

# Security Council

## *Introduction*

Unlike the majority of the United Nations (UN) system bodies, the Security Council (SC) holds meetings periodically as deemed necessary; therefore, several sessions have taken place over the last several months.<sup>1</sup> This update of the Council's latest activities will try to give an overview of some of the current issues. By doing so, this update will also aim to show delegates the range of possibilities that the Security Council has when discussing a topic. Indeed, as will be developed in the following paragraphs, the recent events, particularly in the Central African region, have drawn the Council's full attention and led to a series of decisions representative of the role the body has in times when international peace and security are at stake.

## *Recent Activities*

### *Elections*

On 17 October, Chad, Chile, Lithuania, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia were elected to the Security Council for a two-year term from January 2014 to December 2015.<sup>2</sup> However, only one day later, Saudi Arabia renounced its membership to demonstrate its discontentment about functioning of the SC, especially concerning its role in the conflict in Syria and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>3</sup> This led to the submission of Jordan's candidacy to take Saudi Arabia's seat; the official election took place on 6 December at the UN General Assembly (GA) and Jordan was elected by 178 votes in favor.<sup>4</sup>

### *Priorities*

Over the last several months, the Council has contributed to the stabilization of the situation in Mali, the growing violence in South Sudan and closely followed the situation in Syria. The Syrian case has shown that divisions among the 15 members of the Security Council still hinder successful humanitarian assistance and peaceful settlements.<sup>5</sup> In this regard, the negotiations which began on 22 January 2014, and continue in Montreux, Switzerland, are considered the best opportunity for ending the conflict.<sup>6</sup> The main goals will be to open negotiations between the Syrian government and the opposition as well the implementation of the outcome of the first conference on Syria, called Geneva I, the ultimate goal being the establishment of a transitional government in order to end the conflict.<sup>7</sup>

Other parts have also drawn the SC's attention; this is particularly true for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) where rebel groups still control parts of the country.<sup>8</sup> After the assassination of a commander of the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) acting under a SC mandate set by Resolution 2098 (2013) in order to assist the FARDC, had to redeploy its forces.<sup>9</sup> In addition, South Sudan remains a matter of concern for the SC and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS); since the South Sudanese independence, violence has strongly risen and forced tens of thousands of civilians from their homes.<sup>10</sup> In response, the SC authorized the relocation of UN staff present in the country for safety purposes.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the SC authorized a plan to double UNMISS armed forces and requested that US \$166 million be raised in order to bring additional supplies to the country.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *The Security Council* [Website], 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Security Council Report, *What's in Blue: Extraordinary Election to the Security Council* [Website], 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Security Council Report, *Cross-Cutting Report: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> UN DPI, *Invitations to Syria Peace Conference Being Sent Out Today, UN Spokesperson Confirms*, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, *UN Peacekeepers in DR Congo on Alert After Killing of Army Commander*, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, *UN Peacekeepers Reinforcing Presence in South Sudan Amid Continued Fighting*, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> UN DPI, *Amid Fresh Clashes in South Sudan, UN Warns its Supplies Running Low in Bor*, 2014.

## ***Recent Policy Outcomes***

### *Sudan and South Sudan*

Lately, Resolution 2132 (2013) on the situation in South Sudan was adopted in order to increase the force levels of UNMISS and to facilitate cooperation between the different missions present on the field in this region.<sup>13</sup> In such situations, the protection of civilians, which are particularly vulnerable, becomes a key issue and a matter of international peace and security. Thus, the Council has addressed questions linked to this, as evidenced by the recent passing of Resolution 2122 (2013) in continuation with Security Council resolutions 2068 (2012) and 2106 (2013), specifically addressing the protection of women and children during conflict.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Central African Republic*

Ongoing conflicts have attracted the SCs attention and the political instability, revitalized from clashes between religious communities has caused concerns about the worsening humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic (CAR).<sup>15</sup> After a briefing of the head of United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in November 2013, the SC condemned the actions of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a militant movement active in the region pursuing Christian fundamentalist goals.<sup>16</sup> In December 2013, the Council, acting under Chapter VII of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), authorized the deployment of the African Union International Support Mission to the CAR (MISCA) mandated to protect civilians via the adoption of Resolution 2127 (2013).<sup>17</sup> This action taken by the SC is a perfect illustration of the set of possible actions available to the SC in addressing threats to international peace and security, especially those of violent conflicts, and the way they are intended to be used.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the resolution urges for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), and stresses the importance of respecting human rights, and the protection of children, especially concerning their recruitment as soldiers.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, a better coordination between MISCA and the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the CAR (BINUCA) was encouraged in consultation with the African Union.<sup>20</sup> While the implementation is still needed, the potential upgrade of MISCA into a UN peacekeeping operation has been put forth as an option, leaving the possibility to add non-African troops to the mission.<sup>21</sup> Another important measure was the issuing of an arms embargo over the CAR in order to contain the flow of weapons towards the country.<sup>22</sup>

## ***Policy Implementation***

### *Financing*

An important aspect of the implementation of the Council's decisions are their financing. Peacekeeping operations for instance are financed by the UN and its responsibility is shared by all Member States which contribute in accordance to their national income.<sup>23</sup> The current budget is about \$7.54 billion; it covers the fiscal year 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014 and needs to be approved by the General Assembly.<sup>24</sup> A specific budget is allocated for each peacekeeping operation and Member States are free to make additional contributions, both financial as logistical.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2132 (2013) [Sudan and South Sudan] (S/RES/2132)*, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Security Council Report, *Cross-Cutting Report: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Security Council Report, *Monthly Forecast – December*, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4; UN Security Council, *Resolution 2127 [Central African Republic] (S/RES/2127)*, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Security Council Report, *Monthly Forecast - December*, 2013, p. 4; UN Security Council, *Resolution 2127 [Central African Republic] (S/RES/2127)*, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2127 (2013), [Central African Republic] (S/RES/2127)*, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Financing Peacekeeping*, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

### *Implementation*

Following the implementation of an arms embargo in CAR, a Security Council Committee was established to oversee the sanctions and undertake the tasks set out by the resolution.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, in South Sudan, fighting erupted between civilians and the army, and UNMISS has been highly active providing humanitarian assistance to the 18,000 civilians seeking protection.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, greater difficulties have been encountered during a scheduled polio vaccination campaign in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile states in Sudan partly dominated by the predominantly South Sudanese Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).<sup>28</sup> Since no agreement was reached between Sudanese authorities and the SPLM-N on how to logistically organize the vaccination campaign, approximately 165,000 children have not been vaccinated yet.<sup>29</sup> In more general terms, it has been argued that while being highly effective in the establishment and deployment of peacekeeping missions and operations, the Council encounters greater difficulties when it comes to post-conflict measures and an agreement on indicators to evaluate and monitor progress is still lacking in order to better protect civilians once a conflict has ended.<sup>30</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The Security Council is primary UN organ responsible for peace and security related matters. As conflicts continue to occur across the world, the SC's activity never ceases and it is constantly required to make decisions and enact measures to maintain international peace. While the SC has continued to address broader, overarching themes relevant to international peace and security such as child protection, more country or situation specific decisions have been taken in recent month. These included embracing peacekeeping missions and enacting embargos, such actions should be kept in mind by delegates while discussing the topics on the agenda. By providing an overview of the SC's most recent activities, this update has tried to give delegates a presentation of the different ways in which the Council, in its ongoing efforts, can answer these challenges.

### *The Security Council at NMUN•NY 2014*

The *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) established the main functions for the SC: maintain international peace and security; develop friendly relations among states; cooperate to solve international problems and promote human rights; and be a center for harmonizing action among Member States.<sup>31</sup> The SC is given a multitude of options to fulfill these duties, including economic sanctions, arms embargoes, financial sanctions, travel bans, and collective military actions.<sup>32</sup> Among its administrative roles, the SC recommends the admission of new members to the UN General Assembly (GA); advises the UN General Assembly on the appointment of the Secretary-General; and elects judges to the International Court of Justice in conjunction with the GA.<sup>33</sup>

**Format:** The Security Council is a resolution writing committee.

**Voting:** According to Article 27 (clauses 1-3) of the *Charter of the United Nations*, “[1] Each member of the Security Council shall have one vote. [2] Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members. [3] Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.”<sup>34</sup>

**Membership:** The Security Council consists of fifteen members. Of those fifteen members, 5 are permanent members to the council (China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States of America). Non-permanent members of the Council are allocated per Article 23, clause 1, of the *Charter of the United Nations*,

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<sup>26</sup> UN Security Council, *Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 2127 (2013) Concerning the Central African Republic* [Website], 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Security Council Report, *Monthly Forecast – January*, 2014, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Security Council Report, *Cross-Cutting Report: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2013, p. 30.

<sup>31</sup> UN Security Council, *What is the Security Council?*, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 26 June 1945, Ch. 7.

<sup>33</sup> UN Security Council, *Functions and Powers*, 2013.

<sup>34</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, 26 June 1945, Ch. 5.

which states: “the General Assembly shall elect ten other Members of the United Nations to be non-permanent members of the Security Council, due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution.”<sup>35</sup>

Current Security Council membership is as follows:

Argentina	Australia	Azerbaijan	China
France	Guatemala	Luxembourg	Morocco
Pakistan	Republic of Korea	Russian Federation	Rwanda
Togo	United Kingdom	United States of America	

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

## Annotated Bibliography

Security Council Report. (2014, January). *Monthly Forecast*. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from:

[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/2014\\_01\\_forecast.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/2014_01_forecast.pdf)

*Security Council Report is an independent non-governmental organization (NGO) covering the activities of the Security Council (SC). One of their main activities is the publication of a monthly forecasts providing useful information about the latest developments concerning the SC. These forecasts contain an update of the events of the past month and point out important upcoming meetings and decisions on the horizon for the SC. Delegates will find these monthly forecasts an interesting source of information about the SCs activities while preparing for the conference.*

Security Council Report. (2013, December). *Cross-Cutting Report: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*.

Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/cross\\_cutting\\_report\\_3\\_protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_2013.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/cross_cutting_report_3_protection_of_civilians_2013.pdf)

*This report published by Security Council Report is an interesting analysis of the SCs involvement around the protection of civilians. Delegates will find important resolutions passed by the SC and their role. The report also stresses the importance of a stronger focus on follow-up and evaluation of decisions made by the SC. A country-specific case study on Sudan also provides helpful information for delegates to understand when they enter debate at the conference.*

United Nations Department of Public Information. (2014, January 6). *Invitations to Syria Peace Conference Being Sent Out Today, UN Spokesperson Confirms* [Article]. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from:

[http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46877&Cr=Syria&Cr1=#.UtGGI\\_TuKuI](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46877&Cr=Syria&Cr1=#.UtGGI_TuKuI)

*The Second Syria Peace Conference is taking place in Montreux, Switzerland. The main objectives are to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Important steps would be to open negotiations between the Syrian government and the opposition, the organization of humanitarian assistance for those affected by the conflict is also on the agenda. The United Nations Department of Information provides new information on a daily basis on the latest events in the world in relation with the UN. It also provides coverage of meetings and a webcast of important sessions. Delegates will be able to keep themselves informed of the latest developments and important issues at the UN.*

United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. (2014). *Financing Peacekeeping* [Website]. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: <https://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml>

*The financing of peacekeeping operations is a very important aspect of the SCs actions and this synthesis provides a good overview of it. Even if such operations are only to be decided by the SC, their budget needs to be approved by the General Assembly. Besides providing important numbers to keep in mind and an explanation of procedural aspects, delegates will also find a series of links to important documents and resolutions to help them get a better understanding on such financing of UN decisions and actions. Therefore, delegates will be able to get a better understanding on how to finance decisions they might take.*

United Nations Security Council, 7072th meeting. (2013, December 5). *Resolution 2127 [Central African Republic] (S/RES/2127)*. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: [www.undocs.org/S/RES/2127\(2013\)](http://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2127(2013))

*Resolution 2127 (2013) passed by the SC authorizes the deployment of a peacekeeping mission and enables an arms embargo over the Central African Republic (CAR). Furthermore, important issues such as child protection and the humanitarian situation in the CAR are also addressed. This resolution is a perfect illustration of the possible actions the SC might take during a critical situation. It can serve as a good source of inspiration for delegates while writing their working papers during the conference.*

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Security Council Report. (2013, December). *Cross-Cutting Report: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/cross\\_cutting\\_report\\_3\\_protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_2013.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/cross_cutting_report_3_protection_of_civilians_2013.pdf)

Security Council Report. (2013, December). *Monthly Forecast*. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/2013\\_12\\_forecast.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/2013_12_forecast.pdf)

Security Council Report. (2014, January). *Monthly Forecast*. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/2014\\_01\\_forecast.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/2014_01_forecast.pdf)

Security Council Report. (2014, December 5). *What's in Blue: Extraordinary Election to the Security Council* [Website]. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: <http://www.whatsinblue.org/2013/12/extraordinary-election-to-the-security-council.php>

United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. (2014). *Financing Peacekeeping* [Website]. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: <https://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml>

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United Nations Department of Public Information. (2014, January 3). *UN Peacekeepers in DR Congo on Alert After Killing of Army Commander* [Article]. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46868&Cr=DR#.UtGHAFtuKuI>

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United Nations Security Council, 7091th meeting. (2013, December 24). *Resolution 2132 [Sudan and South Sudan] (S/RES/2132)*. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from: [www.undocs.org/S/RES/2132\(2013\)](http://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2132(2013))

## I. The Situation in Syria

### *Introduction*

The Security Council (SC) is closely monitoring the conflict in Syria between the Assad government and revolutionary groups that has resulted in nearly 130,000 deaths as of February 2014.<sup>36</sup> The SC is primarily focused on ensuring that parties to the conflict fulfill their commitment to engage in peace negotiations, dispose of chemical weapons, and address the humanitarian situation of widespread civilian injury, illness and forced relocation.<sup>37</sup>

The Security Council formally addressed the situation through Resolution 2118 (2013), condemning the use of chemical weapons and calling for their timely destruction, and Resolution 2131 (2013), requiring all combatants to respect the safety of UN personnel in the region.<sup>38</sup> The most recent Presidential Statement on the situation (S/PRST/2013/15) dated 2 October 2013 called for humanitarian access to be facilitated by all conflict parties and condemned violence “irrespective of where it comes from.”<sup>39</sup> On 13 December 2013, the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic provided its final report, concluding that chemical weapons were used in at least five instances between March and August 2013 and highlighted a large-scale attack on 21 August 2013 in the city of Ghouta.<sup>40</sup> On 27 January 2014, the Security Council received its fourth report on chemical weapons disposal by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), in accordance with Resolution 2118 (2013).<sup>41</sup> The OPCW informed the Council that Syrian government failed to meet the 31 December 2013 deadline for the removal of all chemical material from its territory, and urged the country to “expedite in-country movements of chemical weapons material” in order to meet the final deadline of 30 June 2014.<sup>42</sup> Previous updates from the OPCW were detailed in reports of the Secretary-General (S/2013/730 and S/2013/774).<sup>43</sup>

Other UN organs also considered the matter.<sup>44</sup> A report by the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI), released on 19 December 2013, revealed that the Syrian government was responsible for enforced disappearances, constituting a crime against humanity.<sup>45</sup> Both the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council adopted resolutions (A/C.3/68/L.42/Rev.1 and A/HRC/24/L.38 respectively) condemning all violence in Syria, as well as violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.<sup>46</sup>

### *Recent Developments*

#### *Political Situation*

The Geneva II peace talks began in Switzerland on 22 January 2014.<sup>47</sup> In the weeks leading up to the negotiations, SC members expressed concern over the difficulty of finding an appropriate representative for the Syrian people, given the fragmentation of anti-government groups.<sup>48</sup> The political opposition to the Assad, represented by the Syrian National Council (SNC) initially refused to participate, arguing that the President Assad should have no say

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<sup>36</sup> Security Council Report, *February 2014 Monthly Forecast: Syria*, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2118 (2013) [Syria] (S/RES/2118 (2013))*, 2013; UN Security Council, *Resolution 2131 (2013) [Syria] (S/RES/2131(2013))*, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> UN Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2013/15)*, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> Security Council Report, *January 2014 Monthly Forecast: Syria*, 2013.

<sup>41</sup> UN Security Council, *Letter dated 27 January 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/52)*, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid; *Letter dated 27 December 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2013/774)*, 2013.

<sup>44</sup> UN Security Council, *Letter dated 10 December 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council [S/2013/730]*, 2013; *Letter dated 27 December 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council [S/2013/774]*, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> UN Human Rights Council, *Without a trace: enforced disappearances in Syria*, 2013, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> UN Security Council, *United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic: Final Report (S/2013/735)*, 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Security Council Report, *January 2014 Monthly Forecast: Syria*, 2013.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

in Syria's political future.<sup>49</sup> The United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) declared that, if the opposition did not participate, they would remove their support.<sup>50</sup>

Members also disagreed over the participation and approach of the peace negotiations. The US stated publicly that Iran could not be allowed to participate until it has adopted the Geneva I *Communiqué* (30 June 2012).<sup>51</sup> China and Russia maintained their opposition to condemning the Syrian government for its airstrikes against opposition forces in the city of Aleppo.<sup>52</sup>

UN Member State blocs held independent gatherings outside of the SC to express their positions in late 2013 and early 2014.<sup>53</sup> On 13 December 2013, the London 11 – consisting of the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirate – released a statement supporting the Syrian National Coalition (SNC); calling for their full participation in the Geneva II talks; and condemning violent extremism in the government.<sup>54</sup> On 12 January 2014, the Core Group, –comprised of Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the SNC, the UK and the US – released a declaration in advance of the Geneva II talks.<sup>55</sup> It highlighted: (1) the condemnation of the attacks of the Syrian government against its own population, especially “the ‘starve or surrender’ strategy used by the regime;” (2) the implementation of the Geneva I *Communiqué*; (3) the call for a SC humanitarian resolution; (4) the need for judiciary measures against those who have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity; and (5) the condemnation of the participation of foreign armed groups on Syria.<sup>56</sup> The declaration also calls for President Assad to be barred from participation in future elections.<sup>57</sup>

Both the US and Russia proposed confidence-building measures in advance of the Geneva II talks, including the exchange of prisoners and localized ceasefires for the duration of the negotiations.<sup>58</sup> In the wake of the second round of negotiations, a three-day ceasefire was agreed upon in Geneva in early February, allowing for the evacuation of women and children from the city of Homs.<sup>59</sup>

#### *Security Situation*

The rising insecurity in the Golan Heights, the primary operational area of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), created a growing concern that recurring attacks may threaten the ceasefire between Syria and Israel.<sup>60</sup> The SC adopted *Resolution 2131 (2013)*, as the situation continues to threaten regional stability.<sup>61</sup>

Tensions between moderate rebel groups in Syria and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) were exacerbated on 31 December 2013, when ISIS returned the mangled body of a prominent commander of the anti-government Ahrar al-Sham group.<sup>62</sup> This public display of violence unleashed a strong confrontation between ISIS and moderate rebel groups, resulting in more than 400 deaths.<sup>63</sup> Concerns remain over the continued presence in the theater of conflict of Al-Nusra, a faction with strong ties to al-Qaeda and that has been deemed a terrorist organization by the United Nations.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> BBC News, *Syria peace talks: Opposition 'risks US-UK support'*, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> BBC News, *Syria Crisis: US and Russia Discuss Possible Ceasefires*, 2014.

<sup>52</sup> BBC News, *Syria crisis: Russia blocks UN statement on Aleppo attacks*, 2014.

<sup>53</sup> France, *Ministerial meeting on Syria - Paris Declaration of the Core Group*, 2014.

<sup>54</sup> United States of America, *Press Statement Following The London 11 Meeting, London, United Kingdom on 13 December 2013*, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> France, *Ministerial meeting on Syria - Paris Declaration of the Core Group*, 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> BBC News, *Syria Crisis: US and Russia Discuss Possible Ceasefires*, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Reuters, *Syria evacuates civilians from besieged Homs centre*, 2014.

<sup>60</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2131 [Syria] (S/RES/2131 (2013))*, 2013.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Muir, *What does rebel infighting mean for Syria conflict?*, 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



The destruction of Syria's chemical stockpile remains an international effort, with contributions from China, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Italy, Norway, Russia, and the US.<sup>65</sup> The fourth update by the OPCW showed the need for international cooperation, given the difficulties inherent in removing chemical weapons during armed conflict.<sup>66</sup> Denmark, Norway and the US volunteered to handle the destruction of the weapons.<sup>67</sup>

### *Humanitarian Situation*

According to the 16 December 2013 *OCHA Bulletin on Syria*, more than 9.3 million people – nearly half the Syrian population – are in need of humanitarian assistance including access to food, water and health services.<sup>68</sup> An estimated 6.5 million people are internally displaced, including 80 percent of Palestinian refugees living in Syria.<sup>69</sup> Of these internally displaced people (IDP), women and children are the primary populations at risk of malnutrition.<sup>70</sup> Women are disproportionately affected by Gender-Based Violence (GBV), amounting to 90 percent of reported cases.<sup>71</sup>

In late November 2013, fighting in Syria disrupted the Damascus-Homs highway, an essential supply route for humanitarian assistance.<sup>72</sup> This route closure severely limited the delivery of food and non-food items to rural Damascus.<sup>73</sup> The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) expressed particular concern due to the onset of winter in Syria, as the majority of the internally-displaced population resides in “informal settlements or makeshift shelters.”<sup>74</sup> The Syrian government took several measures to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid, including awarding more visas to aid workers and allowing the UN to import items through the Jordanian, Lebanese and Iraqi borders.<sup>75</sup> With the consent of the Iraqi and Syrian government, the United Nations Children's Fund, Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and World Food Program airlifted supplies and food from Iraq into the Qamishli and Al-Hassakeh governorates in December 2013.<sup>76</sup>

Given the rising cost of addressing the humanitarian needs in the region, an international humanitarian pledging conference was held in Kuwait on 15 January 2014.<sup>77</sup> OCHA requested 2.27 billion USD to implement its Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) and 4.2 billion USD for its Syria Regional Response Plan (SRRP).<sup>78</sup> The conference only collected approximately 2.4 billion USD in aid.<sup>79</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The situation in Syria remains a complex international crisis. In the wake of the Geneva II peace talks, and in light of the ongoing humanitarian crisis, SC members must consider the following: what is the best way to facilitate transition in Syria? What will ensure justice and proper representation for the population? What can Member States do to alleviate human suffering in the country? Finally, with the ongoing fighting amongst rebel factions, and with terrorist organizations infiltrating the conflict, what can the Security Council do to maintain security in the country and ensure regional stability?

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<sup>65</sup> BBC News, *Germany agrees to help destroy Syria's Chemical Weapons*, 2014.

<sup>66</sup> UN Security Council, *Letter dated 27 January 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council [S/2014/52]*, 2014.

<sup>67</sup> BBC News, *Germany agrees to help destroy Syria's Chemical Weapons*, 2014.

<sup>68</sup> UN News, *'World must do more' to aid besieged communities in Syria, urges top UN relief official*, 2014.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Bulletin: Syrian Arab Republic. Issue 39: 3 Dec – 16 Dec 2013*, 2014, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Bulletin: Syrian Arab Republic. Issue 38: 19 Nov – 2 Dec 2013*, 2013, p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Bulletin: Syrian Arab Republic. Issue 39: 3 Dec – 16 Dec 2013*, 2013.

<sup>77</sup> UN OCHA, *Syria: Pledges prove that the people devastated by conflict in Syria are not forgotten, says UN Chief Ban Ki-moon*, 2014.

<sup>78</sup> UNOCHA, *2014 Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP)*, 2014; UNHCR, *2014 Syria Regional Response Plan*, 2014.

<sup>79</sup> UNOCHA, *Syria: Pledges prove that the people devastated by conflict in Syria are not forgotten, says UN Chief Ban Ki-moon*, 2014.

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*The declaration of the Core Group is an important guidance for the position of several Security Council members on the situation in Syria. The Declaration outlines Member States' support for the Syrian National Coalition, as well as their stance on the Assad government's participation in national political transition. It also condemns attacks against the Syrian population, which the Security Council has not done officially. The declaration also calls for international justice to be applied against egregious crimes. It concludes by calling for the adoption of a SC resolution addressing the humanitarian crisis.*

Muir, J. (2014, January 10). *What does rebel infighting mean for Syria conflict?* BBC News. Retrieved 13 January 2014 from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-25678996>

*This analysis from BBC correspondent Jim Muir provides an insightful introduction to the internal conflict. The report explains who the different actors are as well as their religious or ideological affiliations. Muir explains that how these rebel groups evolved to form coalitions. This guide will be helpful for delegates when trying to understand the complexity of the security situation. The SC's approach must take into account the interests and possible reactions of the various actors in the conflict, in order to seek mutually-beneficial solutions and stabilize the region.*

Security Council Report. (2014, January 31). *February 2014 Monthly Forecast: Syria*. Retrieved 2 February 2014 from: [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2014-02/syria\\_4.php](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2014-02/syria_4.php)

*This February 2014 forecast provides a helpful analysis of the issues to be considered by the SC over the next month. It explains the different elements of the conflict, as perceived by SC members. This report by the leading non-governmental organization monitoring the Security Council, addresses the humanitarian issues, developments in the peace talks, chemical weapons disposal, and the security implications of the conflict. Moreover, the forecast provides a helpful analysis of Member State ideologies, coalitions, and possible paths of action.*

United Nations Security Council. (2013, December 13). *United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic: Final Report*. December 13, 2013. (A/68/663-S/2013/735). Retrieved December 20, 2013 from: <http://undocs.org/S/2013/735>

*This important document is the final report of the mission in charge of investigating the use of chemical weapons in Syria during 2013. Aside from providing a detailed account of the Mission's findings and methods, the report represents an important policy tool for Member States in addressing ongoing efforts for chemical weapons disposal by the Syrian government and SC members. Bearing in mind that the use of chemical weapons prompted swift and concordant SC action in 2013, this analysis provides proof of the allegations of international norm violations.*

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2013, December 16). *Humanitarian Bulletin: Syrian Arab Republic. Issue 39: 3 Nov – 16 Dec 2013*. Retrieved January 10, 2014 from:

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Syria%20Humanitarian%20Bulletin%20No%2039.pdf>

*The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs publishes periodical bulletins on the various humanitarian crises in the world. The latest bulletin on the situation in Syria is useful for understanding the magnitude and implications of the humanitarian crisis in Syria. The update explains the ongoing issues with food and medical care access. It also provides insight into the effects of winter on the refugee and internally-displaced population, as well as the different financial and logistical needs for humanitarian actors. SC delegates can use this as a guide on next steps concerning the humanitarian component of the conflict.*

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## II. Strengthening United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

### Introduction

In its efforts to properly supply peacekeeping operations and special political missions, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) faces enormous logistical and financial challenges: coordinating the efforts of more than 80,000 military and 14,000 police personnel from over 100 United Nations (UN) Member States in 18 peacekeeping missions around the world; providing them the resources necessary to complete their missions; and ensuring that Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and Police Contributing Countries (PCCs) are adequately reimbursed for their contributions to peacekeeping missions.<sup>80</sup> Over the past several months the UN system has taken several steps in order to more fully address these challenges, and in turn strengthen UN Peacekeeping Operations.<sup>81</sup> This update will cover two aspects of this process: the *Fourth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy* that the Secretary-General submitted on 4 December 2013, and the UN Contingent-Owned Equipment System (COE) Working Group, which took place in January 2014.<sup>82</sup> This guide will also cover the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) meetings.

In 2010, the Secretary-General's initial report on the global field support strategy (A/64/633) introduced a plan for transforming and improving the delivery of essential services to UN peacekeeping field missions, which included a five-year implementation goal to achieve the structural changes essential to improving field support deployment.<sup>83</sup> In General Assembly resolution 64/269 the body requested that the Secretary-General submit an annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy.<sup>84</sup> The Secretary-General's recently released *Fourth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy* is the latest iteration of this process.<sup>85</sup> The fourth progress report on the implementation of the strategy also contains two dedicated annexes that provide an overview of UN peacekeeping operations finances for the upcoming year.<sup>86</sup>

Another core component of strengthening UN Peacekeeping Operations that was addressed in January 2014 was ensuring the proper and adequate reimbursement of TCCs and PCCs for their contributions to peacekeeping missions.<sup>87</sup> From 20-31 January 2014, the COE Working Group held its triennial meeting to negotiate the details of financially reimbursing Member States for the equipment they provide to UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>88</sup> While the majority of the COE Working Group's negotiations cover highly technical mechanisms of reimbursement, the decisions they reach are nonetheless significant because they have wide-ranging consequences for UN peacekeeping policy and the UN peacekeeping budget.<sup>89</sup> Currently, the terms covered under the COE represent approximately \$3 billion of the \$7 billion annual budgets for UN Peacekeeping Operations.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, the outcomes of COE negotiations will influence UN peacekeeping environmental standards, how equipment is rotated and shared between missions, and how extreme operating conditions and hardship costs will affect mission deployment.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> UN General Assembly, *Fourth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy* (A/68/637), 2013; UNDPKO, *Contingent Owned Equipment, Home* [Website].

<sup>81</sup> Security Council Report, *Working Group Meeting on Capability-Driven Approach to Peacekeeping*, 2013; UN General Assembly, *Fourth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy* (A/68/637), 2013; IPI, *Issue Brief: Peacekeeping Reimbursements: Key topics for the Next COE Working Group*, 2013.

<sup>82</sup> UN General Assembly, *Fourth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy* (A/68/637), 2013; IPI, *Issue Brief: Peacekeeping Reimbursements: Key topics for the Next COE Working Group*, 2013.

<sup>83</sup> UN General Assembly, *Global Field Support Strategy* (A/64/633), 2010.

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<sup>85</sup> UN General Assembly, *Fourth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy* (A/68/637), 2013.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations, *Contingent Owned Equipment, Home* [Website].

<sup>88</sup> IPI, *Issue Brief: Peacekeeping Reimbursements: Key topics for the Next COE Working Group*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations, *Contingent Owned Equipment, Home* [Website].

<sup>91</sup> IPI, *Issue Brief: Peacekeeping Reimbursements: Key topics for the Next COE Working Group*, 2013, pp. 2-4.

## ***Recent Developments***

### *The Global Field Support Strategy*

The six new criteria that have been developed to be included in the end-state goals of the GFSS are the most significant contribution made by the latest Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS) report submitted by the Secretary-General in December 2013.<sup>92</sup> End-state goals are UN-parlance for the desired results and state of affairs that will be created by the plan; they are meant as markers of success to ensure that planning is goal oriented and specif.<sup>93</sup> The six new end-state articulations are: End-state for the financial framework and strategic resourcing; End state for the human resources framework; End state for shared services; End state for supply chain and modularization; End state for process re-engineering and alignment with other change initiatives; End state for functional specialization and organization.<sup>94</sup> These newly developed end-states represent plans for creating a functioning system that achieves the goals of each end-state by June 2015.<sup>95</sup> Familiarity with the latest priorities of the GFSS will be essential for delegates who wish to contribute substantively to improving issues related to field support of UN Peacekeeping missions.

The newly desired end-state for a financial framework and strategic resourcing is to develop standardized resourcing models and allocations to ensure that “missions will be able to consistently respond to emerging priorities and deliver resource efficiencies in line with the demands of complex operational environments.”<sup>96</sup> To achieve this goal the Secretariat will be taking several steps, a few of which are: the diffusion of a standardized cost-benefit analysis methods; identifying opportunities for cost reduction; taking advantage of economies of scale that exist across missions; and creating a single structure budgeting function that encompasses all missions.<sup>97</sup>

The human resources end-state will be achieved when field missions acquire necessary civilian staff through “optimized business processes, appropriate delegations of authority and effective monitoring systems.”<sup>98</sup> To achieve this end-state, the development of improved systems of tracking and mapping “current and forecasted capacity gaps in missions” will be required.<sup>99</sup> The hope is that these changes will ensure that missions are staffed with the best and most appropriate civilian staff for their specific needs, reduce mission footprint by eliminating over staffing, and improve gender balance in civilian staff.<sup>100</sup>

The desired end-state for supply chain management and modularization is a higher capacity to “anticipate, identify and respond to requirements for goods and services in the field” by mission and UN headquarters management.<sup>101</sup> Two steps are envisioned as necessary to achieve this end-state: a review of mission-level supply chain management processes and the development of timely and reliable enabling capacities to be able to achieve rapid deployment of modularized camps and uniformed personnel.<sup>102</sup> The effort to achieve this end-state will include a mission-level review of supply chain management and an emphasis on the modularization of missions, as this will engender a quicker and more responsive supply chain.<sup>103</sup>

The shared services end state will be achieved when missions receive “consistent, timely, efficient and effective support services through streamlined and standardized service delivery.”<sup>104</sup> The hope is that this end-state will deliver more family-friendly and safer living conditions for staff and improve and standardize service across all

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<sup>92</sup> UN General Assembly, *Fourth annual progress report on the implementation the global field support strategy (A/68/637)*, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

missions.<sup>105</sup> The desired end state for process re-engineering and alignment with other change processes will be achieved when “a culture of continuous business improvement” will “ensure effective delivery of end-to-end field support services.”<sup>106</sup> And the desired end-state for organization and functional specialization will be achieved when “more clearly delineated strategic, operational and transactional roles and responsibilities” define the relationship between the Department of Field Support and field missions, and govern the distribution of field support.<sup>107</sup>

#### *The United Nations Contingent-Owned Equipment System Working Group*

The UN Contingent-Owned Equipment System (COE) Working Group is the body designated to negotiate the details of financially reimbursing Member States for the equipment they provide to UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>108</sup> These negotiations only take place every three years, however, so the outcomes can various missions into the future.<sup>109</sup> Twenty-eight issue papers were discussed at the COE Working Group, allowing the body to address a diverse range of broader and more limited themes, such as: capability gaps, environmental compliance, and interoperability.<sup>110</sup> The issues papers, which were both submitted by individual Member States and the UN Secretariat, allowed the COE Working Group to address a wide range of concerns.<sup>111</sup> Three issues slated to be discussed that could be potentially impactful are: UN peacekeeping environmental standards, how equipment is rotated and shared between missions, and how extreme operating conditions and hardship costs will affect mission deployment.<sup>112</sup> Delegates should be on the lookout for outcome papers from the COE Working Group and consider how the CEO Working Group’s decisions might affect United Nations Peacekeeping Missions.

#### *The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*

The first step that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) took to prepare for their 2014 agenda was submitting its report of its activities in 2013.<sup>113</sup> C-34 also held a series of informal meetings in January 2014.<sup>114</sup> These meetings laid the ground work for later formal meetings, and covered topics such as: peacebuilding and transitions; military capacities and capability driven approach; and protection of civilians.<sup>115</sup> The substantive sessions will take place at the end of February and continue into March.<sup>116</sup> The C-34 working methods have been distributed in advance of the meetings, encouraging participants to merge similar proposals so that they can be more easily discussed.<sup>117</sup> Model United Nations Delegates should similarly prepare to combine their proposals with their fellow delegates.

#### **Conclusion**

While the work contained in these various reports, committees, and working groups might seem tangential to—or even insignificant when compared with—the work of the Security Council, the decisions these committees make have far reaching effects on the operational details of UN Peacekeeping missions. As such, they are of great importance to Security Council delegates. Proposals that aim to improve United Nations Peacekeeping Operations will need to address the developments represented in this update, and should ideally use them as either justification for their proposals, or as a place to identify gaps that could further be addressed.

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> UN General Assembly, *Fourth annual progress report on the implementation the global field support strategy (A/68/637)*, 2013, p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>108</sup> International Peace Institute, *Issue Brief: Peacekeeping Reimbursements: Key topics for the Next COE Working Group*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> UN Security Council, *Letter dated 30 December 2013 from the Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations addressed to the President of the Security Council*, 2013.

<sup>114</sup> UN General Assembly, *Journal of the United Nations for 31 January 2014*, 2014, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> UN General Assembly, *Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations Draft Programme of Work*, 2013.

<sup>117</sup> UN General Assembly, *Working methods of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, 2014.



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*This Issue Brief provides good analysis of the CEO Working Group and the wide ranging affects that its decisions could have. It is an excellent place for delegates to delve into these issues and think about ways in which the technical reimbursements process can have provide an effective forum to achieve laudable goals in the improvement of UN Peacekeeping Operations.*

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*This report is an excellent place for delegates to the Security Council to familiarize themselves with the work of C34. It provides both a succinct and rich description of the topics discussed and outcomes reached by the body in 2013. Its high digestibility will allow delegates to develop new and necessary proposals by building off of this past year's work.*

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*This is the latest GFSS report from the Secretary-General that was published in December 2013. While its contents are summarized above, there are many more details and important proposals and goals laid out within the report that delegates should be familiar with.*

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### III. Peace Consolidation in West Africa

#### *Introduction*

The Security Council (SC) remains focused on the challenge of meeting the competing demands of structural and direct causes of violence, medium to long-term priorities, short term preventative solutions, and the relationship between them in West Africa.<sup>118</sup> The Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) *Conflict Prevention Framework* (2008) remains the focusing document for codifying the strategy of West African states in achieving sustainable regional peace.<sup>119</sup> Bearing in mind that conflict is a “natural consequence of change,” ECOWAS is pursuing methods to prevent the descent of conflict into violence.<sup>120</sup>

#### *Recent developments*

On 23 December 2013, in line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his 11 December 2013 report, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) for three years through 31 December 2016 and further requested the Secretary-General report biannually on UNOWA's progress implementing their mandate.<sup>121</sup> The report of the Secretary-General states that despite complex domestic and transnational challenges, West African states have made “commendable efforts to consolidate their democracies, promote good governance and respect for the rule of law.”<sup>122</sup> However, progress in peace consolidation has been limited.<sup>123</sup> Challenges include comparatively weak institutions of State, rising inequality and underemployment – particularly amongst the region's young, increasingly violent and organized criminal and terrorist networks, growing military interference in democratic processes, piracy, and political corruption. The Secretary-General calls on the international community to contribute financially to combat drug trafficking in the West Africa Gold Coast, as well as assist in ensuring free and fair elections are held in Guinea-Bissau. The formation of a dedicated analytical unit within the Political Affairs Section is also recommended, in the hope that increasing the amount of research and analysis available to parties will assist diplomatic work and conflict prevention in the region.<sup>124</sup>

On 18 December 2013, the President of the Security Council Gerard Araud, issued a presidential statement on behalf of Council members under the agenda item, “Peace and Security in Africa.”<sup>125</sup> In the statement, the Council expressed “growing concern about the serious threats posed by drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime to international peace and security in West Africa.”<sup>126</sup> The SC also endorsed the action of several regional and international bodies pursuant to the *African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control* and the *ECOWAS Regional Action Plan to address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse*. The statement calls for further implementation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Programme for West Africa.<sup>127</sup>

In August 2013, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was elected President through a run-off election in Keita received support from 22 of the 25 losing candidates from the primary round.<sup>128</sup> In response to the stabilization that Mali experienced as a result of Keita's election, France announced that it would scale back its deployed forces by 60% by the end of April 2014, leaving approximately 1000 troops in Mali to support the work of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> ECOWAS, *ECOWAS conflict prevention framework*, 2008.

<sup>119</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa*, 2013.

<sup>120</sup> ECOWAS, *ECOWAS conflict prevention framework*, 2008.

<sup>121</sup> UN Security Council, *Letter dated 23 December from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General*, 2013.

<sup>122</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa*, 2013.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> UN Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council on Peace and security in Africa on 18 December 2013*, 2013.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> BBC News, *Rebirth of the rule of law in Mali?*, 2013.

<sup>129</sup> BBC News, *Mali Crisis: France announces big troop cuts*, 2013.

In Guinea-Bissau, “limited progress” has been made to restore constitutional order and.<sup>130</sup> Military interference in politics is still widespread, as well as human rights abuses. Presidential and parliamentary elections are scheduled for March 2014.<sup>131</sup>

Tensions are on the rise in Nigeria, fuelled by ethnocentric, inter-party, and intra-party maneuvering.<sup>132</sup> The security situation in Nigeria is further worsened by the continuing insurgency of Boko Haram in the northeastern region<sup>133</sup>. On the 7 November 2013, the national Senate approved the President Goodluck Johnson’s request to extend the state of emergency in this region for another 6 months.<sup>134</sup>

In the Mano River Union – Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – illegal movements of armed groups across porous national borders fuels violence and ethno-political extremism.<sup>135</sup> In response, the Union adopted a cross-border strategy on 25 October 2013.<sup>136</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Successfully addressing West Africa’s security issues is of paramount importance, particularly in 2014 with the Sahel region suffering a “desperate food crisis.”<sup>137</sup> Robert Piper, the UN Regional Humanitarian coordinator, has declared that the region is facing a critical juncture.<sup>138</sup> Delegates should arrive at the conference with this sense of urgency in mind.

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<sup>130</sup> UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S.2013.732)*, 2013.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> BBC News, *Africa Sahel belt region facing ‘desperate food crisis*, 2014.

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*This in-depth article discusses the recent elections in Mali and the victory of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. The positive international response to the election demonstrates a welcome shift from Mali's recent history of conflict toward peace and national stability. The journalist speculates on some of the challenges facing the country. This article is a useful starting point for further reading on the current situation in Mali.*

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*The official website of the United Nations Office for West Africa is a useful introduction for research on the region, and the UN mission in the region. It contains an overview of the background, mandate and leadership of the mission, as well as news updates. It also has a large section dedicated to official press releases and documents.*

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*This letter from the current President of the Security Council, Gerard Araud to the Secretary General, discusses the decision of the Security Council to extend the mandate of UNOWA for a further three years. This extension of UNOWA's mandate is one of the most significant events to occur in recent months.*

United Nations Security Council. (2013, December 11). *Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2013/732)*. Retrieved 8 January from: <http://undocs.org/S/2013/732>

*UNOWA's latest report contains a wealth of information, observation and analysis on the current situation in West Africa and the work of UNOWA. It also contains several specific recommendations for action going forward*

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*Instead of a new resolution on West Africa, the Security Council released this statement, highlighting which areas of West Africa remained of concern, specifically drug trafficking. It also contains a number of recommendations, and calls on West African states to increase co-operation and co-ordination on a range of issues, including piracy.*

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