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For each topic area, Representatives should consider the following questions. These questions should assist Representatives in gaining a better understanding of the issues at hand, particularly from your country's perspective:

- How did this conflict begin? Is this a new conflict or a reignition of a previous conflict?
- How have similar situations and conflicts been solved peacefully?
- What State and regional actors are involved in this conflict?
- If there are non-State actors involved in a conflict, are there any States supporting them? If so, which ones?

## THE SITUATION IN THE SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

The end of the Sudanese civil war did not mean an end to hostilities in the region. Three peacekeeping missions in Sudan are currently addressing unresolved issues from the conflict and unrest caused by the independence of South Sudan: the United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

Recent events in Darfur have increased security concerns for civilians and UNAMID forces. Four rebel movements have combined to form the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), adopting a political platform for a national approach to the many conflicts in Sudan, with economic stagnation topping the list of concerns. Nearly two million people are internally displaced from this ongoing conflict and the increase in overall violence in Darfur has caused further deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

The resolution of competing territorial claims to Abyei remains unresolved, yet the security situation there has largely improved since the deployment of UNISFA. Failed referendums in both 2012 and 2013 add to growing concerns over the border region's long-term stability. Further, both Sudan and South Sudan retain armed forces in Abyei and are in direct violation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement on Temporary Security and Administrative Arrangements for the Abyei Area.

Approaching its third year of independence, Africa's youngest State, South Sudan, faces multiple challenges. Planning for the 2015 elections remains behind schedule, with President Salva Kiir blaming timing and funding issues. While the relationship with Sudan shows glimpses of progress, internally President Kiir has faced mass upheaval. Intercommunal conflict in 2013 brought the attention of the Security Council, which passed a resolution calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and endorsing the Secretary-General's recommendation for UNMISS to increase its presence and humanitarian efforts. A February 2014 UNMISS report highlighted human rights violations

and estimated the death toll to be in the thousands. Others report findings include allegations of rebel forces engaging in ethnically targeted killings.

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## THE SITUATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Following the Second Congo War (1998-2003), rebel groups sought refuge in the east with tacit support from neighboring countries, leading to increased instability in the region. During the war, the Security Council established the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to monitor ceasefire agreements between the warring factions. As foreign armies pulled out of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, violence increased. Militant factions merged, split and evolved over time, creating significant instability in the eastern provinces of Orientale, North Kivu and South Kivu. In July 2010, the United Nations Organization and Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) replaced MONUC. The change emphasized the political aspects of the



mandate and reinforced the Mission's mandate to support the Congolese government, political stabilization and peace efforts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In late 2012, M23, a group that had splintered from the rebel group National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), launched an offensive that led to the brief occupation of Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, near the border with Rwanda. The shifting security situation required greater peacekeeping forces, necessitating a change in the MONUSCO mandate. The Security Council shifted the mandate to encompass protecting civilians and monitoring human rights abuses, including active pursuit of armed groups operating within the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In November 2013, United Nations and Congolese forces defeated M23 and signed a peace deal. MONUSCO and Congolese forces began working in eastern Congo to quell violence. United Nations Special Representative for Congo, Martin Kobler, stated that his peacekeepers were working diligently to root out the rest of the rebel forces, but he noted they were unlikely to be eliminated by military means alone. The government has continued to work with MONUSCO to restore state authority to retrieved areas and begin dialogues with neighboring counties to promote stability. However, while the security situation has greatly improved, the humanitarian situation has remained precarious.

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## THE SITUATION IN THE UKRAINE

Unrest in Ukraine began as an internal political conflict in late 2013. Ukrainian President Yanukovich's rejection of a trade deal with the European Union in November 2013 set off anti-government protests in the capital of Kyiv. Peaceful protest turned violent when government forces attacked protesters on 30 November, leading to dozens of injuries. Opposition forces called for the resignation of President Yanukovich. Instead, he brokered a \$15 billion aid deal with Russia in hopes of quelling the uprising. The conflict reached a critical point in late February when Yanukovich fled the country, leaving opposition forces in control of Kyiv. The Ukrainian Parliament voted to remove him from office, but Yanukovich rejected this decision from exile in Russia. Ukrainian nationalists mobilized their own forces in opposition to Yanukovich's insistence that he was still in charge of the country.

The crisis took on an international focus over the region of Crimea. Armed and uniformed gunman began seizing government buildings in Crimea while rallies erupted calling for Crimea to secede from Ukraine and rejoin the Russian Federation. The Russian Parliament granted President Vladimir Putin the authority to use military force to restore order in the region. On 1 March 2014, the new Ukrainian government mobilized reserve troops, threatening war if Russia intervened. Russian nationalists in Crimea hastily scheduled a referendum for 16 March. The Security Council discussed a draft resolution to declare the elections invalid, but the Russian Federation vetoed the resolution. The referendum was held as scheduled with voters overwhelmingly choosing to join Russia. Since the referendum, the government of Russia has recognized Crimea as Russian territory.

Working in Geneva, the European Union, Russia and the United States agreed on a pact to end the crisis. However, violence intensified in Eastern Ukraine as pro-Russian gunmen refused to relinquish command over government buildings. Rebels in Donetsk and Luhansk declared the creation of the independent State of Novorossiya in May 2014. Ukrainian forces attempted to quell the unrest, but pressure by pro-Russian rebels succeeded in driving them from the region by the end of April. Russia has called for an emergency session of the Security Council over the continued fighting in the region. As of early May, no meeting had taken place.

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## THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Late 2012 saw the destruction of nearly a decade of stability in the Central African Republic when a loose coalition of rebels, calling itself Séléka, began an offensive against the government of President François Bozizé. In January 2013, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) held peace talks, resulting in the Libreville Agreements



which formalized a power-sharing arrangement and established a national unity government. This government was composed of members of Séléka and supporters of President Bozizé. The new government lasted a few short months before fighting resumed. President Bozizé was ousted on 24 March 2013 and fled the nation. Michel Djotodia, First Deputy Prime Minister for National Defense and a prominent leader of Séléka, declared himself President, suspended the constitution and dissolved the unity government. The African Union's Peace and Security Council condemned the seizure of power, and the United Nations Security Council released a statement calling for the Libreville Agreements to continue to be the framework for a peaceful solution.

Fighting continued throughout 2013 despite President Djotodia announcing the disbanding of Séléka in September 2013. In October 2013, the Security Council updated the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office (BINUCA) to support the transition process and stabilize the security situation. Resolution 2121 also authorized BINUCA to increase its field presence as security conditions allowed. With increased violence, militia groups re-emerged and increased their attacks against local communities, including Muslim communities. In his 15 November report, the Secretary-General noted concern about the religious and ethnic violence in the country and the severe humanitarian situation that displaced more than 400,000 persons internally and an additional 66,000 refugees.

In December the Security Council authorized the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission (MISCA) for one year and authorized the 1,600 French forces, launched in Operation Sangaris, to take all necessary measures to support MISCA. Additionally, the resolution called for a one year arms embargo, except for arms that would help MISCA fulfill its mandate. In January 2014, the Security Council extended the mandate of BINUCA until 31 January 2015 and authorized the European Union to deploy troops to the country. The deployment took place after the international community encouraged Djotodia and Prime Minister Tiangaye to step down for failing to establish authority in the country.

Despite strong international involvement, revenge attacks continue. Talks of sanctions on individuals have failed due to Chinese and Russian reluctance. The Security Council passed Resolution 2149 in April establishing the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which will incorporate BINUCA and MISCA by the end of September. The United Nations Director of Humanitarian Operations has commented that the short timeframe and lack of troops has allowed the situation to deteriorate, and that peacekeeping troops need to be mobilized more quickly to protect civilians in the future.

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## THE SITUATION IN MALI

The current unrest in Mali began in early 2012 when a group of Tuaregs led a rebellion and declared an independent State of Azawad, an area that comprises nearly sixty percent of Mali. At nearly the same time, Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré was overthrown in a coup d'état by the Malian military a month before elections were scheduled. The conflict became more complicated as rebel groups fractured and Islamist forces joined the fighting, seizing areas of the desert. In December 2012, the Security Council passed resolution 2085 authorizing the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). The mission was to be composed of neighboring nations and members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Resolution 2100 switched AFISMA from an African operation to the United Nations-led United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). MINUSMA took over on 1 July 2013 and France began to withdraw its troops.

Following a peaceful presidential election in August 2013, President Boubacar Keita was sworn in on 4 September. The ceremony was accompanied by a French announcement that the war against Islamic extremists in the country had been won but that France would maintain forces in the country as long as the threat continued. The Secretary-General called on the new government to focus on the troubling humanitarian crisis in the country as MINUSMA and French troops worked to improve the security situation in the state against Islamic extremists who were still fighting. Peaceful and transparent elections were held in November and December, marking a positive turn. However, a Security Council mission in February 2014 noted that the stalled dialogue for a peace settlement was likely to threaten the progress already achieved. Battles against Islamists have continued, with French troops taking the lead. In April, the entire government resigned in a letter to President Keita with the hope that the government would make good on its word to revive long-delayed peace talks. Nine were killed in separatist battles at the end of April, making the success of the peace talks imperative to a future long-term settlement.

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## THE SITUATION IN SYRIA

Civilian protests began in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2011 and were met with harsh repression by the Syrian government under long-reigning President Bashar al-Assad. Civilians began taking up arms against the government beginning a civil war in which over 160,000 Syrians have died as of May 2014. Despite occasional signs of consolidation, the opposition has been fragmented even though most are Sunni Muslim, the majority religion in Syria. Kurdish rebel groups are also engaged in the conflict, seizing the opportunity to fight for an independent Kurdish State.

On 23 February 2013 former Secretary-General and Joint Special Envoy of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and League of Arab States Kofi Annan introduced a six-point plan that required the government and rebels to actively work toward peace. The United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) was established by the passage of Security Council Resolution 2043 in April, ushering in a brief ceasefire. By the second month of UNSMIS deployment, fighting had expanded beyond pre-ceasefire levels. UNSMIS saw its activities constantly hampered by government and opposition forces. As the initial 90-day UNSMIS mandate drew close to expiring, the Security Council passed Resolution 2059, allowing UNSMIS 30 days to wind down its operations. Shortly thereafter Mr. Annan resigned from his position, and Lakhdar Brahimi was appointed to replace him. Fighting continued to escalate with heavy weapons such as cluster bombs, rockets and gunships; international concerns centered on the potential and rumored use of sarin gas and other chemical and biological weapons. After an August attack in Damascus by Syrian forces, U.S. President Barack Obama stated that he had evidence that chemical weapons had been used, but that it was inconclusive as to which side had used them. In September 2013, Resolution 2118 passed, ordering the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons after a decision by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. By November, all but one of Syria's declared chemical weapons sites had been verified.

Talks between rebel groups and the Syrian government on how to end the Syrian Civil War were held in January and February, but ended without achieving more than a ceasefire in the city of Homs. In February 2014, the Security Council passed Resolution 2139, demanding that government and opposition forces allow humanitarian aid to

reach beleaguered citizens. Since then, two reports from Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos indicate that neither side has accommodated aid deliveries and that fighting has continued, making the humanitarian situation worse. Amos urged the Security Council to take stronger action. In response, France stated that stronger measures would be tough and would likely invite a Russian veto.

Violence continued in early May with bombings in the cities of Aleppo and Hama. The brutality of the bombings that killed dozens of people, including a large number of children, has jeopardized the ceasefire agreement in Homs, which was not announced as scheduled. The agreement was expected to be a victory for President Assad ahead of the scheduled 3 June elections in which Assad is expected to win another term.

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