



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-second session

Agenda item 136

### Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

#### **Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council**

#### **Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms**

#### **Panel of Experts on Mali**

#### **Seventeenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019**

### **I. Introduction**

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council that contains the proposed resource requirements for 2018 for the Panel of Experts on Mali under thematic cluster II ([A/72/371/Add.6](#)). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 2 November 2017.

2. The main report of the Secretary-General ([A/72/371](#)) provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2018 for special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. As in previous years, five addenda to the main report cover the specific requirements for thematic clusters I to III and the two largest missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).<sup>1</sup> The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to all special political missions are contained in its main report ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)), while the

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<sup>1</sup> [A/72/371/Add.1](#), [A/72/371/Add.2](#), [A/72/371/Add.3](#), [A/72/371/Add.4](#) and [A/72/371/Add.5](#).



budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA and UNAMI are covered in its related reports.<sup>2</sup>

3. The budget proposals of the Secretary-General for the Panel of Experts on Mali (cluster II), the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (both under cluster III) are contained in separate addenda<sup>3</sup> and the comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee are contained in its related reports.<sup>4</sup>

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that a biennial provision of \$1,109.6 million for special political missions was included in section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2018–2019, representing a reduction of \$14.8 million compared with the amount of \$1,124.4 million provided for in the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2018–2019 (see General Assembly resolution 71/274). The Secretary-General attributes the reduction of \$14.8 million to planned efficiency gains across all special political missions, as part of the reductions of \$58.9 million under “other changes” in the proposed programme budget. The Committee recalls that it requested, but was not provided with, a consolidated list of the reductions categorized under other resource changes across all budget sections, along with an explanation of how they were to be achieved and the extent to which they could be considered efficiencies. The Committee made comments in this regard in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (see A/72/7, chap. I). In this connection, the Committee notes that no reductions pertaining to Umoja (the enterprise resource planning system) or other efficiencies are reported for the special political missions for 2018, except for an amount of \$698,900 for UNAMA (see A/72/371, para. 111). The comments and recommendations of the Committee on the level of the biennial provision proposed by the Secretary-General will be included in its main report (A/72/7/Add.10).

## II. Resource requirements for 2017 and 2018

### *Mandate*

5. The Secretary-General reports that the Security Council, by its resolution 2374 (2017), established a sanctions regime in relation to the situation in Mali. By the same resolution, the Council imposed a travel ban and an assets freeze and established a Sanctions Committee and a Panel of Experts of up to five members who would be home-based. Information with respect to the mandate and planning assumptions for 2018 is provided in paragraphs 1 to 8 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/371/Add.6).

### *Requirements for 2017*

6. For the period from 1 October to 31 December 2017, the initial requirements of the Panel of Experts on Mali are being funded under the authority granted to the Secretary-General under paragraph 1 (a) of General Assembly resolution 70/250 relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2016–2017, in the amount of \$435,800 for three positions and other operational costs (see A/72/371/Add.6, para. 11). The Advisory Committee notes that there is an error in the reference to the biennium 2016–2017 in paragraph 11 of the report. The Committee

<sup>2</sup> A/72/7/Add.11, A/72/7/Add.12, A/72/7/Add.13, A/72/7/Add.14 and A/72/7/Add.15.

<sup>3</sup> A/72/371/Add.6, A/72/371/Add.7 and A/72/371/Add.8.

<sup>4</sup> A/72/7/Add.16, A/72/7/Add.17 and A/72/7/Add.18.

enquired whether the error would be corrected, but received no response. The Committee expects that the correction will be made as soon as possible.

#### *Requirements for 2018*

7. For 2018, the proposed resource requirements for the Panel amount to \$1,297,200 (net), which would provide for three positions (1 P-5, 1 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level)), as well as operational costs (see table below).

### **Proposed resources for 2018**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	2016–2017 <sup>a</sup>			Requirements for 2018		Variance analysis (2017/2018)	
	Appropriation	Estimated expenditures	Estimated variance	Total	Non-recurrent	2017 <sup>a</sup>	Increase/ (decrease)
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(2)-(1)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(4)-(6)
<b>I. Civilian personnel</b>							
International staff	–	84.3	84.3	341.8	–	–	341.8
<b>II. Operational costs</b>							
Experts	–	202.7	202.7	809.1	–	–	809.1
Official travel	–	13.4	13.4	35.9	–	–	35.9
Facilities and infrastructure	–	120.8	120.8	48.5	–	–	48.5
Ground transportation	–	4.0	4.0	13.1	–	–	13.1
Communications	–	5.3	5.3	18.2	–	–	18.2
Information technology	–	4.3	4.3	23.8	–	–	23.8
Other supplies, services and equipment	–	1.0	1.0	6.8	–	–	6.8
<b>Subtotal, category II</b>	–	<b>351.5</b>	<b>351.5</b>	<b>955.4</b>	–	–	<b>955.4</b>
<b>Total (net of staff assessment)</b>	–	<b>435.8</b>	<b>435.8</b>	<b>1 297.2</b>	–	–	<b>1 297.2</b>

<sup>a</sup> An amount of \$435,800 for the period from 1 October to 31 December 2017 is funded under the authority granted to the Secretary-General under paragraph 1 (a) of General Assembly resolution 70/250 relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses.

#### *Staffing requirements*

8. It is proposed to establish three positions to support the work of the Panel of Experts and the Sanctions Committee as follows: one Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5), one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) and one Research Assistant (General Service (Other level)) (see A/72/371/Add.6, para. 9).

9. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that there were currently no P-5 positions funded under special political missions to support the home-based missions under cluster II. Rather, the support to those missions was provided by the existing Senior Political Affairs Officers (P-5), whose posts were funded under the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs in section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget. The Committee was further informed that the Division would not be able to distribute the workload related to supporting new missions among the existing P-5 staff. Upon enquiry as to why additional resources were not requested for the Division in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, the Committee was informed that the P-5 position was requested to support the increase in the number of mandated activities linked to new

special political missions, rather than to support the regular work of the Division. Upon request, the Committee was provided with a table showing the number of experts and support staff of the missions under cluster II (see annex).

10. In addition, it is stated in the report of the Secretary-General that the P-5 position would provide support on matters related to the safety and security arrangements applicable to the experts (see [A/72/371/Add.6](#), para. 9). It was also indicated in information provided to the Advisory Committee that the position was proposed at the P-5 level in response to one of the recommendations of the United Nations Security Management System Board of Inquiry concerning the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Board had recommended, inter alia, that the Security Council Affairs Division return to assigning as secretaries of sanctions committees more senior staff who are also responsible for leading the teams and providing substantive and other assistance to expert groups. The Board had also indicated that it was aware that, in the past, secretaries were senior staff at the P-5 level; however, in recent years that had changed and there were several P-4 and even P-3 staff assigned as secretaries or acting secretaries of sanctions committees. **The Committee questions the linkage of the functions of the Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) to safety and security arrangements.**

11. **Noting that no P-5 positions are currently funded under special political missions to support the home-based missions under cluster II, the Advisory Committee is not convinced of the justifications provided for a P-5 position of Senior Political Affairs Officer to support the Panel of Experts on Mali and therefore recommends against the proposed establishment of the P-5 position. Related resources under operational costs should be reduced accordingly.**

#### *Vacancy rates*

12. A 25 per cent vacancy factor has been applied to the cost estimates for the new positions proposed for 2018 (see [A/72/371/Add.6](#), para. 10). **Taking into account the existing methodology for budgeting new positions proposed for the special political missions, the Advisory Committee recommends that vacancy rates of 50 per cent and 35 per cent be applied, respectively, to the cost estimates for the proposed new positions of one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) and one Research Assistant (General Service (Other level)) (see [A/70/7/Add.10](#), para. 19; also [A/72/7](#), para. 44).**

13. **Subject to its comments and recommendations in paragraphs 11 and 12 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the staffing requirements proposed for 2018.**

#### **Comments and recommendations on operational costs**

##### *Expert fees*

14. A provision of \$578,700 is proposed to cover the fees of the five members of the Panel for 12 months, calculated at an average monthly rate of \$9,650. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the rate, which was based on the average monthly fees of a similar-sized sanctions panel (the Panel of Experts on South Sudan), already reflected the change in requirements for experts' years of service from 7 to 10 years, including field experience, as recommended by the Board of Inquiry (see para. 10 above). The Committee comments on the new terms of reference for experts in its report on cluster II missions (see [A/72/7/Add.12](#), sect. II.B).

*Official travel*

15. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown of planned trips and cost estimates for 2018. The Committee notes a few discrepancies presented in the estimates, such as different estimates for one destination and two separate trips by staff from New York to Paris and Brussels to support the Panel, although the Panel members would travel to the same destinations in a combined trip. The Committee's comments and recommendations on official travel are contained in its main report on special political missions ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)).

*Estimates for cost-shared services under information technology and other supplies, services and equipment*

16. Upon enquiry regarding the efficiencies applied to special political missions under cluster II, including the Panel of Experts on Mali, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs implemented efficiencies whenever possible, including sharing the costs of subscriptions and databases among the missions. However, the Committee notes from the proposed budget that higher rates are requested for subscriptions under information technology, as well as for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) charges for hosting the roster of experts (which is cost-shared across all panels and groups) under other supplies, services and equipment. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, while the Panel of Experts on Mali would utilize the cost-shared subscriptions and the overall rate might be reduced when the costs were shared by one more panel, it was expected that vendor costs would increase from year to year. Furthermore, the Committee was informed that as a newly established panel, the amount budgeted under UNDP charges included an initial setup cost. **The Committee expects that clarification regarding the budgeting of cost-shared subscriptions and services will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget for 2018 for special political missions.**

17. **Subject to its recommendation in paragraph 11 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the operational requirements proposed for 2018.**

### III. Recommendations

18. The Secretary-General's budgetary proposals for the special political missions for 2018 which require action to be taken by the General Assembly are set out in paragraph 120 of his main report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the Assembly and/or the Security Council ([A/72/371](#)).

19. **The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the resource requirements for 2018 for the Panel of Experts on Mali under thematic cluster II, subject to the comments and recommendations above, as well as those in its main report ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)).**

## Annex

### Number of experts and support staff for special political missions under thematic cluster II

	<i>P-5</i>	<i>P-4</i>	<i>P-3</i>	<i>P-2</i>	<i>General Service</i>	<i>Field Service</i>	<i>Local level</i>	<i>Total staff</i>	<i>Experts</i>	<i>Home- based</i>
Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea	–	–	1	–	1	–	5	7	8	No
Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	6	Yes
Panel of Experts on the Sudan	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	5	Yes
Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	–	1	2	–	3	–	–	6	8	No
Panel of Experts on Libya	–	–	1	–	2	–	–	3	6	Yes
Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic	–	–	1	–	2	–	–	3	5	Yes
Panel of Experts on Yemen	–	–	1	–	–	5	2	8	5	Yes
Panel of Experts on South Sudan	–	–	1	–	2	–	–	3	5	Yes
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions <a href="#">1526 (2004)</a> and <a href="#">2253 (2015)</a> concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities; and the Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1904 (2009)</a>	1	5	6	–	9	–	–	21	11	No
Implementation of Security Council Resolution <a href="#">2231 (2015)</a>	1	5	2	–	3	–	–	11	–	No
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>59</b>	