

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 30 August 2012 from the Permanent Representative
of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to
the President of the Security Council**

The United States held the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April 2012. An assessment of the work of the Council has been prepared under my supervision in consultation with the other members of the Council (see annex).

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

(Signed) Susan E. Rice



Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the United States of America (April 2012)

Africa

Côte d'Ivoire

On 18 April, the Permanent Representative of Guatemala, Gert Rosenthal, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire, briefed the Security Council in closed consultations on the Committee's work over the previous six months and summarized the findings contained in the final report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire. He reported that the Committee met on 11 April to discuss the final report of the Group of Experts. On 26 April, the Council adopted resolution 2045 (2012), by which it extended the sanctions and the mandate of the Group of Experts. The Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, Youssoufou Bamba, spoke at the meeting in support of the resolution and highlighted the progress made in Côte d'Ivoire since the adoption of resolution 1980 (2011).

Guinea-Bissau

On 13 April, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, briefed the Council in closed consultations on the military seizure of power in Guinea-Bissau that occurred on 12 April. On 13 April, the Council issued a statement to the press, in which it condemned the forcible seizure of power by some elements of the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau, and called on those elements to ensure the safety and security of the interim President, Raimundo Pereira, the Prime Minister, Carlos Gomes Junior, and all senior officials currently detained, and demanded their immediate release.

On 19 April, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, Joseph Mutaboba, briefed the Council on political developments subsequent to the coup d'état of 12 April. The Council also heard statements by the Minister of External Relations of Angola, Georges Chikoti; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau, Mamadu Saliu Djalo Pires; the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, in her capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and the Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal, Paolo Portas. Council members unanimously condemned the de facto government's seizure of power and urged the release of detained civilian leaders. On 21 April, the Council issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/15), in which it reiterated its strong condemnation of the military coup, demanded the immediate restoration of constitutional order and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report by 30 April concerning the re-establishment of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2012/280).

Sierra Leone

On 11 April, the Council issued a presidential statement on Sierra Leone (S/PRST/2012/11), in which it reaffirmed its support for continuing efforts to consolidate peace in that country, emphasized that the Government of Sierra Leone

bears primary responsibility for peacebuilding, security and long-term development in the country, emphasized the importance of the elections to be held on 17 November for the consolidation of peace and security, and called on all political parties, as well as other stakeholders, to intensify their efforts to foster an environment conducive to the holding of peaceful, transparent, free and fair elections. The Council in its statement acknowledged the statement of the Government of Sierra Leone on 3 April 2012, clarifying its position regarding the arms delivered to the Sierra Leone Police, underscored the need for Sierra Leone's national authorities to respond proportionately to threats to the security of all citizens in Sierra Leone and to ensure that its security forces remain committed to upholding human rights. The Council commended the achievements of the former Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, Michael von der Schulenburg.

Sudan, South Sudan and Darfur

On 11 April, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, briefed the Council during consultations of the whole on the situation in the Abyei area and the escalation of fighting between the Sudan and South Sudan in the region bordering the two countries. Members of the Council expressed their deep and growing alarm at the situation and called for an immediate and unconditional end to all fighting, withdrawal of South Sudanese forces from Heglig, an end to aerial bombardments by the Sudanese Armed Forces, an end to cross-border violence, and an end to support for proxy militias operating in the territory of the other State. Council members called for the immediate withdrawal of all Sudanese and South Sudanese military and police forces from the Abyei area.

On 12 April, the Council met to issue a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/12) on the situation between the Sudan and South Sudan.

On 24 April, the Council received a briefing during consultations of the whole on the situation between the Sudan and South Sudan from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous; the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Haile Menkerios; and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Hilde Johnson. Members of the Council expressed their strong support for a road map for the Sudan and South Sudan that had been adopted earlier in the day by the African Union Peace and Security Council. Council members discussed possible Security Council action under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in support of the African Union road map and to address the serious threat to international peace and security.

On 26 April, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the situation in Darfur, including implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. He raised concerns that the Government of the Sudan had not yet funded the Darfur Regional Authority. He commented that near-term prospects for the resumption of negotiations between the Government and non-signatory movements were not good. Regarding internal dialogue on the peace process, the Under-Secretary-General reported that preliminary analysis showed that stakeholders favoured such a dialogue, but had concerns related to equitable representation, freedom of expression, security of participants, and the commitment of the signatory parties to respect the outcome. He reported incidents of conflict in

several of Darfur's border areas. He also outlined the findings of the Secretariat's review of uniformed personnel. Both the Under-Secretary-General and Council members expressed condolences on the loss of a Togolese police officer in an attack on UNAMID on 20 April, and condemned attacks against peacekeepers. Council members welcomed progress that had been made in implementation of the Doha Document, but expressed concerns about lagging progress in certain areas, in particular on the issue of non-signatory movements. Council members expressed generally favourable initial reactions to the Under-Secretary-General's outline of proposed adjustments to the UNAMID force composition and deployment based on the findings of the uniformed personnel review.

Western Sahara

The Council held consultations on 17 April concerning Western Sahara. The Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Christopher Ross, said that while Morocco and the Frente Polisario have made some progress on secondary issues, there has been no progress on the core issues. He said the parties have agreed to two more rounds of informal talks and to his trip to the region that includes Western Sahara. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Hany Abdel-Aziz, briefed the Council and said that the area of operations of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) had been relatively quiet over the past year, with the exception of clashes in Dakhla in September 2011, and he outlined challenges to MINURSO operations as set forth in resolution 1979 (2011). Most Council members welcomed the efforts of the Personal Envoy and the Special Representative, as well as progress in the parties' discussions on discrete subjects and confidence-building measures, but lamented the lack of progress on core issues and stressed the need to reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. A few members stated concern regarding the issuance of several versions of the Secretary-General's report on MINURSO. While members welcomed the efforts and commitments of Morocco in promoting human rights, some members stated concern for human rights in the territory, and a member called for adding human rights monitoring to the Mission's mandate. Some members highlighted the importance of addressing the situation in refugee camps. On 24 April, the Council adopted resolution 2044 (2012), by which it extended the mandate of MINURSO until 30 April 2013.

Peace and security in Africa: Mali

On 3 April, the Council held consultations following the forcible seizure of power from the democratically elected Government of Mali by some elements of the Malian armed forces. The Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, on the efforts of ECOWAS in promoting the return to full civilian authority and the effective re-establishment of constitutional order in Mali as well as the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation and the presence in the region of the terrorist group Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.

On 4 April, the Council met to issue a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/9) on the situation in Mali.

Asia and the Middle East

Non-proliferation

On 13 April, the Council discussed, in consultations, the launch of a satellite on the same day by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. On 16 April, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/13) on this issue.

Iraq

On 10 April, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, Martin Kobler, briefed the Council on the situation in Iraq. The briefing underlined the important developments that have occurred in Iraq, in particular the significance of the withdrawal of United States troops, as well as Iraq hosting the recent Arab League Summit for the first time in two decades, as well as its continuing political and security challenges. The Special Representative highlighted the recent steps taken to improve relations between Iraq and Kuwait, such as a settlement on the Kuwaiti Airlines issue, Iraq's payment to the United Nations Iraq-Kuwaiti boundary maintenance project, and the announcement that the joint ministerial meetings would be held in Baghdad at the end of April. Council deliberations that followed centred on the importance for Iraq to resolve internal political differences and to address the concerns of all political blocs in an inclusive forum. The Special Representative expressed concern at Iraq's domestic political situation, commended the efforts of the Government of Iraq, with United Nations support, to find a peaceful and durable solution to the situation in Camp Ashraf, and emphasized the need for Member States to accept eligible candidates for resettlement.

Middle East

On 2 April, the Council held consultations to receive a briefing from the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to Syria, Kofi Annan. He informed the Council that the Syrian Government had agreed to begin immediately to cease troop movements towards population centres, cease the use of heavy weaponry, begin troop pull-backs from population centres, and to complete these steps by 10 April. The Joint Special Envoy explained that he would call on the Syrian opposition to commit itself to ceasing violence within 48 hours of the Government having clearly implemented the steps outlined above. Council members universally expressed continued support for the mediation role of the Joint Special Envoy, cautiously noted the timetable for the planned cessation of violence and stressed the importance of these commitments being implemented. The Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/10) on 5 April, in which it called upon the Syrian Government to implement by 10 April its aforementioned commitments to the Joint Special Envoy, and called upon all parties to cease armed violence in all its forms within 48 hours of the Government's implementation of those commitments.

The Council held consultations to discuss the Syrian Arab Republic on 10 April after having received a letter from the Joint Special Envoy expressing concern at the level of progress on the implementation by the Syrian Government of his six-point plan and reaffirming the need for a cessation of violence by 12 April. The Deputy Joint Special Envoy, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, told the Council that

Mr. Annan had received assurances from the opposition that it would respond in kind to a cessation of armed violence by the Government. All Council members deplored the ongoing violence in the Syrian Arab Republic and expressed support for the efforts of the Joint Special Envoy. Some Council members condemned the Syrian Government's failure to meet its commitments by 10 April.

On 12 April, the Joint Special Envoy informed the Council that he had received a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, Walid al-Moualem, informing him that the Syrian Government would cease all military fighting as from 6 a.m. on Thursday, 12 April, while preserving the right to respond proportionately to any attacks carried out by armed terrorist groups against civilians, government forces or public and private property. The Joint Special Envoy also stated that he had received similar assurances that the Syrian National Council and the Free Syrian Army would observe the cessation of violence. He requested authorization from the Council for an advance element of a monitoring mission to go to the Syrian Arab Republic immediately to liaise with the parties and to begin reporting on the situation on the ground.

On 14 April, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2042 (2012), by which it authorized the deployment of an advance team of up to 30 unarmed military observers to the Syrian Arab Republic to monitor the cessation of violence, as announced by the Joint Special Envoy on 12 April. The Council called for the full implementation of the six-point proposal and expressed the Council's intention to authorize a larger follow-on mission subject to a sustained cessation of violence. The Council requested the Secretary-General to provide a formal proposal to the Security Council by 18 April with recommendations on the mandate and composition of the larger mission. All Council members expressed support for the efforts of the Joint Special Envoy and for the deployment of the advance team.

On 19 April, the Council members heard briefings in consultations from the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Deputy Joint Special Envoy to Syria on the status of the United Nations advance team of observers in the country and the Joint Special Envoy's proposal for a full mission of up to 300 observers. Both the Assistant Secretary-General and the Deputy Joint Special Envoy stated that continued clear, unified action by the Council represented the best hope for resolving the Syrian crisis and moving towards a political solution. The Assistant Secretary-General reported that the advance team, which began its work on 16 April, was denied access to Homs by Syrian authorities but was granted freedom of movement in Daraa on 17 April and three additional locations in Damascus on 18 April. The Deputy Joint Special Envoy reviewed the Secretary-General's letter dated 18 April, in which it was stated that the Syrian Government had not yet fully implemented its initial obligations regarding the six-point plan and recommended that the Council authorize a full observer mission. Most Council members supported the proposal of the Joint Special Envoy and favoured quick action on a second resolution authorizing a full mission. Other Council members highlighted the continued violence and the Syrian Government's non-compliance with key elements of the plan. Some members noted that the Government reported violent actions by armed groups.

On 21 April, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2043 (2012), by which it established, for an initial 90-day period, the United Nations Supervision Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic (UNSMIS), comprising up to 300 unarmed

military observers, including an appropriate civilian component, to monitor a cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties as well as the full implementation of the Joint Special Envoy's six-point proposal to end the conflict. The Council called on the Syrian Government to ensure the Mission's effective operation by, among other things, facilitating its expeditious and unhindered deployment and ensuring its full freedom of movement, and called on the parties to guarantee the safety of UNSMIS personnel without prejudice to its freedom of movement and access.

On 24 April, the Council members received a briefing by video conference from the Joint Special Envoy and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on United Nations efforts in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Joint Special Envoy reported that the situation in the country continued to be unacceptable and that, while observers had travelled to several locations within the country and played a positive role on the ground, they were unable to "meaningfully" monitor the situation given the limited numbers of observers on the ground. The Under-Secretary-General reported that the Chief Military Observer would be appointed by the end of April. Council members called on the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to accelerate the deployment of personnel in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

During the Security Council open debate on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" on 23 April, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs said that achieving peace for Israelis and Palestinians is "an undiminished priority". He highlighted the Quartet meeting in Washington on 11 April and said the delivery of a letter from the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, to the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 17 April was a positive step. Most Council members expressed support for the Quartet's efforts and the letter from Mr. Abbas to Mr. Netanyahu as an opportunity to restart talks. Most Council members called Israeli settlement activity "illegal" and argued that it undermines progress on a two-State solution. Some members condemned rocket attacks from Gaza on Israel. The Under-Secretary-General and Council members welcomed the adoption of recent resolutions on the Syrian Arab Republic, noting with regret that the cessation of violence was incomplete and measures taken to implement the Joint Special Envoy's six-point plan were insufficient. The delegations reiterated calls to all parties to cease all violence in all its forms.

Myanmar

On 11 April, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Myanmar, Vijay Nambiar, briefed the Council in consultations on recent developments in Myanmar. He reviewed the conduct and results of the legislative by-election held on 1 April and discussed priorities for future United Nations engagement in the country, including possible support for economic development, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding activities, anti-narcotics efforts, and the conduct of a census. He announced that the Secretary-General would visit Myanmar from 29 April to 1 May and would hold meetings with senior government officials, opposition leaders, civil society representatives, and other stakeholders.

Thematic issues

Illicit cross-border trafficking and movement

On 25 April, the Council held an open debate to discuss the evolving challenges and threats related to illicit cross-border trafficking and movement of arms and drugs, trafficking by non-State actors in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials, trafficking in conflict minerals and the movement of terrorists and their funds. The Council noted that such illicit cross-border trafficking and movement can exacerbate threats to international peace and security. The Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/16), in which it reaffirmed that securing their borders was the sovereign prerogative of Member States, called on States to improve border security, and requested the Secretary-General to provide a survey and assessment of relevant United Nations efforts.

Nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and security

On 19 April, the Secretary-General briefed the Council on nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and security and the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/14) on nuclear security. During the meeting Member States underscored the recent global efforts and progress on nuclear disarmament and combating threats of nuclear proliferation and terrorism; highlighted broadly shared interests and mutually reinforcing responsibilities to respond to those threats; and emphasized the steps taken to reduce nuclear dangers.

Women and peace and security

On 24 April, the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women, Michelle Bachelet, briefed the Council on advancing resolution 1325 (2000) and patterns observed in recent post-conflict elections. She provided six recommendations for Council actions, including continued consultations with envoys, special representatives of the Secretary-General, advisers and Member States on women's participation in conflict resolution and political dialogue; and ensuring that women are invited to a wider range of international engagement processes and donor conferences. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations focused on women's political participation and protection, saying that peacekeepers must do their utmost to maximize the former and minimize the risks faced by women. In consultations, Council members acknowledged the importance of the principles discussed in the briefing.

Election of a member of the International Court of Justice

On 27 April, Justice Dalveer Bhandari of India was elected to the International Court of Justice in a simultaneous ballot in the Security Council and the General Assembly.