Security Council Istanbul Retreat: Strengthening Cooperation between the Security Council and Regional Organizations

Introduction

The role, relevance, and influence of regional and subregional organizations in the area of international peace and security have increased in recent years. This development of regional multilateralism, or mini-multilateralism, is reflected in the growing interaction between regional organizations and the UN Security Council, and in calls for a reassessment of this evolving dynamic, its opportunities and challenges.

The UN Charter unequivocally established the Security Council as the principal organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. However, the charter also foresaw a role for "regional arrangements" with respect to the peaceful settlement of disputes and their contribution to the maintenance of peace and security, with the explicit understanding that such efforts are subordinate and made known to the Security Council as stipulated in Chapter VIII of the charter.

Official discussions within the Security Council concerning this interplay began in 2003, when the council held its first open debate on its relationship with regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.[1] Since that date, multiple council debates have been held on this subject. In 2005, the council adopted its first resolution on cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organizations, Resolution 1631.[2] More recently, in July 2014, the council passed Resolution 2167, which highlights partnership and cooperation between the UN and relevant regional and subregional organizations in peacekeeping operations.[3] In August 2013, the council issued a presidential statement stressing the importance of continuing to develop effective partnerships between the UN and regional organizations, highlighting the role of regional and subregional organizations in the peaceful settlement of disputes, including through conflict prevention, confidence-building and mediation efforts, as well as peacekeeping and postconflict peacebuilding worldwide. The presidential statement also expanded space for cooperation with regional organizations on thematic issues such as women, peace, and security; children and armed conflict; counterterrorism; and the rule of law.

The Security Council's relationship with specific organizations, including the African Union (AU), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the

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1 Security Council Report, "Update Report No. 3: The UN and Regional Organisations," September 18, 2006, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/update-report/lookup-c-glKWLeMTIsG-b-2071503.php .

2 UN Security Council Resolution 1631 (October 17, 2005), UN Doc. S/RES/1631.

3 UN Security Council Resolution 2167 (July 28, 2014), UN Doc. S/RES/2167, available at www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2167.pdf .

League of Arab States, the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), has also been the subject of the body's open debates, briefings, and high-level meetings, with several calling for the establishment of dedicated high-level channels of communication between regional organizations and the council.

As of today, the council maintains relations with regional organizations through several means and formats. Organizations, such as the EU and the OSCE, regularly brief the council. Since 2007, members of the council have held annual meetings with the council's AU counterpart, the Peace and Security Council, alternating between their respective headquarters. Operationally, the cooperation between the UN and regional organizations is quite varied, ranging from the multiyear, jointly led hybrid peacekeeping operations between the AU and the UN, to the less institutionalized, more ad hoc operational engagement with regional organizations on specific topics, such as organized crime.

As organizations try to keep pace with rapidly evolving international peace and security dynamics, a more comprehensive and practical understanding is needed of the relationship and opportunities for cooperation between the council and regional organizations, with their varied structures, mandates, and capacities. This understanding remains an imperative even more so today, as nearly twenty years have passed since then secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali laid down the UN strategic vision for this interaction in the *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace.* Yet, as regional organizations develop both an interest and an ability to lead efforts to secure peace and stability, doctrinal and operational divergence has started to emerge, whether the issue is supply of troops, logistics, funding, or leadership.

Against this backdrop, the government of the Republic of Turkey, in collaboration with the International Peace Institute, held an informal retreat of the council in April 2014 to think creatively about inter-organizational dynamics and opportunities for strengthened cooperation in conflict prevention, peace operations, counterterrorism, and humanitarian crises. Throughout the sessions, the following crosscutting themes were judged as relevant to strengthened cooperation

between the council and regional and subregional organizations: interpretation of Chapter VIII; comparative advantage, impartiality, and steps for shared intervention; and strengthening communication.

INTERPRETATION OF CHAPTER VIII

Regional and subregional organizations have played a role in sustaining cease-fires and peace processes; addressing emerging and chronic regional challenges; and maintaining the peace in regions following the departure of the international community. However, a practical understanding of the different mandates, history, capacity, and legal imperative of regional and subregional organizations has yet to be achieved. Given the real possibility of overstretch for the council, revisiting Chapter VIII of the UN Charter has become increasingly relevant to better understand the division of roles between the council and "regional arrangements." Not all matters of peace and security warrant the council's attention, or its intervention. A stronger working knowledge of Chapter VIII, as well as the extraordinarily varied composition of regional and subregional organizations that exist, may significantly enhance the effectiveness of cooperation for peace among the members of the international community.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE, IMPARTIALITY, AND STEPS FOR SHARED INTERVENTION

Regional organizations can be quite effective in conflict prevention and resolution in situations beyond the immediate interest of larger powers. Regional organizations also often have the comparative advantage of shared geographic location and cultural affinity. However, such proximity may bring with it political interests, raising questions of impartiality and neutrality, as has been the case in South Sudan. Likewise, council action (e.g., in Libya) or inaction (e.g., in Burundi) can be often viewed as an expression of certain political interests of more powerful states.

Therefore, it would be valuable to further explore and develop strategies for shared interventions to both ease concerns that they are primarily political tools of regional and/or international powers and to prevent the internal political dynamics of either the council or regional organizations from adversely affecting the design or implementation of

a mission. However, certain situations have shown that regional organizations and the council are not always able to make the same policy choices. In the recent crisis in Ukraine, for example, the EU and NATO chose to levy sanctions (at the urging of their more powerful member states) whereas the UN Security Council did not.

Ultimately, the council and regional and subregional organizations need to work together more effectively on periods of transition from regionally led to UN-led missions. It is during this critical juncture that regional and subregional organizations' capacities are most easily overestimated or stretched, particularly when lacking adequate support.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION

Effective communication on all issues between the council and regional and subregional organizations was stressed as a necessary step toward strengthened cooperation. Interaction between these various institutions needs to move beyond briefings and annual meetings to more interactive and meaningful dialogue. With a particular look to the AU, members noted the importance of the continued functioning of mechanisms established between the AU Commission and the UN Secretariat to foster strategic partnerships and operational coordination, as well as the establishment of an agenda, with noted items requiring follow-up in advance of their annual joint consultative meetings.

The creation of a committee of experts at the council level committed to increasing the viability and visibility of regional organizations was also suggested, provided that it increases understanding and communication without adding bureaucratic burdens.

What follows herein are summaries of the discussions held during the different sessions of the retreat relating to conflict prevention, peace operations, counterterrorism and sanctions, and humanitarian crises.

Conflict Prevention

Throughout the conference, conflict prevention, including mediation, was championed as the most logical area for cooperation between the UN and regional organizations. Particularly in a world in which nonstate armed groups, criminal actors, and violent extremists operate within and across borders and regions, developing effective mechanisms to prevent armed conflict or a relapse into violence has become imperative. Proactively identifying and addressing the root social and economic causes of violence were highlighted as of preeminent importance by the majority of participants. However, designating responsibilities for conflict prevention between the UN and regional organizations in both scale and scope of operation, as well as articulating how the council could best support such work, remains a difficult task.

Various examples of regional organizations' involvement in conflict prevention were noted. In West Africa, these included initiatives by the Economic Community of West African States (in collaboration with the UN Peacebuilding Commission) in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. Reflecting on East Africa, participants discussed and largely commended the mediation work of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in South Sudan to facilitate an agreement between the government of the Republic of South Sudan and the armed opposition. The work of the AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan was also noted as a potentially useful model for organizations engaged in consensus-building efforts. While the violence continues in South Sudan, many participants nevertheless suggested that the international community learn from the experiences of the local and regional mediation efforts of IGAD and the AU Commission there, particularly with a view to informing action in the Central African Republic.

In addition to the comparative advantage of regional and subregional engagement in conflict prevention, some participants also spoke in favor of regional organizations' prerogative in conflict prevention, recalling then AU chairman Jean Ping's call for "African solutions to Africa's problems" and highlighting the importance of regional ownership. Conflict prevention efforts and responsibilities, regardless of lead organization, must be undertaken with an awareness of local context and existent organizational structures to avoid perceptions that regional and global strategic interests take priority over local needs.

While the world had witnessed a decline in the

number of civil wars in the 1990s, major civil wars have increased in recent years and the number of displaced people globally in 2013 hit a record 51.2 million (33.3 million internally displaced and 16.7 refugees), reaching levels not seen since World War II, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).[4] As the international community continues to struggle to cope with destabilizing conflicts and their repercussions, participants called for the establishment of guidelines for scaled UN involvement in conflict, with a clear allocation of operational responsibilities to the UN once a conflict reaches a to-be-determined level of size, implication, and threat to regional security.

Such a system would delineate levels and timing of UN engagement while more thoughtfully capitalizing on regional and subregional organizations' growing influence in conflict prevention norms, early-warning systems, and preventive tools. In addition, participants suggested it would increase awareness and build preparedness of the international community for times when seemingly local conflicts have larger regional and international implications. The crises in Mali, the Central African Republic, or Syria, for example, have repercussions far beyond their borders. Developing a stronger appreciation of how national and local conflict can impact regional and global dynamics may help the UN and regional and subregional organizations work more collaboratively in combating threats to international peace and security, particularly at the initial stages of conflict. Such an appreciation may also assist regional organizations, particularly in the African context, to think more strategically about long-term goals for peace and security, as opposed to short-term interests.

Regional and subregional organizations must therefore assess next steps regarding their prerogatives and capacities, especially in the escalation and postconflict stages when they have the strongest role to play in the mitigation, monitoring, prevention, and mediation of conflict and violence. As such, regional organizations also have a complementary role alongside the efforts of the council, thus helping to reduce potential council overstretch. Some participants suggested the possibility of establishing a separate committee

charged with monitoring the activities and potential overreach of regional organizations, while others cautioned that doing so would only duplicate what is already a council responsibility.

Ideas for Enhanced Cooperation

- Produce a comprehensive overview of the council, UN, and regional organizations' roles and responsibilities and enhance their joint early-warning efforts and information sharing.

- Support and develop the conflict prevention role for existent UN bodies and sub-bodies, such as the Mediation Support Unit, the Standby Team of Mediation Experts (STME), the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN Development Programme, etc., before creating alternative bodies.

- Adequately fund, empower, and develop the capacity of regional organizations to prevent an outbreak of or relapse into conflict.

- Focus on active mediation as a tool for conflict prevention.

Peace Operations

Issues of overstretch and lack of capacity for peace operations were highlighted as particularly problematic for UN agencies and regional organizations. At a time when the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) oversees the second-largest deployed military force in the world, the need to avoid overstretch was reiterated. In 2014, DPKO directed seventeen peace operations worldwide, which amounted to nearly 100,000 uniformed personnel following the full deployment of peacekeeping troops to the Central African Republic. Sixteen of these missions were peacekeeping operations, and one was a political mission in Afghanistan.

Since the 1990s, the role of regional organizations has expanded notably in the area of peace and security. As a result, UN peace operations, broadly defined, have worked with the AU (and its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity), ECOWAS, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the EU, the OSCE, the Arab League, and

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4 UNHCR, "War's Human Cost: Global Trends 2013," available at www.unhcr.org/5399a14f9.html .

the OIC, as well as others. Indeed, in a world in which the demand for peace operations has hit historic highs and the operating environments facing peacekeepers are increasingly complex, peace operations require organizational partnership.

Several examples were offered of partnership and cooperation in peace operations more broadly between the UN and regional organizations, including between the OAS and the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and ECOWAS and the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. The case of Guinea-Bissau, where a relatively peaceful presidential run-off election was held in May 2014 primarily in coordination with the UN and ECOWAS, was nevertheless cited as an example of the significant challenges that exist in organizational cooperation and operational linkages between the UN and AU systems. Such challenges, as well as those related to levels of funding that match mandates, were also said to have characterized UN-AU cooperation in Mali and the Central African Republic.

Participants also discussed the effective role that UN regional offices, such as the UN Office of West Africa (UNOWA) or the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), can play in bringing together various UN agencies and regional organizations and coordinating efforts. For example, UNOWA works with regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the AU, as well as UN missions in the subregion, such as the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), and the UN Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

Definitively distinguishing between conflict phases can often prove quite difficult both during and following conflict. The "conflict cycle" can be quite dynamic, with successive missions and mandates having to quickly adapt or take on tasks that they were not originally intended to take. Several participants highlighted the importance of maintaining both security and economic stability during these critical moments of transition, particularly when moving from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. Maintaining stability through effective security sector reform and police force

development is also critical.

In discussing the composition of peace operations, the comparative advantage of **regionally led missions** as opposed to UN-led missions was debated, based on the mandate of the mission and the support given. Regionally led peacebuilding or political missions, such as those engaged in mediation and the work of good offices, for example, have greater potential for impact, as argued by some, given their inherent interest in and connection to a region.

Not all regional organizations are well-suited in design or capacity for peace operations, especially peacekeeping ones. Protection-of-civilians mandates require significant support and resources, and regional organizations often suffer from a lack of funding and capacity. Further, regional organizations may also not have the ability or political will to ensure compliance by member states regarding troop commitments and peacekeeper neutrality, as evidenced by allegations against Chad of an unprovoked attack in the AU-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA).

Other regionally led missions noted were the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). While AMISOM has proved relatively successful in its mission, despite the presence of al-Shabaab, AFISMA, not unlike MISCA, has demonstrated the challenges facing regionally led missions. As such, the AU is rethinking how it can most effectively deploy military forces to tackle the continent's crises. While the deployment of rapid reaction or regional protection forces, as advocated by IGAD in the South Sudan context, might provide the flexibility and speed necessary following an outbreak of violence, policymakers are unclear about how to raise the necessary levels of investment and capacity to operationalize such a force, and how to address the issues of impartiality.

The experience of the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) has discouraged many from replicating the organizational structure of **hybrid missions.** It was established out of an immediate need but did not provide an ideal blueprint for future missions. That said, participants asked if the idea of hybrid missions should be scrapped as a whole, or if UNAMID should provide lessons on

how to better structure hybrid missions in the future, and if properly executed hybrid missions could provide an effective means of UN and regional organization cooperation in peacekeeping operations. While hybrid missions require complicated partnerships, often magnified by the complexities of sharing limited resources and aligning differing organizational principles of peacekeeping, they do offer the option of a UN presence when a UN-only mission has been refused by the host government.

Hybrid missions also have proved complicated due to confusion over chain of command and differing rules of engagement depending on the troop-contributing country; a lack of equipment; varied spoken languages; and questions of interpretation of the mandate at hand, especially regarding the protection of civilians and human rights. As such, participants postulated that joint missions might be more effective if they employed troops and capacities of member states and regional organizations that have a history of cooperation on an operational level.

In addition to the composition of missions, participants discussed notions of **impartiality and neutrality** relevant to missions. For example, peacekeepers from neighboring states within a region can be more assertive than others, leading to speculation about the influence of national interests in peacekeeping situations. Much debate and discussion was fueled by notions of neutrality and impartiality vis-à-vis Security Council mandates. Discussants noted that many council resolutions, such as Resolution 1559 on Lebanon, are neither neutral nor impartial. As stated by one participant, governments do not sit on the council to be neutral.

Ideas for Enhanced Cooperation

- Develop the coordinating capabilities of the UN and use existing tools, such as the exchange of best practices, to strengthen cooperation between the UN and regional organizations.

- Rethink funding structures and capacity-building mechanisms to more adequately and sustainably support regional organizations in

peace operations broadly speaking, including security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes.

- Provide increased legitimacy and leverage of regional organizations in peace operations by mentioning them by name in council resolutions and presidential statements.

- Develop strategies to reconcile differing organizational principles of peacekeeping in the African context.

Counterterrorism and Sanctions

The council and its counterterrorism subsidiary bodies work with various regional organizations on both tactical and operational levels through the promotion of best practices; technical, financial, regulatory, and legislative assistance programs; and special meetings between the council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and regional organizations, including the OAS, the AU, the Council of Europe, and CIS. Further, expert bodies attached to council committees specializing in counterterrorism use a common strategy for their work with regional and subregional organizations, primarily aimed at reducing organizational fatigue.

Operationally, the CTC engages with regional organizations, such as the EU, the OIC, the AU, and the OAS on activities that include joint assessments of counterterrorism measures, joint external projects on capacity building, workshops on countering incitement to terrorism and enhancing cultural dialogue, and the strengthening of border-related counterterrorism capacities through the use of international databases. Despite this level of cooperation, participants emphasized the need for a much more holistic approach to counterterrorism, addressing the spread of radicalism and violent extremism on a local level. To stimulate discussion, the participants recalled the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its four primary actions.[5]

As terrorism becomes more diffuse and extremism grows in segments of societies, there is a need

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5   In the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/288 of September 8, 2006, a UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was adopted in which member states resolved: to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; to prevent and combat terrorism; to take measures to build state capacity to fight terrorism and to strengthen the role of the UN in combating terrorism in this regard; and to ensure the respect of human rights while countering terrorism. The General Assembly revised the strategy for the fourth time by adopting Resolution A/RES/68/276 on June 13, 2014.

to identify **root causes** and address underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism—including the vulnerability of communities—while ensuring that the protection of human rights is upheld in counterterrorism efforts. Participants also highlighted the need to not implicate any single religion or region as being more conducive to extremism than others. Furthermore, the international community must think critically about the impact and effectiveness of **current sanctions regimes,** not least in light of the evolution of terrorist networks and the decentralization of terrorist cells (particularly in West Africa and the Horn of Africa); recruitment techniques (including use of social media and the Internet); communication within organizations and networks; and informal payment systems (prepaid cards and mobile payments). Conflict situations, such as those throughout the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and the Great Lakes, can only exacerbate the potential spread of terrorism.

In addition to terrorism and conflict, the link between **drugs and terrorism** was debated by participants, with some arguing that there is a direct, causal link between the two (i.e., drug trafficking can provide the funding for terrorism) and others rejecting the claim of a direct relationship. In Latin America, for example, drug trafficking has largely existed without the presence of terrorist organizations.

A concluding point of intervention was made regarding **legal dynamics** that may arise in the application of counterterrorism sanctions where multiple bodies of international law are germane, as evidenced by the 2012 European Court of Human Rights case, *Nada vs. Switzerland.* In this case, Youssef Nada, who had been listed by the Security Council Resolution 1267 sanctions committee, was barred from leaving his home in an Italian enclave in Switzerland from 2003 to 2009. Nada contested his sentence and the court found (among other conclusions) that he had been denied adequate recourse to challenge the ruling against him. While the judgment did not directly compromise the primacy of council resolutions on the international level, it problematized their implication on a domestic level. In light of this case, participants questioned potential future legal implications of the implementation of sanctions in the Syrian context, whether counterterrorism oriented or otherwise, and how such debates may play out in situations of varying and applicable bodies of law.

In thinking critically about future cooperation between the council and regional organizations, there was agreement that counterterrorism measures need to be revisited to better address the underlying causes and contexts that can lead to extremism; how regional organizations may have a comparative advantage over the council in addressing root causes; and how sanctions need to be executed in a manner that more effectively targets the individuals in question, not the larger population. While the council is able to impose sanctions, regional organizations may have a clearer perspective of the actual impact of a sanctions regime, as demonstrated by the decision of the OSCE to send a monitoring mission to Ukraine in March 2014.

Ideas for Enhanced Cooperation

- Build new and broad partnerships between the council and regional and subregional actors in counterterrorism, as most current efforts are state-centric.

- Decide on specific, definitional terms while using current counterterrorism frameworks (avoid creating alternative conventions and frameworks).

- Develop strategies and mission mandates that incorporate the interconnectedness of conflict and terrorism when necessary (e.g., AMISOM in Somalia and MINUSMA in Mali).

- Maximize the comparative advantages and efforts of regional and subregional organizations in addressing root causes of extremism, including through education for tolerance, local intelligence gathering, and the garnering of local buy-in and support for counterterrorism efforts.

- Strengthen financial and capacity-building support to regional organizations, including by assisting regional organizations in effectively ensuring member state accountability in the implementation of sanctions.

Humanitarian Crises

Conflict-induced humanitarian crises and the council discussions that follow invariably have political as well as humanitarian dimensions. This was an argument echoed by several during the

discussion on humanitarian crises, recalling current crises in Palestine, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Syria, among others. Therefore, while the urgent humanitarian needs of a conflict demand priority, the underlying political issues must also be addressed for the sake of any long-term solution.

As evidence of political challenges affecting council decisions in the midst of crises, discussants highlighted Resolution 2139 on **Syria,** the humanitarian provisions of which are extremely challenging to implement given issues of political will among the parties to the conflict, in particular the Syrian government and those powers that support it.[6] In the first report of the secretary-general on the implementation of Resolution 2139, findings of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic highlighted the limited impact the resolution has had until now and the continuing violations of international humanitarian law and crimes against humanity.[7]

Of primary concern are the politicization of aid and the issue of access. As noted by one participant, it is purported that the vast majority of UN aid is given in areas controlled by the Syrian government (with some figures reaching 90 percent to areas controlled by the government in 2014). As such, at least 3.5 million people in 2014 who were most in need had not been reached.[8] This reality of aid partiality can place donors in a dilemma of wanting to save as many lives as possible but fearing that they may be fueling the conflict, as aid is only going to one side. Mention was also made of Turkey's Zero Point policy by which it delivers aid to the border to be picked up and distributed by aid actors within Syria. While this system does avoid direct entanglement with sovereignty issues, it nevertheless does not guarantee balanced aid delivery once inside the country. On this point, participants debated whether it is better to deliver some aid, even if unbalanced, than no aid in cases of limited or no access.

Questions of sovereignty led participants to address other legal dimensions of humanitarian crises, specifically the lack of compliance by parties to the conflict with Security Council Resolution 2139 regarding Syria. Participants further postulated that if council resolutions are obligatory, then humanitarian access and consent of the parties is mandatory, despite the shield of sovereignty and territorial integrity. At some point, a state's rights must be trumped by its sovereign obligation to human rights and the protection of its civilian population. As articulated by participants, besieging communities and systematically denying aid is considered a weapon of war. Therefore, how might compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law be enforced when wider political and strategic interests are at play?

At the time, the humanitarian community, including various UN agencies, international NGOs, and regional and national aid organizations, were divided over the extent and geographical scope of humanitarian need in the Syrian context. Interagency coordination is lacking, which has made taking full advantage of Resolution 2139 and its language regarding access that much more difficult. In addition to coordination, requests for access have been under-documented, without relevant detail as to when requests were made, if they were refused, and on what grounds. Some participants expressed the view that the UN could be more assertive in supporting cross-border operations. Success will depend on the ability to develop a unified approach to the humanitarian crisis in Syria and the council's ability to apply the necessary political pressure to force the issue of humanitarian access on basis of need.

In recognition of such political challenges in the council, participants discussed the role of **regional organizations in humanitarian crises.** As in previous discussions, the comparative advantage of regional organizations was noted. Regional organizations are physically closer to conflicts, better placed to understand local dynamics and the conditions on the ground, and may be able to lend legitimacy to international efforts, as evidenced in

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6 UN Security Council Resolution 2139 , adopted on February 22, 2014, demanded that all parties permit free access to humanitarian aid, among other humanitarian-oriented provisions. See UN Security Council Resolution 2139 (February 22, 2014), UN Doc. S/RES/2139.

7 United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution* 2139 (2014), UN Doc. S/2014/208, March 24, 2014, available at www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/208 . See also, United Nations, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic,* UN Doc. A/HRC/25/65, February 12, 2014, available at www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/HRC/25/65 .

8 "UN: 3.5 Million Syrians Desperately Need Aid," *The Telegraph,* April 24, 2014.

initial OIC-UN efforts in Syria and in joint efforts of the OIC and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mauritania, the Sahel, Somalia, and Yemen. However, based on the council's current challenges in enforcing Resolution 2139, questions were asked as to the role regional organizations could play in a humanitarian crisis such as Syria's, as well as their subsequent ability to uphold the **"responsibility to protect"** doctrine. If they are unable to guarantee humanitarian access, how are they expected to be able to enforce a state's responsibility to protect its citizens?

Regardless, greater engagement by regional organizations involves increased investment in capacity and in **coordination,** both between the council and regional organizations and within the UN system itself. The need for better coordination is particularly salient in the Syrian refugee crisis and its impact on the region. The UN cannot handle the needs of these communities alone. The question then becomes how to make regional organizations operational in humanitarian relief. Although their fact-finding missions are still critical, as highlighted by the work of the OIC in the Central African Republic, it is necessary to move them beyond this. Additional thought needs to be given to accrediting new potential partners in humanitarian work, as well as developing the operational capacity of regional organizations, particularly those that may lack the necessary political will to become involved in humanitarian efforts or hold biases toward one party or another in a conflict, despite claims of impartiality. The fact that relevant regional organizations have de-activated Syrian membership may also make the current situation more complicated to navigate. Participants also noted that the reality of armed conflict often makes it very difficult to fully comprehend what is actually taking place. As a result, it is worthwhile to analyze conflicts from multiple angles.

While the history of cooperation with the council in humanitarian and reconstruction efforts were mentioned (particularly in Haiti), participants were hopeful for a greater future role of regional and subregional organizations in humanitarian relief and strengthened cooperation with the council and the larger UN system. In this regard, participants were reminded of the global humanitarian summit,

convened by the secretary-general, to take place in Istanbul in 2016.

Ideas for Enhanced Cooperation

- Review refugee policy options and develop strategies with neighboring countries, host governments, and regional organizations for a coherent response to inflows of refugees, including capacity development of the host community.

- Produce a definition of "state" terrorism, identify violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Syria and elsewhere, and work with regional actors to develop strategies to require compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law, possibly developing basic parameters for the conduct of conflict.

- Develop coherent coordination systems with regional organizations and viable local actors to explore conditions that would facilitate the implementation of humanitarian frameworks, particularly aid delivery.

- Strengthen and enhance the precision of internal UN information gathering and reporting, such as when requests for access are made, when a refusal occurs, and what the obstacles are.

Conclusion

As regional and subregional organizations continue to grow in number, nature, and capacity, so too do opportunities for increased cooperation with the council, including in areas such as women, peace, and security; children and armed conflict; arms control; counterterrorism; and organized crime. However, of utmost priority is the need for increased cooperation and coordination in humanitarian crises—particularly in the Middle East and Africa—and to more proactively address the root causes of conflict and the spread of extremism.

Despite a multitude of opportunities for cooperation, challenges remain as the larger multilateral umbrella under which the international community has placed its efforts has yet to fully adapt to the trend of regional multilateralism. Practically developing Chapter VIII of the UN Charter may help members of the international community, the council, and regional and

subregional organizations think through means of effective collaboration and coordination, potentially avoiding unrealistic political, financial, or operational expectations.

In addition, giving greater thought to the varying sizes and mandates of regional organizations may give more concrete meaning to notions of "comparative advantage" and how to best use such an advantage. For example, the OIC and ECOWAS are very different organizations, with distinct contributions to ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security. Given the emphasis placed on conflict prevention, it may be

advisable to analyze how individual regional and subregional organizations have and will continue to engage in conflict prevention and mediation and how the council, with its particular political weight, may work with these organizations in this regard.

As political institutions throughout the globe come under strain, it is of increasing interest and practical value for the council and regional and subregional organizations to work together—through both multi- and mini-multilateralism—in combating threats to international peace and security.

Annex

IDEAS FOR ENHANCED COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND REGIONAL/SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Conflict Prevention

- Produce a comprehensive overview of the council, UN, and regional organizations' roles and responsibilities and enhance their joint early-warning efforts and information sharing.
- Support and develop the conflict prevention role for existent UN bodies and sub-bodies, such as the Mediation Support Unit, the Standby Team of Mediation Experts (STME), the Peacebuilding Support Office, ECOSOC, UNDP, etc., before creating alternative bodies.
- Adequately fund, empower, and develop the capacity of regional organizations to prevent an outbreak of or relapse into conflict.
- Focus on active mediation as a tool for conflict prevention.

Peace Operations

- Develop the coordinating capabilities of the UN and use existing tools, such as the exchange of best practices, to strengthen cooperation between the UN and regional organizations.
- Rethink funding structures and capacity-building mechanisms to more adequately and sustainably support regional organizations in peace operations broadly speaking, including security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes.
- Provide increased legitimacy and leverage of regional organizations in peace operations by mentioning them by name in council resolutions and presidential statements.
- Develop strategies to reconcile differing organizational principles of peacekeeping in the African context.

Counterterrorism and Sanctions

- Build new and broad partnerships between the council and regional and subregional actors in counterterrorism, as most current efforts are state-centric.
- Decide on specific, definitional terms while using current counterterrorism frameworks.
- Develop strategies and mission mandates that incorporate the interconnectedness of conflict and terrorism when necessary (e.g., AMISOM in Somalia and MINUSMA in Mali).
- Maximize the comparative advantages and efforts of regional and subregional organizations in addressing root causes of extremism, including through education for tolerance, local intelligence gathering, and the garnering of local buy-in and support for counterterrorism efforts.
- Strengthen financial and capacity-building support to regional organizations, including by assisting regional organizations in effectively ensuring member state accountability in the implementation of sanctions.

Humanitarian Crises

- Review refugee policy options and develop strategies with neighboring countries, host governments, and regional organizations for a coherent response to inflows of refugees, including capacity development of the host community.
- Produce a definition of "state" terrorism, identify violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Syria and elsewhere, and work with regional actors to develop strategies to require compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law, possibly developing basic parameters for the conduct of conflict.
- Develop coherent coordination systems with regional organizations and viable local actors to explore conditions that would facilitate the implementation of humanitarian frameworks, particularly aid delivery.
- Strengthen and enhance the precision of internal UN information gathering and reporting, such as when requests for access are made, when a refusal occurs, and what the obstacles are.

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