explained that it had voted in favour of resolution 2180 (2014) on the understanding that the Haitian Government had expressed its agreement with the terms of the renewal of the mandate of MINUSTAH, as well as an expression of Argentina's continued solidarity with efforts to strengthen the democratic process and bolster Haiti's security and stability. However, her delegation would have preferred that the resolution reflected the comments and proposals made by Argentina and other Latin American troop-contributors during

the negotiations in the Group of Friends of Haiti, as well as the concerns of those same contributors in the debate the Council held on the situation in Haiti on 11 September. The representative added that was the reason that her delegation had not sponsored the resolution. She expressed great concern that the security situation in Haiti had not improved enough to favour a rapid and sharp reduction in the level of troops, or such a substantial change in the Mission's mandate as the one adopted, in a year when such an important electoral process for Haiti's future was scheduled to take place. She also expressed concern, in particular that, as indicated by the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/617), the residual military component would not have the capacity to carry out the important deterrence and conflict-prevention tasks it had undertaken to date, including conducting patrols, which could have unintended consequences and could force the international community to face an even more difficult and complex situation.

The delegation of Guatemala, a member of the Group of Friends of Haiti, and the delegation of Ecuador, requested to participate and made a statement at the meeting along the lines of those made by Argentina and Chile.

V. Europe

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

On 24 October, a meeting of the Security Council was convened at the request of the delegation of the United Kingdom. Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, participated in the meeting and briefed the Council.

Mr. Fernandez-Taranco considered that the results of efforts to end the conflict in Ukraine remained mixed. He informed the Council that on 5 September and on 19 September the Minsk protocol and the Minsk memorandum, which clarified the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, had been signed under the auspices of the trilateral contact group. He stressed that, if fully implemented, they would help to halt the violent conflict in eastern Ukraine, and he stressed that much more work needed to be done. Despite the initial important steps undertaken by various stakeholders to implement the Minsk protocol and memorandum, including, notably, the implementation of the ceasefire, violation of the ceasefire agreement was a daily occurrence. The Assistant Secretary-General called upon all parties to collectively make every possible effort to support the urgent implementation of the Minsk protocol and the memorandum, underlining that it is incumbent on all actors to fulfil their responsibilities and to refocus their efforts in that direction. He stressed the point that eastern Ukraine should not be allowed to become the latest in a string of frozen conflicts in Europe. He reported that the discussions on the conflict in Ukraine that had been held on the margins of the tenth Asia-Europe Meeting, on 16 and 17 October 2014, in Milan, Italy, were welcome, and he stressed that the continuing bilateral discussions between the Ukrainian and Russian Presidents on the means to fully implement the Minsk protocol and memorandum remained critical.

Mr. Fernandez-Taranco underscored that the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine, particularly with the onset of winter, remained of the utmost concern, and

he stressed the urgent need to redouble efforts to assist the internally displaced persons and refugees. He also referred to the early parliamentary elections in Ukraine, and considering that it was more important than ever that the extraordinary legislative elections and the local elections take place peacefully throughout Ukraine and serve as important milestones in the efforts to help to stabilize the country. He also stressed that reports of alleged violence against several parliamentary candidates and representatives of various parties in the upcoming legislative elections were deplorable. At the same time, the Assistant Secretary-General considered that inflammatory statements by armed groups threatening to disrupt voting in areas of Eastern Ukraine and to hold their own elections on 2 November, in breach of the constitution and national law, should be condemned by all.

Mr. Šimonović underlined that the 5 September ceasefire agreement was adhered to only in terms of an absence of large-scale offensive actions as the number of military and civilian casualties continued to grow and residential areas continued to be indiscriminately shelled by various artillery and multiple rocket-launch systems. He considered it alarming that there were recent reports of the use of cluster munitions in residential areas and stressed that their use in such situations constituted a violation of international humanitarian law and may amount to a war crime. He informed the Council that the Ukrainian Government had denied the use of cluster munitions. He stated that it was imperative that the reported use of cluster munitions as well as the reports of indiscriminate shelling of residential areas by conventional weapons be investigated promptly and thoroughly.

The Assistant Secretary-General informed the Council that armed groups continued to terrorize the population in areas under their control, committing killings, abductions, torture, ill-treatment and other serious human rights abuses, including the destruction of housing and the seizure of property, and that there had been continuing allegations of human rights violations committed by some volunteer battalions under Government control. He stressed that the Government had been urged continually to exercise more control over all of its forces, including the volunteer battalions, and to ensure accountability for any violations and crimes committed by their members. He also informed the Council regarding the humanitarian situation in the areas controlled by the armed groups, which remained precarious, especially in the Luhansk region.

The Assistant Secretary-General also informed the Council that in previous weeks, there had been an increase in direct action by the Right Sector and other activists to publicly remove allegedly corrupt officials or former politicians of the former Party of Regions, and that some of those acts had involved violence against individuals and appeared, in some cases, to have been tolerated by local law enforcement officials. There were also indications in some areas of incidents of election-related intimidation and violence.

The Assistant Secretary-General also referred to the issue of the alleged mass graves near the village of Nyzhnia Krynka in the Donetsk region, which had received extensive publicity, and informed that, the Council, despite the fact that a number of other graves containing more than one body had been reportedly found in the conflict zone, the human rights monitors did not have information that those graves might contain the bodies of victims of arbitrary or summary executions. He considered accountability to be key to reconciliation and that efforts had also to be

made to hold members of armed groups who have perpetrated grave human rights violation accountable. He welcomed the fact that the 12-point Minsk protocol excludes amnesty for such crimes as genocide, terrorism, murder, the infliction of serious bodily injury, sexual abuse, hostage-taking and human trafficking, and indicated that the law appeared to allow amnesty for acts of torture, which had to be clarified in order to bring the law in line with international norms and standards.

Concerning the Crimea, the Assistant Secretary-General informed the Council that, in addition to the previous human rights violations reported, there had been an increase in the number of cases of enforced disappearance, and he expressed concern about the abduction of four Crimean Tatars during the previous month in the Crimea, one of whom had been found dead. He considered it imperative that the whereabouts of those missing persons be clarified and those responsible held accountable.

VI. Thematic and general issues

Annual report of the Security Council

On 22 October, the Security Council adopted its annual report to the General Assembly covering the period from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014. As Council President for the month of July, 2014, Rwanda was tasked with drafting the introduction to the report.

Peace and security in Africa (Ebola)

On 14 October, a briefing followed by informal consultations was held on the Ebola epidemic, under agenda item "Peace and Security in Africa: Ebola".

Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Anthony Banbury, Special Representative and Head of the Mission of the United Nations Emergency Response to Ebola (UNMEER) and Taye-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, briefed the Council. The meeting focused on the security impact arising from Ebola, with particular emphasis on the presence of the United Nations in the most affected countries.

The Under-Secretary-General referred to developments in the response and the deployment of UNMEER, noting that the deployment was unprecedented, but also expressing deep concern that, despite efforts, the epidemic continued to advance. The Under-Secretary-General underlined the objective that in 60 days, starting on 1 October, 70 per cent of cases would be treated in health facilities and 70 per cent of people who have died from the disease would be buried under established protocols, preventing new infections. He warned that if this objective was not achieved, many more people would die. The Head of UNMEER considered that the lack of time was the worst enemy and that that was why the United Nations had mobilized so quickly and efficiently. He urged the Council to assist Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia to reduce the risk of contagion to other countries. He recalled that on the day of the meeting, a second United Nations worker had died from the disease. The Under-Secretary-General concluded by reiterating the need for more health workers, increased funding and more treatment centres.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations considered that there was the risk of falling back on many of the achievements made in recent years,

as the tragedy was unprecedented. In this regard, he highlighted the case of Liberia, where UNMIL had managed to accompany the country on the path of peace and stability, but where the epidemic had forced the Mission to recognize that the outlook was not so optimistic. He stressed, however, that, for the moment, from the point of view of security, no significant deterioration of the situation was evident, but insisted that discontent could become a risk factor. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous also referred to the death, in late September, of two UNMIL agents and urged the Council to do everything possible to allow the Mission to continue fulfilling its role as it was essential to ensuring the treatment and evacuation of all United Nations staff.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs expressed concern about the security implications, because the epidemic has affected regional integration mechanisms and programmes and violent incidents had occurred. He felt that there was a risk of further deterioration of security, given the shortage of supply of public services and the relentless decline in economic activity. Given that the effects of such events can be destabilizing, he asked the Council not to underestimate the consequences of the epidemic. Mr. Zerihoun considered that there was potential for a deterioration of the situation and increased violence. He regretted that the three countries were being isolated. Highlighting the regional cooperation, he concluded that the epidemic had exacerbated challenges to peace and security.

The Representative of Sierra Leone reiterated the need for urgent action, thanking the Council and the General Assembly for their efforts in response to the crisis. He considered the situation to be a global calamity, with economic and security implications that were still unknown, and called on all members to work together to increase and deepen the action to confront the global threat that Ebola represented.

The Representative of Liberia welcomed the rapid deployment of UNMEER and urged the deployment of more assistance. She regretted that the epidemic has put a stop to all progress and also called on the Council to mitigate the economic consequences of the crisis.

The Representative of Guinea expressed concern about the crisis and the fact that the lack of confidence and panic were further aggravating the situation, as perceptions were jeopardizing stability. He called for action to isolate Ebola, not the affected countries.

In the informal consultations that followed, Council members expressed concern about the situation and their support for UNMEER, and reviewed the assistance that their countries were contributing to the epidemic. Several delegations urged increased aid and the continuation of open air connections. Some members expressed concern about the withdrawal of UNMIL officials. Most delegations welcomed the rapid deployment of UNMEER and requested that the United Nations continue to maintain its leadership. One delegation considered it necessary that the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) increase and improve communications in order to prevent the spread of the disease and inform the public. Several delegations expressed concern at the deteriorating security situation as a result of the epidemic and its impact on the social climate and on the achievements made in recent years. Several delegations agreed that the crisis was affecting international peace and security, and that it was not only a health crisis. One delegation stated that the speakers had not referred to the impact on the security

situation, but acknowledged that the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs discussed the issue. The same delegation recalled that on 10 September the General Assembly had agreed on the need to address the crisis, and that this was not the responsibility of the Council.

Mr. Banbury explained that UNMEER was to implement the strategy established by the United Nations Coordinator and stressed once more the importance of ensuring medical evacuations, since otherwise it would be very difficult to assure the provision of human resources. He thanked the issuance of a press release from the Council to support the work of UNMEER.

After the meeting a press statement (SC/11602) was issued.

Peacekeeping

On 9 October, the Security Council held its annual briefing about the United Nations peacekeeping missions on various peacekeeping topics. The meeting underlined the Council's much appreciated commitment and interest in gaining first-hand information from the Force Commanders as it contributed to well-informed decision-making. Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed, Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations; Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, Force Commander of MONUSCO; Major General Jean Bosco Kazura, Force Commander of MINUSMA; and Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha, Force Commander of UNDOF participated in the meeting.

Lieutenant General Ahmed reminded the Council that the Force Commanders are commanding more than 90,000 soldiers out of 105,000 uniformed personnel and that this number is likely to grow in the coming period. They operate in an environment that is often very difficult. Mali is a case in point, where the United Nations has suffered maximum casualties in 2014. United Nations operations in the Central African Republic, the Sudan, South Sudan, the Golan Heights and MONUSCO are some of the other challenging missions. The Force Commanders are operating in failing or failed States where there is, frankly, hardly any peace to keep. Ebola is yet another dimension of this complex situation.

Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz indicated that the protection of civilians is the most important task of MONUSCO, which goes beyond a task in a mandate: it is a moral obligation. The importance of protecting civilians is not in question. The question is, how to protect them in a more effective way. The best way to protect civilians, in his opinion, was to be proactive rather than reactive. He added that the United Nations principles of peacekeeping, namely, the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate, may not always apply against armed criminal groups in contemporary missions, and that their application could be reviewed and adjusted to contemporary threats and to the context of violence that innocent civilians and peacekeeping personnel face in conflict areas.

Major General Kazura referred to the changed security environment that is threatened by armed conflicts and religious fundamentalism, in addition to economic, political, social and environmental crises. This security environment is fuelled and sustained by such existing complex and unresolved security challenges as corruption, internal tensions, violent extremism and radicalization, illicit trafficking and terrorism. That is the kind of security environment in which the

population of Mali has been living for quite some time. The reality on the ground is that MINUSMA, which was supposed to be a peacekeeping mission, is facing a terrorist network that is combining patience, intelligence, coercion and brutality to design and direct its attacks when and where it wants. MINUSMA is in a terrorist-fighting situation without an anti-terrorist mandate or adequate training, equipment, logistics or intelligence to deal with such a situation.

In closing, Lieutenant General Singha explained that since March 2012 UNDOF has experienced fighting between opposition groups and the Syrian Army in the area of separation, which is a clear violation of the mandate. The landscape changed drastically in 2014 with radical groups arriving in large numbers and gaining control of moderate elements. The mission witnessed an upward spiralling of violence, amidst which peacekeepers were directly targeted by the extremists. It was not an easy task to operate in that environment, but UNDOF had evolved as a mission and had adjusted its operations to meet the challenges presented by the environment of internal conflict and clashes that have recently increased in intensity and severity.

All Council members acknowledged the importance of these meetings and of the opportunity to ask operational questions to the Force Commanders of individual missions. Council members were also united in stating that attacks against peacekeepers are not to be tolerated.

Several members emphasized that challenges should be met by the strengthening of peacekeeping capabilities. Robust mandates and the safety of the troops should always be ensured by providing appropriate training and the necessary equipment. In the view of several members, civilians are best protected through prevention, mobility and active intervention, rather than by the simple presence of troops. If missions do not fulfil their protection-of-civilian responsibilities, it undermines other tasks they may have been mandated to do, to say nothing of the loss of life and suffering that ensues. For other delegations, protecting civilians, while one of the central tasks of today's peacekeeping operations, was far from being the sole obligation, and they expressed concern over the recently observed desire to loosely interpret the standards of international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Actions to protect civilians should not go beyond the framework of Security Council mandates. For another delegation, the active protection of civilians should not be confused with the neutralization of armed groups through aggressive activities.

International Court of Justice

On 29 October, in a private meeting, the Security Council considered the item entitled "Briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice". The Council members heard a briefing by Judge Peter Tomka, President of the Court, and engaged in an exchange of views.

Judge Tomka gave a presentation on the overall activities of the Court, including an overview of pending contentious proceedings, its role in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security, and the Court's relationship with the Council. He also focused on the complementary role the Court and the Council play in the promotion of the rule of law at the international level, and he emphasized the substantive links between the issues considered by the two organs.

Women and peace and security

On 28 October, the Security Council held its annual debate on women and peace and security, focused on the theme “displaced women and girls: leaders and survivors”. On the occasion, the Council received the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2014/693). The following individuals were invited to participate in the meeting: Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Mr. Chaloka Beyani, Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the human rights of internally displaced persons; and Ms. Suaad Allami, of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka delivered a message on behalf of the Secretary-General, stressing that the confluence of crises faced should drive the Organization to do even more to live up to the principles in its Charter and global norms and urgently calling on all parties to stand against abuses. She underlined that the United Nations was striving to realize the vision set out in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and that the Organization counts on the active participation of all countries in the upcoming strategic high-level reviews on issues ranging from sanctions to peace operations, peacebuilding and gender equality, as well as in the Secretary-General’s upcoming global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In her own capacity, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka underlined that there was not simply an increase in violence and insecurity, but a shift in the nature of conflict itself: violent extremists were taking control of territory and directly threatening and targeting women, girls and their communities, contributing to the high levels of displacement. She said that if there had not been so much conflict, a lot of progress would have been made in the field of gender equality. She considered that the Council needed to put gender equality at the front and centre of its efforts to maintain peace and security, to overcome extraordinary challenges from the Ebola outbreak to the rise of violent extremism and the unprecedented levels of displacement that come with it.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations underlined that the most effective and appropriate ways of preventing violence towards internally displaced women and girls was to intensify protection mechanisms, while at the same time increasing support for women’s participation in political processes and in governance, and he stressed that peacekeeping missions advocate the political participation of women. He emphasized that more is needed to be done to support States in developing gender-sensitive policies, particularly in the justice and security sectors, both to protect and encourage women’s participation in all peace and reconciliation efforts.

The Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the human rights of internally displaced persons recalled that, since the 1990s, greater attention has been paid to the rights and needs of women and girls in emergency and post-conflict situations and to promoting gender-sensitive approaches in humanitarian, development and early recovery response. Despite such positive developments, responses to internal displacement still do not adequately address the specific concerns and roles of women and girls. Internally displaced women often face double discrimination, based on being both an internally displaced person and a

woman. Mr. Beyani also called on the Council not to lose sight of the important role that internally displaced women can play in negotiating peace, ensuring their human rights and bringing about development in post-conflict situations.

In closing, Ms. Allami stated that in her daily work she is able to observe how displaced women and girls are affected when they are forced to flee. Many are traumatized by the violence. She addressed three key interconnected ways to overcome inaction: first, the importance of women's leadership and participation; second, the need for gender-sensitive and multisectoral responses to protection efforts and humanitarian assistance; and, third, women's role in conflict prevention and in combating State and non-State violence, including violent extremism and terrorism. She added that all three require international pressure and domestic political will, and she called on the Council and all Member States to ensure gender sensitivity in addressing the challenges faced by women who have been forcibly displaced, and in all peace and security efforts, and to recommit to working towards the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

On 28 October 2014, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2014/21) urging all parties involved in an armed conflict to allow full and unhindered access by refugee and internally displaced women to humanitarian assistance and protection, as well as to basic services such as education, health, housing and productive livelihoods, calling for the systematic collection, analysis and utilization of sex- and age-disaggregated data that is required to assess the specific needs and capacities of women, highlighting the impact of violent extremism on women, and urging Member States to address that trend, and encouraging all relevant actors, as appropriate, to review existing implementation plans and targets and to accelerate progress and prepare to formulate new targets, in time for the 2015 high-level review.

Working methods of the Security Council

On 23 October, the Security Council held an open debate on its working methods under the agenda item "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)". The Presidency had produced a concept note, contained in document S/2014/725, inviting delegations to refer to two issues in particular: due process and targeted sanctions, in particular the possibility of extending the mandate of the Ombudsperson to all sanctions committees; and Security Council follow-up of its referrals to the International Criminal Court.

As an innovation compared to previous years, the meeting featured two speakers: the Ombudsperson of the Security Council's 1267 (1999) Committee, Ms. Kimberly Prost, and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Mrs. Fatou Bensouda. The Ombudsperson briefed the Council on the 1267 (1999) Al-Qaida sanctions regime and due process of law, including recommendations for further enhancing the effectiveness of the regime. The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court focused her presentation on the value of strengthened cooperation between the Council and the Court, in particular on follow-up of the referrals, in view of the pursuance of the shared purpose of combating impunity for heinous crimes.

In her briefing Ms. Prost indicated that the imposition of targeted sanctions, which directly affect the rights of individuals and entities, without the availability of an independent review mechanism that can deliver an effective remedy, is a practice

inconsistent with fundamental human rights obligations, adding that, on a principled basis, there is no evident rationale as to why an independent review mechanism is made available to one set of individuals subject to targeted sanctions, but not to others. That is particularly the case when the matter is considered from the perspective of those subject to the sanctions. She also emphasized that fair process is supportive of, and in fact essential to, the effective implementation of sanctions measures, in order to avoid legal challenges in the courts.

Prosecutor Bensouda indicated that follow-up on referrals was a concern for her office. She also called on the Security Council to consider using stronger language in its referrals, requiring all States to cooperate with the International Criminal Court, as well as with regard to their obligations regarding privileges and immunities afforded to the staff of the Court. Lastly, in her view, a focal point for interaction between the Council and the Court could be of practical assistance.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the Security Council to look into the two issues highlighted in the concept note and to hear the views of other Member States of the United Nations regarding those two issues, as well as to understand in which areas delegations consider improvements to be necessary in order to foster transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness in the Council's work. In assessing progress, as proposed by the Presidency, several delegations availed themselves of the opportunity to welcome the new documents concerning the working methods of the Council agreed upon by the Informal Working Group since last year's open debate: on consultations between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries issued on 28 October 2013 (S/2013/630); on the penholdership of Council documents issued on 14 April 2014 (S/2014/268); on the handover of the Chairmanship of subsidiary bodies issued on 5 June 2014 (S/2014/393); on intra-Council dialogue issued on 4 August 2014 (S/2014/565); and on the speaking order for meetings of the Council issued on 15 October 2014 (S/2014/739).

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507 (wrap-up session))

On 30 October, the Security Council held a briefing on the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507 (wrap-up session)). The President of the Council invited members to critically assess the Council's work during the month of October, as well as to submit recommendations on how the Council could improve its efficiency and effectiveness, particularly in dealing with the current country specific situations.

Concerning the substance of the issues addressed by the Council during October, the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the meeting with United Nations force commanders, Ebola, women and peace and security and the working methods of the Security Council, featured prominently.