

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 28 July 2008 from the Permanent Representative of  
Panama to the United Nations addressed to the President of the  
Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit to you the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Panama in February 2008 (see annex). This assessment has been prepared under my responsibility, following consultations with the other members of the Security Council.

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

*(Signed)* Ricardo Alberto **Arias**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 28 July 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

[Original: English]

**Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Panama (February 2008)**

**Introduction**

During the presidency of Panama in February 2008, the Security Council held 17 meetings, including one open debate, one private debate, four debates and three briefings. In addition, the Council held consultations of the whole on 15 occasions. The Council also held one informal interactive discussion. The Council adopted four resolutions and five presidential statements and agreed on five statements to the press.

The Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, Samuel Lewis-Navarro, presided over the open thematic debate convened on 12 February on the topic of children and armed conflict.

**Africa**

**Chad/Central African Republic**

On Sunday, 3 February, the Security Council met in emergency consultations of the whole to discuss the security and political situation in Chad, following heavy fighting in its capital between rebel groups and the Chadian armed forces.

On 4 February, following further consultations of the whole, at its 5830th meeting the Council adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2008/3, in which it condemned the attacks and called on the parties to put an end to the violence. The Council expressed its support for African Union efforts to resolve the crisis, including the appointment of President al-Qadhafi of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and President Nguesso of the Congo to mediate a peaceful solution between the parties.

On 5 February, the Council was briefed by the Secretary-General in consultations of the whole on his trip to Africa, including his participation in the summit of the African Union. In his briefing, the Secretary-General expressed his concern regarding the security situation in Chad and its negative impact on the humanitarian situation. He also expressed his support for the efforts of the African Union, particularly those of the leaders of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Congo, to find a solution to the crisis.

On 13 February, in consultations of the whole, under other matters, the Council was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, on the latest developments in the security and political situation in Chad. Mr. Mulet highlighted the return to relative stability in the capital, N'Djamena, the deteriorating humanitarian situation in eastern Chad, the increasing tensions between the Sudan and Chad and the resumption of the deployment of the

European military operation (EUFOR Chad/CAR) charged with protecting the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad.

On 26 February, the Council met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chad, Ahmed Allam-Mi, in an informal interactive discussion on the political and security situation in Chad. The Foreign Minister informed the Council that while the security situation in N'Djamena was relatively calm, the security situation in eastern Chad was still volatile and the increasing violence in Darfur was also generating an increase in refugees fleeing across the border. Minister Allam-Mi accounted for the whereabouts of some of the opposition leaders that allegedly disappeared following the rebel's siege of N'Djamena. The Minister said that the Government had established a committee to investigate all disappearances resulting from the fighting in the capital, in which the international community was invited to participate. Lastly, the Foreign Minister expressed the willingness of Chad to engage constructively with both the Chadian rebels and the Government of the Sudan with a view to resolving their differences.

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

On 13 February, in consultations of the whole, Ambassador Marty Natalegawa (Indonesia), Chairman of the sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, informed the members of the Council on the activities of the Committee, in particular the actions to be taken by the Committee regarding the recommendations made by the Group of Experts on its final report (see S/2008/43).

On 15 February, at its 5836th meeting, the Council adopted resolution 1799 (2008), which constituted a technical rollover of the sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts until 31 March 2008. The Council intends to continue reviewing the measures with a view to adjusting them, as appropriate, in the light of the consolidation of the security situation in the country.

### **Ethiopia/Eritrea**

On 4 February, in consultations of the whole, under other matters, the Council considered and approved a press statement (SC/9240) in which it demanded that Eritrea resume fuel supplies to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and facilitate the visit of the United Nations technical assessment mission to Asmara. The Council also warned that the failure to comply with its demands could result in the withdrawal of the Mission from Eritrea.

On 15 February, the Council met on an emergency basis in consultations of the whole to hear a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, on the difficulties facing UNMEE in temporarily relocating from Eritrea to Ethiopia, including Eritrean restrictions on the supplying of the Mission with fuel and food and the impeding of its movement across the border into Ethiopia. The Secretariat had altered the relocation plan, regrouping personnel in Asmara.

Immediately following that briefing, at its 5838th meeting, the Council adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2008/7, in which it expressed its concern about the Eritrean restrictions on UNMEE, condemned the lack of cooperation by Eritrea and demanded that Eritrea resume cooperation with the Mission. The

Council also expressed its determination to consider further appropriate steps to protect the Mission and its personnel.

On 21 February, the Council met again on an emergency basis in consultations of the whole to hear a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, on the latest developments related to the regrouping and relocation of UNMEE, namely, the resumption of food supplies to the Mission, the critical levels of fuel stocks and obstacles placed by Eritrea to the Mission's temporary relocation exercise. As a result of the continued difficulties encountered by the Mission, the Secretary-General will issue a special report with recommendations and options regarding the future of UNMEE.

## **Kenya**

On 5 February, in consultations of the whole, the Council was briefed by the Secretary-General on his recent visit to the region. During his visit, the Secretary-General reiterated his call to both parties to end violence and sit down at the negotiating table. Also, he made clear to President Kibaki that it was his responsibility to protect the population from unwarranted attacks and to investigate the events that had led to the disturbances. The Secretary-General stressed that his meetings were not mediation efforts, but rather a show of support for other initiatives that were being undertaken. The Council members exchanged views on the issues, expressed concern at the ethnic violence and welcomed the efforts to bring peace to the country.

On 6 February, at its 5831st meeting, following consultations of the whole held on an emergency basis, the Council adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2008/4, in which it welcomed progress in the negotiations overseen by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to defuse the crisis and emphasized its full support for the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, which he leads. The Council expressed its deep concern over the fact that civilians continue to be killed, subjected to sexual and gender-based violence and displaced from their homes. It called for those responsible to be brought to justice. It also expressed its strong concern at the continuing dire humanitarian situation in the country. The Council requested the Secretary-General to report on how the United Nations can further support the mediation efforts in Kenya, as well as on the impact of the crisis on the wider subregion and United Nations operations in that area.

On 25 February, at its 5845th meeting, the Council was briefed by John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, about his visit to Kenya and the details of the humanitarian efforts undertaken by the relief community. In his report, Mr. Holmes stressed that further political polarization would exact a heavy toll on humanitarian relief efforts under way in the country. In his view, the United Nations must examine additional ways to collaborate with development efforts to bridge the social gaps that surfaced during the post-electoral violence. Immediately afterwards, during consultations of the whole, Council members exchanged views on the situation and on ways to better help the United Nations coordinate activities on the ground.

On 29 February, the members of the Council adopted a press statement (SC/9265) in which the Council welcomed the Agreement on the Principles of Partnership of the Coalition Government announced on 28 February between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga to resolve the crisis in Kenya following the disputed

elections held on 27 December 2007. The members of the Council commended the parties in reaching the Agreement, as well as the efforts of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, led by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in assisting them. They expressed their appreciation for the work of the African Union, President John Kufuor of Ghana, President Jakaya Kikwete of the United Republic of Tanzania and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The members of the Council expressed their full support for Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga in forming a new Government and called for the Agreement to be implemented in full and without delay. The members of the Council recalled their statement of 6 February and expressed their support for the efforts to address the widespread violence. Recalling the need to avoid impunity, the members of the Council reiterated the need for those responsible for the violence to be brought to justice. The members of the Council urged Kenyan leaders to foster reconciliation, guarantee human rights and address the longer-term issues that the crisis has brought to the forefront.

### **Somalia**

On 15 February, at its 5837th meeting, the Council was briefed by Lila Ratsifandrihamanana, Permanent Observer of the African Union, about the situation in Somalia and the status of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Mrs. Ratsifandrihamanana underscored the funding constraints faced by the mission and the numerous hurdles in the way of deploying the force at full strength. In addition, the Permanent Representative of Somalia, Elmi Ahmed Duale, made a statement in which he renewed his Government's appeal to the United Nations to develop existing contingency plans for the possible deployment of a peacekeeping operation to further enhance peace in Somalia and to support AMISOM, as set out in previous Security Council documents.

In consultations of the whole immediately following that meeting, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, presented a preview of the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia. In his preview he dealt with a wide variety of issues in the country, especially with regard to the political and security situations in Somalia. He emphasized the work currently being undertaken by AMISOM to secure areas within its operational range and took note of the attack against the United Nations compound in Mogadishu. He also expressed concern at the deteriorating situation between "Puntland" and "Somaliland".

On 20 February, at its 5842nd meeting, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1801 (2008), by which it renewed its authorization of AMISOM for another six months.

### **The Sudan (Darfur)**

On 5 February, in consultations of the whole, the Council was briefed by the Secretary-General on his trip to Africa, including his participation in the summit of the African Union. In his briefing, the Secretary-General referred to his meeting with President Al-Bashir of the Sudan at the margins of the Summit. According to the Secretary-General, the meeting was quite positive, and there was a possibility of signing a status-of-forces agreement in the near future. Nevertheless, the Secretary-General reminded the Council that the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was still missing a number of critical capabilities,

including tactical and military helicopters. Furthermore, the Secretary-General emphasized that any peacekeeping operation can be effective only if there is a credible peace process.

On 8 February, at its 5832nd meeting, the Council held a debate under the agenda item "Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan". At that meeting, the Council was briefed on the latest developments in the Darfur peace process by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Darfur, Jan Eliasson. Mr. Eliasson underscored the need to negotiate a ceasefire to improve the security situation and create conditions conducive to a dialogue. At the same time, he reported that while the rebel groups had coalesced into five main groups, only two were actively participating in the consultation process. Nevertheless, the Joint Mediation Support Team would continue to consult the parties with a view to convening formal negotiations. The Council was also briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, on the status of the deployment of UNAMID. Mr. Guéhenno stressed that the Mission's current capabilities were not sufficient to fulfil the expectations of the civilian population in Darfur. In addition, while there was significant progress in the negotiation of the status-of-forces agreement, there were still many issues to be resolved, such as visas and full freedom of movement for UNAMID.

#### **The Sudan (United Nations Mission in the Sudan)**

On 19 February, at its 5840th meeting, the Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Ashraf Qazi of Pakistan, on the progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between north and south Sudan. Mr. Qazi emphasized that while some progress had been achieved and the parties had been able to overcome their impasse through dialogue, progress towards many key implementation benchmarks still lagged. Mr. Qazi stressed that the lack of trust and confidence between the parties could potentially unravel the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Immediately following the briefing, the members of the Council retired to consultations of the whole to continue discussions on the issue.

#### **Western Sahara**

On 4 February, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Peter van Walsum, briefed the Council in consultations of the whole on the report of the Secretary-General on the status and progress of the negotiations on Western Sahara (S/2008/45). Mr. van Walsum highlighted the modest progress on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007) after the third round of meetings of the parties, at the Greentree Estate in Manhasset, New York, from 7 to 9 January 2008. In their comments, and in a press statement (SC/9241) adopted during the consultations of the whole, Council members welcomed an agreement by the parties and States of the region to meet from 11 to 13 March 2008 in Manhasset, New York, in accordance with resolution 1783 (2007); supported the intention of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara to travel to the region for in-depth consultations in preparation for the next round of talks; and welcomed the fact that the parties had reiterated their commitment to show political will and negotiate in good faith and had agreed on the need to move the process into a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations under United Nations auspices. Council members also reaffirmed their

support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to implement resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007).

## **Asia**

### **Non-proliferation**

On 21 February, in consultations of the whole, under other matters, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland presented a draft resolution on non-proliferation. The draft resolution proposed extending existing measures to encourage the compliance of the Islamic Republic of Iran with prior Security Council resolutions on its nuclear programme, and proposed new measures to the same end.

On 25 February, in consultations of the whole, under other matters, and again on 28 February, during consultations of the whole, Council members exchanged views on the draft resolution on non-proliferation. Members made comments and presented suggestions for improvement, and discussed the timetable for reaching a decision. Delegations expressed regret that mistrust between the parties and the lack of cooperation by the Islamic Republic of Iran on this issue had led to a new consideration of sanctions, and hoped that ongoing diplomatic efforts would soon bring positive results.

### **Timor-Leste**

On 11 February, the Council held consultations of the whole on an emergency basis for a briefing by the Director of the Asia and Middle East Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, who reported on the attempts earlier that day on the lives of President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão of Timor-Leste.

Immediately following those consultations, at its 5833rd meeting, the Council adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2008/5, in which it condemned the two attacks, which represented an assault on the legitimate institutions of Timor-Leste, and called upon the people and Government of Timor-Leste to remain calm and maintain stability in the country.

On 21 February, in a debate held at its 5843rd meeting, the Council was briefed by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, on the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2008/26) and the recent attacks. He stated that the security situation had remained calm throughout the country, including throughout the funeral ceremonies of the fugitive Alfredo Reinado and one of his accomplices, who had died during the attack on the President's residence. Mr. Guéhenno stressed that UNMIT would need to focus on the review and reform of the security sector, strengthening the rule of law, economic and social development and promoting a culture of democratic governance. He recalled the Secretary-General's recommendation for an extension of the UNMIT mandate for an additional 12 months at the current authorized levels and strength. The Council also heard from the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste, Nelson Santos, who said that since taking office six months ago, the Government had made significant advances in its agenda to reform and develop the country by rebuilding institutions,

in particular the police and the judiciary. Timor-Leste recognized the invaluable contribution of the United Nations and the need for its continued and sustained presence.

On 25 February, at its 5844th meeting, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1802 (2008), by which it extended the mandate of UNMIT until 26 February 2009 at the current authorized levels and urged all parties in Timor-Leste to continue to work together and engage in political dialogue and consolidate peace, democracy, rule of law, sustainable social and economic development and national reconciliation in the country.

## **Europe**

### **Kosovo (resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999))**

On 14 February, Council members met in consultations of the whole to set the format for a meeting on Kosovo that had been requested on an emergency basis and that would take place later that afternoon. Council members decided that the meeting would be a private debate in which only Council members and the delegation of Serbia would be able to intervene, though any Member State would be able to attend.

That afternoon, at its 5835th meeting, the Council held a private debate on an emergency basis to consider the latest developments in Kosovo, including actions by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo in preparation for a unilateral declaration of independence. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Vuk Jeremić, said Serbia would never accept a unilateral declaration of independence by its province of Kosovo and warned of grave consequences that support for such a decision would have for the future of international relations and other similar situations. He requested that the members of the Council ensure that all provisions of resolution 1244 (1999) and the Charter of the United Nations were implemented in their totality, and argued that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo had the obligation to declare null and void any unilateral declaration of independence. Council members had differing views on the situation, but stressed the need for both sides to abide by their commitments to non-violence. The Council did not take any action on the matter.

On Sunday, 17 February, Council members met in emergency consultations of the whole to consider the unilateral declaration of independence adopted earlier that day by the Assembly of Kosovo and to decide on the format of a Council meeting to be held on 18 February, both at the request of the delegations of Serbia and the Russian Federation. The Secretary-General briefed the Council members on events surrounding the unilateral declaration of independence. He said that following the declaration there were no serious incidents of violence, that his fundamental responsibility was to maintain peace and security in the region and that he had urged the parties not to take actions that could threaten peace and security. He maintained that, barring a new Council decision, resolution 1244 (1999) would continue to be the legal framework for activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Council members agreed to hold a debate the next day, in which only the Secretary-General, Council members and the delegation of Serbia would speak. Any Member State that so requested would be able to attend.

On 18 February, at its 5839th meeting, the Council debated recent events in Serbia and Kosovo, including the unilateral declaration of independence adopted on 17 February by the Assembly of Kosovo. The Secretary-General and the President of Serbia, Boris Tadić, attended the meeting. The Secretary-General's statement was practically identical to his briefing to Council members in consultations of the whole the day before. President Tadić stated that the unilateral declaration of independence by the Serbian province of Kosovo was illegal and a violation of the territorial integrity of his country, and that Serbia would never recognize the independence of Kosovo. He asked the Secretary-General to instruct his Special Representative to annul the declaration and dissolve the Assembly of Kosovo. Council members' views on the situation differed, but they stressed the need for both sides to abide by their commitments to non-violence. The Council took no action on the matter.

On 21 February, in consultations of the whole, Council members considered and adopted a press statement (SC/9260) presented by the delegation of the United States of America regarding embassy attacks in Belgrade earlier that day. The members of the Council condemned mob attacks against embassies in Belgrade, which had resulted in damage to embassy premises and endangered diplomatic personnel. The members of the Council recalled the fundamental principle of the inviolability of diplomatic missions and the obligations on host Governments, including under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, to take all appropriate steps to protect embassy premises. The members of the Council welcomed steps taken by the Serbian authorities to restore order and protect diplomatic property and personnel.

## **Middle East**

### **The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question**

On 26 February, at its 5846th meeting, the Council was briefed by Robert Serry, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, on recent developments regarding the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and by John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, on the worsening humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. After the meeting, Council members retired to consultations of the whole to discuss those briefings. Council members exchanged views on the content of the briefings, and in particular expressed concern for the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the daily rocket attacks from Gaza against Israeli civilians. The Council took no action on the matter.

## **Thematic issues**

### **Children and armed conflict**

On 12 February, at its 5834th meeting, the Council held an open debate presided over by the First Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, Samuel Lewis-Navarro, to consider the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2007/757). The Council heard statements by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy; the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's

Fund, Ann Veneman; and the representative of Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, Jo Becker. Before concluding the meeting, the Council adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2008/6, in which it took note of the report, restated its commitment to implement monitoring and reporting mechanisms adopted in resolution 1612 (2005) within the framework of the working group established in that resolution and requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the implementation of the presidential statement, as well as other relevant resolutions and statements.

## **Other issues**

### **International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia**

On 20 February, at its 5841st meeting, the Council adopted resolution 1800 (2008), authorizing the Secretary-General to appoint, within existing resources, additional ad litem judges to the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, increasing the maximum from the current 12 provided for in the statute of the Tribunal to a maximum of 16 at any one time, returning to a maximum of 12 by 31 December 2008. In that resolution the Council also recalled that in its resolution 1503 (2003) of 28 August 2003 it had called upon the Tribunal to take all possible measures to complete all trial activities at first instance by the end of 2008 and to complete its work in 2010 (the Tribunal's completion strategy), and that in its resolution 1534 (2004) of 26 March 2004 it had emphasized the importance of fully implementing the Tribunal's completion strategy.

### **Terrorism and international peace and security**

#### *Attack in Kandahar*

On 17 February, in consultations of the whole, under other matters, Council members considered and adopted a press statement (SC/9251) presented by the delegation of Italy on the suicide attack that day in the Afghan province of Kandahar. In the statement, the members of the Council condemned the attack, noting with dismay that it was one of the deadliest in Afghanistan in recent years and that it had targeted civilians, including children, and police officers. The members of the Council also expressed their condolences, underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of that reprehensible act of terrorism to justice and urged all States to cooperate actively with the Afghan authorities in that regard. The members of the Council reiterated their concern at the increasing threat to the local population, national security forces, international military and international assistance efforts posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, illegal armed groups, criminals and those involved in the narcotics trade.