

**Security Council**

Distr.: General  
13 December 2019

Original: English

---

**Letter dated 13 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith an assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of July 2018 during the presidency of Sweden (see annex). The assessment was prepared by the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations. While other members of the Council have been consulted, the assessment should not be considered as representing the views of the Council.

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

(Signed) Olof **Skoog**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative



## **Annex to the letter dated 13 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

### **Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Sweden (July 2018)**

#### **Introduction**

During the month of July 2018, the Security Council held 17 public meetings, 13 consultations of the whole and 1 private meeting. During the closed consultations, three additional items were discussed under the item “Other matters”.

The Council adopted five resolutions, agreed on two statements by the President and issued seven press statements.

Among the public meetings there were two open debates. On 9 July 2018, the Security Council held an open debate at the ministerial level, entitled “Children and armed conflict: protecting children today prevents conflicts tomorrow”, chaired by the Prime Minister of Sweden, Stefan Löfven. On 24 July, the Council convened its quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

In accordance with the Organization’s practice, Sweden began its presidency with the presentation of the provisional programme of work of the Council for the month, which was adopted at the consultations of the whole on 2 July.

#### **Situation in the Middle East**

##### **Syrian Arab Republic**

###### *Chemical weapons*

On 3 July, the Security Council held closed consultations on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and the implementation of resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#). Council members were briefed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, via a videoconference.

In her briefing, the High Representative reported that there had been some progress, as the remaining two chemical weapons production facilities had been destroyed. Although the destruction remained to be verified by the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, she welcomed the development. She regretted, however, that there had been no progress to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the initial declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic. It could therefore not be considered accurate and complete. She noted that the fact-finding missions of the Organisation on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons continued their activities and had issued a report regarding chemical weapons use in Lataminah in March 2017. The investigation into allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Duma in April 2018 continued. Finally, she noted that a decision had been adopted by the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in The Hague on 26 and 27 June.

In the ensuing interventions, Council members condemned the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and welcomed the progress in the destruction of the remaining production facilities, subject to verification by the Organisation on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Many Council members expressed concern

about the outstanding issues relating to the Syrian declaration and called for increased cooperation between the Organisation on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Syrian authorities to resolve them.

Council members expressed different views regarding the outcome of the Review Conference of the State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention held in The Hague on 26 and 27 June. While some members welcomed the decision adopted, others expressed reservations about its conformity with the Chemical Weapons Convention and concern that it risked leading to politicization of the Organisation on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and thus jeopardizing its technical role.

Several members underlined the need to ensure accountability for those responsible for the use of chemical weapons and to continue the fight against impunity. Several members emphasized the need for the Council to agree on a unified response to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

#### *Political situation*

On 25 July, the Security Council held closed consultations on the political process in the Syrian Arab Republic. The members of the Council were briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, via a videoconference from Geneva, on the latest developments ahead of the Astana guarantors' meeting to be held in Sochi, Russian Federation, on 30 and 31 July.

In his briefing, the Special Envoy gave a comprehensive overview of the latest developments on the ground and stressed the need for a safe, calm and neutral environment for the political process. He warned about the threat of regional tensions and emphasized the need to give more attention to the question of detainees and to make progress. He also addressed the question of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. He further addressed the issue of the establishment of a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned constitutional committee, facilitated by the United Nations, within the framework of the Geneva process and in accordance with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). He addressed the subject of the composition of the constitutional committee, in line with the criteria outlined in resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) and the final statement of the Congress of the Syrian National Dialogue, as well as a range of other issues related to the establishment and functioning of a constitutional committee. He emphasized the need for further progress, enabling the committee to be set up before the high-level week of the General Assembly in September 2018.

In the ensuing interventions, Council members reiterated their full support for the Special Envoy's leadership in facilitating a viable, enduring political solution to the Syrian conflict and reaffirmed their strong commitment to the Syrian-led political process facilitated by the United Nations in line with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). They also called upon the Syrian parties to engage constructively, in good faith and without preconditions, with the Special Envoy regarding the constitutional committee. Council members also underlined the importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Many Council members reiterated their full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy in the swift establishment of a representative constitutional committee, including the full and effective participation of women.

Many Council members expressed concern about military escalation on the ground, in particular in the south-west of the Syrian Arab Republic, and emphasized the need for a propitious environment for the political process, including respect for the de-escalation areas. Some also warned against the risk of military escalation in Idlib Governorate.

Several Council members emphasized the importance of the fight against terrorism in line with Security Council resolutions and international law and strongly condemned the terrorist attack committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Suwayda' earlier the same day.

Some Council members reiterated the need for safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access and respect for international humanitarian law. Some emphasized the return of refugees to the Syrian Arab Republic, while others stressed that it must be safe, dignified and voluntary.

The members of the Council agreed on elements to be read to the press following the adjournment of the meeting.

#### *Humanitarian situation*

On 5 July, the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic was discussed under the item "Other matters" at the request of the co-penholders, Kuwait and Sweden. The members of the Council were briefed by the Director of Operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, John Ging, on the deterioration of the humanitarian situation caused by a recent military escalation in the south-west of the Syrian Arab Republic.

According to the Director of Operations, the situation in the south-west of the country had further deteriorated since the briefing given to the Council on 27 June, with intensified attacks along the border between Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic and a significant increase in the number of internally displaced persons.

Many Council members stressed the need for de-escalation and called upon the parties to reduce the levels of violence, while others recognized the need to pursue the fight against terrorist groups. Most Council members emphasized the need for the protection of civilians, respect for international humanitarian law, a reduction in the vulnerability of internally displaced persons and the need to resume cross-border deliveries. Some Council members also expressed concern about reports of attacks against hospitals and medical facilities.

On 27 July, the Security Council held a briefing on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The members of the Council were briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba. The Under-Secretary-General advocated that ensuring that children's rights were respected, protected and fulfilled must be at the centre of all efforts. He then gave the Council an update on the humanitarian situation and response in the south of the Syrian Arab Republic, where he was particularly concerned for the 110,000 displaced persons in Qunaytirah, to whom the United Nations had no access. He also briefed the Council on the situation and humanitarian response in Idlib, eastern Ghutah, Afrin, Raqqah, Dayr al-Zawr and Rukban, and the evacuation of the besieged populations in Fu'ah and Kafraya. He expressed concern that needs were increasing while the United Nations appeal for the Syrian Arab Republic remained substantially underfunded. He highlighted the need to maintain donors' confidence and stressed that the ability of the United Nations to independently assess needs and prioritize responses was crucial to that end and that access was required. The United Nations remained committed to working with Syrian authorities to that end.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict briefed the Council on the grave violations against children verified and reported by the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. She underscored

that children were disproportionately affected by the conflict in the country. During the first quarter of 2018, there had been a 25 per cent increase in the recruitment and use of children and a 348 per cent increase in killing and maiming, both compared with the previous quarter. The total number of grave violations for the first quarter marked a 109 per cent increase compared with the last quarter of 2017. The Special Representative also touched upon sexual violence against children and attacks affecting schools, and informed the Council that the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic would be issued in the next few months. The Security Council was encouraged to do all that was in its power to put pressure on the parties to comply with their obligations under international law. The Special Representative called upon the parties to take immediate actions to prevent child casualties during the conduct of hostilities and stated that children affected by the conflict must be given access to protection programmes designed to meet their needs in an integrated and comprehensive approach, as stipulated in Council resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#). The international community was also encouraged to prioritize funding for quality education.

In the ensuing interventions, many Council members expressed concern over the humanitarian situation in the south and in Idlib. Council members also expressed their views on the return of refugees to the Syrian Arab Republic, Law No. 10 of 2018, the safety of humanitarian workers and the cross-border modality. Many called for a de-escalation of violence, increased efforts for humanitarian access for the United Nations and the importance of respecting obligations under international humanitarian law. Many Council members also focused on the humanitarian situation of children in the Syrian Arab Republic, highlighting various aspects such as the grave violations committed against children, protection concerns for children, attacks against schools, the large number of children out of school, the reintegration of children, children's mental health and various parts of resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#).

### **Situation in the Middle East (Yemen)**

On 5 July, the Security Council held closed consultations on the situation in Yemen, in which Council members were briefed via a videoconference by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, as well as by the Director of Operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The Special Envoy updated the Council on his efforts to relaunch the peace process in Yemen. He reported on his latest visits to Yemen and the region and the discussions with the parties on his proposals to reach an agreement on the city of Hudaydah – with a possible role for the United Nations – and relaunch broader political negotiations. He stated that he was encouraged by the fact that the coalition had paused its offensive against Hudaydah, which he stressed would have had disastrous consequences if carried out, and emphasized the importance of continued Council engagement, so as to have diplomacy and mediation work hand in hand.

The Director of Operations updated the Council on the grave humanitarian situation in Yemen, still ranked as the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, and the impact of the conflict on the civilian population. He put emphasis on the situation in Hudaydah, where 17,000 families had been forced to flee their homes since the beginning of June – more than half of whom were now receiving emergency kits from humanitarian organizations. The ports of Hudaydah and Salif remained open and operational, receiving imports of food, fuel and medical supplies. Despite improved imports over recent months, however, the purchasing power remained in decline, compounding the plight of the civilian population. He also drew the Council's attention to the heightened risk of cholera, especially in Hudaydah, where health and nutrition conditions were some of the worst in the country. He stated that any escalation of the conflict could quickly result in an epidemic that would imperil the

lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians and stressed the importance of avoiding military confrontation in Hudaydah.

At the end of the consultations, the members agreed on elements to the press, in which they summarized the discussions and, inter alia, reaffirmed their full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy, encouraged all parties to engage constructively with his efforts to restart the political process and reaffirmed that a political solution remained the only way to end the conflict. They recognized the importance of the ports of Hudaydah and Salif and reiterated their call for them to be kept open and operating safely given the continued risk to the grave humanitarian situation. Council members also reiterated their call for the full implementation of Security Council resolutions and statements, including resolution [2216 \(2015\)](#), and urged all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law.

## **Lebanon**

On 23 July, the Security Council held consultations on the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) and the situation in Lebanon. The acting United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Pernille Dahler Kardel, briefed the Council on the latest political developments in Lebanon in the aftermath of the parliamentary elections held in May. The process of forming a Government was complicated but needed to be concluded soon so that a new Government could start tackling the many challenges that Lebanon was facing, including reforms and commencing work on a national defence strategy. The acting Special Coordinator informed the Council of violations of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) and cautioned against bellicose rhetoric. The parties needed support to create a favourable environment for further steps towards the full implementation of the resolution. She called for continued international support for Lebanon and vulnerable parts of the Lebanese population, as well as Palestinian and Syrian refugees, and emphasized the importance of Council unity on Lebanon.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, briefed the Council focusing on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), including patrolling, inspections, joint activities with the Lebanese armed forces and the work of the tripartite mechanism, and on the implementation of the recommendations of the strategic review concerning the Maritime Task Force and the Model Regiment. The Under-Secretary-General also briefed the Council on restrictions to the freedom of movement of UNIFIL during the reporting period and measures taken in response to them.

The members of the Security Council expressed support for the activities of the acting Special Coordinator and for UNIFIL in carrying out its mandate. They also expressed their hope that a new Government of national unity would be formed swiftly in Lebanon and looked forward to the upcoming renewal of the UNIFIL mandate. They expressed their commitment to follow closely the situation in Lebanon, including the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). The members of the Council agreed on elements to be read to the press following the adjournment of the meeting.

## **Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

On 24 July, the Security Council convened its quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, participated in a videoconference from Jerusalem a few hours after returning from Gaza. In his briefing, he warned that the outbreak of a new conflict between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip was “almost a certainty” unless

the international community began work immediately to ease tensions on the ground, without losing sight of the broader aim of a sustainable peace. Progress, he added, would require de-escalation and calm in Gaza, strengthened coordination with the Palestinian Authority, Israel, Egypt and the United Nations and financial support, with the human dimension at the forefront of all efforts. He credited intensive preventative diplomacy by the United Nations and Egypt over the previous weekend with averting a fresh military confrontation between Israel and Hamas.

The Special Coordinator reported that the United Nations was closely monitoring the situation after the Israel Defense Forces announced that they had fired two missiles earlier the same day to shoot down a Syrian fighter jet, which they claimed had infiltrated Israeli airspace. “These hostilities demonstrate a disturbing trajectory of increasingly frequent and dangerous confrontations,” he stated, calling on all parties to abide by the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces, of 1974.

Speaking under rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, Riyad Mansour, argued that Israel was continuing its oppression of Palestinians. “It is ... imperative that the international community act urgently to prevent further assaults against Palestinian civilians” and ensure the lifting of the Israeli blockade, he emphasized, calling also for sustainable funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) after the United States of America announced that it would cut back its contribution to that entity. The Permanent Representative of Israel, Danny Danon, stated that it was time for the Security Council to designate Hamas as a terrorist organization on par with Al-Qaida and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh). Some 12 years since Hamas seized Gaza, peace in the region was a “figment of the imagination” because Hamas valued death over life, he declared. He also noted the rescue by Israel on the night of 21 to 22 July of White Helmets volunteers from the Syrian Arab Republic and the downing of a Syrian aircraft.

During the debate, speakers reiterated support for a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the realization of the two-State solution, based on international law and United Nations resolutions, while at the same time condemning terrorism and appealing for restraint. The situation in Gaza also figured prominently in the speakers’ interventions, with calls for an end to the closure, Palestinian reconciliation and the return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza. Many also emphasized the gravity of the humanitarian situation in Gaza and called for the easing of restrictions. Many speakers addressed the issue of the dire financial situation of UNRWA and the need for more support. Some speakers held Israel responsible for the escalation of violence and the Gaza blockade.

Several speakers also touched upon other issues affecting the Middle East, including the ongoing conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, the formation of a new Government in Lebanon and the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme.

## **Africa**

### **South Sudan**

On 5 July, the Security Council held closed consultations on South Sudan sanctions. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations briefed the Council on the security and political situation in South Sudan, as requested in resolution [2418 \(2018\)](#). The Under-Secretary-General consequently updated the members of the Council on whether any fighting had taken place involving parties to the cessation of hostilities agreement signed on 21 December 2017 and on whether the parties had



“come to a viable political agreement”. He stated that there had been credible reports of fighting taking place involving parties to the peace agreement during the reporting period from 21 May to 27 June and that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) had documented “gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, particularly in central and southern Unity”. He noted that UNMISS patrols had come under direct fire three times during the reporting period. He also mentioned reports in which it was indicated that, in the context of the peace process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, progress was being made in the ongoing negotiations in Khartoum. Council members presented divergent views on how to interpret the latest developments and what would be the most effective way in which the Council could support the peace effort.

On 13 July, the Council adopted resolution [2428 \(2018\)](#), by a vote of nine in favour (Côte d’Ivoire, France, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States) to none against, with six abstentions (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation). By the terms of the resolution, the Council expressed deep concern at the failure of the leaders of South Sudan to bring an end to the country’s hostilities and condemned the continued violations of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and related ceasefires. It decided that, until 31 May 2019, all Member States should prevent the supply, sale or transfer to South Sudan – from or through their territories – of arms and related material and withhold training, technical and financial assistance related to military activities or materials. In addition, it laid out several exemptions to the country’s arms embargo – including for material and activities related to humanitarian activities – and listed details related to the inspection of shipments and cargo bound for South Sudan. It also decided to renew until 31 May 2019 a travel ban and assets freeze, as laid out in resolution [2206 \(2015\)](#), and included two additional individuals for such measures in the annex to the resolution. The representatives of Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, France, Poland, the Netherlands, China, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, the United Kingdom, the United States and Sweden delivered explanations of their vote. The delegation of South Sudan spoke under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

On 26 July, the Council received a briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, under the item “Other matters”. She shared with Council members her impressions of her visit to South Sudan from 3 to 7 July 2018 and highlighted some key findings and recommendations on the patterns and trends of conflict-related sexual violence.

### **Peace and security in Africa**

On 10 July, the Council held a briefing on peace and security in Africa, with a focus on women and peace and security in the Sahel region. The meeting followed a joint high-level African Union-United Nations mission to South Sudan, Chad and the Niger, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed. At the meeting, the Council was briefed by the Deputy Secretary-General and the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström, participated in the leg of the mission in Chad and the Niger and chaired the meeting in her capacity as President of the Security Council in July.

The Deputy Secretary-General highlighted the need to address the cost that women and girls pay for conflict, the need for the greater inclusion, representation and participation of women in all areas of society and the need to ensure that countries currently experiencing fragility do not become failed States in the future. She also



spoke about the pressing need to operationalize the policies, frameworks and agendas already in place to support countries in the region.

The Special Envoy confirmed that terrorism constituted a major challenge in the region and that widespread unemployment, the practice of child marriage and the lack of basic social services constituted recruiting grounds for terrorist groups. In order to address those challenges, the basic needs of the population – in particular women – must be met, prevention must be at the heart of efforts and women must be assisted in becoming drivers of social change. Every woman should be empowered to say no to early marriage, to association with extremist groups and to a life of poverty, she stated.

Council members, as well as the briefers, recognized that women and girls often bore a disproportionate burden of the crisis in the Sahel. Empowering women and girls to become agents of change was a key aspect of achieving peace, development and security in the region.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Chad outlined recent initiatives by the Government, including a 30 per cent quota for women in the Government, the prohibition of early marriage and the prioritization of education and literacy for girls.

### **Central African Republic**

On 13 July, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the situation in Central African Republic ([S/PRST/2018/14](#)).

### **Sudan and South Sudan (Darfur)**

On 13 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2429 \(2018\)](#), in which it extended the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) until 30 June 2019. By the terms of the resolution, the Council decided that the authorized troop ceiling for the Mission should be reduced over the course of the mandate renewal period to consist of up to 4,050 personnel and further authorized a police force, not exceeding 2,500 personnel, including individual police officers and members of formed police units, which is essential for the implementation of the UNAMID mandate. The Council requested UNAMID to consolidate the whole-of-system approach to Darfur focused on peacekeeping and providing sustainable solutions to the drivers of conflict with the Mission's current two-pronged approach, to prevent relapse and enable the Government of the Sudan, the United Nations country team, civil society and other actors to prepare for the eventual exit of UNAMID. The representative of the Sudan spoke under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

### **Libya**

On 16 July, the Security Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the situation in Libya. The Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Ghassan Salamé, as well as by the acting Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1970 \(2011\)](#) concerning Libya, Carl Skau, who reported on the work of the Committee during the period from 22 May to 16 July 2018.

The Special Representative noted the relative calm that had been enjoyed in Libya during the first months of the year, which the United Nations had been able to capitalize on to further the implementation of its Action Plan for Libya. Such progress included supporting local elections and concluding the consultative phase of the

Libyan National Conference process, in which a quarter of the participants had been women. He went on to state that, regrettably, the previous two months had been marked by military action – for example in Darnah and the oil crescent region – which had drained some of the momentum gained. He described recent events in the oil crescent region, starting with the attacks on the oil facilities on 14 June. Without addressing underlying issues, such as the distribution of resources, he expressed fear that the recent agreement that had brought an end to the immediate oil crisis would not hold. He highlighted the request by the Government of National Accord for a review of the official Central Bank of Libya and the parallel eastern central bank as a first step to bring transparency to the finances of Libya.

The Special Representative underlined the desire of the Libyan people to hold elections and stressed the need to create the conditions necessary for such elections – not least a legal framework. He expressed hope that the House of Representatives would deliver on its responsibility and vote on a law for a referendum on the constitution. Finally, he expressed concern over the humanitarian situation, including for migrants and refugees, and the continued human rights abuses in Libya. He reiterated the call for all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law, including by taking all feasible precautions to protect civilians.

Speaking under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Libya, Elmahdi S. Elmajerbi, drew attention to the importance of creating conditions conducive to organizing elections. He expressed concern about attempts to obstruct efforts to stabilize the country, including the recent attacks against the oil facilities. He called upon the Security Council to help to increase the transparency of Libyan economic institutions.

The members of the Council agreed on elements to the press, in which they summarized the discussions and, inter alia, reiterated their support for the efforts of the Special Representative and the United Nations-facilitated, Libyan-owned and Libyan-led political process, including the continued implementation of the United Nations Action Plan for Libya and preparations for inclusive and credible elections. Members welcomed the announcement that the National Oil Corporation of Libya was resuming its work on behalf of all Libyans, stressed the expectation that it would continue its work unimpeded and condemned the attacks against the oil infrastructure. They noted the importance that the Special Representative attached to increasing the transparency of Libyan economic institutions and invited him to submit early proposals to that end, taking into account his dialogue with Libyan parties. They expressed continued concern at the humanitarian situation, especially in Darnah, and called upon all parties to protect civilians and respect international humanitarian law.

### **United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel**

On 17 July, the Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohammed Ibn Chambas, briefed the Council based on the most recent report of the Secretary-General ([S/2018/649](#)).

The Special Representative described positive trends in the region, including democratic transitions and the successful holding of elections. He also expressed concern, however, over the dire security situation, with terrorist groups remaining active, escalating violence between nomadic herders and agrarian communities, transnational organized crime and piracy.

Council members expressed support for the good offices of UNOWAS. They welcomed recent progress in the region, including the successful holding of elections, but noted that the security situation remained of serious concern. The need for a

holistic approach and additional support for the region was highlighted, including through the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel.

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

On 26 July, the Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and on the Sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution [1533 \(2004\)](#) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, Leila Zerrougui, briefed the Council based on the most recent report of the Secretary-General ([S/2018/655](#)).

The Special Representative updated the Council on the election preparations, including the distrust in those preparations voiced by the opposition. Confidence-building measures aimed at creating a level playing field were still not fully implemented. She also described a volatile security situation, which could become a challenge to MONUSCO owing to its budgetary constraints, while implementing a “protection-through-projection approach”. In accordance with its mandate, MONUSCO was still preparing to support the elections logistically, but in the absence of a specific request to do so, the Mission would soon need to decide whether to continue those preparations.

Subsequently, the coordinator of Synergy of Women for Victims of Sexual Violence, Justine Masika Bihamba, briefed the Council and described a deterioration in the security situation of women, alongside difficulties and mounting obstacles to participation in politics. She urged the Council to do more to promote the participation of women in decision-making and the elections. She also recommended the Council to request the Government to respect civic and political space, the New Year’s Eve agreement and the rule of law. She asked that MONUSCO restore bases in fragile and especially exposed areas and support the elections and that the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office carry out field visits to document human rights violations.

The Permanent Representative of Kuwait, Mansour Alotaibi, who is Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1533 \(2004\)](#), described the activities of the Committee during 2018, including the decision to add more names to the list of sanctions. The Committee had met with the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including on its final report and its recommendations. The Committee had also worked closely with the senior official and his technical experts supporting the Government in the investigation into the murders in March 2017 of two members of the Group of Experts, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp.

The Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gata Mavita wa Lufuta, described the electoral preparations and other measures being taken to further peace and security in the country. He stressed that national sovereignty was the basis for preparing for the elections to be held in December.

Council members reaffirmed the joint communiqué of 19 July of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council. They emphasized the need for all parties to respect the Constitution and stressed the need for free, fair, inclusive and transparent elections. Security Council members urged the Government to do more to allow for the full exercise of the right to demonstrate and freedom of expression. In this regard, members urged that confidence-building measures be fully implemented. Women needed to be encouraged to participate in decision-making and in the elections. Council members expressed concern over the continued violence in the country, as well as the dire humanitarian situation. They

expressed interest in a visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They also repeated their support for continued electoral assistance by MONUSCO. Finally, they stressed that the pursuit of accountability for the murders of Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp would continue.

### **Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [751 \(1992\)](#) and [1907 \(2009\)](#) concerning Somalia and Eritrea**

On 30 July, the Security Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [751 \(1992\)](#) and [1907 \(2009\)](#) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. The Chair of the Committee, Kairat Umarov, briefed the Council on recent activities, including his visit to the region in May. He noted that interlocutors had described the destabilizing effect on the region of the war in Yemen and warned against a premature withdrawal of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The representatives of Somalia and Eritrea spoke under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure. Council members welcomed the visit of the Chair to the region. They also welcomed the continued commitment of Somalia to political and security reforms, as well as to improving weapons and ammunition management. They further commended the historic signing of the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship by Eritrea and Ethiopia on 9 July, as well as the announcement that Somalia and Eritrea would work together to foster regional peace and stability, and reiterated their readiness to support the region in those efforts.

### **Somalia**

On 30 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2431 \(2018\)](#), thereby extending the mandate of AMISOM until 31 May 2019 and reaffirming that one of the priority tasks of the Mission was to reduce the threat posed by Al-Shabaab and other armed groups, including through targeted offensive operations, as well as to support Somali security forces during the ongoing political process. By the terms of the resolution, the Council decided to reduce the troop levels to 20,626 by 28 February 2019 and requested a joint African Union-United Nations operational readiness assessment of AMISOM to be completed by 15 September. The Council welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to conduct a technical assessment of AMISOM by 31 January 2019 to review its reconfiguration, including the implementation of the troop reductions.

## **Europe**

### **United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus**

On 12 July, the Security Council held a private meeting with troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of Mission, UNFICYP, Elizabeth Spehar.

On 17 July, the Security Council held closed consultations on the question of Cyprus and received a briefing from Ms. Spehar in her dual role as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission, UNFICYP, and as the Deputy Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus. She presented the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus ([S/2018/676](#)), indicating that the situation along the green line had remained relatively stable throughout the period. She also informed the Council of the appointment by the Secretary-General of Jane Holl Lute to carry out consultations with the parties. Council members reiterated their commitment to supporting both

sides in their efforts to reach a settlement, while stressing the need for a more inclusive process and confidence-building measures.

On 26 July, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2430 \(2018\)](#), in which it extended the mandate of UNFICYP until 31 January 2019.

## **Asia**

### **Afghanistan**

On 23 July, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the situation in Afghanistan ([S/PRST/2018/15](#)).

### **Myanmar**

On 23 July, the Council held consultations on the situation in Myanmar. The members of the Security Council were, for the first time, briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener. They expressed strong support for her and for her work to address the crisis and to deepen partnership between Myanmar and the United Nations. The members of the Security Council were also briefed by the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Volker Türk, and by the Chief of the Country Office Liaison and Coordination Division of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Claire Van der Vaeren. The briefers provided a comprehensive overview of the current situation, including United Nations access to those in need.

The members of the Security Council stressed the need to make progress in facilitating implementation of the memorandum of understanding with UNHCR and UNDP, as well as memorandums of understanding and arrangements between Bangladesh and Myanmar. They continued to stress the importance of undertaking independent and transparent investigations into allegations of human rights abuses and violations. They noted the decision of the Government of Myanmar to establish an independent commission of inquiry on 31 May. They also stressed the need to step up efforts, including by providing assistance for social and economic development, to create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary and dignified return of Rohingya refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes in Rakhine State.

## **Americas**

### **Colombia**

On 26 July, the Council held a briefing followed by closed consultations on the special political mission to Colombia. The Council heard from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Colombia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, Jean Arnault. In his briefing, he emphasized the positive developments, including the presidential elections, the inauguration of a new Congress that included members of the disbanded Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) and the first hearings of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

The Special Representative voiced concern over post-election attacks on civil society activists, human rights defenders and former FARC-EP members and praised a "pact of repudiation" signed by outgoing President, Juan Manuel Santos, the President-elect and others that reflected national outrage at the killings.

Looking ahead, the Special Representative looked forward to a similar consensus being forged around the core challenge for consolidating peace, namely addressing poverty, violence and illegal economies in the zones of conflict. In that regard, he called for dialogue and cooperation between the new Government, local authorities, social organizations and civil society.

Council members unanimously encouraged further progress, with many highlighting Colombia as a model for resolving other conflicts. At the same time, they echoed concerns about deadly attacks, including those on civil society activists and human rights defenders, and called for greater efforts to reintegrate former FARC-EP combatants and their families.

Subsequently, and speaking under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, the Vice-President of Colombia, Óscar Naranjo, declared that the Government and 50 million Colombians wanted to thank the Council for its unwavering support for peace after 53 years of violence that cost 250,000 lives. He also stated that weapons had been laid down, that FARC-EP had become a political party with seats in Congress and that efforts needed to be multiplied to ensure that violence decreased.

## **Thematic issues**

### **Children and armed conflict**

On 9 July, the Council held an open debate at the ministerial level on children and armed conflict, entitled "Protecting children today prevents conflicts tomorrow", presided by the Prime Minister of Sweden. At the outset, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), which had been submitted by Sweden and 98 cosponsors.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Henrietta Fore, and a representative of the Colombian civil society organization Grupo de Jóvenes Consultores, Jenny Londoño, briefed the Council.

The Special Representative emphasized that rehabilitation and reintegration must be the centrepiece of all efforts to engage with children formerly recruited by or associated with armed forces and armed groups. Stressing the importance of action plans adopted by various Governments and armed groups – including, recently, in the Central African Republic, Mali, Nigeria and the Sudan – she declared: "we must build on those advances to move to an era of prevention".

The Executive Director of UNICEF warned that, as conflicts increased in number and ferocity, thousands of children were slipping through safety nets around the world. She called for increased political will and resources to protect children and stressed that the international community must demand zero tolerance for all violations against children, which fuel grievances that inflame and perpetuate conflicts across generations.

The representative of Grupo de Jóvenes Consultores stated that she was speaking on behalf of the many girls and boys recruited by armed groups around the world. Recalling that she had ended up in the ranks of FARC-EP at the age of 13, she stated that preventing violations against children must be a top international priority. Protecting children should be an integral part of any peace process, she stressed, emphasizing that recruited children – themselves victims of crimes – should never be treated as criminals. Noting that recruited children around the globe often ended up in detention centres, she described the law on victims of Colombia and its potential as a best practice model to share with other countries.

Many of the more than 90 speakers throughout the debate welcomed the focus of the resolution on concrete guidance and its links to the conflict prevention agenda of the Secretary-General, and how protecting children could prevent conflict and sustain peace. Citing the recent report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict ([S/2018/465](#)), Member States voiced grave concern over the 21,000 documented violations against children – a large increase compared with 2016. Some members spotlighted trends outlined in the report, including substantial increases in child casualties in Iraq and Myanmar, high overall child casualty rates in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, attacks on schools and hospitals in the Kasai Region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the continued abduction of children by Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria.

**Maintenance of international peace and security: climate-related security risks**

On 11 July, the Council held a debate on climate-related security risks, presided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. A summary of the debate by the Chair is contained in [S/2018/749](#).

---