

Chronology of Events

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Syria

March 2018

On 7 March, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and OCHA Director Lisa Doughten briefed Council members in consultations at the request of France and the UK. Doughten told the members that, despite the readiness of the UN and its partners to deploy humanitarian convoys to Eastern Ghouta, the lack of security on 5 March had prevented the complete offloading of the first convoy that had made it into Eastern Ghouta since November 2017. Some of the critical humanitarian supplies that could not be delivered then were unloaded in Eastern Ghouta on 9 March, despite renewed shelling that was in breach of “assurances of safety from parties including the Russian Federation”, according to the Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria, Ali al-Za’tari.

On 12 March, Secretary-General António Guterres **briefed** the Council on the implementation of resolution 2401. He said that there had been no cessation of hostilities and that violence had continued not only in Eastern Ghouta but also in Afrin, Idlib, and Damascus and its suburbs. The delivery of humanitarian aid had not been safe, unimpeded or sustained, and no sieges had been lifted. He also underscored that efforts to combat terrorist groups did not supersede those humanitarian obligations.

On 16 March, de Mistura **briefed** the Council on “developments of substantial gravity on the ground” in Eastern Ghouta. He also briefed the Council on his ongoing political efforts to bring about a constitutional committee. He reiterated that the government continued to refuse to engage on the committee’s formation, and in consultations he raised the possibility of establishing interim arrangements and timelines to begin its work.

On 19 March, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, was scheduled to brief the Council on the human rights situation in Syria. The **meeting** was requested by France with the support of the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, the UK and the US. However, a procedural motion called for by Russia on whether to convene the meeting failed to receive the nine votes necessary for approval. Bolivia, China, Kazakhstan and Russia voted against the motion, while Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia abstained. In lieu of a formal meeting, that afternoon Al Hussein was asked to brief members in an Arria-formula format organised by the countries that had requested the meeting.

At the initiative of the Netherlands, Council members held an informal interactive dialogue on chemical weapons in Syria on 20 March with the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, and the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Ahmet Üzümcü. Nakamitsu and Üzümcü discussed with Council members the elements contained in a 23 February report of the

OPCW, conveyed to the Council on 1 March. The report raised concerns regarding the limited cooperation of the Syrian government in addressing the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies identified by the OPCW in Syria's initial declaration.

On 27 March, Lowcock briefed the Council on the lack of implementation of resolution 2401. At the meeting, many Council members expressed concerns at the situation in Eastern Ghouta. Kuwait and Sweden emphasised that evacuations must be voluntary, that the dialogues on evacuations between armed groups and Russia need to also include the participation of civilians, and that the conditions of the shelters receiving civilians need to be improved.

February 2018

Briefing the Council on 5 February, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu highlighted how the OPCW continues to believe that there are gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies with the initial declaration of the Syrian government that have not been addressed.

On 6 February, the Humanitarian Coordinator and other UN representatives in Syria had called for a cessation of hostilities of at least one month to improve the humanitarian situation. In response to this call, Kuwait and Sweden (the humanitarian penholders on Syria in the Council) asked for a briefing from Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock under "any other business" on 8 February. At the briefing, Lowcock elaborated on the urgent need for an immediate cessation of hostilities of at least one month to enable the delivery of humanitarian aid and services, the evacuation of the critically sick and wounded, and the alleviation of people's suffering. With this objective in mind, Kuwait and Sweden circulated a draft resolution on that same day.

On 14 February, UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura **briefed** the Council on his efforts to bring about a constitutional committee, including to define the mandate and terms of reference, powers, rules of procedure, and selection criteria for its composition. The establishment of a constitutional committee was the main outcome of a conference of Syrians hosted in Sochi on 29-30 January by Russia, along with Iran and Turkey, which had been boycotted by key opposition groups. At the Council meeting, Russia reiterated the coherence between its initiative and the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva, announcing that it had circulated the final communiqué of the Sochi meeting as an **official document** of the Council.

On 21 February, Kuwait and Sweden put the draft resolution into blue. Right after that, Russia requested a public meeting on Eastern Ghouta in order to allow all sides to "present their vision, their understanding of the situation and come up with ways of getting out of this situation", according to its ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia.

At a 22 February **briefing**, Lowcock told Council members: "You can still save lives in eastern Ghouta—and elsewhere in Syria. I urge you to do so. Millions of battered and beleaguered children, women and men depend on meaningful action by this Council." At the meeting, Russia, which highlighted the presence of terrorist groups in Eastern Ghouta, announced the circulation of amendments to the draft in blue for the

consideration of the Council. Russia's amendments were related to the role of the Council regarding the cessation of hostilities and the details of its implementation, including timing.

Intense negotiations ensued, and the Council was able to unanimously adopt **resolution 2401** on Saturday, 24 February. The resolution demands that all parties cease hostilities without delay and engage immediately to ensure full and comprehensive implementation of this demand by all parties for a durable humanitarian pause of at least 30 consecutive days throughout Syria. The resolution also demands that, immediately after the start of the cessation of hostilities, all parties allow safe, unimpeded and sustained access each week to the humanitarian convoys of the UN and its implementing partners, including to hard-to-reach and besieged locations.

On 28 February, the Council **received** an early assessment of the implementation of resolution 2401 by the Under-Secretaries-General for Humanitarian and Political Affairs, Mark Lowcock and Jeffrey Feltman, respectively. Lowcock said that there had been no improvement in the humanitarian situation in Eastern Ghouta since the passage of the resolution.

January 2018

On 9 January, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Ursula Mueller briefed Council members under "any other business". The briefing had been requested by Russia to focus on the humanitarian situation of Raqqa and to call for the US-led coalition involved in liberating the city from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant to play a role in its reconstruction.

On the same day, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu briefed Council members in consultations on the efforts to eliminate Syria's declared arsenal. She told Council members that 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by Syria had been verified by the OPCW Technical Secretariat as having been destroyed. Initial inspections had been carried out in the two remaining facilities and their destruction is expected.

On 20 January, Turkey launched "Operation Olive Branch", a military offensive into the territory held by the YPG, a Kurdish militia that is part of the US-allied Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and that Turkey considers a terrorist organisation. The offensive was discussed at the 22 January briefing under "any other business", for which France requested information on the situation in Afrin. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, who briefed Council members along with Lowcock, described the potential impact of the offensive and its ramifications in the conflict dynamics.

In early January, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock visited Syria. In remarks to the press in Damascus on 11 January he highlighted five areas where progress is needed. These were conveyed to Council members in a briefing under "any other business" on 22 January:

- The finalisation of the UN humanitarian response plan for 2018 to meet the needs of more than 13 million people in Syria.
- Reaching an agreement to allow for the medical evacuation for hundreds of people trapped in Eastern Ghouta.
- Ensuring consistent and regular cross-line access.
- Agreeing on UN-supported aid convoys from Damascus to the remote area of Rukban (the berm) in south-eastern Syria.
- Developing more effective arrangements to allow the UN to support the work of Syrian and international NGOs.

On 23 January, Russia called for a Council meeting in order to address the accusations made by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson the same day that Russia was responsible for shielding the Syrian government on this issue. At the meeting, Russia circulated a draft resolution aimed at establishing a new investigation mechanism to identify facts beyond a reasonable doubt that could lead to the attribution by the Council of the use of chemical weapons.

On 30 January, Mueller briefed the Council on the 23 January **report** of the Secretary-General on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

December 2017

On 7 December 2017, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu briefed Council members in consultations on the efforts to eliminate Syria's declared arsenal. Nakamitsu reiterated that the Syrian government's cooperation with the OPCW was limited. Among other issues, different perspectives emerged as to whether the JIM could transfer evidence to other UN bodies as it winds down. The Council did not reach any conclusion regarding proper follow-up to the November 2017 finding of the OPCW fact-finding mission that sarin "was more than likely used as a chemical weapon" on 30 March 2017 in Latamineh.

On 19 December, the Council adopted **resolution 2393**, drafted by Egypt, Japan and Sweden, which renewed for a year the authorisation for cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access to Syria. Through this authorisation, first established by the Council in **resolution 2165** in July 2014, UN actors and implementing partners have been able to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance to millions of people in northwest and southern Syria through Turkey and Jordan, respectively. After welcoming the adoption, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock briefed the Council on the critical situation in Eastern Ghouta, which remains besieged by government forces and has seen an increase in fighting and a worsening in the living conditions of nearly 400,000 people. He described the extremely limited access allowed to humanitarian actors and the need for more than 500 urgent medical evacuations that are expected to be approved by the government.

At the same meeting, Special Envoy Staffan De Mistura briefed the Council on the eighth round of intra-Syrian talks that were held between 28 November and 14 December 2017 in Geneva. He expressed his disappointment that the parties had not engaged in direct talks as a result of preconditions imposed by the government. In particular, he mentioned

the government's refusal to hold discussions with the opposition unless it withdrew a statement issued at the Riyadh II conference in November 2017 that does not foresee any role for President Bashar al-Assad during the political transition.

November 2017

On 7 November, Edmond Mulet, head of the JIM's leadership panel, and Izumi Nakamitsu, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, briefed the Council. Mulet shared the conclusions of the JIM's final report, which attributed responsibility for the 15-16 September 2016 attack in Um Hawsh to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and for the 4 April attack in Khan Shaykhun to the Syrian government. Most Council members, including the P3, publicly supported the conclusions of the JIM's final report, but Russia and some others questioned its findings or highlighted areas where they felt the conclusions were not definitive.

At a 16 November meeting, Russia called for a procedural vote on the sequence of voting on the two draft resolutions, which by then were already in blue. Russia's motion to have its draft voted on after the US draft did not pass since it only received the support of China, Russia and Bolivia (seven Council members voted against and five abstained). Russia then withdrew its draft and vetoed the US draft (Bolivia also voted against; China and Egypt abstained). Following the defeat of the US draft, Bolivia re-tabled the Russian draft as its own and asked for a vote; it only received favourable votes from Russia, Bolivia, China and Kazakhstan (seven Council members voted against and four abstained), so it was not adopted.

After the meeting, Japan circulated a draft that would have extended the JIM's mandate for one month while requesting the UN Secretary-General to, in coordination with the OPCW, submit proposals to the Council for the structure and methodology of the JIM "reflecting views of Security Council members". Twelve members voted for the draft resolution, but Russia, which had already signalled that it did not support this draft in a meeting in consultations on 17 November, cast its 11th veto on Syria later that day (Bolivia also voted against, China abstained).

Although Council members met after the veto in an attempt to find a compromise before the expiration of the JIM's mandate by midnight, no further action was taken. In a last-ditch attempt to revive the JIM, Italy circulated a draft letter to the Secretary-General requesting that the organisational and administrative arrangements pertaining to the JIM be maintained until 31 December pending a final decision on the renewal of its mandate. Sweden and Uruguay also circulated a draft to extend the JIM's mandate for a year, aiming to reach a compromise among the competing perspectives in the Council. Russia opposed both initiatives.

October 2017

In response to a question during consultations on 4 October, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu confirmed the utility of an early renewal to ensure continuity in the JIM's capacity to deliver on its mandate. The uncertainty regarding the JIM's future during the negotiations of the mandate renewal in 2016 created difficulties in the planning and hiring of staff, which disrupted the JIM's work for several months.

On 24 October, Russia cast its ninth veto on Syria on a US draft resolution renewing the mandate of the OPCW-UN JIM for another year. Before the vote, Russia proposed postponing the meeting until 7 November under rule 33(3) of the provisional rules of procedure. A procedural vote was held, but Russia's proposal was supported by only Bolivia, China and Kazakhstan, hence failing to gain the nine votes required for adoption (Egypt, Ethiopia and Senegal abstained, and eight Council members voted against).

Briefing the Council on 26 October, de Mistura announced that he expected to convene a new round of the intra-Syrian talks on 28 November in Geneva. Different opposition groups (the High Negotiations Committee and the Moscow and Cairo platforms) continue to work on developing common negotiating positions and to explore the possibility of forming a single delegation. De Mistura called upon those with influence on the government to press it to negotiate substantive issues in Geneva.

Lowcock briefed the Council on Syria on 30 October.

September 2017

Briefing the Council on 27 September Mark Lowcock, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, emphasised the longstanding difficulties in ensuring humanitarian access. The difficult security situation, administrative impediments, deliberate restrictions, and the removal of items from convoys continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian aid, particularly to besieged and hard-to-reach locations.

At the same meeting, Staffan de Mistura reiterated the widespread consensus among Syrian stakeholders that de-escalation arrangements must not lead to a partition of the country. He stressed that de-escalation should be a precursor to a truly nationwide ceasefire and to action on the humanitarian and confidence-building fronts. He has also repeatedly expressed frustration at the lack of progress on the issue of detainees, abductees and missing persons.

August 2017

In a 28 July letter to de Mistura, Russia's Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, expressed the willingness of Russian military police units to ensure the safe passage of humanitarian convoys in coordination with Syrian authorities in the Southern and Eastern Ghouta de-escalation areas. The Council was briefed by Russia in consultations on 9 August under "any other business" on the contents of this letter and the role of these units in the de-escalation areas. On 17 August, an aid convoy reached the besieged town of Douma for the first time since May, after Russian military police stationed along the route secured the road.

On 16 August, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, briefed Council members in consultations on progress in the destruction of Syria's declared stockpile of chemical weapons. At the meeting, the US expressed its intention to table a resolution ensuring accountability for chemical weapons attacks before the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) of the OPCW and the UN releases its final substantive reports on two recent attacks, which are expected in October.

Briefing the Council on 30 August, de Mistura expressed the need to extend the cooperation among external and internal players on the de-escalation areas into the political realm. He briefed the Council on how members of the opposition groups (the High Negotiations Committee and the Moscow and Cairo platforms) met in Riyadh in late August to develop common negotiating positions and explore the possibility of forming a single delegation. He warned that the government has sent strong public signals that indicate an exclusively military approach and a dismissal of the prospects for any meaningful political negotiation. He emphasised that only political dialogue can turn military advances into a sustainable post-conflict situation.

Stephen O'Brien, then-Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, **briefed** the Council on Syria for the last time on 30 August. In his statement, O'Brien urged Council members "to find a way to stop the Syrian people from paying the price of political failure".

July 2017

Despite the announcement in early May by Iran, Russia and Turkey of the establishment of four de-escalation areas in Syria, a 4-5 July meeting in Astana ended without agreement on the delineation of the areas or their monitoring mechanisms. On 7 July, the US and Russia, along with Jordan, announced the establishment of a ceasefire agreement in southwestern Syria. While details regarding the implementation of the agreement are still being discussed, Russian military police units have deployed along the perimeter of the de-escalation zone. On 22 July, Russia and Egypt brokered a ceasefire agreement in Eastern Ghouta. Despite the deployment of Russian military police, the government reportedly conducted airstrikes the next day.

From 10 to 14 July, de Mistura convened the seventh round of the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva. Briefing Council members on 14 July via video teleconference, de Mistura described incremental progress, particularly regarding the holding of joint meetings with opposition delegations before and during the last round of talks in which common positions were identified. He also described how the government has so far not provided concrete thinking on issues in the different baskets, particularly on a proposal regarding the schedule for drafting a new constitution.

During the sixth round of talks, de Mistura had proposed the establishment of a technical process of expert meetings to address constitutional and legal issues, but the government has refused to participate in these meetings between rounds. De Mistura conveyed his intention to address these issues and to push for direct engagement by the parties in the next round of talks in early September. On 13 July, France proposed the establishment of a contact group composed of permanent members of the Council and regional actors to support UN efforts to broker a political settlement.

The investigation of the 4 April attack in Khan Shaykhun conducted by the FFM of the OPCW, while not able to visit the site given security considerations, concluded that a large number of people, some of whom died, were exposed to sarin or a sarin-like substance used as a chemical weapon (S/2017/567). On 29 June, the OPCW informed the Council that with the destruction of an aircraft hangar in June, the OPCW has verified the

destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by Syria (S/2017/564). However, the OPCW continues to consider Syria's initial declaration as incomplete.

On 6 July, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Edmond Mulet, the head of the three-member leadership panel of the OPCW-UN JIM, briefed Council members in consultations. Speaking to the press after the meeting in consultations, Mulet said that the JIM has been under pressure from some member states, telling them how to do their work and otherwise threatening not to accept their conclusions. He appealed to all member states to allow the JIM to perform its work in an impartial, independent and professional manner.

Ursula Mueller, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, briefed the Council on 27 July on the humanitarian situation in Syria. According to the 21 July report of the Secretary-General, the number of people displaced across northeast Syria due to the counter-terrorism offensive near Raqqa has grown in June alone to almost 20,000, many of whom were displaced more than once (S/2017/623).

June 2017

De Mistura's plan to convey an expert meeting on the consultative process on constitutional and legal issues in between rounds of the intra-Syrian talks was rejected by the Syrian government. However, de Mistura met with experts from opposition delegations on 15-16 June. On 17 June, he announced that the seventh round of the intra-Syrian talks would begin on 10 July in Geneva. Briefing the Council on 27 June de Mistura expressed his readiness to "seek to facilitate direct talks between the government and the opposition" either at a formal or technical level.

On 15 June, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, briefed Council members on progress in the elimination of Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons. She stressed that there has been no change to the lack of safe access to the two above-ground stationary facilities that are to be destroyed with the supervision of the OPCW (S/2017/469). The JIM, whose three-member leadership team (headed by Edmond Mulet with Judy Cheng-Hopkins and Stefan Mogl) is now complete, has started to investigate the 16 September 2016 incident where the FFM found that mustard gas was used (S/2017/400).

On 21 June Secretary-General António Guterres appealed to all those conducting military operations in Syria to do everything in their power to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, as fighting continues in Raqqa and elsewhere. OCHA head Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council on 29 June on the humanitarian situation in Syria on a 23 June report of the Secretary-General. Despite the drop in violence in some areas of the country, humanitarian convoys continue to be delayed and blocked by bureaucratic restrictions that limit their ability to get to civilians living in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. O'Brien stressed how even if the most egregious restrictions come from the Syrian government, other groups operating in areas not controlled by the government are also implementing procedures that slow the process or impinge upon humanitarian principles.

May 2017

In a 2 May **report**, the FFM of the OPCW confirmed the use of sulfur mustard in a September 2016 attack in Um-Housh near Aleppo, which had been denounced by the government of Syria. The FFM of the OPCW shared with Council members a 12 May update on its investigation of the 4 April Khan Shaykhun attack. An analysis of biomedical samples in OPCW-designated laboratories **confirmed** the use of sarin or a sarin-like substance in the attack. On 22 May, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura **briefed** Council members on the sixth round of intra-Syrian talks was convened in Geneva between 16-19 May. On 23 May, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, **briefed** the Council on **progress** in the elimination of Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons. On 30 May, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien **briefed** the Council on the monthly **report** on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

April 2017

On 4 April, a chemical weapons attack in the Khan Shaykhun area of Idlib resulted in at least 80 civilians killed, including many children. In a Council **meeting** called for by the UK and France on 5 April, Kim Won-soo, then High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, stated how the Fact-Finding Mission of the OPCW had already started gathering and analysing information on the attack. On 6 April, the US launched 59 cruise missiles on the Shayrat airbase outside of Homs in Syria in response to the chemical weapons attack. The US said that the air strikes targeted the base from which the 4 April attack had been launched and that they destroyed 20 percent of Syria's operational aircraft. The next day, 7 April, Bolivia requested a **meeting** in consultations to discuss this attack, but the US, as Council presidency, chose to hold a public briefing. At the meeting, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman reiterated some of the points made earlier by Secretary-General António Guterres, calling for accountability for the chemical weapons attack and appealing for restraint to avoid any acts that could deepen the suffering of the Syrian people. On 12 April, a **draft** resolution condemning the Khan Shaykhun attack was **vetoed** by Russia. Bolivia also voted against the **draft**, while China, Ethiopia and Kazakhstan abstained.

Earlier on 12 April, addressing the potential for military escalation, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura had **briefed** the Council emphasising the need to ensure that the parties and international actors continue their commitment to negotiating and supporting a political settlement. While recognising that much still needed to be done, he highlighted how the 23-31 March fifth round of the Geneva talks had made incremental progress towards the goal of a political transition laid out in **resolution 2254** and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué. On 18 April, Council members **condemned** the barbaric and cowardly terrorist attack which took place in Rasheedin, Syria, on 15 April, during which at least 126 people were killed, many of them children, and dozens injured.

On 21 April, the P3 organised an Arria-formula meeting with the HRC Commission of Inquiry on Syria. Its chair Paulo Pinheiro and fellow commissioner Karen AbuZayd described violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed in

Syria. France and the UK drew attention to the CoI's report in a 27 April **letter**. On 27 April, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien **briefed** the Council on the monthly **report** on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

March 2017

The fourth round of the intra-Syrian talks was held between 23 February and 3 March in Geneva. Following the parameters set out in **resolution 2254**, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura proposed to discuss three "baskets" of issues in parallel: governance, constitution and elections. Following a request by the Syrian government delegation to add a fourth "basket" to discuss counter-terrorism, de Mistura proposed that this also tackles issues related to security governance and confidence-building measures. The Council welcomed this announcement in a **press statement** as "a clear agenda for future negotiations" after a briefing by de Mistura on 8 March. On 30 March, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien **briefed** the Council on the monthly **report** on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

February 2017

Although the nation-wide ceasefire brokered by Russia and Turkey that started on 30 December 2016 is largely holding, several violations have taken place since it went into effect. Despite the overall improvement in the security situation, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien stressed in a 22 February Council **briefing** how the ceasefire has not resulted in an increase in humanitarian access. According to a 16 February **report** by the Secretary-General, not a single inter-agency cross-line humanitarian convoy planned for January was deployed that month.

On 24 February, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Kim Won-soo, and the head of the OPCW and the JIM, Virginia Gamba, briefed Council members in consultations on efforts to re-establish the full operational capacity of the JIM, which is expected to be reached in March, four months after the renewal of its mandate.

On 28 February, a **draft** resolution establishing a sanctions regime, a committee and a panel of experts to ensure accountability for the use and production of chemical weapons in Syria, with an appended list of individuals and entities to be targeted, was **vetoed** by China and Russia, also receiving the negative vote of Bolivia and the abstentions of Egypt, Ethiopia and Kazakhstan.

January 2017

On 4 January, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on efforts to re-establish the operational capacity of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism. On 20 January, Council members were briefed by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman on the preparation for the Astana talks under "any other business". Also on 20 January, Council members **condemned** the destruction of cultural heritage by ISIL in Syria following reports of the destruction of the tetrapylon and parts of the theatre of Palmyra. On 26 January, OCHA, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organisation **updated** the Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria, which continues to be critical. According to the Secretary-General's **report** discussed at the briefing, bureaucratic delays imposed by the government continue to limit the ability of the UN to reach those most in need. On 31 January, Special Envoy

Staffan de Mistura briefed Council members on how the Astana talks can feed into preparations for the Geneva talks scheduled for 20 February. Also on 31 January, Council members welcomed the International Meeting on Syria held in Astana, Kazakhstan, and took note of the joint statement adopted at the meeting by Iran, Russia and Turkey.

December 2016

On 5 December, there was a vote on the draft resolution put forward by Egypt, New Zealand and Spain that called for a 7-day end to all attacks in Aleppo. The vote was 11-3-1. Russia and China vetoed the resolution, Venezuela voted no and Angola abstained. On 13 December, France and the UK called for an emergency meeting of the Council where the Secretary-General reported that after 48 hours of unprecedented levels of bombardment, the UN had seen an almost complete collapse of the armed opposition's front lines in eastern Aleppo. He said that civilian deaths and injuries continued at a brutal pace. At that meeting, a majority of Council members called on Russia and Syria to allow impartial observers into Aleppo to monitor the situation of civilians. Against this backdrop, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien briefed Council members under "any other business" on 16 December. He reported that the UN was waiting for the Syrian government to approve the redeployment of existing UN staff already in Syria to Aleppo and permission for the UN to access all affected areas there. Following O'Brien's briefing, France called for a vote on a draft resolution that called for evacuations to be carried out in line with international humanitarian law, and for direct observation, independent monitoring of and reporting on the evacuations and the situation of civilians inside eastern Aleppo. However, during the consultations preceding the scheduled vote on Sunday, 18 December, Russia raised objections regarding UN access to eastern Aleppo and made clear that it would veto the French draft. After three hours of negotiations between France, Russia and the US, a deal was reached and resolution 2328 was adopted unanimously the next day. OCHA briefed the Council again on 23 December presenting the monthly report on the humanitarian situation in Syria. In another development on the humanitarian track, the Council adopted resolution 2332 on 21 December, renewing UN authorisation for cross-border aid delivery until 10 January 2018. On 30 December, Council members met in consultations to discuss a draft resolution to endorse the ceasefire in Syria agreed in late December between Russia and Turkey. On 31 December, another round of consultations was held on the draft with many Council members expressing a strong preference to adopt the draft in early January 2017. However, Russia insisted a vote that day. France, Russia and the US held further negotiations. That afternoon the draft was adopted unanimously. Resolution 2336, as adopted, takes note of Russia and Turkey's agreement and acknowledges that the Astana talks are an important step ahead of UN-facilitated talks in Geneva on 8 February 2017.

November 2016

On 17 November, the Council adopted resolution 2319, renewing the mandate of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism, the body established to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria, for a further year. Also on chemical weapons, Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on 29 November on the most recent reports on the implementation of resolution 2118 (S/2016/998 and S/2016/928). OCHA head Stephen O'Brien briefed the

Council on 21 November presenting the monthly report on the humanitarian situation in Syria. He reported a high tempo of military activity against opposition-held areas, particularly eastern Aleppo and a significant increase in the government's use of siege and starvation tactics. On 29 November, Egypt, New Zealand and Spain put in blue their draft resolution calling for an end of all attacks in Aleppo, though no vote was taken in November. On 30 November, the Council was briefed by Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien, and a representative from UNICEF on the situation in Aleppo. France and the UK called for the emergency meeting in response to the Syrian government's continued offensive to retake rebel-held eastern Aleppo.

October 2016

On 7 October and 17 October Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura briefed Council members on his "Aleppo initiative". He reported that the implementation of the initiative would require an immediate and total halt to the bombing of eastern Aleppo followed by the evacuation of Al Nusra fighters. On 8 October, Russia vetoed a draft resolution tabled by France and Spain demanding an end to military flights over Aleppo. The vote (S/PV.7785) was 11-2-2 with Venezuela also voting no and Angola and China abstaining. This was Russia's fifth veto on a Syria resolution, but it was the first time China refrained from casting a veto alongside Russia on a Syria draft resolution. Immediately after the veto, the Council voted on a competing Russian draft resolution. The draft was almost identical to the French-Spanish draft, except that it placed greater emphasis on the counter-terrorism aspects of the conflict, in particular separating Al Nusra Front from other armed opposition groups, and did not include the demand to cease aerial bombardment. The vote (S/PV.7785) was 4-9-2. China, Egypt, Russia and Venezuela voted yes and Angola and Uruguay abstained. Nine Council members, including the P3, voted no. Because the Russian draft did not get the 9 positive votes to be adopted, the negative votes by the P3 were not considered a veto. OCHA head Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council on 26 October, presenting the most recent report on the humanitarian situation and expressed his "incandescent rage" at the unparalleled humanitarian catastrophe, saying that eastern Aleppo had become a "kill zone". On chemical weapons, Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo and Virginia Gamba, the head of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), briefed Council members on 27 October where the most recent 2118 implementation report and the JIM's fourth report were presented. The JIM concluded that of the nine cases it investigated, the Syrian regime used chlorine gas against its own population in three cases and that ISIL used mustard gas in one case. There was insufficient evidence to make a determination in the remaining five cases. On 31 October, the Council adopted resolution 2314, extending the mandate of the JIM to 18 November 2016, with a view to vote on a further renewal.

September 2016

On Sunday, 17 September, Russia requested emergency consultations regarding the US-led coalition airstrikes in Deir ez-Zor. In comments to the media, Russia suggested that the US might have intentionally attacked Syrian government targets. The US stated that the strikes had been meant for ISIL targets, and that it had ceased attacks once informed by Russia that the targets were thought to be Syrian military. There was palpable tension between Russia and the US displayed at the Council's 21 September high-level meeting on

Syria, where US Secretary of State John Kerry said that to restore credibility to the cessation of hostilities agreement all aircraft flying in key areas should be grounded in order to de-escalate the situation and give a chance for humanitarian assistance to flow unimpeded. On 25 September, the P3 called for an emergency meeting of the Council on Sunday, 25 September, where Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura briefed on the massive military escalation against Aleppo. On 29 September, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien presented the latest report on the humanitarian situation and focused his briefing on the impact of the ruptured cessation of hostilities agreement and the subsequent severe escalation of fighting in Aleppo. September consultations on the chemical weapons track and 2118 implementation report were cancelled.

August 2016

On 8 August, France, New Zealand, Ukraine, the UK and the US co-hosted an Arria-formula meeting on the siege of Aleppo. The next day, Council members held consultations on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria, with briefings by Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and OCHA head Stephen O'Brien. De Mistura had few positive developments to report regarding the resumption of talks, in light of the battle for Aleppo. O'Brien reported that the encirclement of eastern rebel-held Aleppo put it at risk of becoming another besieged area and by far the largest in Syria. O'Brien briefed the Council again on 22 August to present the monthly report on the humanitarian situation and was unable to convey any significant progress in humanitarian access to Aleppo since his 9 August briefing. On two occasions during the month of August, Council members attempted to reach agreement on press statements regarding the situation in Aleppo. Neither the UK draft nor a subsequent and separate draft by the humanitarian penholders Egypt, New Zealand and Spain could be agreed among all Council members and no statement was ever issued. On chemical weapons, Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on 30 August presenting the most recent report on the implementation of resolution 2118. The meeting focused on the OPCW Director-General's findings that discrepancies in Syria's declared chemical weapons arsenal and lack of sufficient cooperation from Syria to clarify those discrepancies had led the OPCW to conclude that Syria's declaration cannot be considered accurate and complete. Virginia Gamba, the head of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), also briefed on its third report on the nine cases investigated: eight related to allegations of the government's use of chemical weapons and one related to an alleged use of chemical weapons by ISIL. The JIM's third report concluded that the Syrian regime used chlorine gas against its own population in two cases and that ISIL used mustard gas in one case. Three cases merited further investigation and there was insufficient evidence to determine responsibility in the remaining three cases, the report said.

July 2016

The head of OCHA, Stephen O'Brien, briefed the Security Council on 25 July and presented the latest Secretary-General's report on the humanitarian situation. He said that eastern rebel-held Aleppo was at risk of becoming another, and by far the largest, besieged area in Syria and called for a weekly 48-hour pause in fighting to allow humanitarian aid to reach eastern Aleppo. On chemical weapons, Acting High

Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on 22 July in consultations, presenting the latest report on implementation of resolution 2118. The meeting focused on the discrepancies in Syria's declared chemical weapons arsenal that had not been clarified by Syrian authorities, despite repeated visits to Syria over the course of two years by the OPCW's Declaration Assessment Team.

June 2016

In a 3 June briefing to Council members, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura reported that the chances of resuming political talks were remote. That view was reiterated when de Mistura briefed Council members again on 29 June, but he reported that his office would try to work on bridging proposals to bring the parties closer together on the issue of political transition. On the humanitarian track, the 17 May statement of the International Syria Support Group called for UN air bridges and air drops if the government continued to deny humanitarian access to besieged areas after 1 June. Council members were briefed by OCHA on 3 and 16 June to follow up on the status of the delivery of humanitarian aid to besieged areas in Syria and the UN's planning for air drops. In a 23 June Council briefing, OCHA head Stephen O'Brien said that the UN had received approval to access 15 of the 18 besieged locations in Syria. However, the approvals were ad hoc, and some were partial in nature, i.e. there were restrictions on food or medicine as well as restrictions on the number of beneficiaries. Also on 23 June, the Department of Political Affairs briefed Council members in consultations under "any other business" on the situation on the Syrian/Turkish border. Russia requested this briefing, expressing concern about Turkish incursions into Syrian territory and seeking more information about the wall Turkey is building on the border with Syria. On chemical weapons, Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on 16 June. Virginia Gamba—the head of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), the body mandated to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria—also briefed on the nine cases the JIM is investigating. On 22 June, Council members issued a press statement that deplored the attack on a Jordanian crossing post on the border with Syria.

May 2016

On 3 May, the Security Council adopted resolution 2286 condemning attacks on health care workers and facilities and demanding compliance with international humanitarian law. While the resolution was not country-specific, many Council members viewed it as relevant to Syria in light of ongoing attacks against medical facilities there. On 4 May, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council on the escalation of hostilities around Aleppo. On 12 May, Council members issued a press statement expressing outrage at attacks against civilians and civilian objects. On 24 May, Council members issued another press statement condemning ISIL attacks in Jableh and Tartous as well as indiscriminate attacks by all parties, called for the resumption of talks, and expressed support for Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. On 26 May, de Mistura briefed Council members and said there was a need for substantially less violence and substantially more aid, and reiterated that without appropriate conditions on the ground, the credibility of any political process would be in jeopardy. On 27 May, the head of OCHA briefed, reporting that ongoing indiscriminate attacks, the slow-down in aid

delivery, the continued removal of medical supplies from convoys by government forces and the lack of access to government-besieged suburbs of Damascus, particularly Darraya, continued to undermine independent humanitarian action. On the chemical weapons track, Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on 5 May.

April 2016

On 5 April, the US called for a briefing from OCHA on besieged areas in Syria, in particular government-besieged Darraya, under “any other business.” Subsequent to this briefing, a fact-finding mission by Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura’s office visited Darraya in April and confirmed the presence of civilians in need of food and medicine. De Mistura briefed Council members on 12 April and then again on 27 April, calling for engagement by Russia and the US at the highest level to try and shore up the cessation of hostilities and regain political momentum. On 28 April, OCHA briefed the Council on the regular monthly report on the humanitarian situation that highlighted very limited access to besieged areas, difficulty in getting medical supplies to those in need, and escalating violence around Aleppo. On the chemical weapons track, Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on 13 April.

March 2016

On 14 March, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura briefed Council members via video teleconference from Geneva after the first day the resumed intra-Syrian proximity talks. He reported that the cessation of hostilities had lowered overall levels of violence. On the same day that this round of talks began, Russia announced a drawdown of its forces from Syria, which de Mistura said would have a positive impact on the negotiations. OCHA head Stephen O’Brien briefed the Council on 30 March, presenting the latest Secretary-General’s report that described improving access, but also that overall access remained subject ad-hoc approval by government authorities, and that no access had been granted to several suburbs of Damascus that were besieged by the government. On the chemical weapons track, Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on 23 March on the most recent OPCW report.

February 2016

On 5 February Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura briefed Council members on the peace talks in Geneva that had been abruptly postponed two days earlier due to the government’s Aleppo offensive, backed by Russian airstrikes. Subsequently, intense diplomatic activity between Russia and the US culminated in the agreement on a cessation of hostilities which was endorsed by the Security Council on 26 February in resolution 2268 (S/PV.7634). Earlier in the month, Council members New Zealand and Spain called for consultations on 10 February after OCHA announced that the Aleppo offensive had displaced tens of thousands of people. Meanwhile, Russia called for two meetings of Council members on 16 and 19 February to discuss the military escalation between Turkey and Syrian Kurdish forces, and introduced a draft resolution on the issue. There was not significant support among Council members for the draft text, with several stressing the need to de-escalate the situation and stay focused on a political solution to the Syrian crisis. Council members also had their regular briefings on the chemical

weapons report on 22 February and humanitarian report on 24 February. Separately, Council members issued two press statements condemning ISIS attacks in Damascus on 31 January (SC/12232) and then Homs and Damascus on 21 February (SC/12254).

January 2016

Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura briefed Council members on 18 January to stress the importance of maintaining the momentum towards a political solution, but not at the cost of convening a process that would be a stillborn repetition of previous talks. The talks began on 29 January after a series of meetings in late January between US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. There was also focus on besieged areas in Syria at three meetings in January, in part to build the opposition's confidence that the Security Council would use its leverage on the humanitarian track in the lead-up to talks. Humanitarian leads New Zealand and Spain requested a briefing under "any other business" on 11 January to keep pressure on the government to fulfil its 7 January agreement to grant humanitarian access to Madaya. (The situation in Madaya—besieged by government forces—was a matter of particular concern after alarming images of starving residents appeared in the media.) France and the UK, supported by the US and the humanitarian leads, requested a public briefing on 15 January to follow up the Madaya briefing. Finally, at the regular monthly humanitarian briefing on 27 January, the Council was briefed by OCHA and by the World Food Programme on access to food, malnutrition and starvation in Syria. In other developments, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, at the request of Russia, briefed Council members under "any other business" on 5 January on the situation along the Syrian-Turkish border. Earlier that same day, Council members had their regular monthly briefing on the chemical weapons track on and Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo reported that the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons had been completed.

December 2015

On 18 December, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2254 at a ministerial-level meeting, setting out the sequence of events to end the war in Syria: UN-mediated political talks, a national ceasefire and a two-year timeline to achieve a political transition. On 21 December, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-Wha Kang and High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres briefed the Council on the humanitarian situation. The next day, the Council adopted resolution 2258 renewing the authorisation for cross-border aid delivery into Syria without state consent until January 2017. In other developments, on 2 December, Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on the regular chemical weapons track. He presented the monthly report on the implementation of resolution 2118 that included the results of the OPCW fact-finding mission's investigation into three allegations of chemical weapons use. The report concluded that in the two instances of chemical weapons attacks against rebel-held areas, toxic chemicals including chlorine and mustard gas had been used, though the mission's mandate did not allow it to attribute responsibility for the attacks. It did not reach a similar conclusion in relation to the government's claim.

November 2015

On 10 November, Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on the regular chemical weapons track. The previous day, the Secretary-General had informed the Council that the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism, established to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria, would be fully operational on 13 November. Also on 10 November, Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura briefed Council members under “any other business” saying the UN was ready to support “any decision taken at the next round of talks” in reference to the 14 November Vienna talks aimed at finding a common position on a political solution to the war in Syria. On 12 November, Security Council members held a closed Arria-formula meeting with Paulo Pinheiro and Karen Koning AbuZayd, members of the Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry on Syria. They briefed on the impact of the intensification of armed activities on civilians, especially vulnerable groups such as internally displaced persons. On 16 November, the Council was briefed on the humanitarian situation in Syria by OCHA, the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Regarding the counter-terrorism track, the 13 November Paris attack was the catalyst for France to draft a resolution that was adopted with very little negotiation on 20 November. Resolution 2249 called for member states to take all necessary measures on the territory under the control of ISIS to prevent terrorist acts committed by ISIS and other terrorist groups.

October 2015

On 7 October, Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on the regular OPCW chemical weapons report as set out in resolution 2118. OCHA head Stephen O’Brien briefed the Security Council on 27 October and presented the latest Secretary-General’s report on the humanitarian situation in Syria. The report reiterated the Secretary-General’s call during the 70th General Assembly for the Security Council to refer Syria to the ICC. Separately, Russian airstrikes commenced in Syria on 30 September and continued throughout the month of October. On 29 October, international talks aimed at finding a common position on a political solution to the war in Syria began in Vienna. Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the US participated along with: the UN and the EU; the remaining P5 members China, France and the UK; regional countries Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar and the UAE; and European countries Germany and Italy. This was the first time that Iran has participated in such international talks.

September 2015

On the chemical weapons track, the Secretary-General and the Security Council exchanged letters on 9 and 10 September, formally authorizing the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism, established to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria (S/2015/669, S/2015/696 and S/2015/697). Also on 9 September, Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on the regular chemical weapons report (S/2015/668) as set out in resolution 2118. On the humanitarian track, OCHA head Stephen O’Brien briefed the Security Council on 16 September, he urged the Council to find a political solution. He said the war

in Syria had created one of the largest refugee exoduses since the Second World War and the Secretary-Generals report said civilians were risking the perilous journey across the Mediterranean to escape (S/2015/698). On the political track, On 22 September UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura announced the leads of his proposed intra-Syrian working groups. In the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies, on 9 September, representatives of UN Women and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate briefed member states at an open meeting of the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee about how gender has started to be integrated into the UN's policy and programming on counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism. The briefing included a focus on ISIS in Iraq and Syria. On 21 September, the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee added four individuals to its sanctions list, three of whom were listed for being financial facilitators for Al Nusra Front in Syria (SC/12053).

August 2015

The Council adopted resolution 2235 on 7 August to establish a UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism to determine responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. On 12 August, Council members received their regular monthly briefing from Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpile. On 19 August, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed Council members under "any other business" on one of the deadliest raids since the outbreak of the war that occurred while he was visiting Damascus. On 16 August, Syrian government warplanes carried out two air strikes on a marketplace in Douma, a besieged area in eastern Ghouta, reportedly killing more than 100 people and injuring more than 200 others. O'Brien briefed the Council again on 27 August, presenting the Secretary-General's report that said indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks by all parties to the conflict, including through the use of barrel bombs and other explosive weapons in populated areas, remain by far the primary cause of civilian deaths and injuries. On 24 August, Chile and the US organised an Arria-formula meeting on ISIS's targeting of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons, as part of ISIS's ongoing track record of deliberately targeting minorities and vulnerable populations. Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura briefed Council members on 25 August on her 16-29 April visit to the Middle East, including to Syria where, she said, sexual violence is being committed strategically, in a widespread and systematic manner, and with a high degree of sophistication by most parties to the conflict in Syria—both state and non-state actors. On 28 August, Council members issued a press statement that condemned the use of sexual violence committed, including as a method or tactic of warfare, in Syria and Iraq.

July 2015

On 9 July, Acting UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Kim Won-soo briefed Council members on the most recent report by the OPCW on the chemical weapons track. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien briefed the Council on 28 July presenting the Secretary-General's report that said the devastating humanitarian situation in Syria "bears unflinching witness to the urgent need to find a political settlement to this ruinous conflict". Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura briefed the Council on 29 July. He announced that his office would facilitate intra-Syrian

working groups to generate a “Syrian-owned framework document” on the implementation of the Geneva Communiqué. He stressed that the support of the Security Council would be critical to convince all Syrian and regional players to get involved.

June 2015

On 3 June, Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Won-soo Kim presented the Secretary-General’s report on the Syria chemical weapons track. On 4 June, OCHA Operations Director John Ging briefed Security Council members under “any other business” on the 30 May barrel bomb attacks by government helicopters targeting a civilian market in Aleppo. On 5 June, Council members issued a press statement expressing outrage at indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including those involving shelling and aerial bombardment. The focus on indiscriminate attacks against civilians continued with an Arria-formula meeting on 26 June. The Arria was organised by France and Spain so that Council members could hear about the impact of barrel bombs from Bassam Alahmad of the Violations Documentation Center, Nadim Houry of Human Rights Watch and Raed Saleh of Syria Civil Defence (or the “White Helmets”). A pre-recorded video message from Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura was also delivered at the Arria. On 29 June, Deputy Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-wha Kang briefed the Council on the Secretary-General’s report on the humanitarian situation.

May 2015

On 4 May, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and UNRWA representative Michael Kingsley-Nyinah briefed Council members under “any other business” on the situation in Yarmouk—a Palestinian refugee camp on the outskirts of Damascus that has been besieged by the government for two years and was briefly overtaken by ISIS in early April. On 7 May, Council members received their monthly briefing on the destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons stockpile. During these consultations, allegations were raised that the government had used chlorine bombs in March and April during clashes with opposition groups over control of Idlib. On 19 May, Council members agreed to “press elements” condemning a mortar attack on the Russian embassy in Damascus. On 22 May, Council members issued a press statement condemning ISIS’s seizure of Palmyra, a world heritage site in Syria (SC/11904). On 28 May, Under Secretary-General Valerie Amos presented the Secretary-General’s most recent humanitarian report (S/2015/368) during her final briefing to the Security Council in her role as head of OCHA (S/PV.7452).

April 2015

UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane briefed on 2 April on the destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons stockpile (S/2015/211). The US arranged a closed Arria-formula meeting on 16 April for Council members to hear first-hand accounts of chemical weapons attacks in Syria. On 6 and 20 April, Council members held emergency consultations on Yarmouk—a Palestinian refugee camp on the outskirts of Damascus—that has been besieged by the government for two years and was overtaken by ISIS in early April. Following the 6 April consultations with UNRWA head Pierre Krähenbühl, Council members agreed to “elements to the press” that condemned the terrorist groups and called for the protection of civilians and humanitarian access. Following the 20 April briefings by Krähenbühl and Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy,

Council members released a press statement expressing grave concern and condemning aerial bombardment. On 24 April, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the impact of Syria's humanitarian crisis on neighbouring countries, followed by briefings on the humanitarian situation (S/2015/264) by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos, High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres along with UNHCR Special Envoy Angelina Jolie and the head of the UN's World Food Programme, Ertharin Cousin. On 27 April, Jordan and France presided over an Arria-formula meeting where UNESCO and INTERPOL briefed UN member states on how they could implement the cultural heritage provisions of resolution 2199, i.e., the prevention of illicit trade in Iraqi and Syrian cultural property. On 29 April, the P3 organised a closed Arria-formula meeting in New York so that Council members could interact with the head of the Syrian National Coalition, Khaled Khoja.

March 2015

On 6 March, the Council adopted resolution 2209, which condemned the use of toxic chemicals such as chlorine, without attributing blame, and threatened sanctions. UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane had briefed Council members the previous day on the 2118 implementation report. On 26 March, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos briefed the Council presented the report on the devastating humanitarian situation. She reported breath-taking levels of savagery and unrelenting aerial bombardment and indiscriminate shelling of populated areas. She also focused on the needs of neighbouring countries that host the 3.9 million refugees who have fled Syria. The same day, Council members issued a press statement supporting Amos's call to fund the UN's 2015 Syria response plan at the Kuwait Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria on 31 March. On 27 March, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius chaired a ministerial-level open debate on the situation of persecuted ethnic or religious minorities in the Middle East (S/2015/176), there was a particular focus on Iraq and Syria (S/PV.7419). The Secretary-General and High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein briefed. An Iraqi parliamentarian of the Yazidi faith and the head of the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Babylon also addressed the Council.

February 2015

On 6 February, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane, briefed Council members in consultations on the chemical weapons track. The major focus of this meeting was the 4 February decision of the OPCW that created a reporting line back to the Council on the reports of the OPCW's fact-finding mission on the use of chlorine bombs. Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura briefed Council members on 17 February, announcing that Syria had indicated a willingness to halt all aerial bombardment over Aleppo for a period of six weeks. De Mistura could not say when such a freeze would go into effect, reporting that a date would be announced from Damascus. On 20 February, Council members held a closed Arria-formula meeting with the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry on Syria. Commissioners said they were considering whether to publicly release a list of alleged perpetrators of massive violations in the Syrian conflict. On 26 February, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-wha Kang and High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres briefed

the Council on the devastating humanitarian situation, presenting the latest Secretary-General's report. Separately, on counter-terrorism, the Council adopted resolution 2199 on 12 February which addressed the funding of ISIS and Al-Nusra via illegal oil exports, traffic of cultural heritage, ransom payments and external donations. In sanctions-related developments, on 4 February the 1737 Iran Sanctions Committee reviewed a list of pending issues that includes a US proposal to designate Jaysh Al-Shabi, a pro-government Syrian militia that has allegedly received arms from Iran.

January 2015

On 6 January, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane briefed on the remaining tasks in the implementation of resolution 2118, such as the gaps in Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpile and the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities in Syria. Discussion of the OPCW fact-finding mission reports on Syria's use of chlorine bombs (S/2014/955) featured prominently during the 6 January consultations. Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-wha Kang briefed the Council on 28 January on the most recent report on the humanitarian situation in Syria (S/2015/48). Following Kang's briefing, Council members Jordan, New Zealand and Spain proposed press elements that thanked the neighbouring countries and expressed concern that resolutions 2165 and 2191 lacked effective implementation in Syria. The press elements called for full implementation of all of the Council's resolutions and statements on the humanitarian situation in Syria. Council members expressed concern about the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of the Syrian crisis as well as violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Finally, there was emphasis that the humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate in the absence of a political solution.

December 2014

On 3 December 2014, Special Adviser Sigrid Kaag provided her last briefing to Council members on the chemical weapons track. She focused on remaining tasks in the implementation of resolution 2118, such as the verification of the ongoing destruction of chemicals outside Syria, plans to complete the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities in Syria by the summer of 2015 and clarification of any discrepancies in Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpile. Syria's use of chlorine bombs was also discussed. The Council adopted resolution 2191 on 17 December 2014, extending until 10 January 2016 the humanitarian access provisions of resolution 2165—the authorisation to deliver aid across borders and conflict lines without Syria's consent and the monitoring mechanism that ensures the humanitarian nature of such aid convoys. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos had briefed the Council two days earlier, reporting that brutality, violence and callous disregard for human life were the hallmark of the Syrian crisis (S/PV.7342). On 30 December 2014, the P3, current Council members Jordan and Lithuania and then-Council members Australia, Luxembourg and the Republic of Korea transmitted to the Security Council the OPCW fact-finding mission reports on Syria's use of chlorine bombs (S/2014/955).

November 2014

Special Adviser Sigrid Kaag briefed the Council on 5 November, reporting on the destruction plan for chemical weapons production facilities, to be completed by the summer of 2015. Council members also discussed the 10 September fact-finding report by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapon (OPCW), which found evidence that chlorine had been consistently and repeatedly used in barrel bombs dropped from helicopters. While the report did not attribute blame, only the government has aerial capacity. On 18 November, the Council issued a press statement that condemned ISIS for the murder of US aid worker Peter Kassig. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos briefed the Council on 25 November, reporting that resolution 2165 had enabled assistance to enter more hard-to-reach locations via cross-border access and that the UN and its partners are planning to scale up deliveries in the weeks and months ahead (S/PV.7324). She also presented the 21 November Secretary-General's report (S/2014/840) that stated since the adoption of resolution 2165, there had been 30 cross-border aid deliveries and while cross-line deliveries within Syria occur, they remain difficult.

October 2014

On 3 October, the Council issued a press statement condemning the 1 October twin bomb attacks on a school complex in a government controlled area of Homs and a press statement condemning ISIS for the murder of UK aid worker Alan Henning. Sigrid Kaag, Special Coordinator of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-UN Joint Mission, briefed the Council on 7 October, reporting on the destruction plan for chemical weapons production facilities in Syria—in particular the four additional facilities disclosed by Syria only in September. She also updated Council members on the 10 September OPCW report that found evidence that chlorine had been used consistently and repeatedly in barrel bombs dropped from helicopters. Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura briefed Council members on 30 October on possible ways to revive the political process following his meetings with key players in Damascus, Amman, Ankara, Beirut, Cairo, Moscow, Riyadh and Tehran (S/PV.7293). Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-wha Kang also briefed on 30 October and presented the Secretary-General's report on the humanitarian situation in Syria. On 30 October, the Council issued a press statement expressing support for the role and efforts of de Mistura. On 31 October, the Council issued a press statement condemning the aerial bombardment, by the use of barrel bombs, of a displaced persons camp in Idlib on 29 October, leaving many dead and injured, including children.

September 2014

Sigrid Kaag, Special Coordinator of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-UN Joint Mission, briefed the Council on 4 September, reporting on the destruction plan for the 12 chemical weapons production facilities in Syria and on the successor arrangements to carry out the remaining verification and inspection activities under resolution 2118. During the 4 September consultations, many Council members also exhibited an interest in keeping a reporting line open to the Council regarding the use of chlorine bombs. On 6 September, the Council issued a press statement condemning ISIS for the murder of a US journalist, Steven Sotloff. On 14 September, the Council issued a press statement condemning ISIS for the murder of UK aid worker, David

Haines. On 30 September, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos reported that since the adoption of [resolution 2165](#), there had been 14 cross-border aid deliveries, but cross-line deliveries within Syria remain difficult ([S/PV.7273](#)).

August 2014

Sigrid Kaag, Special Coordinator of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-UN Joint Mission, briefed the Council on 5 August, reporting that on 24 July, the OPCW had agreed to a destruction plan for the 12 production facilities in Syria—the facilities were to have been destroyed by 15 March. On 25 August, the Secretary-General said that successor arrangements to the OPCW-UN Joint Mission were being established to carry out the remaining verification and inspection activities under [resolution 2118](#) and that reporting to the Security Council would continue. On 15 August, the Council unanimously adopted [resolution 2170](#), which condemned ISIS and al-Nusrah Front for the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters. It also listed six individuals affiliated with these groups under the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida sanctions regime and expressed the Council's readiness to list others involved in financing or facilitating the travel of foreign terrorist fighters. On 22 August, Council members issued a [press statement](#) condemning the 19 August beheading of US journalist James Foley by ISIS. On 28 August, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-wha Kang briefed the Council on humanitarian access ([S/PV.7252](#)). She reported that since the adoption of [resolution 2165](#), there had been five cross-border aid deliveries, some improvement in access to Aleppo, Dar'a and rural Damascus and that medical supplies had reached a number of opposition held areas. However, access continued to decline in government and ISIS controlled areas and that key elements of [resolution 2139](#) remained unimplemented, such as medical neutrality, ceasing aerial bombardments and easing administrative hurdles.

July 2014

Sigrid Kaag, Special Coordinator of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-UN Joint Mission, briefed the Council on 7 July, reporting that the final 7.2 percent of declared chemical weapons was removed from Syria on 23 June. On 10 July, the new Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura was appointed. The Council adopted [resolution 2165](#) on 14 July, authorising cross-border and cross-line access for the UN and its partners to deliver humanitarian aid in Syria without state consent, creating the potential to help 2.9 million people in need ([S/PV.7216](#)). The resolution authorised access through four border crossings and a mechanism to monitor aid convoys and to notify Syrian authorities. The first such convoy traversed the Bab al-Salam crossing from Turkey on 24 July. On 25 July, Security Council members met with the Commission of Inquiry in a closed Arria-formula format in New York. Over three years, the Commission collated testimonies indicating a massive number of war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed. The scale of government violations continues to outpace that of the opposition, with aerial bombardment, targeting highly populated areas, systematic and widespread reports of deaths and torture in government detention centres. Under Secretary-General Valerie Amos briefed Council members on humanitarian access for the first time under resolution 2165 on 30 July. On 28 July, the Council adopted a [presidential statement](#) addressing the seizure of the oilfields and pipelines in Syria and

Iraq by ISIS and al-Nusra to finance terrorism. The statement stressed that all states are required to ensure that their nationals and any persons within their territory do not trade in oil with these entities.

June 2014

Sigrid Kaag, Special Coordinator of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-UN Joint Mission, briefed the Council on 4 June, reporting that the 30 June deadline for the completion of all removal and destruction activities would be missed. Kaag reiterated that other important issues remained such as verification work, the destruction of production facilities and clarification of the declared chemical weapons stockpile. There was also a discussion of the OPCW's fact-finding mission to investigate allegations that the regime had used chlorine-filled bombs against civilians. On 10 June, High Commissioner Navi Pillay, during her opening statement to the Human Rights Council, regretted the Security Council's inability to ensure accountability in Syria and deplored that war crimes and crimes against humanity are commonplace in Syria and occur with complete impunity. On 26 June, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos briefed Council members, presenting a report that clearly demonstrates that the regime has used the distribution of humanitarian aid as a tactic of war (S/PV.7212). She reported that there continues to be no progress in implementing any of the key demands in resolution 2139, such as authorising cross-border aid operations, allowing access to besieged or hard-to-reach areas, observing medical neutrality, ceasing aerial bombardments or easing administrative hurdles.

May 2014

Sigrid Kaag, Special Coordinator of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-UN Joint Mission, briefed the Council on 8 May, reporting that Syria had missed the extended deadline of 27 April for the complete removal of its declared chemical weapons materiel. The remaining 7.2 percent includes precursors to produce sarin, held at one site that could not be reached due to the security situation. There was also a discussion of the OPCW's 29 April announcement that it would deploy a fact-finding mission to investigate allegations that the regime had used chlorine-filled bombs against civilians. On 13 May, UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi resigned and briefed Council members on the failure of the Geneva peace talks, largely due to the government's intransigence. On 22 May, China and Russia cast their fourth joint veto on Syria and blocked the French draft resolution referring Syria to the ICC, co-sponsored by 65 member states. All other Council members voted in favour of the referral (S/PV.7180). On 29 May, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-wha Kang briefed Council members on humanitarian access. The most recent Secretary-General's report did not indicate any progress in implementation of resolution 2139's key demands, such as authorising cross-border aid operations, allowing access in besieged or hard-to-reach areas, observing medical neutrality, ceasing aerial bombardments or easing administrative hurdles. In fact, access dropped significantly since the last reporting period due to a new transport mechanism put in place by the government. The report said that the government failed its responsibility to look after its own people and that its arbitrary denial of aid, in particular by not opening relevant

border crossings, which is a violation of resolution 2139 and international law. The report called on the Security Council to urgently consider its next steps to ensure compliance with its demands.

April 2014

On 15 April, France convened an “Arria-formula” meeting for the authors of Report into the Credibility of Certain Evidence with regard to Torture and Execution of Persons Incarcerated by the Current Syrian Regime (codenamed the Caesar Report) to present their work to Council members. Also at France’s request, humanitarian chief Valerie Amos and Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernández-Taranco briefed Council members on 17 April on the situation in Homs, where the local government and local opposition had almost reached agreement on the evacuation of civilians and fighters from the besieged old city. However, the authorities abruptly stopped negotiations, and on 15 April the government renewed its assault on Homs. It seems the briefing and discussions in consultations focused on the coercive elements of localised ceasefires in besieged areas, in which the government uses bombardment and starvation tactics to bring communities to their knees. Amos briefed Council members again on 30 April to present the Secretary-General’s report on implementation of resolution 2139 (S/2014/295). The report said that the arbitrary denial of humanitarian access was a violation of international humanitarian law, and it called on the Security Council to take action. Regarding chemical weapons, Special Coordinator of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-UN Joint Mission Sigrid Kaag briefed Council members twice in April reporting significant, but not yet complete, removal of declared chemical weapons material. On 3 April she warned that further delay would make it increasingly unrealistic to meet the 30 June completion deadline. The US requested an additional briefing on 23 April for an update on removal activity ahead of the 27 April deadline.

March 2014

Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission Sigrid Kaag briefed Council members on 5 March, reporting that despite several missed deadlines Syria and the OPCW had reached agreement on a revised deadline for full removal of chemical weapons material by the end of April. UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi delivered a pessimistic message to Council members on 13 March and to the General Assembly on 14 March about the prospects for the Geneva process to deliver a tangible outcome. He said that the current blockage is due to the government’s unwillingness to accept the proposals on the table and that a third round of talks will be meaningless if there are no constructive ideas to break the stalemate. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos briefed Council members on 28 March, reporting continuing aerial bombardments by the government and increasing use of car bombs and suicide attacks by extremist groups. France drafted a press statement expressing support for Brahimi and the resumption of talks based on genuine engagement by all parties. The draft underlined the centrality of forming a transitional governing body and emphasised that elections should be organised within the framework of the Geneva peace talks. Russia objected to referencing elections and to any language specifying how an approach to the

resumption of talks should be sequenced, i.e. tackling issues of terrorism and forming a transitional government in parallel. In the end, the press statement was not issued due to Russia's objections.

February 2014

Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission Sigrid Kaag briefed Council members on 6 February, reporting that the 5 February deadline for the removal of the entire chemical weapons stockpile was missed, though Syria did transfer cargoes on 7 and 27 January. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos briefed Council members on 13 February, reporting that since the adoption of the October 2013 presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/15) the conflict had intensified with the continued use of siege as a weapon of war, denial of humanitarian assistance and aerial bombardment. On 22 February, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2139, demanding that all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, allow humanitarian access across conflict lines, in besieged areas and across borders and expressing its intent to take further steps in case of non-compliance. The vote followed two weeks of intense negotiations that resulted in significant compromises on references to Syria's unwillingness to implement the October 2013 presidential statement on humanitarian access, possible sanctions in case of non-compliance, cross-border access and access to besieged areas, aerial bombardment, accountability and counter-terrorism.

January 2014

On 8 January, Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission Sigrid Kaag briefed Council members, reporting that the 31 December 2013 deadline for removing priority-one chemicals was missed, though Syria did transfer an initial tranche on 7 January. She told Council members that the first movement of chemicals must not be a symbolic action and that the government should continue its cooperation in a safe and timely manner. Kaag also reported that Syria continued to request security equipment despite consistent advice that such "dual use" equipment would not be procured by the mission. Finally, Kaag encouraged key member states to continue to exert pressure on Syria to fulfill its obligations. On 17 January, Security Council members held a closed Arria formula meeting focused on women's participation in resolving the Syrian conflict. A key message was that neither the government nor the opposition sufficiently represent the Syrian people and the integrity of the talks would be undermined if women and civil society were excluded. In a 17 January note to Council members, OCHA head Valerie Amos reported nominal progress in some areas but reiterated that intense needs continued to go unmet, particularly in besieged areas. While in Damascus on 12 January, Amos said that she raised access to besieged areas with the government and that she was "particularly worried about reports of starvation". The 17 January note recommended intense engagement by Council members to respond to these increasing reports of malnutrition and starvation.

December 2013

On 3 December, humanitarian chief Valerie Amos briefed Council members reporting no progress in gaining cross-line access into hard-to-reach areas. She also reported no improvement in the protection of civilians or in the demilitarisation of schools and hospitals. She said there was moderate progress with the approval of visas for UN humanitarian workers and additional humanitarian hubs. On 4 December, the Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, Sigrid Kaag, briefed Council members on the preparations for removing critical chemical agents from Syria by 31 December, warning that the security situation could negatively impact the end of year deadline. Council members were briefed on 16 December by the Secretary-General on the final report of a UN team led by Åke Sellström that included the results of the investigation into seven allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria. On 18 December, Council members failed to reach agreement on a press statement condemning the Syrian government's airstrikes against Aleppo. Separately, High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said on 2 December that the UN Commission of Inquiry had produced massive evidence that war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed and indicated responsibility at the highest level, including Assad.

November 2013

On 4 November, OCHA head Valerie Amos briefed Council members on humanitarian access in Syria. She reiterated her deep disappointment that access had not improved and there had been no major breakthrough in getting Syria to lift bureaucratic obstacles. On 5 November, Sigrid Kaag, the Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, briefed Council members that 21 of 23 declared sites had been inspected. (Syria reported that the two remaining sites were abandoned. One was later inspected on 6 November, and the remaining site will be inspected when security conditions allow.) Separately, the General Assembly's Third Committee passed a resolution, drafted by Saudi Arabia, on 19 November condemning human rights violations in Syria, in particular attacks against medical facilities. It urged the Council to take measures to end violations in Syria and stressed the need for immediate action to facilitate humanitarian access.

October 2013

On 2 October, the Council adopted a presidential statement on humanitarian access in Syria. Members were briefed on its implementation on 25 October by OHCA head, Valerie Amos. Amos expressed deep disappointment that, despite the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, access had not improved and there had been no major breakthrough in getting the Syrian government to lift bureaucratic impediments and other obstacles. On 10 October, Council members were briefed in consultations on the recommendations for the establishment of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission. The Council authorised the mission on 11 October to support, monitor and verify the destruction of the chemical weapons programme by 30 June 2014.

September 2013

On 4 September, in a horizon scanning briefing in consultations, Jeffrey Feltman, head of the Department of Political Affairs, reported on his discussions with Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Qatar on the situation in Syria and preparations for Geneva II peace talks. On 16 September, the Secretary-General briefed Council members on the results of

the UN investigation into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria on 21 August. Although the UN inspectors' mandate did not cover the attribution of blame for the attacks, many Council members, particularly the P3, in remarks to the press following the consultations were of the view that the report provided detailed information on delivery systems which pointed to government culpability. Also in September, there was a flurry of high-level diplomatic activity, particularly between Russia and the US, regarding Syria. On 19 September, Russia and the US transmitted to the Council their framework for the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons agreed in Geneva on 14 September. On 24 September, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and US Secretary of State John Kerry met on the sidelines of the General Assembly to discuss a draft resolution on the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal. On 27 September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2118 requiring the verification and destruction of the chemical weapons stock piles in Syria. The resolution also called for the convening of the Geneva II peace talks and endorsed the establishment of a transitional governing body in Syria with full executive powers.

August 2013

Council members met in consultations on 21 August to receive a briefing from Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson on attacks earlier that day on rebel-held areas east of Damascus that reportedly involved the use of chemical weapons and killed hundreds of Syrian civilians, including women and children. Speaking at the stakeout after the meeting, Ambassador María Cristina Perceval (Argentina), Council President for August, said that "all Council members agree that any use of chemical weapons by any side, under any circumstances, is a violation of international law." She added that "the members of the Security Council also welcomed the determination of the Secretary-General to ensure a thorough, impartial and prompt investigation."

July 2013

On 5 July, Australia and Luxembourg withdrew a draft press statement on the Syrian government's siege of Homs after three days of negotiations that were not able to address the objections raised by Russia. On 16 July, the Council was briefed on the humanitarian situation in Syria by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos, High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres and Assistant Secretary-General Ivan Simonovic on behalf of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. All three underscored that the solution to the Syrian crisis was political and not military. Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey also participated. Amos said that humanitarian organisations had not been able to gain consistent and unimpeded access to the 6.8 million Syrians in need. She called for a mix of approaches to address the humanitarian crisis, including cross-border operations as appropriate. Guterres said there were nearly 1.8 million Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries with two-thirds of them having fled since the beginning of 2013, a rate not seen since the Rwandan genocide. Simonovic said that serious human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity were now the rule in Syria with several reports of massacres by the government and affiliated militias. He called for the supply of weapons to both sides to stop and for the Council to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC. On 26 July, Council members met with the leadership of the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) in a closed Arria Formula session organised by the UK.

The delegation included the head of the SNC, Ahmad Jarba, the representative to the US, Najib Ghadbian, as well as Burhan Ghalioun and Michel Kilo. The SNC delegation communicated its willingness to participate in peace talks with the Syrian government insofar as the outcome of Geneva I—the 30 June 2012 communiqué outlining a political transition—was the basis for Geneva II. Separately, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, the head of the Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry on Syria, addressed the General Assembly on 29 July.

June 2013

On 4 June, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernández-Taranco briefed Council members at “horizon-scanning” consultations on the UN’s preparations for a possible peace conference between the Syrian government and opposition in Geneva. The Council issued a press statement on 7 June expressing grave concern about heavy fighting in Al-Qusayr, calling for unhindered humanitarian access and emphasising accountability. On 20 June, OCHA head Valerie Amos briefed Council members in consultations under “any other business” on the humanitarian situation in Syria. She reported that access had been denied or delayed for months and there had been an increasing use of siege tactics by the parties. She said that unless there is a genuine political solution to the crisis then the humanitarian situation would continue to deteriorate with increasing regional instability. She called on the Council to consider alternative forms of aid delivery, including cross-border operations. On 21 June, Council members met with Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro and Karen Abu Zayd of the Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry on Syria in a closed “Arria formula” format session organised by Australia. Pinheiro reported on the militarization of the conflict, warning that further arms shipments to Syria are likely to be used to commit serious violations of international law. He added that violations are being committed by all parties but that the scale and intensity were greater on the part of Syrian government forces and affiliated militias. Regarding the use of chemical weapons, he said the Commission could not establish the perpetrator, the chemical agent or the mode of delivery. Finally, he called for the Council to lead a diplomatic surge to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

May 2013

On 15 May, the General Assembly adopted a resolution strongly condemning the Syrian government’s use of indiscriminate violence against civilian populations and welcoming the establishment of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces as interlocutors needed for a political transition. The resolution was adopted with 107 votes in favour, 12 votes against, and 59 abstentions.

April 2013

On 18 April, the Council received briefings on the humanitarian situation in Syria from Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos, High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura, and Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict Leila Zerrougui. Amos described the situation in Syria as a “humanitarian catastrophe”. Guterres asserted that the refugee crisis had become an “existential threat” to some of Syria’s neighbors. Bangura detailed instances of sexual

violence alleged against both the opposition and forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, adding that her message to the perpetrators of such abuses is that “justice may be delayed, but it will not be denied”. Finally, Zerrougui drew the Council’s attention to the fact that more than three million children inside Syria had been affected by the conflict, and more than 600,000 children had been counted among the refugees in the subregion. Representatives of Syria, Lebanon and Turkey also made statements. Closed consultations followed the briefings, after which the Council President read elements to the press at the media stakeout in which Council members strongly condemned incidents of sexual violence and violence against children; urged all parties to protect civilians and respect international humanitarian law; and “underlined the need to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance ... including where appropriate across borders in accordance with guiding principles of humanitarian assistance.” On 19 April, UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi briefed Council members in consultations on his own efforts to facilitate a political solution to the Syrian conflict. Speaking to the press following the briefing, Brahimi denied rumors that his resignation was imminent and reiterated his position that the situation in Syria required action by the Council. The Syrian conflict also dominated statements made during the quarterly open debate on the Middle East, held on 24 April ([S/PV.6950](#) and [Resumption 1](#)). Prince Zeid Ra’ad Zeid Al Hussein, Ambassador of Jordan, addressed the Council in a private meeting on 30 April to seek the Council’s determination that the influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan represents a threat to international peace and security ([S/2013/247](#)).

March 2013

On 19 March, the Government of Syria and the opposition each accused the other of employing chemical weapons in an attack that killed dozens in Aleppo province. France raised the issue in the Council under “other matters” on 20 March. On 21 March the Secretary-General announced his intention. In a 22 March [letter](#), the Secretary-General said he would establish a technical mission to investigate the Aleppo incident. On 22 March, the Council issued a [press statement](#) condemning a terrorist attack on a mosque in Damascus that killed more than 40 people, including a senior Muslim cleric.

February 2013

Council members were briefed on 27 February in closed consultations by Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, on the humanitarian situation in Syria. In addition, High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres and Zainab Hawa Bangura, the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, also briefed. As of 24 February, the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees had registered more than 740,000 Syrian refugees in neighboring countries, while elsewhere the UN has estimated that up to 70,000 people have died in the Syrian conflict. A draft press statement proposed by Russia on 21 February regarding a series of bombings in Damascus that killed at least 50 people failed to achieve consensus following objections from the US that the statement should also make reference to attacks on civilians conducted by the government of Syria. Similarly, Council members were also unable to agree to a draft press statement proposed by France on 1 February on the humanitarian situation, in particular a call for cross-border

humanitarian access to areas under the opposition's control. Russia, while supportive of OCHA's efforts, appeared to have a problem with the Council making a public statement on the cross-border issue.

January 2013

On 18 January, High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay and OCHA head Valerie Amos briefed Council members in consultations on, respectively, the human rights and humanitarian situations in Syria. Amos reported that there were as many as 4 million in need within Syria, including 2 million internally displaced persons, and 650,000 Syrian refugees negatively impacting the economic and political situations in host countries. She also highlighted the indiscriminate nature of the violence, distressing reports of sexual violence and the need for unhindered humanitarian access. Pillay reiterated the findings of an independent study commissioned by her office that more than 60,000 people had died in the Syrian conflict and repeated her call for the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the ICC. (On 14 January, Switzerland submitted a letter to the Council requesting that it refer the situation in Syria since March 2011 to the ICC. The letter was co-signed by 56 other member states including Council members Australia, France, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea and the UK.) The five Council members who signed the letter urging a referral to the ICC made a joint statement to the press following the Pillay and Amos briefing that without accountability there will be no sustainable peace. On 29 January, Council members were briefed in consultations by the UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, on his efforts towards a political solution to the Syrian conflict. Brahimi reported that the international community was facing a scenario of a failed state in Syria, putting the stability of the region at risk. It seems Brahimi urged the Council to take the lead in forging an initiative that would bring the opposition and the government together in talks based on the Geneva Communiqué's call for a transitional government with full executive powers and that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's legitimacy had been too severely damaged to be a credible partner in such talks. It seems Brahimi also suggested the Council might want to set up inquiries into war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria to complement the work being done by the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry.

December 2012

On 17 December, Council members received a briefing in consultations from OCHA head Valerie Amos on the humanitarian situation in Syria following her 15 December visit to Damascus reporting that Syria was on the edge of irreversible damage. On 19 December, during the regular monthly briefing on the Middle East, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman noted that the violence in Syria had escalated dangerously and stressed that if nothing is done "the destruction of Syria will be the likely outcome".

November 2012

On 29 November, Council members were briefed in consultations by the Joint UN-Arab League Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, on his progress towards a political solution to the Syrian crisis. Previously, on 6 November, Council members were briefed in consultations by Jeffrey Feltman, head of the Department of Political Affairs, who related

the events surrounding a failed ceasefire brokered for the Eid al-Adha holiday at the end of October and expressed concern at the “appalling levels of violence and human rights abuses, suffering, destruction and humanitarian needs in Syria.”

October 2012

On 24 October, the Security Council issued a press statement in support of an Eid al-Adha ceasefire proposed by UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi following his briefing in consultations via video-conference from Cairo. On 16 October, Portugal held a closed-Arria formula meeting allowing Council members to informally meet with Paulo Pinheiro, the chair of the Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry on Syria. Earlier in the month, the Council issued two other press statements on Syria. On 4 October, following nearly 24 hours of negotiations, the Council condemned the shelling of the Turkish town of Akcakale by Syrian forces. On 5 October the Council condemned the 3 October terrorist attacks in Aleppo that killed dozens and injured more than 100 civilians.

September 2012

On 24 September Council members were briefed in consultations by Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative for Syria, on his recent meetings in Cairo and Damascus on the Syrian crisis and his visits to refugee camps in Turkey in Jordan earlier in the month. He also updated Council members on the establishment of his office in Damascus as the follow-on UN presence in Syria after the departure of the UNSMIS. He reiterated to Council members that his mediation efforts would require united and sustained support from the Security Council. On 26 September, the Council adopted a presidential statement welcoming the intensifying cooperation between the UN and Arab League in the wake of regional transformations and, *inter alia*, welcoming Brahimi’s appointment.

August 2012

On 2 August Council members were briefed by DPKO on the security situation in Syria and preliminary recommendations for the future of UNSMIS. The same day, Kofi Annan announced his resignation as Special Envoy. DPKO briefed Council members in consultations again on 16 August confirming that the two conditions in resolution 2059 for a further renewal of UNSMIS—cessation of the use of heavy weapons and a reduction in violence by all sides—had not been achieved. The UNSMIS mandate expired on 19 August and was not renewed. On 17 August, Lakhdar Brahimi was appointed as the Joint Special Representative for Syria and he had an informal meeting with Council members on 29 August which allowed for an exchange of ideas on his role. On 30 August, the Council held a high-level meeting on the humanitarian situation in Syria chaired by the French Foreign Minister. The Deputy Secretary-General briefed the Council together with the High Commissioner for Refugees. Foreign Ministers from Jordan and Turkey as well as ministers from Iraq and Lebanon also participated. In other developments, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on 3 August deploring the Security Council’s failure to act on Syria and calling for a political transition (there were 133 votes in favour, 12 against and 31 abstentions).

July 2012

On 24 July Lt. Gen. Babcar Gaye took over as acting head of UNSMIS after Maj. Gen. Robert Mood's tour ended on 20 July. Also on 20 July, the Council adopted resolution 2059 renewing UNSMIS for a final period of thirty days and conditioning any further renewal on the cessation of the use of heavy weapons by the Syrian government and a reduction in violence by all sides. On 19 July a draft resolution under Chapter VII and co-sponsored by France, Germany, Portugal, the US and the UK was vetoed by China and Russia with Pakistan and South Africa abstaining. On 11 July, the Special Envoy briefed Council members, including on his 9 July meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. On 2 July UN High Commissioner for Human Rights briefed Council members. There were several other significant developments in July. On 22 July, the Arab League called on Assad to renounce power for a safe exit. On 16 July, the acting Special Representative for Sexual Violence described sexual violence against men, women and children by Syrian government authorities as alarming. On the 14th the ICRC determined that the fighting in Syria was civil war. The 6 July Friends of Syria meeting emphasised that Assad must relinquish power.

June 2012

On 30 June, the Action Group for Syria issued a communiqué calling on all parties to the Syrian conflict to recommit to the six-point plan and mapped out steps for a Syrian-led political process. Council members had been briefed on the Special Envoy's preparations for this meeting in Geneva by his deputy on 26 June. On 19 June the head of UNSMIS briefed Council members following his decision to suspend the mission's activities due to the deteriorating security situation and targeting of mission personnel. On 7 June Council members were briefed by the Secretary-General and the Special Envoy on mediation efforts to ensure a cessation of violence. The same day, the Arab League Secretary-General met with Council members in an interactive dialogue to follow-up the 2 June Arab League resolution urging the Security Council to take measures which would ensure the implementation of Annan's six-point plan. In other developments, on 26 June NATO condemned Syria's shooting down of a Turkish F4 Phantom jet on 22 June.

May 2012

On 30 May the Deputy Special Envoy and DPKO briefed Council members regarding ongoing mediation efforts and UNSMIS activities, including the Special Envoy's visit with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on 28-29 May. After a 27 May briefing by DPKO and the head of UNSMIS, the Council issued a press statement condemning the killing in el-Houleh. On 10 May the Council issued a press statement condemning a terrorist attack in Damascus, which killed 55 people. On 8 May Council members were briefed by the Special Envoy and DPKO where concern was expressed over the spate of deadly bombings. Also on 8 May, the ICRC said fighting in Homs and Idlib had met its criteria for non-international armed conflict, i.e. civil war.

April 2012

On 27 April, Maj. Gen. Robert Mood was appointed head of UNSMIS. The Special Envoy briefed Council members on 24 April urging quick deployment of UNSMIS which had been authorised on 21 April in resolution 2043. On 19 April Council members were briefed by the Special Envoy's deputy and DPKO on the implementation of resolution

2042 which was adopted on 14 April and had authorised the deployment of 30 unarmed military observers to Syria and requested proposals for a UN supervision mechanism. The Special Envoy briefed Council members on 12 April regarding progress on the cessation of violence in Syria. On 5 April, the Council adopted a presidential statement urging the Syrian government to adhere to its commitment to cease violence following the Special Envoy's 2 April briefing where he informed Council members of Syria's positive response to the six-point plan.

March 2012

On 1 March, the Council issued a press statement deploring the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria and calling upon Damascus to grant access to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. On 6 March, DPA briefed Council members during the monthly horizon scanning exercise on Syria. On 13 March the head of OCHA briefed Council members on its 7-9 March visit and on 16 March the Special Envoy briefed Council members on his 10 March visit and ongoing mediation efforts. On 21 March the Security Council agreed on a presidential statement supporting the Special Envoy's six-point plan for mediation. The same day the Council issued a press statement on the terrorist attacks in Aleppo and Damascus which had occurred earlier in the month. Syria was also a prominent issue at the 12 March high-level debate on challenges and opportunities in the Middle East. On 22 March there was an Arria-formula meeting for Council members to meet with the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry on Syria. There were P5+Morocco negotiations between 6-8 March on a draft resolution condemning the violence in Syria. However, as agreement was not possible the draft text was never circulated to the wider Council membership.

February 2012

On 4 February a Security Council draft resolution condemning the violence in Syria and supporting the Arab League's 22 January decision to facilitate a Syrian-led political transition was vetoed by China and Russia with all other Council members voting in favour. On 16 February the General Assembly adopted a similar resolution which additionally requested the Secretary-General to appoint a special envoy for Syria. During the monthly Middle East briefing on 28 February, DPA briefed on the deteriorating situation in Syria saying there were credible reports of in excess of 7,500 dead. On 29 February, Kofi Annan was appointed as the UN-Arab League Joint Special Envoy for Syria. In other developments, the first meeting of the Friends of Syria was held on 24 February in Tunis.

January 2012

On 6 January the Council condemned a terrorist attack in Damascus in a press statement. On 10 January the DPA briefed Council members on the Syrian situation as part of its regular monthly horizon scanning exercise. The Arab League's 22 January decision to facilitate political transition in Syria and seek Security Council support was a focus of the 24 January open debate on the Middle East and the members of the Arab League briefed the Council on 31 January. A new draft resolution (coordinated by EU members of the Council, the US, and several Arab states) supporting the Arab League's approach to Syria was introduced to the Council on 27 January by Morocco.

December 2011

On 12 December the High Commissioner for Human Rights briefed Council members in informal consultations indicating that crimes against humanity had likely been committed by Syrian government forces. On 15 December, Russia called for emergency informal consultations to discuss a proposed Russian draft resolution on Syria (the draft was never tabled for a vote).

November 2011

On 15 November the Council issued a press statement condemning the attacks against several embassies and consular premises in Syria. On 11 November DPA briefed Council members on the Syrian situation as part of its regular monthly horizon scanning exercise. During the Council's 9 November open debate on protection of civilians, the High Commissioner for Human Rights said there was a risk of civil war in Syria. In other developments, the Arab League decided on 12 November to suspend Syria and it imposed sanctions on 27 November after Syria failed to comply with the Arab League initiative it had agreed to on 2 November.

October 2011

On 4 October, China and Russia vetoed a draft resolution, sponsored by France, Germany, Portugal and the UK, which condemned the Syrian crackdown on protestors. Brazil, India, Lebanon and South Africa abstained. Several rounds of negotiations substantially altered the text. However, language on the Council's intent to consider further measures if the Syrian regime failed to implement the resolution's provisions remained.

August 2011

On 3 August the Council held a debate on the situation in the Middle East and adopted a presidential statement expressing concern over the deteriorating situation in Syria. In a rare procedural move, Lebanon disassociated itself from the statement after its adoption. Council members were briefed by DPA on the Syrian situation in informal consultations on 10 August. Council members received a briefing from Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in informal consultations on 18 August. The latter urged the Council to consider referring the "pattern of widespread or systematic human rights violations by Syrian security and military forces" to the ICC. On 22 August, DPA briefed Council members on the Syrian situation as part of its regular monthly horizon scanning exercise. On 23 August the UK circulated a draft resolution imposing targeted sanctions on Syria. However, the draft was never voted on.

July 2011

On 12 July, the Council issued a press statement condemning the 11 July attacks on the French and US embassies in Damascus. On 14 July the Council was briefed by the IAEA on the Syrian nuclear issue in informal consultations. The Syrian situation was mentioned by some Council members at the 26 July open debate on the Middle East and was also discussed during the 28 July DPA horizon scanning exercise.

June 2011

On 8 June Council members were briefed by Assistant Secretary General Oscar Fernandez Taranco in closed consultations. Discussions followed on a draft resolution on the situation in Syria circulated on 25 May by the UK, France, Germany and Portugal. Some Council members were uncomfortable with what they saw as possible action-oriented language which might lead to robust follow-up by the Council. Another issue raised by members like Brazil, South Africa, India, China and Russia was that the Council should not be prescribing precisely how a country should reform itself politically. However, there was never a vote on this draft.

May 2011

On 17 May, the Department of Political Affairs briefed Council members on the Syrian situation as part of its regular monthly horizon scanning exercise. On 9 May, the Secretary-General called for an end to the violence and mass arrests, for an independent inquiry into the killings and for a UN team to enter Syria to assess the humanitarian situation. The Syrian situation was also raised in the 10 May open debate on protection of civilians. On 11 May, Syria withdrew its bid for membership in the Human Rights Council.

April 2011

On 27 April, the Council held a public debate on Syria and was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. On 29 April, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution requesting an investigative mission to Syria.

March 2011

Protest actions escalated across Syria. On 15 March, state security forces responded with violent repression.

January 2011

Inspired by similar events across the region, on 26 January protests began against the ruling regime in Syria.