

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 26 November 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Australia held the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September 2013. An assessment covering the work of the Council has been prepared under my supervision and in consultation with the other members of the Council (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gary Quinlan



Annex to the letter dated 26 November 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Australia (September 2013)

Under the presidency of Australia in September 2013, the Security Council held a total of 22 meetings, of which 11 were private and 11 were public. The Council also adopted three resolutions and issued six statements to the press during September.

Africa

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 12 September, the Council held closed consultations on the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General 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 to the Great Lakes region, Mary Robinson, briefed the Council (via videoconference) on the fragile security situation on the ground. They warned that, while fighting between M23 and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had ceased, tensions remained high.

Both the Special Representative and the Special Envoy provided an update on their recent diplomatic efforts, including their joint visit to the Great Lakes region from 3 to 7 September along with special envoys from the African Union, the European Union and the United States of America. They advised the Council that the military success in pushing back M23 from its positions in the Kibati Hills overlooking Goma had far-reaching implications. Together with the concerted diplomatic push by the international community, this had helped to refocus attention on the political process. Both briefers stressed the importance of not repeating past mistakes in the search for lasting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They said that those that had committed serious crimes should therefore not receive amnesty or be reintegrated into the security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Special Representative advised the Council that MONUSCO had refocused its military presence in the east, and was beginning to also shift its civilian personnel there. He emphasized the importance of strengthening the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, and welcomed the decision taken on 5 September by the Extraordinary Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region granting MONUSCO permanent representation on the Mechanism. The Special Envoy advised the Council that the Technical Support Committee of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework was meeting in Nairobi on 12 and 13 September to finalize regional benchmarks to track progress in the implementation of commitments. The regional benchmarks were subsequently adopted at the meeting of the "11+4" regional oversight mechanism in New York on 23 September, attended by Council members.

Council members reiterated their concern about the fragile security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. They expressed their strong support for the proactive response of MONUSCO to protect civilians from the recent shelling of Goma by M23. Council members welcomed the diplomatic efforts of the Special Representative and the Special Envoy, as well as regional efforts, including the convening on 5 September of the Extraordinary Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, to reduce recent tensions. Many Council members echoed the call of the Special Envoy to avoid past mistakes regarding immunity and reintegration into the armed forces of combatants who had committed serious crimes. Following the meeting, the Council issued a statement to the press in which it emphasized these points.

Guinea-Bissau

On 5 September the Council held closed consultations to hear from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), José Ramos-Horta, on progress towards the restoration of constitutional order. The Special Representative told the Council that the transitional authorities had taken significant steps on this path, including the adoption of a Transitional Pact and Political Agreement as well as a Transitional Road Map in May 2013; the appointment of a new leadership for the National Electoral Commission; and setting the date of 24 November 2013 for the presidential and legislative elections. He said preparations for the electoral process had not progressed as quickly as expected to adequately prepare for elections as scheduled on 24 November, and the transitional government had still not decided on a voter registration mechanism, but was considering an improved manual voter registration system with enhanced security features. The United Nations Development Programme had assessed that this option would push the election date to 18 May 2014 and would cost approximately US\$ 19 million.

The Special Representative told the Council that the culture of impunity and lack of accountability remained a major challenge for Guinea-Bissau, and elections would have to be followed by long-term efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of political instability and discontent. He noted the intention of the interim President, Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo, to seek the establishment of two international commissions of inquiry: one to examine past politically motivated crimes; and another to look into the issue of drug trafficking. The Special Representative said that, while UNIOGBIS had not received any reports confirming an increase or decrease in illicit drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, the international community still had to do its utmost to support the efforts of the national authorities to eradicate this scourge.

Council members broadly welcomed the recent positive developments towards the full restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. They expressed their regret that the election date was likely to slip past 24 November 2013, and called for the holding of elections as soon as possible. Council members also expressed broad concern at the continued culture of impunity and lack of accountability, and called for more to be done to allow security sector and justice reforms to progress. They noted that drug trafficking continued to be a major challenge for Guinea-Bissau and welcomed news that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime would shortly resume its operations in Guinea-Bissau, which had ended in May 2013 for lack of

funding. On 11 September, the Council issued a statement to the press on Guinea-Bissau which reflected these points.

United Nations Mission in Liberia

The Council held a briefing and consultations on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) on 10 September. The Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIL, Karin Landgren, and the Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Staffan Tillander. The Liberian Minister of National Defence, Brownie J. Samukai, also made a statement.

The Special Representative said Liberia deserved praise for the progress it had made in the 10 years since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed. She welcomed the work of the Constitutional Review Committee and the launch of the Road Map for National Healing and Reconciliation. She cautioned that many potential drivers of conflict still need to be addressed through long-term reform and development. She raised concerns over the mismanagement of natural resources, which she said was a potential source of conflict. She reported on the ongoing efforts of the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, with the support of UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to reduce border insecurity. She noted that the first phase of the UNMIL military drawdown had concluded successfully; however, she stressed that the Liberian security forces had been unable to scale up their presence and operational effectiveness to assume increased security responsibilities. She observed that Liberia required continued support from the international community for the challenges ahead.

The Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission said that only limited progress had been made with regard to national reconciliation in Liberia. While the Road Map for National Healing and Reconciliation had been launched, implementation had been delayed and the necessary funds had yet to be released by the Government of Liberia. With regard to security sector reform and the rule of law, progress had been hampered by the lack of Liberian police capacity and delays in reforming and strengthening the judiciary. The appointment of a new Chief Justice represented an opportunity to accelerate progress. On sexual and gender-based violence, he noted that Liberian civil society had played a constructive role in seeking to address this issue, but greater government effort was needed to ensure that action was taken against perpetrators. He also noted concerns over corruption in the natural resources sector and suggested that the international community increase its support to Liberia in this area.

The Liberian Defence Minister noted that, while the Liberia National Police had taken over responsibility for security in areas transferred by UNMIL to the Government, personnel, logistics and budgetary challenges remained key issues for the further deployment of the National Police. With regard to the continued presence of UNMIL in Liberia, the Defence Minister noted that the UNMIL transition plan had been carefully calibrated to account for Liberia's capabilities and remaining challenges, and warned that any effort to accelerate the transition process could destabilize the situation or undermine the gains achieved.

In closed consultations, many Council members welcomed efforts to consolidate stability and democracy in Liberia over the 10 years since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed. Some Council members said greater

effort was needed by the Government of Liberia to manage its natural resources, address corruption and improve the capacity of the Liberia National Police to assume more security responsibility as UNMIL draws down. Sexual and gender-based violence was also a key concern for Council members, as was the need to hold perpetrators of those crimes to account. Many Council members welcomed improved security along the border with Côte d'Ivoire.

On 18 September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2116 \(2013\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of UNMIL until 30 September 2014 and authorized the Secretary-General to reduce the Mission's military component by 1,129 personnel.

Libya

The Council held a briefing and consultations on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) on 16 September. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNSMIL, Tarek Mitri, briefed the Council, as did the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, Eugène-Richard Gasana, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution [1970 \(2011\)](#) concerning Libya. The Permanent Representative of Libya, Ibrahim Dabbashi, also made a statement.

The Special Representative said security problems in Libya remained a key concern, citing recent armed clashes between rival revolutionary brigades, assassinations of political and security figures, as well as journalists, attacks against the diplomatic community and threats against the United Nations. He welcomed the adoption by the General National Congress of a law for the election of the Constitutional Assembly and the launch of a national dialogue.

The Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution [1970 \(2011\)](#) said that, with regard to the arms embargo, the Panel of Experts had concluded that the Libyan authorities had taken concrete steps in security assistance areas, which had already produced the first few end-user certificates. He noted that the main points of discussion within the Committee on the report of the Panel of Experts were concerned with the reported violations and with the destabilizing effect of arms proliferation outside Libya, particularly in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sahel and other regions, as well as the challenges faced by Member States with regard to the implementation of the asset freeze and the possibility of repatriating frozen funds.

The Permanent Representative of Libya said that Libya remained in a transition period. Despite significant security challenges, Libya had begun the process of establishing a national army and re-establishing a police force.

In closed consultations, Council members noted concern over the deteriorating security situation. Some also noted concern over the impact of the disruption to oil exports. Many Council members welcomed the adoption of the electoral law for the Constitutional Assembly and the launch of the national dialogue. Some Council members raised concerns over detainees, noting there had been little improvement in conditions for those held outside government control. With regard to sanctions, some Council members highlighted the need for the Committee to continue to prioritize the implementation of the arms embargo as a critical means to support stability and reduce violence in Libya. Some also expressed concern at the increased reports of arms transfers to the region.

Sierra Leone

On 18 September, the Council received a briefing on the situation in Sierra Leone from the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen; the Permanent Representative of Canada, Guillermo Rishchynski, in his capacity as Chair of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and the Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone, Samura Kamara.

The Executive Representative presented the Secretary-General's latest report on UNIPSIL and provided an update on the consolidation of peace in the country, including the launching of the constitutional review process and Sierra Leone's national development strategy, the Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2018). He confirmed that the transition plan was on track for the full drawdown of UNIPSIL by 31 March 2014, as mandated under resolution [2097 \(2013\)](#), with residual tasks to be transferred to the United Nations country team.

The Chair of the Sierra Leone configuration stressed that the UNIPSIL drawdown should be seen as a transformation of international support, rather than its culmination. He advised that the Peacebuilding Commission was reviewing its engagement with Sierra Leone with a view to scaling down its role, in line with resolution [2097 \(2013\)](#), and that a transition strategy was being prepared and the Council would be consulted early in 2014.

The Foreign Minister outlined the progress achieved in economic growth and poverty reduction in Sierra Leone, as well as the Government's efforts to address key challenges such as youth unemployment. He urged the international community to continue to provide long-term support to Sierra Leone's development through a strong United Nations country team.

In closed consultations, Council members broadly welcomed the positive trend in Sierra Leone as a good news story on the Council's agenda, and unanimously supported the work of the Executive Representative on the drawdown of UNIPSIL. Many Council members commended the work of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and underlined the complementarity of the configuration's own transition process with that of UNIPSIL. The Chair of the configuration stressed the importance of continued international attention on Sierra Leone to overcome the challenge of poverty reduction and deliver a peace dividend to the population.

Somalia

On 12 September, the Council received a briefing on the situation in Somalia. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), Nicholas Kay, briefed the Council, together with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Mahamat Saleh Annadif. The Special Representative noted the significant progress on state-building in Somalia, but warned that gains were still reversible: if Somalia "slipped back" and Al-Shabaab prevailed, this would have serious implications for the region and beyond. More support was therefore needed, in particular for the Somali National Security Forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Both the Special Representative and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African

Union Commission noted the forthcoming joint United Nations/African Union review of AMISOM. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission urged the Council to endorse an increase in the number of AMISOM troops as well as logistical support for the training of the Somali National Security Forces.

In consultations, Council members welcomed the deployment of UNSOM. They expressed appreciation for the work of AMISOM and Ethiopian personnel, working alongside the Somali National Security Forces. They emphasized the need for AMISOM and the Somali National Security Forces to continue the fight against Al-Shabaab, and expressed their willingness to examine proposals in this respect, in the context of the joint review of AMISOM. They also condemned recent Al-Shabaab attacks in Somalia. Council members also expressed concern at reports of violations of human rights, including sexual and gender-based violence and violations and abuses committed against children. They echoed the Secretary-General's call for the Government of Somalia to demonstrate further commitment to addressing such violations and abuses. They welcomed the recent agreement between the Federal Government and the Interim Jubba Administration, emphasizing the importance of all parties implementing the agreement and upholding the ban on charcoal exports. Some Council members also welcomed the Federal Government's leadership in seeking a "New Deal" compact with the Somali people, which was subsequently adopted at the conference on Somalia held in Brussels on 16 September. On 13 September, the Council issued a statement to the press on the meeting.

Nairobi attack: statement to the press

On 21 September, the Council issued a statement to the press, condemning the terrorist attack in Nairobi and extending condolences to the victims and their families, as well as to the people and the Government of Kenya. Through the statement, Council members reiterated their determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with their responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations.

Sudan and South Sudan

In consultations on the report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan on 5 September, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, said relations between the Sudan and South Sudan had continued to improve, as demonstrated by the presidential talks held in Khartoum on 3 and 4 September and the decision by the Government of the Sudan not to halt the flow of oil from South Sudan. Despite these positive developments, he said there had been limited progress on demarcating the centre line of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and also on the inquiry conducted by the Ad Hoc Investigative Mechanism into alleged support by both countries for rebels operating against the other State.

With regard to Abyei, the Under-Secretary-General said no progress had been made on this issue at the bilateral presidential talks on 3 September — the joint communiqué issued after the meeting noted only that the parties affirmed the importance of continuing their discussions on the issue and emphasized the necessity of reaching a speedy agreement on the establishment of interim civilian

institutions in Abyei to pave the way for the two Presidents to reach a final resolution. He said tensions had increased in Abyei as October (the date proposed by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel on the Sudan for a referendum on the final status of the area) approached. He said in the absence of agreement on a referendum, any unilateral action would be dangerous and could lead to a fresh outbreak of hostilities. With regard to Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, fighting continued unabated and this had caused further displacement of civilians, including into Ethiopia. Council members welcomed the adoption on 23 August of a presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/14) on the Sudan and South Sudan, noting that a unified Council had the potential for a positive impact on the two parties. Council members also welcomed recent improvements in the bilateral relationship between the Sudan and South Sudan, including the discussions on 3 September between the President of the Sudan, Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, and the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, in Khartoum, and the decision by the Government of the Sudan not to halt oil flows. Council members raised concerns about the highly volatile situation in Abyei. Some Council members noted particularly the continuing lack of agreement on the way forward on the referendum and on temporary administrative institutions, while others expressed concern at the rejection by the Ngok Dinka community of the establishment of interim institutions in Abyei. The Council stressed the need to urge both parties to desist from unilateral action there, which could further inflame tensions. On Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, several Council members reiterated concerns over the continued lack of humanitarian access to populations in need.

During closed consultations on 18 September, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, Haile Menkerios, said relations between the Sudan and South Sudan had improved during the preceding weeks. The Summit between the Presidents on 3 September had been a positive step, as was the decision by the Government of the Sudan to allow oil to continue to flow, in increased quantities. With regard to the African Union Border Programme Technical Team tasked with demarcating the centre line of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, the Special Envoy said the team had submitted its report to the African Union. The Ad Hoc Investigative Mechanism, tasked with investigating allegations by both countries of support for rebels in the other State, was finalizing its report. He said there had been no progress in establishing the Abyei area institutions. With regard to the referendum, the lack of progress and the lack of any form of communication with the communities had caused serious frustration among the population. The President of South Sudan had reportedly said that, in the absence of advice that the proposed referendum was not proceeding, he would continue to prepare for one, but would not conduct it unilaterally.

With regard to Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, the Special Envoy said fighting continued, with 800,000 people having been affected. Regarding the proposed polio vaccination campaign, both the Government of the Sudan and SPLM-N had accepted in principle that it should proceed, but agreement was still pending on logistical issues. The Special Envoy said that the President of the Sudan had agreed to conduct a national dialogue on a new constitution, involving armed and unarmed opposition groups and civil society. The President would announce this soon and would seek support from the international community. With regard to debt relief, he said the Presidents of the Sudan and South Sudan had agreed to sign a

joint letter calling for debt relief for the Sudan and this would be presented to the World Bank in October.

Abyei was a key concern for Council members. Many noted that it was crucial for the Abyei area institutions to be established, including the Abyei police force. Council members reiterated the need to avoid unilateral action with regard to a referendum. Some Council members suggested that the Council could discuss Abyei when it met with the African Union during its visit to Addis Ababa in October. Some Council members also suggested that the Sudan/South Sudan Consultative Forum, to be held on 27 September on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, would be a useful forum for discussion of pending issues between the two countries.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 19 September, the Council held the quarterly open debate on Afghanistan. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Ján Kubiš, briefed the Council, drawing on the report of the Secretary-General.

The Special Representative outlined progress with Afghanistan's political, security and economic transition. Considerable challenges remained, but efforts were on track. The Taliban continued to target mostly Afghans, but had failed to achieve a significant military victory. The Afghan National Security Forces had taken the security lead across the country, but their capabilities were not yet fully developed and continued international support would be required. The Special Representative noted the importance of sustained international support in the years ahead. Increasing civilian casualties were a grave concern, the vast majority of which were caused by the Taliban. The Special Representative noted that narcotics remained a key problem and expressed concern over indications of an increase in opium cultivation.

The Special Representative told the Council that Afghan preparations for elections in 2014 were progressing well, including the adoption of two key laws, appointments to the two independent electoral management bodies and the roll-out of the district-level voter registration update. He welcomed regional support for Afghanistan's transition, including positive signals from neighbouring countries, including through the "Heart of Asia" process and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Zahir Tanin, said the progress in preparations for the third presidential elections showed Afghanistan's democratic maturity and he expressed his confidence that a successful election would be held. The Government of Afghanistan remained committed to an Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process and welcomed regional support. He said that first attempts at peace negotiations were undermined by the Taliban's determination to take Afghanistan back to the past, but Afghanistan's leadership had not lost faith in a political solution.

Council members as well as non-Council Member States taking part in the debate emphasized the importance of credible, inclusive and transparent elections being held in 2014. Several delegations emphasized the need for effective security preparations in support of the elections. Members also noted the security transition

and condemned recent terrorist attacks. Council members expressed concern at civilian casualties, the vast majority of which were caused by the Taliban; and also denounced the continued deliberate targeting of senior female officials, female police and election officials.

Council members stressed the importance of making progress against the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, including on human rights issues, with a particular emphasis on the rights of women and girls. Some Council members emphasized the importance of building the capacity of Afghan National Security Forces to ensure a successful security transition. Some Council members noted the problems caused by drug cultivation and trafficking, and associated financing of extremism and terrorism. Some delegations also sought clarity on the nature of the post-2014 international mission to train, advise and assist.

Herat attack: statement to the press

On 13 September, the Council issued a statement to the press condemning the attack on the United States Consulate in Herat, Afghanistan, for which the Taliban had claimed responsibility.

Middle East

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, provided the monthly briefing on the Middle East to the Council on 17 September. He noted that the resumption of direct negotiations in the Middle East peace process on 29 July had been widely welcomed. The Secretary-General had been encouraged by the seriousness with which both the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, had approached the talks, as the only viable path by which a two-State solution may still be achieved.

The Special Coordinator noted that the two sides had been engaged in several rounds of talks and encouraged both sides to accelerate and intensify discussions. Stability in the West Bank would be critical as talks continued. He deplored the loss of life from security incidents in the Jenin and Qalandiya refugee camps on 20 and 26 August respectively, including the death of an employee of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. He expressed concern at settlement activity in the West Bank and said the United Nations was monitoring tensions in the Old City of Jerusalem with increased concern.

The Special Coordinator said the calm in Gaza had been mostly sustained, despite attempts to fire rockets from Gaza towards Israel. He reported that he had met the Egyptian leadership in Cairo earlier in September, and condemned the attacks in Rafah on 11 and 16 September in which Egyptian security personnel had been killed. He said the United Nations was paying particularly close attention to the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and called for the easing of restrictions and enhanced access into Gaza through legal crossings, taking into account legitimate security concerns and previous agreements. On Lebanon, he highlighted the Secretary-General's condemnation of recent bombing incidents, including the attack in Tripoli on 23 August.

During the consultations which followed the Special Coordinator's briefing, many Council members commended the parties to the Middle East peace process for the leadership they had shown in returning to negotiations. Many Council members also acknowledged the need for improvements to the situation on the ground, including in relation to settlement activity in the West Bank and restrictions on Gaza as well as the legitimate security interests of relevant parties. Many Council members also highlighted the continued fragility in Lebanon as a result of the Syrian civil war, and the large number of Syrian refugees that had crossed into Lebanon.

Middle East (Syrian Arab Republic)

The Secretary-General briefed the Council in closed consultations on 16 September on the findings of the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, led by Åke Sellström. Following a request by one Council member, Mr. Sellström joined the Council's consultations after the Secretary-General had provided his briefing. A copy of the Mission's report was made available to Council members during the briefing, and at the same time made available to non-Council members and the wider public.

The Secretary-General advised the Council that the Mission had concluded that chemical weapons had been used in the Damascus suburbs on a relatively large scale on the morning of 21 August. He told the Council that the international community had a responsibility to hold perpetrators of the attack to account, and to ensure that chemical weapons never emerged as an instrument of warfare. He welcomed the framework for the elimination of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic agreed between the United States and the Russian Federation in Geneva on 14 September, and called for the Council to act to ensure compliance with that plan.

Council members condemned the use of chemical weapons and expressed gratitude for the work which Mr. Sellström and his team had done in difficult circumstances. Many Council members also called for a binding resolution which would ensure compliance with the framework agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation on the destruction of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, and which would reinforce an anticipated decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the modalities for implementation of the framework agreement. While acknowledging that the Mission's mandate did not extend towards determining who was responsible for the attack of 21 August, a number of Council members expressed the view that the evidence presented in the report pointed towards the culpability of the Syrian authorities, while other Council members said that the report needed to be carefully examined. A number of Council members repeated their points during consultations on the Middle East on 17 September.

Following intensive discussions, the representatives of the United States and the Russian Federation presented a draft resolution on the destruction of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic to the Security Council on 26 September, by which the Council determined that the use of chemical weapons anywhere constituted a threat to international peace and security, and condemned any use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular the attack of

21 August. The two delegations noted that the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons would soon adopt a decision on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons. In the draft resolution the Council decided that the Syrian Arab Republic shall comply with all aspects of the decision of 27 September of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, authorized an advance United Nations team to provide early assistance to activities of that organization in the Syrian Arab Republic, and requested that the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and, where appropriate, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, submit to the Council within 10 days of the adoption of the resolution recommendations on the role of the United Nations in eliminating the Syrian chemical weapons programme. In the draft resolution also, for the first time, the Council endorsed the final communiqué of the Action Group signed in Geneva on 30 June 2012, which identified measures to secure an immediate cessation of all violence and contained agreed principles and guidelines for a Syrian-led transition. The co-authors of the draft resolution asked that all Council members consider also sponsoring the resolution so that it could be presented as a “presidential text”.

Since all Council members indicated they would sponsor the draft resolution, it was presented as a presidential text and was adopted unanimously by the Council on 27 September as resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#). All Council members delivered statements after the adoption welcoming the result and calling for full implementation. Most Council members were represented at the adoption of resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#) at the ministerial level.

After the adoption of resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#), the representatives of Australia and Luxembourg announced their intention to circulate a draft presidential statement on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. A draft text was subsequently circulated to Council members on 28 September and was discussed during informal discussions on 30 September. Many members of the Council expressed support for the draft, in recognition that it was time for the Council to take action to support efforts to improve humanitarian access to Syrians in need of assistance. A number of Council members proposed amendments and additions to the draft presidential statement.

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, in closed consultations, briefed the Council on 19 September on the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). Further to the security incidents described in the Secretary-General’s most recent report on UNDOF, he described another serious security incident, on 12 September, in which armed elements of the Syrian opposition had taken over three positions of the Syrian armed forces and during which shots had been fired towards the Israeli side. The UNDOF Force Commander had liaised with both the Syrian and Israeli sides in response to that incident. He noted that Israel had reacted with restraint in response to the incident.

The Under-Secretary-General reminded Council members that any military presence, other than UNDOF, in the Area of Separation was a violation of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement and had the potential to escalate tensions between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. He said that recent activities of the armed opposition,

including the use of improvised explosive devices, posed a risk to UNDOF personnel and had led to restrictions on their movement. He reminded Council members that primary responsibility for the safety and security of UNDOF peacekeepers lay with the parties and called for those with influence over the members of armed opposition to encourage them also to respect the safety and security of UNDOF personnel.

The Under-Secretary-General noted that the UNDOF mission continued to adopt force protection measures to enhance its safety and security and that its overall strength would nearly reach the maximum capacity of 1,250 following contributions from Fiji, Nepal and Ireland. He thanked those countries as well as troop-contributing countries which had remained in UNDOF and in the Observer Group Golan of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. He advised the Council that UNDOF was arranging for the importation of additional equipment to protect peacekeepers, although there had been some delay in securing the necessary approvals from the Syrian authorities in relation to some pieces of equipment.

Council members expressed strong appreciation to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for its efforts to enhance the capacity of UNDOF, including through the increase in troop numbers. Council members also expressed gratitude to existing and new troop-contributing countries for their efforts to strengthen the mission. Many Council members urged the parties to act with restraint in response to security incidents and to comply with the terms of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement.

Yemen

On 27 September, the Council held a briefing on the situation in the Middle East (Yemen), with the Foreign Minister of Australia, Julie Bishop, presiding and several delegations represented at ministerial level. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, Jamal Benomar, and the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al-Zayani, briefed the Council on recent developments. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen, Abu-Bakr Abdullah Al-Qirbi, also made a statement.

The Special Adviser said Yemen's National Dialogue Conference was the most genuine, transparent and inclusive deliberative process anywhere in the Arab region. The National Dialogue had made extraordinary progress and was nearing completion. He emphasized that the National Dialogue was but one step in the transition — it was never intended to resolve all of Yemen's challenges, but rather to provide guidance for the constitution-drafting process, to be followed by general elections. He noted that the Transition Agreement based on the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative would be delayed because some tasks had taken longer than foreseen, and there had been instances of obstruction at times.

The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council told the Council that the Gulf Cooperation Council stood by Yemen during its transition, and commended the leadership of interim President Hadis Mansour during this period. He also welcomed the continued engagement of the international community in assisting Yemen during this crucial period.

The Foreign Minister said Yemen welcomed the ongoing role of the Council in supporting Yemen's transition. The National Dialogue had been a free, transparent

and inclusive process. The Foreign Minister reiterated that Yemen remained committed to the transition plan based on the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative.

Council members noted the significant progress Yemen had made with its political transition, despite significant humanitarian, economic and security challenges. The National Dialogue had been delayed, but Council members encouraged all parties in Yemen to remain engaged in dialogue to ensure that the Gulf Cooperation Council transition timetable was adhered to as closely as possible. Several Council members highlighted the importance of the Council's continued engagement in supporting Yemen's transition, and noted that the Council should be prepared to take measures against spoilers.

Council members expressed concern at recent terrorist attacks, including the threat posed by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. Several Council members also referred to the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen, noting that only 44 per cent of the humanitarian appeal had been funded.

Non-proliferation: Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006)

On 5 September, the Council received an open briefing from the Permanent Representative of Australia, Gary Quinlan, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), on the work of the Committee from 16 July to 5 September 2013. He noted the Committee's continued consideration of the final report of the Panel of Experts, as well as the Committee's deliberation on whether it should apply the INTERPOL Special Notices to disseminate information to Member States on the Security Council's targeted sanctions list. He said that the Committee continued to consider an appropriate response to the Panel's compilation of publicly available statements made by Iranian officials and alleged recipients of Iranian military assistance regarding potential violations of resolution 1747 (2007), as well as follow-up to the Panel's unanimous conclusion that launches by the Islamic Republic of Iran of Shabab 1 and 3 missiles constituted a violation of resolution 1929 (2010). He noted that the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammad Khazaei, had called on him on 1 August and had not been able to advise whether his country intended to reply to the Committee's letter of 12 April on the Shabab 1 and 3 missiles, and the Committee's letter of 21 May on the Panel's report concluding that an intercepted arms shipment was at the very least a probable violation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of resolution 1747 (2007).

Council members reiterated their support for dialogue in the five plus one framework for achieving a solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. Some Council members noted the opportunity presented to the new Iranian Government to demonstrate a commitment to address the international community's concerns and considered the resumed talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on 27 September a key opportunity. Some Council members expressed concern about the continued non-compliance by the Islamic Republic of Iran with Security Council and IAEA resolutions, as documented most recently in the report of the Director General of IAEA dated 28 August. Some Council members encouraged greater Committee action to fulfil its mandate, including to implement recommendations contained in the Panel's final report and to improve the

Committee's response to sanctions violations, and urged the Committee to reach agreement on a number of pending issues before it. Some members emphasized the importance of the Panel performing its work in strict conformity with its mandate and based on objective and corroborated evidence.

Thematic and other issues

Horizon-scanning briefing by the Department of Political Affairs

During a "horizon-scanning" meeting scheduled by the presidency on 4 September, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, provided a briefing covering his recent visit in August to the Middle East and neighbouring countries. During his visit he travelled to Jordan, Israel and the West Bank with the Secretary-General. The Under-Secretary-General then travelled back to Jordan, before proceeding to visit Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The purpose of the Under-Secretary-General's travel to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the Islamic Republic of Iran was to discuss preparations for a conference to agree on a political solution to the current crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. He reported that, while the United Nations had completed all of the necessary preparations to hold the conference, the Syrian parties and their supporters in the region did not appear to be ready to participate. He noted that there had been divergent views within the three countries on who had been responsible for the chemical weapons attack in certain neighbourhoods of Damascus on 21 August. A number of Council members said that the Syrian authorities had been responsible for the attack, and many Council members agreed that a firm response was required. Some Council members expressed doubt that the Syrian authorities had been responsible for the attack.

The Under-Secretary-General advised the Council that he had visited Egypt at the direction of the Secretary-General, and the primary purpose of his visit had been to listen to a variety of Egyptian interlocutors from the Government as well as representatives of religious groups and civil society. On the basis of those discussions, the Under-Secretary-General emphasized the need for a political road map of genuine reconciliation and inclusivity. He advised the Council that the foundations of democracy in Egypt would need to be built over time. Many Council members welcomed the Under-Secretary-General's visit to Egypt, although some Council members cautioned that it was important that the transition in Egypt be an Egyptian-led process.

The Under-Secretary-General expressed some concern at the deterioration of the security situation in Iraq, and at continuing political divisions. He reiterated the Secretary-General's strong concern at the violence at Camp Ashraf on 1 September, during which at least 52 lives had been lost. He reported that it was beyond the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq to determine responsibility for the violence, and that the Iraqi authorities would carry out an investigation. He also commended Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas for their courage in resuming direct negotiations towards the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the United States Secretary of State, John Kerry, for his consistent efforts over recent months to bring the parties together.

Small arms

On 26 September, the Foreign Minister of Australia, Julie Bishop, chaired a high-level meeting of the Council on the topic of small arms and light weapons. The meeting was the first time in five years that the Council had taken up the issue.

During his briefing, the Secretary-General drew on the findings in his recent report on small arms (S/2013/503) to highlight the evolving nature of the threat posed by the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and areas where the Council could improve its responses. He described the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in March 2013 as a historic step forward, and urged all States to sign and ratify the Treaty. The Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Christine Beerli, also briefed the Council. She highlighted the devastating cost to civilians and communities of the widespread availability and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and called upon States to develop a comprehensive approach in order to more effectively combat these threats.

In their interventions, Council members were unanimous in recognizing the deleterious impact the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons has on international peace and security. Several members welcomed progress made to date, including the adoption by the General Assembly of the Arms Trade Treaty in March 2013. A number of members urged the Council to support regional initiatives, including the Foreign Minister of Rwanda, Louise Mushikiwabo, who said Africa, and especially the Great Lakes region, had been engulfed by conflict facilitated by such weapons. Some speakers highlighted the impact on humanitarian assistance and how women and children bore the brunt of the violence caused by such weapons.

Council members adopted resolution 2117 (2013) by 14 votes to none, with 1 abstention (Russian Federation). Explaining the abstention, the representative of the Russian Federation said his country could not support the text as it lacked an important provision on the unacceptability of transferring small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. Eleven Council members sponsored the resolution (Argentina, Australia, France, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Morocco, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America), together with 15 non-Council members (Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Germany, Japan, Liberia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Timor-Leste and Trinidad and Tobago). This is the first Council resolution dedicated exclusively to the issue of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

Resolution 2117 (2013) reinforces the Council's efforts to address the threat posed by the illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and elaborates practical steps to achieve this. In it, the Council reminded Member States of their obligation to fully and effectively comply with Council-mandated arms embargoes; and supported the work of peacekeeping and political missions to limit the impact of these weapons on societies, including by helping Governments, as requested, to enhance border security and management of their weapons stocks. The Council also called on parties to conflict to ensure the protection of civilians from these weapons. These elements have not previously been drawn together in a Council resolution.