

## 15. Peace consolidation in West Africa

### Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held four meetings on peace consolidation in West Africa and adopted two presidential statements. The Council focused on the challenges facing the subregion, including the impact of drug trafficking and challenges posed to governance, and on the role of the United Nations Office for West Africa in addressing those issues. It heard two briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, and a briefing by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

### 21 January to 7 July 2009: briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General

On 21 January 2009, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who presented the report of the Secretary-General<sup>209</sup> which focused on cross-cutting and cross-border developments in West Africa. He pointed out that many of the root causes of conflicts in a number of West African countries had yet to be addressed in an effective and durable manner, although significant progress had been made in consolidating peace and stability in West Africa. Underscoring particular concerns in the region, he pointed to rising global food prices and food insecurity; the spread of cross-border organized crime; military coups in Mauritania and Guinea; and the situation in the fragile Sahel band. He also stated that security sector reform must be seen as a key component of every peacebuilding strategy, and that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) must play the lead role with the full support of the United Nations. In addition, he outlined initiatives of the United Nations Office for West Africa and its pivotal role in promoting concerted subregional approaches to peace and security and in addressing the issues he had highlighted, together with ECOWAS, UNODC and West African leaders. Lastly, he reported on the support provided by the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission to the delimitation and demarcation process along the boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria. To that end, he stated that following the transfer of authority in the Bakassi

peninsula from Nigeria to Cameroon, efforts were now focused on expediting the border demarcation process.<sup>210</sup>

On 7 July 2009, the Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNODC. Presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa,<sup>211</sup> the Special Representative underscored the progress made in the overall peace and security situation in the subregion, especially the positive developments registered in post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding and progress in the area of governance and the rule of law. He expressed the view that the commitment of West African peacekeeping forces was a testimony to the strong political will of their leaders and people to remain at the forefront of peace efforts in their subregion with the support of the United Nations and the wider international community. He informed the Council that this had led to a reduction in the scope and level of violence across the subregion and that currently there was no open armed conflict going on in West Africa. However, considerable challenges to peace and security in West Africa remained, including the resurgence of unconstitutional or violent changes of government as one of the most alarming threats; security sector reform; and drug trafficking, as well as socioeconomic and development challenges.<sup>212</sup>

The Executive Director of UNODC reported that the volume of drug trafficking through the region of West Africa seemed to be significantly diminishing, but that the situation would remain very volatile until the underlying conditions of vulnerability, such as poverty, underdevelopment and inadequate governance, were addressed. He also expressed concern that drugs were not the only illicit flows or activity and that organized crime made West Africa more prone to political instability. Concluding, the Executive Director invited Council members to put the situation in West Africa in a global perspective, drawing attention to the fact that most illicit activity was only transiting through West Africa, and that the drugs were bound for Europe. He urged rich countries to stop using West Africa as a

<sup>209</sup> S/2009/39.

<sup>210</sup> S/PV.6073, pp. 2-3.

<sup>211</sup> S/2009/332.

<sup>212</sup> S/PV.6157, pp. 2-5.

dumping ground for weapons, waste and fake medicines.<sup>213</sup>

**10 July 2009: presidential statement on security and development challenges in West Africa**

In a statement by the President dated 10 July 2009,<sup>214</sup> the Council noted with satisfaction continued progress in the overall peace and security situation in West Africa. The Council, however, noted with deep concern the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government and undemocratic seizures of power, and stressed again the importance of expeditiously restoring the constitutional order, including through open and transparent elections. It also expressed concern over the fact that the progress achieved remained fragile, being concerned in particular by growing or emerging threats to security in West Africa, notably terrorist activities in the Sahel band, maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and illicit drug trafficking, which posed a threat to regional stability with a possible impact on international security. In addition, the Council expressed its concern about the impact of the global economic crisis on West African

economies, since the region was already confronted with such development challenges as rising food insecurity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and youth unemployment. The Council encouraged the continued engagement of financial institutions and development partners to mitigate the adverse effects of the decline in economic growth and other destabilizing factors in West Africa.

**28 October 2009: presidential statement concerning the situation in Guinea**

By a statement by the President dated 28 October 2009,<sup>215</sup> the Council, inter alia, remained deeply concerned by the situation in Guinea, which might pose a risk to regional peace and security following the killings that occurred in Conakry on 28 September, when members of the army opened fire on civilians attending a rally. It strongly condemned the violence that reportedly caused more than 150 deaths and hundreds of wounded and other blatant violations of human rights, including numerous rapes and sexual crimes against women, as well as the arbitrary arrest of peaceful demonstrators and opposition party leaders.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>214</sup> S/PRST/2009/20.

<sup>215</sup> S/PRST/2009/27.

**Meetings: peace consolidation in West Africa**

| <i>Meeting and date</i>   | <i>Sub-item</i>   | <i>Other documents</i> | <i>Invitations</i>  | <i>Speakers</i>   | <i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i> |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------|---|---|---|
| 6073rd<br>21 January 2009 | Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in West Africa<br>(S/2009/39)  |                        | <b>Rule 39</b><br>Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa | Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa |   |
| 6157th<br>7 July 2009     | Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in West Africa<br>(S/2009/332) |                        | <b>Rule 39</b><br>Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Executive Director of UNODC                          | Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Executive Director of UNODC                          |   |

| <i>Meeting and date</i>   | <i>Sub-item</i>   | <i>Other documents</i> | <i>Invitations</i> | <i>Speakers</i> | <i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i> |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|
| 6160th<br>10 July 2009    | Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in West Africa<br>(S/2009/332) |                        |                    |                 | S/PRST/2009/20                                    |
| 6207th<br>28 October 2009 |   |                        |                    |                 | S/PRST/2009/27                                    |

## 16. The situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

### Overview

During the period 2008-2009, the Security Council held 13 meetings, including one private meeting with the troop-contributing countries,<sup>216</sup> and adopted two resolutions and three presidential statements concerning the situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion. The Council focused on the volatile security situation in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic and its negative impact on the humanitarian situation in the region, and oversaw the deployment of a multidimensional presence with a mandate, inter alia, to protect humanitarian operations and displaced persons. The Council also focused on the attacks perpetrated by armed groups against the Government of Chad as well as the implementation of the Dakar Agreement of 13 March 2008 and the Doha Agreement of 3 May 2009.<sup>217</sup>

In June 2008, the Council visited Chad in connection with the situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion, as part of its mission to Africa.<sup>218</sup>

The Council twice extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) for periods of 12 months, until 15 March 2009 and 15 March 2010.<sup>219</sup>

### 4 February and 16 June 2008: presidential statements on attacks by armed groups against the Government of Chad

By a presidential statement of 4 February 2008,<sup>220</sup> the Council, inter alia, strongly condemned the attacks perpetrated by armed groups against the Government of Chad, and called upon the States of the region to deepen their cooperation with a view to putting an end to the activities of armed groups and their attempt to seize power by force. The Council expressed its concern regarding the direct threat that the combats posed for the safety of the civilian population, including internally displaced persons and refugees.

By a presidential statement of 16 June 2008,<sup>221</sup> the Council condemned in the strongest terms the attacks conducted by Chadian armed groups since 11 June 2008, and demanded that all armed groups cease violence immediately. In addition, the Council called upon States in the region to implement their commitments under the Dakar Agreement and prior agreements, and to cooperate with a view to putting an

<sup>216</sup> 5975th meeting, held on 19 September 2008.

<sup>217</sup> The Dakar Agreement and the Doha Agreement (S/2009/249, annex) were signed by the Governments of Chad and the Sudan with a view to defusing tensions and stopping the support of both parties for rebels. For more information, see the case study in the present part concerning the situation in Chad and the Sudan.

<sup>218</sup> For more information, see the present part, sect. 40, and part VI, sect. II, in regard to Security Council missions.

<sup>219</sup> Resolutions 1834 (2008) and 1861 (2009), respectively. For more information, see part X, sect. I, in regard to the mandate of MINURCAT.

<sup>220</sup> S/PRST/2008/3.

<sup>221</sup> S/PRST/2008/22.