

Press Conference by Security Council President on Work Programme for January

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The Security Council would focus in January on comprehensive strategies to stamp out global terrorism and bolster the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Permanent Representative of Pakistan, which holds the Council's rotating presidency for the month, said today.

Military action was not enough to stop the terrorist acts of demented ideologues that were tearing apart civilized societies, Masood Khan told correspondents at Headquarters during the regular monthly briefing on the Council's agenda. "This is a difficult issue. Collective measures have to be taken," he said.

On 15 January, Pakistan's Foreign Minister would chair a ministerial debate on that topic and propose a draft presidential statement on a holistic, multi-stakeholder approach to end terrorism, address its root causes and reintegrate both its victims and perpetrators into mainstream society, Mr. Khan said.

His Government, a long-time contributor of troops and equipment to the Organization's peacekeeping operations, also intended to introduce a draft text on ways to capitalize on peacekeeping's growing links to peacebuilding during the Council's 21 January public debate on that matter. The same day, a photographic exhibit on Pakistan's "blue helmets" would open.

In addition, the situation in Sudan and South Sudan would be at the forefront of attention, with consultations scheduled for 8 and 22 January, featuring briefings by Haile Menkerios, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for those countries. On 8 January only, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs would brief on the humanitarian situation in the border states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Later in the month, on 24 January, the Council would examine the Secretary-General's latest progress report on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The brewing crisis in the Central African Republic and the renewal of the United Nations mission there, known as BINUCA, would be discussed today in a private briefing with Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, and on 9 January in a public briefing followed by consultations with BINUCA Head Margaret Vogt. On 24 January, BINUCA's mandate, set to expire on 31 January 2013, should be extended for one year.

The situation in Cyprus and the expiring mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) would be the focus of three meetings. The Council would meet with troop-contributing countries to UNFICYP on 16 January, hold consultations the next day and renew the Force's mandate on 24 January.

Other highlights of the month, he said, included briefings followed by consultations concerning: the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on 17 January; the United Nations Office in Burundi on 24 January; the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) on 25 January; and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) on 29 January. On 30 January, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson would brief the Council about ongoing efforts to strengthen the rule of law.

Additionally, Council members would consult in private meetings with Mariano Fernandez, outgoing Special Representative for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), on 22 January, and with Miroslav Jenca, Special Representative and Head of the Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) on 29 January. On 23 January, they would hold their monthly public debate on the Middle East and, on 31 January, a private “wrap-up” session of the month’s activities.

Other hot-button issues, including non-proliferation and the situations in Mali, Syria, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen would be on the Council’s radar, Mr. Khan said, pledging to alert correspondents of related developments.

Asked several questions about Syria, Mr. Khan said it remained a Council priority and that all members, notably the United States and Russian Federation, were making “sustained and intense” efforts to reach middle ground on a viable solution to the crisis. He lauded the efforts of United Nations-Arab League Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi and expressed hope for a trilateral meeting next week between him and United States and Russian leaders to break the current diplomatic deadlock. And he expressed hope that the killings — the Syrian death toll now topped 60,000, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights — would end and national reconciliation would occur.

Concerning civilian casualties in Pakistan from counter-terrorism activity and the use of drones as weapons of war there and elsewhere, he said it was a matter of concern and that Pakistan’s Foreign Minister would comment during the Council’s debate on the matter. As the war against terrorism was not a conventional war, different systems must be employed to fight it. Poverty, while a factor in terrorism, was not its direct cause and could not be used to justify it.

Asked if the Council would issue a statement or resolution in response to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s 12 December rocket launch, he said some Council members wanted follow-up and others had called for more intense engagement between the United States, China, and the Republic of Korea, as well as regional actors, to help move towards peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

Concerning Mali, he said the Secretary-General's report on the Council's resolution last month to authorize deployment of an African-led support mission in that country should be issued the third week of January. The Council remained concerned about extremist elements in Mali and was working with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union to respond concretely to such challenges.

Asked about the ceasefire proposed by Congolese rebel groups as a prerequisite for holding peace talks with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he said it was a positive step and would hopefully spur continued engagement towards peace, security and stability. Council members were consulting, in line with operative paragraph 9 of Council resolution 2076 (2012), of 20 November, on options for possible reinforcements for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) in order to better protect peacekeepers, humanitarian actors and civilians.

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