



# Security Council

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## **Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country**

### **I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the Security Council contained in the statement issued by its President on 26 September 2001 (S/PRST/2001/25), in which the Council requested me to keep it regularly informed about the situation in the Central African Republic and about the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (BONUCA).

2. The report provides an update on the political, security, socio-economic, humanitarian and human rights developments in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) (which succeeded BONUCA on 1 January 2010) since my previous report dated 10 June 2010 (S/2010/295). It also provides an update on efforts to strengthen the ongoing integration process and to mobilize resources for the effective functioning of the Office.

### **II. Political situation**

3. During the reporting period, the political situation in the Central African Republic remained stable as preparations started for the first round of the presidential and legislative elections set for 23 January 2011. The electoral process and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, which are two key recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue of December 2008, are aimed at bringing all politico-military movements into the political process in order to restore security and promote national reconciliation. Despite the relative political calm, there are reports of sporadic violence and insecurity in the north and south-east of the country owing to the activities of rebel groups that are not yet part of the political process, as well as those of other domestic and foreign armed groups and criminals. The continued weakness and absence of effective administrative and security institutions of the State beyond the capital remains a major constraint.

4. During the same period, the Follow-up Committee on the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue continued to meet and report on political,



governance, security and socio-economic issues. At its sessions held on 27 July and on 27 and 28 September 2010, the Committee reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue.

5. On 29 September, the Committee reported that no further recommendations had been implemented, fully or partially, in between the two sessions. Therefore, out of a total of 116 recommendations adopted by the inclusive political dialogue, 43 have now been fully implemented and 15 partially implemented. The bulk of the unimplemented or partially implemented recommendations relate to the Government's obligations in the security sector.

6. From 30 August to 4 September, the Committee deployed rapporteurs to 12 out of the country's 16 regions. Owing to insecurity, the missions could not visit the Vakaga or Haute Kotto regions in the north-east of the country. The missions' reports specifically covered the electoral process, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the poverty reduction strategy paper and good governance. The rapporteurs highlighted the absence of State institutions in many areas outside the capital and apathy towards the upcoming elections. The missions uncovered a pattern of incidents of corruption by State institutions and asserted that such endemic corruption is a major obstacle to the promotion of sustainable socio-economic development.

7. The Government took an important first step in attempting to improve the situation in the Vakaga region, in the north-east, which has been insecure as a result of political and ethnic tensions and the activities of poachers, bandits and armed groups, including, recently, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). On 6 September, five senior Government Ministers visited Birao, the administrative capital of the Vakaga region, to lead a reconciliation ceremony among the Gula, Kara, Yulu, Haussa, Sara, Runga and Arab ethnic groups coexisting in the region.

## **Elections**

8. Since the expiry of the presidential term on 11 June 2010, as stipulated in the Constitution, President François Bozizé has been ruling the Central African Republic under the terms of the constitutional amendment passed by the National Assembly on 10 May, which extended the terms of office of the President and the National Assembly until such time as elections are held. On 30 July, President Bozizé issued a presidential decree setting 23 January 2011 as the date for the first round of the presidential and legislative elections.

9. At a meeting with my Special Representative on 2 August, President Bozizé stated that the long postponement of the elections was owing to the pressing need to make adequate preparations and to overcome logistical constraints during the rainy season, when many parts of the country become inaccessible over land.

10. On 10 August, the Independent Electoral Commission, supported by all political factions, civil society and the six entities of the inclusive political dialogue, agreed on a revised consensual electoral timetable based on the presidential decree. That timetable established dates for voter registration, the nomination of candidates and a possible second round of presidential and legislative elections, to be held on 20 March 2011. That timetable was further elaborated on and amended on 18 August at a meeting of the Elections Steering Committee, which was co-chaired by my Special Representative and the President of the Independent Electoral Commission.

11. The beginning of the preparations for elections witnessed the easing of some social tensions in Bangui, as salary arrears were paid to telecommunications workers, and the traditional strike action in the education sector coinciding with the start of the school year in September was also averted.

12. In preparation for the commencement of the voter registration process, the Independent Electoral Commission, with support from international experts, organized on 8 and 9 September a two-day train-the-trainers workshop for its commissioners. The commissioners in turn trained local electoral committee members and voter registration workers, who started the voter registration exercise throughout the country on 22 September. In 5 out of the 79 districts, that process experienced delays of up to one week because of security concerns and logistical difficulties. On a separate note, in September, some political leaders were occasionally prevented from travelling outside the capital, thus diminishing their ability to campaign.

13. The voter registration process started slowly, and the Central African Republic's Observatoire national des élections and the National Democratic Institute noted a low degree of involvement by the political parties and local civil society leaders, including community and traditional leaders. The Observatoire national des élections also reported that the procedures for voter registration were not being uniformly applied and that local administrative authorities were interfering in the work of the local electoral committees.

14. The Elections Steering Committee subsequently concluded that there was a further need to raise voters' awareness and proposed a number of measures to mobilize civil society to participate more actively in the electoral process. The Independent Electoral Commission also made a national appeal to members of its local committees to improve their performance in implementing their mandates. The voter registration process was completed on 21 October, and preliminary results, disclosed by the President of the Independent Electoral Commission, indicate that 70 to 75 per cent of the voting population had registered.

15. On 19 October, President Bozizé convened a meeting with national and international stakeholders to discuss progress and challenges with regard to the electoral process during which he expressed concerns over possible delays in the preparation for the elections by the Independent Electoral Commission. The President also urged stakeholders to assist by putting the electoral process back on track and provided the following guidelines: switching from a computerized to a manual electoral roll and shortening the period for the nomination of candidates. He also discussed the redrawing of the boundaries of electoral constituencies for the legislative elections and decided to return to the 2005 decree. On 27 October, presidential decrees were issued, which further amended the boundaries of electoral constituencies. These decrees, taking into account a decision by the Conseil d'État on 28 September, abrogated decrees issued earlier in March that had increased the number of electoral constituencies used for the 2005 elections and modified their boundaries. In addition, the period for the registration of candidates was amended to be carried out from 28 October to 8 November 2010 instead of 8 November to 8 December 2010.

16. On 21 and 26 October, the "Collectif des forces du changement", a coalition of opposition parties, issued statements rejecting the decisions of the President of the Independent Electoral Commission, including the use of a manual electoral roll, as

non-consensual, calling for his resignation on the grounds of alleged mismanagement of public funds and requesting the publication of the audit report of the Independent Electoral Commission. The coalition also threatened to withdraw from the Independent Electoral Commission if its demands were not met. My Special Representative conducted extensive consultations with all national stakeholders, including the Prime Minister, the main political leaders and the Médiateur de la République, as well as with international partners to bridge positions and build consensus. At the time of the writing of the present report, six candidates, including President Bozizé, former President Ange-Félix Patassé, and Jean-Jacques Demafouth, leader of the politico-military movement Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie (APRD), had registered for the presidential elections.

17. The elections suffered a funding gap which has now been closed thanks to various contributions and pledges, including those from the European Union, the United Nations, the African Union and bilateral European and African donor countries. However, some pledges are yet to materialize in actual transfers to the basket fund, which is managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The basket fund is specifically designed to finance activities as envisaged in the *Projet D'appui au cycle Électoral en République Centrafricaine*.

#### **Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration**

18. Despite different levels of commitment to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process by the various politico-military movements, implementation of the programme has been severely undermined by tensions related to the electoral process, continued insecurity and limited access to outlying regions of the country during the rainy season, as well as the absence of a reintegration strategy. In addition, the work of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Steering Committee has been hindered by tensions which have developed between the representatives in the Committee and the leadership in the field of some of the politico-military groups.

19. On 24 June, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Steering Committee agreed to begin the verification of the lists of combatants of the politico-military movements which are committed to the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue. The Steering Committee approved the deployment of two missions to the north-west and north-east of the country where most of the combatants to be verified are located. Representatives of the politico-military movements in the Steering Committee agreed to these missions after the Government released funds for the payment of food stipends to former combatants.

20. The verification process in the north-west duly started on 9 August with the active commitment of the leaders of APRD and the Union des forces républicaines (UFR). Three groups of military observers, and one integrated police unit of the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX), the subregional peacekeeping force, deployed in the Nana Gribizi, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé regions, completed this phase of the verification process on 16 September. The military observers visited the camps of both APRD and UFR and verified 5,992 out of the 6,047 names submitted by the two groups. However, the number of military weapons identified has been worryingly low.

21. In the course of the verification process, the military observers were not able to visit the camps or verify the lists of combatants submitted by the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC), which has been weakened by internal divisions, as some elements reject the ongoing peace process. The future participation of FDPC in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is therefore not clear at present.

22. The verification mission to the Vakaga and Haute Kotto regions could not take place due to political and logistical reasons. The leadership of the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR) has been reluctant to engage in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, citing the high level of insecurity emanating from both external elements and local armed groups in their region. The Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (MLCJ) experienced a power struggle in July which temporarily led to a split in the movement.

23. The Government, for its part, is yet to develop a reintegration strategy for former combatants. The design and implementation of a solid reintegration strategy is a critical component for the success of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. The reintegration strategy should be implemented for the benefit of both communities affected by the conflict and individual combatants and should be developed in a way that will ensure coherence with ongoing and planned development activities.

#### **Security sector reform**

24. Security sector reform is also a key component of the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue. Implementation of the holistic agenda of security sector reform, which was adopted during the National Seminar that was held in April 2008, has been stalled since the inconclusive round table held in October 2009 and the departure of the multidisciplinary team of international experts in early 2010. The established security sector reform political and technical mechanisms are no longer active. The Government has expressed its readiness to reactivate the security sector reform agenda and to work in partnership with the donor community to that end.

25. BINUCA carries out regular training sessions for the police, the gendarmerie, and the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA). The Security Institutions Unit, recently established within BINUCA, will work with the national authorities and relevant international partners, to lay the foundations for the establishment and implementation of an updated security sector reform agenda.

### **III. Military and security situation**

26. The security situation remains volatile in parts of the country. While the situation around Bangui and the south-west of the country has been mostly calm, there has been some violence as a result of the lack of capacity of the national security forces in the north and east of the country, combined with the presence of rebel movements that are not part of the peace process, criminal gangs, including bandits, and heavily armed poachers. During the reporting period, no attacks were reported in the north-west of the country. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons, however, remains a challenge to security across the country.

27. Local community self-defence groups, together with rebel movements, notably UFDR and APRD, are de facto providing security against armed criminal gangs and foreign elements in large areas of the country where the poorly equipped FACA are not deployed or have little presence.

28. The Convention des patriots pour la justice et la paix (CPJP) remains outside the Libreville peace process, and there is still no information regarding the whereabouts of its leader, Charles Massi, who disappeared in December 2009. The Government has attempted unsuccessfully to reach out to the group. In September, the Minister Delegate in charge of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration carried out a mission to Ndélé with a view to engaging negotiations with the CPJP leadership, in vain. During the reporting period, CPJP extended its military control over territory in the north-east, including in the Bamingui-Bangoran and Vakaga regions southwards to the Haute Kotto region. CPJP temporarily seized control of the strategic towns of Yalinga in September and Ippy in October. The presence of CPJP north of Ndélé continues to create insecurity within the town and has led to the displacement of portions of the civilian population.

29. The security situation remains tense around the northern town of Kabo in the Ouham region where FDPC is active. There have been clashes in the areas of Kabo and Batangafo between FDPC hardliners and APRD, who have sometimes operated in coordination with FACA. Most commercial vehicles crossing between Kabo and the Chadian border are reportedly subjected to extortion demands by alleged members of FDPC. FACA carries out occasional patrols on the main road but does not control the area. In addition, the Chadian Front populaire pour le redressement (FPR) is still based north of Kaga Bandoro in the Nana-Grebizi region. The presence of the forces from APRD appears to have prevented FPR from attacking villages in the area.

30. Since its establishment in the Central African Republic in early 2008, LRA has burned many homes, looted food supplies, killed and kidnapped hundreds of civilians, and forced thousands to flee from their villages into the bush. A group of approximately 60 LRA fighters moved north from the south-eastern regions of Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou to the Haute Kotto and Vakaga regions. In attacks attributed to the group, in September and in October, an unspecified number of civilians, members of local community self-defence groups and LRA fighters were killed. The group reportedly took a dozen people as hostages, including two national staff members of the NGO, Triangle, one of whom escaped and the other killed. On 5 September, in Ouanda Djallé, 100 km south of Birao, at least 80 houses were burned down, and the marketplace and health centre were looted. Further attacks were reported on 27 and 30 September in the villages of Koumbal and Tiroungoulou, respectively, about 110 and 117 km south of Birao. On 10 October, an armed group believed to be LRA attacked Birao. The attack was repelled by FACA, supported by elements from MLCJ after the market had been looted and nine men, women and children had been taken hostage.

31. The Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF) continues to be based in the south-east of the country, in Obo and Djema, in an effort to combat LRA. In August, UPDF troops based in Sam Ouandja were withdrawn in a redeployment process. The Government of the Central African Republic is said to be working with Uganda to start downsizing the UPDF force in the territory of the former.

32. On 13 and 14 October, the African Union hosted a conference in Bangui to address the threat posed by LRA to the Central African Republic and neighbouring countries. The conference was attended by the Defence Ministers of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, as well as by representatives of the Sudan. The meeting resulted in a series of humanitarian, development and security-related recommendations which include: the formation of a joint operations centre and a joint brigade, and increased cooperation on border patrols. BINUCA provided logistical support to the conference and organized, on its margins, a meeting of participants representing United Nations missions in the region in order to facilitate better information sharing and coordination of political initiatives on the LRA threat to regional stability.

#### **IV. Socio-economic situation**

33. The macroeconomic performance of the Central African Republic remained satisfactory during 2010. The economy continues to recover following the gradual resumption of exports of timber and diamonds and the strengthening of domestic consumption. Real growth is expected to reach 3.3 per cent, up from 1.7 per cent in 2009. Reflecting good agricultural production, annual average inflation has fallen from 3.5 per cent in December 2009 to 0.1 per cent in August, and is expected to be contained at 1 per cent at the end of 2010. The external current account deficit is expected to deteriorate to 8.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) against 8 per cent in 2009 owing to higher imports of goods and services.

34. Fiscal data at the end of June 2010 indicate that budgetary performance has been strong, reflecting strengthened revenue collection efforts and prudent budget management. As a result, the domestic primary fiscal balance edged up in surplus against a programmed deficit of some 0.6 per cent of GDP. However, the domestic primary balance will revert to a deficit by year end (1.8 per cent of GDP) owing to the expected acceleration of expenditure late in the year, and extraordinary outlays for the preparation of the elections in early 2011.

35. For the year 2011, growth is projected to accelerate to 4.1 per cent with moderate inflation (approximately 2 per cent). Given projected revenue increases and a reduction in elections-related spending, the domestic primary fiscal deficit is expected to drop to near zero balance in 2011 if prudent budgetary management is upheld.

36. In spite of the progress made over recent years, as evidenced by the uninterrupted implementation of a medium-term programme supported by the International Monetary Fund, the country continues to face important challenges, including weak administrative capacity, below-potential growth, an undiversified export base and low domestic revenue to GDP ratio. These factors undermine efforts aimed at the provision of basic infrastructural and social services. It is therefore important to maintain the reform momentum, with the appropriate technical and financial support from the international community.

## V. Humanitarian situation

37. The humanitarian situation during the reporting period focused mainly on responding to the needs of 25,000 refugees and 192,000 internally displaced persons. The humanitarian space was characterized by several challenges, including: an increase in violent incidents and the threat of violence perpetrated by LRA in the eastern part of the country; criminality; logistical constraints; and the absence of State institutions in most of the country. In addition, crises caused by natural disasters had a negative impact on the humanitarian situation. Floods in Bossangoa in August and in Kouango in September resulted in the temporary displacement of residents.

38. The number of internally displaced persons increased in LRA-affected areas, especially in the Haut-Mbomou and Mbomou regions, where 32,000 people were displaced, 6,000 of whom are refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sites for internally displaced persons are concentrated in the five towns of Bangassou, Rafai, Zemio, Mboki and Obo. In Obo, the number of internally displaced persons has placed significant further strain on the already limited resources available to the local populations, including the ability to produce adequate supplies of food. In June and August, United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners provided emergency supplies and food for refugees and internally displaced persons in that area. Although the number of attacks by LRA has significantly decreased in these areas, internally displaced persons are still living in fear of renewed violence. It is therefore unlikely that they will return to their villages in the near future and before the start of the next agricultural season in early 2011. The United Nations country team has also provided assistance to other groups of refugees in the Central African Republic. For example, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) continue to provide assistance to 3,500 Sudanese refugees in Sam Ouandja, in the Haute Kotto region, and to 31,000 refugees and internally displaced persons in the south-western region of Lobaye affected by the ethnic-driven conflicts in the Équateur Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

39. Significant progress has been made in enhancing humanitarian access in conflict-affected areas. Access has now been restored to the areas north of Ndélé after restrictions on the distribution of humanitarian assistance, which had been perceived as support to CPJP, were lifted. From 10 to 17 July, my Special Representative on the Human Rights for Internally Displaced Persons, Dr. Walter Kälin, visited the Central African Republic, including the Ndélé area. The immediate outcomes of Dr. Kälin's visit were the formal approval by the Government to grant unrestricted access for humanitarian organizations everywhere in country, including in areas under the control of rebels. Further negotiations led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with non-State actors, including CPJP, have enabled United Nations agencies and NGOs to resume providing assistance to the 15,000 people directly affected by the ongoing conflict in the Bamingui-Bangoran region. However, on occasion, insecurity continues to have an impact on the provision of humanitarian assistance. In August, a UNDP and Peacebuilding Fund mission was blocked for several hours near Kabo by unidentified elements, and, in October, two other missions, led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-UNDP and MICOPAX, were also blocked at an unofficial check point in the surrounding areas.



of Bozoum and Paoua and threatened by APRD elements. These missions were ultimately authorized to continue after payment of money.

40. During the period under review, WFP also assisted with food commodities and complementary feeding for some 480,000 vulnerable and conflict-affected people. Logistical support to humanitarian activity was facilitated by the management by WFP of such support through the United Nations humanitarian air service, warehousing facilities and a fleet of transport trucks, which contributed to safe and reliable storage and movement of goods and personnel.

41. Funding in support of humanitarian assistance and early recovery programmes remains insufficient and unpredictable. The Common Humanitarian Fund has raised and disbursed \$6 million to date, while the Central Emergency Response Fund provided for the immediate needs of the 18,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo based in the south of the Central African Republic through an additional \$3 million. In July, the Emergency Relief Coordinator granted the Central African Republic another \$3 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund for underfunded emergencies. As at 28 October 2010, only \$64 million had been mobilized through the Consolidated Appeal Process covering less than 45 per cent of the \$145 million needed. Underfunding for shelter, health, education, protection and early recovery is of particular concern.

## **VI. Operational activities in support of recovery and development**

42. The United Nations country team has continued its active engagement to address immediate challenges, including protection and food insecurity and longer-term recovery and development issues, including the fight against HIV/AIDS.

43. In the framework of its school feeding programme, WFP continued to contribute food to provide school meals towards meeting the nutritional needs of 233,000 schoolchildren during the academic year that opened in September.

44. In the health sector, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported the Government in organizing a national campaign to address the yellow fever epidemics that started in 2009. The first phase of that campaign was undertaken in July and early August in 12 health districts across the country and immunized 1.5 million people. The second phase, aimed at immunizing an additional 1.7 million people, took place from 15 to 21 November in the north-western and central Ouham, Ouham Pende, Kemo, Ouaka, and Nana Gribizi regions, and will resume from 17 to 23 January 2011 in the north-western and south-eastern regions of Vakaga, Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute Kotto, Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou. In August, WHO provided support to the Government for the vaccination of 400,000 people nationwide against influenza A (H1N1).

45. The Central African Republic is still among the countries most affected by HIV/AIDS, with a prevalence rate of 6.2 per cent, and approximately 160,000 people currently estimated to be living with HIV. Out of 39,000 people eligible to receive antiretroviral drugs, approximately 15,000 are receiving treatment. The national AIDS commission is currently working on a new national strategic plan for the period 2011-2015, and in August, the HIV/AIDS programme of UNICEF supported the development of the Government's proposal to Round 10 of the Global

Fund to Fight AIDS, which aims to address the needs of the most vulnerable women and children. A total of 55 doctors in key prevention positions around the country were trained on the new WHO guidelines on antiretroviral treatment, and 660 young peer educators were trained in the Youth Houses in Paoua and Bossangoa to reinforce primary prevention among the youth. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is also working with local NGOs to distribute 2.8 million contraceptives.

46. Malaria remains a serious threat to the population. In an effort to protect the population from the disease, in particular children and pregnant women, UNICEF and partners have carried out a countrywide distribution of mosquito nets.

47. In the education sector, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in establishing reforms and new policies to improve the quality of education in the country. One element of the new reforms involves the revision of existing laws on education to increase access to better education in a safe environment. UNICEF is also working on supporting the Government to develop human resources management in order to ensure the deployment of qualified teachers for schools.

48. For its part, UNFPA supports the Government efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goal of reducing maternal and neonatal mortality, including through the establishment of a mechanism to track maternal fatalities across the country. During the reporting period, UNFPA also provided technical and financial support to launch the population census scheduled for 2013.

49. With the support of the European Union, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is implementing a comprehensive programme combining aspects of emergency interventions, such as the distribution of tools and seeds and longer-term development measures, including seed production and the strengthening of the management capacities of groups of farmers. These projects are aimed at improving the livelihood of 18,000 farmers and their families.

50. In order to meet its commitments under the poverty reduction strategy paper, UNDP supported the efforts of the Government to assess its environmental priorities and raise awareness of environmental issues.

## **VII. Human rights and rule of law**

51. Since my previous report, BINUCA has observed serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by FACA, domestic and foreign armed groups and self-defence groups, particularly in conflict-affected areas in the north of the country. The victims are often women, children and other vulnerable groups, including refugees and internally displaced persons. Displacement, criminality and sporadic fighting between Government forces and armed groups, as well as the extreme poverty of the population, have created a protection crisis, which is accentuated by the lack of capacity of the judiciary. The human rights situation has also been characterized by widespread impunity, including among the security forces and law enforcement agents, especially the “Office centrafricain de répression du banditisme”.

52. Non-State actors have established parallel justice and administration systems in several regions, including in Bamingui-Bangoran, Nana-Gribizi, Ouham, Ouham-Pende and Vakaga. In these regions, illegal arrests and detentions, infringement of prisoners’ rights, torture and ill-treatment, summary and extrajudicial killing,

recruitment and use of children by armed forces and sexual and gender-based violence, are widespread, together with mob justice and accusations of witchcraft, often targeting young girls or elderly women.

53. Addressing sexual and gender-based violence has remained a challenge in several regards owing to the social stigmatization associated with rape cases and cultural and traditional practices. This environment has prevented victims from reporting cases, or even discussing them, for fear of reprisals from the perpetrators and their families, particularly in a rural environment. The national authorities appear generally unable or unwilling to act in cases of sexual and gender-based violence or to hold the perpetrators accountable. These challenges have contributed to perpetuating a cycle of impunity with respect to cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

54. To address these human rights challenges, BINUCA has continued to carry out systematic investigations and to take the lead on human rights training and capacity-building activities, including the provision of technical advice to civil society and governmental entities at the national and local levels.

55. BINUCA also increased its human rights monitoring activities in prisons and other detention facilities, through investigations and follow-up visits, and provided legal advice to the population on how to access justice. The provision of financing from the Peacebuilding Fund for the construction of two prisons in Bria and Bouca should help in addressing the chronic overcrowding in the prison system.

56. In addition, BINUCA has enhanced its advisory activities by interacting with national and local authorities to seek protection solutions for individuals in situations of risk and to build the capacities of community leaders and groups to access justice.

57. BINUCA has also promoted the need for an enhanced presence of FACA in LRA-affected areas to ensure the effective protection of civilians in those areas. In September, the Government established an Inter-Ministerial Task Force to better coordinate humanitarian and protection efforts and to seek external support to address the LRA issue. In June, BINUCA and UNICEF facilitated the participation of the Central African authorities at the N'Djamena Conference on ending the recruitment and use of children in armed forces and armed groups. At that meeting, the Government committed to upholding the terms of the N'Djamena Declaration, which called for an end to the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and for the release and reintegration of children. A high-level meeting of the Follow-up Committee for the N'Djamena Declaration took place in Bangui from 26 to 27 October and provided the opportunity to discuss the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan of the Declaration.

58. Furthermore, with a view to implementing the measures tabled before the Human Rights Council during the review of the human rights reports on the Central African Republic in May 2009, the Government, on 27 September, signed the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, covering specifically the involvement of children in armed conflict and child pornography, prostitution and trafficking.

59. In addition, with the support of the Executive Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the assistance of BINUCA, the Permanent National Committee of the International Conference produced a draft law

to incorporate the provisions of the Great Lakes Protocol on the prevention and repression of sexual violence against women and children. The Government has also enacted an Inter-Ministerial decree that introduced human rights and international humanitarian law modules into the training curriculum for the defence and security forces.

60. With regard to the rule of law and the administration of justice, UNDP, through its “Projet de renforcement de l’État de droit” (PRED) and with financing from the Peacebuilding Fund, supported courts and tribunals with training of magistrates and judicial police officers.

## VIII. Gender issues

61. Since my previous report dated 10 June 2010, my Special Representative continued to provide support to efforts taken by the Government and civil society organizations to promote women’s political participation and to contribute to reducing sexual and gender-based violence, in compliance with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), as well as with the national action plan for the implementation of the national gender policy.

62. The difficult conditions for women in the Central African Republic are exacerbated by extreme poverty, compounded by instability and insecurity, which limit the prospects for socio-economic development, and which in turn prevent any broad improvement in raising awareness on issues affecting women, including on sexual violence. Since the inclusive political dialogue in December 2008, the Government and civil society organizations, including women’s organizations, have made strong efforts to promote gender equality and equity with the support of international partners, including the United Nations. Despite these efforts, much remains to be done.

63. In an effort to raise awareness at the political level, UNFPA has worked closely with the Government on a number of initiatives, including the adoption by the Council of Ministers of the report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the ongoing examination and revision of the Family Code.

64. On 13 September, my Special Representative met with Brigitte Touadera, the wife of the Prime Minister and Secretary-General of Ruban Blanc, a national NGO working on maternal health, to discuss the work of the NGO and the support that could be provided by BINUCA. Preparations are ongoing to carry out a public awareness campaign in the provinces on maternal mortality.

65. BINUCA continues to work with a number of partners to address both the political representation of women and to advance women’s rights, including protection. As part of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, BINUCA and UNFPA provided support to the Government to organize a workshop from 19 to 22 October for representatives of the Government, civil society and United Nations agencies to review the implementation of the resolution in the Central African Republic and to develop strategies to intensify implementation prospects in the future.

## **IX. Child protection**

66. During the reporting period, sporadic fighting and prevailing criminality, especially in the north-eastern and south-eastern regions, have led to further displacements, thus increasing protection challenges of children who often live in extreme poverty and have no access to basic services.

67. Insecurity has also severely hampered the capacity of the United Nations to monitor and report on grave violations committed against children, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, which continues to be of serious concern. Due to a lack of human and financial resources, the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict, established by Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), was not fully operational. However, representatives of United Nations agencies continued to meet regularly, under the leadership of BINUCA and UNICEF, to strengthen the monitoring and reporting mechanism and ensure that it is operational in 2011.

68. With support from UNICEF and funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, 1,846 war-affected children, including 432 children who were formerly associated with armed groups in the north, participated in activities to reduce vulnerability to recruitment into armed forces and armed groups, including life skills training, non-formal education, and individual counselling and income-generating activities.

## **X. Relations between the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad**

69. BINUCA continued to provide political support for the operations of MINURCAT in the Central African Republic and, from 4 to 6 September, my Special Representative visited MINURCAT forward headquarters in Abéché to discuss support to the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the ongoing inter-ethnic reconciliation process and security arrangements in the north-east after the withdrawal of MINURCAT forces.

70. From 25 September to 4 October, a joint mission of the Department of Safety and Security, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, MINURCAT and BINUCA visited N'Djamena, the Vakaga prefecture and Bangui to assess the security threats and risks associated with the withdrawal of MINURCAT, and also to provide an assessment of the post-MINURCAT situation. The main conclusions of that assessment were presented to the Security Council by my Special Representative for MINURCAT, Youssef Mahmoud, on 20 October. He stressed the extreme weakness of the FACA detachment in Birao and the decrease in inter-ethnic tensions, and indicated that domestic and foreign armed and criminal groups represented a greater threat to security and stability in the north-east than the Lord's Resistance Army.

71. BINUCA has encouraged and provided technical assistance to the Government to elaborate a credible needs assessment for FACA to be deployed in the Vakaga prefecture. The assessment was transmitted to the Security Council for consideration on 15 October. BINUCA has also encouraged the Government to reach out to bilateral partners to build the capacity of FACA.

72. MINURCAT responded to requests from BINUCA for logistical and air support. On 16 and 17 July, MINURCAT facilitated the transportation of a delegation of the Disarmament, Demobilization And Reintegration Steering Committee to Birao and Tiringoulou for the official launching of the campaign to sensitize the population on the verification of lists of ex-combatants. The lack of access to MINURCAT air assets following the end of that Mission's mandate will have a negative impact on the ability of BINUCA to deliver on its mandate in the north-east of the country. In addition, the proposed establishment of a BINUCA regional office in Birao would involve significant logistical and security challenges.

## **XI. Activities of the Peacebuilding Commission**

73. The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration on the Central African Republic, the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Jan Grauls, visited Bangui from 9 to 12 June. Discussions focused mainly on the electoral process, security sector reform, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the follow-up to the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue, justice sector reform, and the way forward on the review of the strategic framework for peacebuilding in the Central African Republic.

74. During the reporting period, the Peacebuilding Commission held three meetings on the Central African Republic devoted to: justice sector reform, in the presence of Laurent Ngon Baba, the Minister of Justice; elections; and the situation of internally displaced persons, during which my Special Representative on the Human Rights for Internally Displaced Persons, gave a briefing on his recent mission to the country. The Peacebuilding Commission also contributed significantly to efforts by the broader international community to raise funds to cover the gap in the electoral budget.

75. The Chair pursued the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission to bring together partners in support of the Central African Republic. In particular, he undertook three visits to the World Bank to promote increased cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission and to achieve greater coherence and effectiveness in their respective actions. These sustained demarches resulted in the holding of a high-level event, on the margins of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit on 20 September 2010, to address peacebuilding and development challenges in the country. Co-organized by the Peacebuilding Commission and the World Bank, the event was also attended by: President Bozizé; Obiageli Ezekwesili, World Bank Vice-President for the Africa Region; Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; several high-level representatives of Member States and of regional and subregional organizations; as well as my Special Representative. At that meeting, I noted the considerable challenges the country faced in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. I commended the Government's decision to request to be added to the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission and encouraged it to continue demonstrating ownership. In recognition of the strengthened partnership between the Peacebuilding Commission and the World Bank, the latter announced an exceptional additional support from the International Development Association in the amount of \$20 million to accelerate the delivery of a new agricultural project in the Central African Republic. The World Bank also announced its readiness to contribute to the organization of a future donors' round table to be convened after the successful holding of elections.

## **XII. Peacebuilding Fund**

76. The implementation of projects approved by the Peacebuilding Fund under its first \$10 million allocation is almost complete, with an average implementation rate of 88 per cent.

77. In Paoua and Ndelé, mobile legal clinics and training of paralegal personnel have continued to improve access to justice in rural areas. The participation of women in conflict resolution processes was enhanced through micro-credit activities and training in conflict resolution and human rights. In the areas of youth employment and job creation, the Fund supported the revival of training centres in Bozoum, Bossangoa and Bria to help build human capital and enhance youth employment. Community recovery support was provided in the major conflict-affected areas through the strengthening of associations involved in income-generating activities and socio-economic reinsertion. These peace dividends have generated public confidence in the peacebuilding process. Two community radio stations have been set up in Birao and Paoua to increase awareness of the peacebuilding process.

78. The implementation of projects under the \$20 million second allocation of the Peacebuilding Fund, which I approved in January 2010, is proceeding smoothly. The Joint Steering Committee has started the approval of individual projects, in line with key peacebuilding priorities, as set forth in the revised priority plan. This second phase focuses in particular on the areas of security sector reform, rule of law and the delivery of peace dividends in targeted conflict-affected areas.

79. The United Nations Office for Project Services will implement two projects for the reconstruction of barracks and prisons, as an important precondition for professional functioning of the military and police forces. In the area of rule of law, projects implemented by UNDP and UNHCR will focus on justice reform and strengthening justice delivery in conflict-affected areas.

80. In addition, two FAO projects were approved in support of youth employment and revitalization of the economy in areas that have been heavily affected by conflict. Support will be provided in particular to enable the economic integration of young farmers and the revitalization of agricultural activities for 5,570 rural families.

## **XIII. Integration and common United Nations vision for the Central African Republic**

81. The United Nations has advanced the integration process since BINUCA was established on 1 January 2010. The Policy and Coordination Group, which brings together the leadership of BINUCA and the United Nations country team, has completed the drafting of an integrated strategic framework, which projects a shared vision of the strategic objectives of the United Nations in support of the country's progress towards peace consolidation. The agreed objectives at the country level are: security sector reform, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; good governance and rule of law; support to the restoration of State authority throughout the national territory; and improvement of basic services and community-based recovery.

82. The integrated strategic framework has been closely aligned with the country's national priorities and the Peacebuilding Commission strategic framework for

peacebuilding. It includes a set of agreed results to be achieved by BINUCA and the United Nations country team in 2011, with defined timelines and responsibilities for the delivery of agreed tasks critical to consolidating peace, including agreed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

#### **XIV. Mission Support**

83. Mission Support has worked to enhance the capacity of BINUCA through a reduction in the vacancy rate from 45 per cent in June to 22 per cent in October through the recruitment of substantive and mission support personnel. To further enhance its activities during the reporting period, BINUCA has requisitioned a further \$2.5 million of the 2010 procurement acquisition plan.

84. Actions on several significant elements of the BINUCA procurement acquisition plan were postponed owing to the pending liquidation of MINURCAT and decisions on the disposition of its surplus assets. BINUCA has requested that some of the assets of MINURCAT, including vehicles, generators and prefabricated buildings, be transferred from Chad to the Central African Republic in order to address numerous outstanding programme support requirements for the Office.

85. Mission Support has also worked to increase the capacity of the BINUCA regional offices through ensuring the availability of basic services, the regular provision of fuel for generators and the connection of the regional offices to the computer network of the Office through the use of remote satellite connection. The enhanced capability of these offices will significantly contribute to the ability of BINUCA to monitor, analyse and advise on the political, human rights and security issues beyond Bangui.

#### **XV. Observations**

86. Presidential and legislative elections constitute a key milestone to the next era of peacebuilding in the Central African Republic. I strongly encourage the Independent Electoral Commission to continue its efforts to meet the consensual timetable agreed by all stakeholders and to address outstanding technical and logistical challenges promptly and transparently. I call on national stakeholders to continue to act responsibly and in good faith in the long-term interests of the country. Candidates contesting the elections should enjoy freedom of movement throughout the country to conduct their electoral campaigns. I also call on regional and international partners to continue to provide political and financial support to ensure that transparent, credible, inclusive and peaceful elections are held on 23 January 2011, as scheduled.

87. The critical complement to elections outlined in the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue is the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. While the verification process in the north-west of the country has now been concluded, the slow pace of progress remains a matter of concern. I urge the Government to finalize the elaboration of a comprehensive and inclusive reintegration strategy for former combatants.

88. It is important to ensure that all groups remain committed to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, including FDPC and MLCJ,



notwithstanding their relatively small size. Efforts must also be made to bring into the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process those armed groups, which have not yet joined, and to disarm self-defence groups and ethnic militias.

89. Much more needs to be done to increase the capacity and capability of FACA. Implementation of the security sector reform programme has been stalled for the past year and needs to be reinvigorated. Without sufficiently trained and equipped security personnel to tackle the challenges posed by armed groups, which move freely in the country and across its porous borders, a state of relative instability and insecurity will continue to exist. I urge bilateral partners to respond positively to the appeals made by the Government, to assist FACA to enable it to provide more security, especially in the volatile north-east.

90. I commend the African Union for holding the conference on the question of the Lord's Resistance Army in Bangui. It was an important event in strengthening coordination to enhance regional efforts against LRA. Implementation of the recommendations of that meeting will aid in tackling the threat of LRA activity in the Central African Republic and across the region and will also improve the security, humanitarian and development response to LRA activity.

91. I remain concerned over the disappearance of political leaders in the country, as noted in my previous report. I renew my call for the authorities of the Central African Republic to clarify the circumstances of those incidents and to ensure the safety of the politico-military leaders who have joined the peace process and who now reside in Bangui. This would be consistent with the decision of the Follow-up Committee established under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Libreville in June 2008.

92. Measures need to be taken to address the culture of impunity that remains a central feature of human rights violations in the Central African Republic and to fight against corruption, which constitutes a leading obstacle to socio-economic development in the country. I commend the actions taken by the Government to implement the recommendations of the Follow-up Committee on the Inclusive Political Dialogue and encourage further concrete steps to be taken to address outstanding problems.

93. I would like to express my appreciation for the commendable contributions made by regional and international partners to support the Central African Republic, including the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the African Union, the European Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie, as well as bilateral partners.

94. I am pleased with the progress in the ongoing integration of BINUCA and the United Nations country team. The strategic alignment of United Nations operations in each of the humanitarian, development and political spheres serves to reinforce the activities of each agency, fund, and programme, as well as BINUCA and to enable more effective service delivery in our common efforts to consolidate peace in the Central African Republic.

95. The mandate of BINUCA will expire on 31 December 2010. In view of the leading role the Office is called upon to play in the reconciliation process and the need for continued United Nations integrated support to the peacebuilding challenges confronting the Central African Republic, and following consultations between my Special Representative and the Government of the Central African

Republic, I would like to recommend that the mandate of BINUCA, as approved by the Security Council in its presidential statement (S/PRST/2009/5), be extended for another year, until 31 December 2011. In the coming year, BINUCA will continue to implement its mandate within an integrated framework and in close cooperation with national authorities and the partners of the Central African Republic, with a particular focus on the reconciliation process, including through the completion of the electoral process, and progress in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the restoration of state authority throughout the national territory, security sector reform, and the promotion of the rule of law and human rights.

96. Finally, I would like to commend the staff of BINUCA, under the leadership of my Special Representative, Sahle-Work Zewde, and the entire United Nations country team for their efforts in support of sustainable peacebuilding in the Central African Republic.

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