



Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council

18th Supplement

2012-2013

Department of Political Affairs - Security Council Affairs Division
Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch

13. Peace consolidation in West Africa

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held eight meetings on peace consolidation in West Africa, and adopted one resolution and one presidential statement concerning piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. The Council heard five briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), who presented the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office.¹ The Council in its deliberations focused on political and economic challenges facing the subregion, including recent developments concerning electoral crises, seizures of power, security and the rule of law, refugees, illicit drug traffic, youth unemployment, terrorism, transnational organized crime and maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the role of UNOWA in addressing those issues.

The table at the end of the section lists the meetings at which this item was considered, and gives information on, inter alia, invitees, speakers and decisions adopted.

¹ For more information on the mandate of UNOWA, see part X, sect. II, with regard to political and peacebuilding missions.

Briefings on the activities of UNOWA and developments in the Sahel region

On 16 January 2012, the Security Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWA, who provided an overview of the latest developments and challenges in West Africa, including the activities undertaken by UNOWA. Reporting on the positive developments in West Africa, he noted that there had not been recurrence of open conflict in the subregion and informed that tensions related to internal institutional or political crises had decreased in both number and intensity. In addition, he stated that a number of countries of the subregion had held elections that were judged credible by the international community, thereby averting potential electoral crises and any resulting destabilization. He paid tribute to all stakeholders in West Africa for their efforts in consolidating stability in the subregion and welcomed the role of the United Nations in supporting such efforts. He, however, cautioned that progress in the region remained tenuous, citing a number of challenges, such as the recent events in Guinea Bissau, the activities of the Boko Haram group in Nigeria, the Libyan crisis, as well as drug trafficking and organized crime. He drew attention to the re-emergence of transborder threats, and indicated that the significant increase in the number of acts of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea posed a fresh threat to the security and development of the States of the region. He informed the Council that UNOWA would continue to mobilize the United Nations system and strengthen its partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, particularly the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union, the African Union and civil society, especially women, in order to better consolidate the achievements that had been made in West Africa.²

On 11 July 2012, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWA in his briefing introduced the ninth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOWA and reported on, among other challenges, the vulnerable situation

² [S/PV.6703](#), pp. 2-4.

in the Sahel region, notably in Mali,³ on the evolving phenomenon of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea and on the upsurge of violence at the border between Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire. He expressed confidence that the forthcoming African Union summit meeting in Addis Ababa would help in reaching a consolidated African position on the way forward in addressing the situation in the Sahel and emphasized that such a common position would inform the much-needed concerted and coordinated efforts on the Sahel. He further explained that UNOWA and the Dakar-based United Nations agencies would support the development of a comprehensive regional strategy on key priorities in the security, political, human rights, humanitarian and development realms in support of the countries of the region, consistent with the demand of the Council in resolution [2056 \(2012\)](#). He underlined the need to continue pursuing strategies and resources to eradicate activities of drug cartels and other criminal networks, as well as efforts to prevent election-related tension and violence in West Africa.⁴

The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that West Africa represented a key challenge to UNODC due to increased drug trafficking, signs of drug production, growing drug consumption, as well as piracy and insecurity. He indicated that West Africa was no longer simply a transit route for cocaine, but had become a final destination which had resulted in a greater need for prevention and treatment of drug users.⁵ In that regard, he informed that UNODC was reviewing possible links between terrorism and transnational organized crime. To that end, he outlined the initiatives of UNODC in addressing those challenges, such as building political commitment through regional platforms, developing inter-agency approaches and delivering solutions through its integrated regional programmes.⁶

³ For more information on this crisis, see the present part, sect. 16, with regard to the situation in Mali.

⁴ [S/PV.6804](#), pp. 2-4.

⁵ For more information on this topic, see the present part, sect. 14, with regard to peace and security in Africa.

⁶ [S/PV.6804](#), pp. 4-6.

On 25 January 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWA presented the tenth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOWA and briefed the Council on the continued challenges to governance, peace consolidation and conflict prevention facing the region. In this regard, he reported on the ongoing crisis in Mali, the evolving threat posed by piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, and the tensions along the borders of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. He detailed the activities and good offices efforts of UNOWA in liaison with its regional partners, in particular ECOWAS, the Mano River Union, as well as with the African Union. He finally drew attention to the significant progress achieved in the demarcation of the boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria facilitated by the United Nations.⁷

On 10 July 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in his briefing, recalled the continued political and security as well as humanitarian challenges affecting the subregion, such as, election-related tensions, transnational organized crime, piracy and terrorism, as well as food insecurity and malnutrition. In addition to recalling the threats affecting the region covered in previous briefings, he reported on the positive developments in Mali and Guinea which had led to agreements between the parties in conflict, thereby paving the way for the holding of elections in both countries.⁸

On 17 December 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWA informed the Council that during the review period the region continued to move forward along the path of stability, and commended the commitment of the leaders and peoples of the region. He mentioned that legislative elections were ultimately held in Togo, Guinea and Mauritania and the post-electoral challenge in Ghana was brought to an end following the decision of the Supreme Court. Concerning the activities of UNOWA, he noted that the Office continued to focus on carrying out its mandate through actions aimed at preventing conflicts and crises by supporting good

⁷ [S/PV.6911](#), pp. 2-5.

⁸ [S/PV.6995](#), pp. 2-5.

offices, mediation and facilitation efforts. He updated the Council on the progress achieved on the border demarcation process between Cameroon and Nigeria as well as on the Mano River basin regarding the tensions at the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. With respect to the Sahel, he informed the Council of the positive momentum for the coordinated and integrated implementation of the United Nations strategy for the Sahel under the overall leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sahel.⁹ He reported further on activities by UNOWA and other regional organizations relating to the fight against the threat of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, security sector reform, combating drug trafficking and organized crime, as well as terrorism. In closing, he acknowledged that despite the efforts made by countries of the region and their people, the region remained fragile and required ongoing international support.¹⁰

Consideration of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

On 27 February 2012, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs briefed the Security Council on the report of the mission dispatched to the Gulf of Guinea by the Secretary-General from 7 to 24 November 2011,¹¹ whose main objective was to assess the scope of the threat of piracy in the region and to take stock of national and regional efforts being made to ensure maritime safety and security in the region, as well as to make recommendations for a possible United Nations response. He expressed concern that the threat of piracy had become more alarming as the activities of the pirates had become more violent. Detailing the findings of the assessment mission, he informed that according to the report, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea had become more systematic, with the pirates resorting to sophisticated modes of operation and utilization of heavy weapons. He stressed that countries in the Gulf of Guinea required a united front to

⁹ For more information on the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, see the present part, sect. 14, with regard to peace and security in Africa.

¹⁰ [S/PV.7087](#), pp. 2-5.

¹¹ [S/2012/45](#).

respond effectively to the growing threat of piracy along their coasts. He pointed out that the assessment mission had recommended that countries in the Gulf of Guinea should convene a regional summit to develop a comprehensive anti-piracy strategy for the region. While welcoming the support provided by the international community to strengthen the maritime security capacities of countries in the Gulf of Guinea, he asserted that more needed to be done and advocated for concrete steps to eradicate piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.¹²

In his statement, the Special Representative of the Chairman of the ECOWAS Commission presented the challenges faced, as well as the initiatives launched by States members of ECOWAS in addressing the issue of piracy in the region. He also urged all parties concerned to “scale up efforts” to develop a more comprehensive framework that involves all parties to ensure a holistic approach to maritime security, in close cooperation with the United Nations.¹³

The Deputy Executive Secretary of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) welcomed the report of the mission and referred to some of the activities undertaken by the GGC and ECOWAS on maritime safety and security in the region. Specifically on the report, she commented on the insufficiency of the existing legal framework for dealing with piracy in the region and emphasized the need for a common definition of acts of piracy and for harmonized legislation against piracy in the region.¹⁴

Council members welcomed the report of the assessment mission and expressed concern regarding the threat to peace and security, as well as to socioeconomic development, posed by piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. They commended the ongoing initiatives of ECCAS, ECOWAS and GGC in addressing this emerging threat and urged them to work towards the convening of a joint summit of the Gulf of Guinea States aimed at developing a regional anti-piracy strategy, in cooperation with the African Union. In that context, they stressed the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination among affected States and regional organizations to develop a comprehensive regional strategy

¹² [S/PV.6723](#), pp. 2-4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

to manage maritime security. In this regard, there was consensus among most speakers that the United Nations should play a central role in the overall coordination and mobilization of international assistance to build the capacity of regional organizations, including through the provision of financial and technical assistance.

Decision concerning piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

On 29 February 2012, the Council adopted resolution [2039 \(2012\)](#) in which it encouraged national authorities, as well as regional and international partners to consider implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General's assessment mission. It stressed the primary responsibility of the States of the Gulf of Guinea to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea and requested the Secretary-General through UNOWA and the United Nations Office of Central Africa to support States and subregional organizations in convening a joint summit. In addition, the Council urged States of the region of the Gulf of Guinea to take prompt action to develop and implement national maritime security strategies, including the establishment of a legal framework for the prevention and repression of piracy and armed robbery at sea, as well as prosecution of persons engaging in those crimes, and punishment of those convicted of those crimes. The Council also encouraged Benin and Nigeria to extend their joint patrols beyond March 2012 and international partners to consider providing support, as needed. It further encouraged the States of the Gulf of Guinea, ECOWAS, ECCAS and GGC, to develop and implement transnational and transregional maritime security coordination centres covering the whole region of the Gulf of Guinea.

Presidential statement on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

On 14 August 2013, the Council adopted a presidential statement, in which it stressed the need to coordinate efforts at the national and regional levels for the implementation of the regional strategy on maritime safety and security and the

importance of adopting a comprehensive approach led by countries in the region against piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea. In this connection, the Council welcomed the initiatives already taken by the countries in the region, inter alia, the holding of the Heads of States and Governments of the Gulf of Guinea Summit on maritime safety and security in Yaoundé in June, the adoption of the “Code of Conduct concerning the Prevention and Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illegal Maritime Activities in West and Central Africa” as well as a “Political Declaration of the Gulf of Guinea Heads of State and Government on Maritime Safety and Security” and the “Memorandum of Understanding” among ECCAS, ECOWAS and the GGC on “Maritime Safety and Security in West and Central Africa”. Furthermore, it welcomed the decision to establish in Cameroon an inter-regional coordination centre responsible for coordinating the implementation of the regional strategy for maritime safety and security. The Council also reiterated its call upon States to criminalize piracy and armed robbery under domestic law and to investigate and prosecute consistent with international law. In this regard, the Council urged States, international organizations and the private sector to share evidence, information and intelligence, as appropriate, for law enforcement purposes.¹⁵

¹⁵ [S/PRST/2013/13](#).

Meetings: peace consolidation in West Africa

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.6703 16 January 2012	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2011/811)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWA	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWA	
S/PV.6723 27 February 2012	Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea Letter dated 18 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/45)		Benin, Congo, Nigeria	Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Special representative of the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States Commission, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Gulf of Guinea Commission	All Council members and all invitees	
S/PV.6727 29 February 2012	Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea Letter dated 18 January 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/45)	Draft resolution submitted by Benin, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Morocco, South Africa, Togo, United States (S/2012/122)	Benin			Resolution 2039 (2012) 15-0-0
S/PV.6804 11 July 2012	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2012/510)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWA, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	All invitees	
S/PV.6911 25 January 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office			Special Representative of the Secretary-General	Special Representative of the Secretary-	

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
	for West Africa (S/2012/977)				General	
S/PV. 6995 10 July 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2013/384)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General	Special Representative of the Secretary-General	
S/PV. 7016 14 August 2013						S/PRST/2013/13
S/PV. 7087 17 December 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2013/732)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General	Special Representative of the Secretary-General	