



# Security Council

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## Central African Republic

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. By its resolution [2499 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2020 and requested me to report on its implementation every four months. The present report provides an update on major developments in the Central African Republic since the previous report of 14 February 2020 ([S/2020/124](#)), including the impact of the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which was officially declared in the Central African Republic on 14 March.

#### II. Political situation

##### Political developments

2. The political environment was marked by increased mobilization ahead of the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for December 2020, contributing to tensions between political stakeholders. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Mankeur Ndiaye, with his good offices and political facilitation mandate, engaged with national stakeholders and international partners to encourage constructive and inclusive political dialogue to preserve fragile gains.

3. On 11 February, 14 opposition parties formed the Coalition de l'opposition démocratique with the proclaimed objective of ensuring free, fair, inclusive and timely elections. The coalition includes the parties Union pour le renouveau centrafricain of the former Prime Minister, Anicet-Georges Dologuélé; the Kwa Na Kwa of the former President, François Bozizé; the Convention républicaine pour le progrès social of the former Prime Minister, Nicolas Tiangaye; the Chemin de l'espérance of the former President of the National Assembly, Karim Meckassoua; and the Be Africa Ti E Kwe of the former Prime Minister, Mahamat Kamoun.

4. The arrests, on 28 March and 3 April, of 31 individuals on charges of criminal association, undermining State security, and conspiracy, including 11 members of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, contributed to political tensions. The arrests took place, respectively, at the residence of the Minister of Arts, Culture, and Tourism, Dieudonné Ndomate, head of the Ngaïssona anti-balaka wing, and at an



unoccupied residence of Mr. Bozizé. On 3 April, the public prosecutor of the Bangui Court of Appeal clarified that he had not issued an arrest warrant against Mr. Bozizé as had been rumoured. The Kwa Na Kwa denounced the arrests as politically motivated. In a joint communiqué dated 24 April, signatory armed groups characterized the arrests as a violation of the Government's commitments under the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

5. Political tensions also increased following a legislative petition sponsored by the ruling coalition to amend the constitution in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was signed by 101 of 140 parliamentarians. The proposed amendment was aimed at extending the tenures of the president and members of parliament if elections could not be held within constitutional timelines owing to unforeseen circumstances, or force majeure. The Government expressed support for the bill, arguing the need to prevent institutional instability and a constitutional vacuum. Many opposition parties and civil society groups voiced strong concerns, insisting on adhering to constitutional timelines. On 5 June, the Constitutional Court ruled that the proposed amendment would be unconstitutional, as would be a transition, and emphasized that any slippage of the electoral calendar should derive from broad national consultations seeking a consensual solution.

6. In national addresses on 19 and 26 March, the President, Faustin Touadéra, announced a series of mitigation measures to combat the spread of COVID-19, calling for national solidarity, including a 21-day quarantine for people entering the country and any suspected COVID-19 cases and their contacts, a temporary ban on gatherings of more than 15 people, temporary closure of schools and entertainment spaces, and restrictions on entering the country. On 27 April, authorities temporarily restricted commercial and passenger movements on key axes from Bangui to the west and to towns bordering Cameroon and the Ubangi river.

7. A number of opposition parties rallied behind the announced mitigation measures and suspended public events. National Assembly members made private donations to the Government for the national pandemic response. Interreligious platforms welcomed the measures and announced restrictions of religious activities. Despite agreement to address the pandemic apolitically, some opposition politicians criticized shortcomings in the Government's response and perceived the authorities to be using the pandemic to advance a political agenda.

8. On 15 May, 34 out of 42 parties associated with the presidential majority launched the "Be Oko" or "Les coeurs unis" political platform to counterweigh the opposition Coalition de l'opposition démocratique platform. The intention of the United Hearts platform is to rally behind one candidate for the presidential elections and agree on candidates for the legislative elections. Four political leaders announced their candidacy for the presidential elections, specifically Martin Ziguélé of the Mouvement de libération du peuple Centrafricain; Bornou Brigitte Hortense of the Parti pour le progrès du peuple; Crépin Mboli-Goumba of the Parti africain pour une transformation radicale et l'intégration des Etats; and Aristide Briand Reboas of the Parti chrétien démocratie, which has since joined the "Be Oko" platform.

9. The National Assembly in its first ordinary session of 2020, which concluded on 30 May, adopted four laws, including on the status of military personnel, in accordance with the 2017 national defence plan.

### **Peace process**

10. While advances were made in implementing the Agreement, progress was undermined by a resurgence of violence perpetrated by armed groups, particularly in Birao, Bria, Ndélé and Obo.

11. The Executive Monitoring Committee of the Agreement held its seventh and eighth sessions on 28 February and 22 May, respectively. Government, armed groups, political parties and civil society representatives discussed issues related to special mixed security units, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, and electoral preparations, and called for sanctions under article 35 of the Agreement against those violating their commitments, particularly to cease hostilities.

12. During an extraordinary session held from 19 to 28 February, the National Assembly adopted several laws required under the Agreement, including on political parties and the status of the opposition; the creation of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation; the status of former Heads of State; and the first of a two-part law on local authorities and decentralization.

13. Following the call of the Secretary-General on 23 March for a global ceasefire to fight the pandemic, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC), the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain and the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation armed group publicly declared their adherence. The statements have yet to translate into action on the ground. The Special Representative, amplifying the call, engaged with signatory parties to encourage the immediate cessation of hostilities.

14. Although many of the formal follow-up mechanisms of the Agreement were suspended following the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government continued high-level engagement with armed group leaders, supported by the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Agreement's guarantors, as well as MINUSCA as a facilitator. The Government engaged with the Sultan-Mayor of Ndélé on 25 March to address escalating tensions and violence. The Prime Minister, Firmin Ngrébada, also sought to mediate between the ethnic Gula and Runga factions of FPRC from 24 to 27 April in Bangui. On 17 April, he invited the leader of the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC), Ali Darassa, to Bangui to discuss restoring State authority, preparations for disarmament and demobilization and establishment of special mixed security units in the south-east of the country. The Prime Minister also met with FPRC military leader, Abdoulaye Hissène, in Bangui on 25 April, agreeing to deploy the national armed forces to Ndélé for the first time since 2013 on 13 May, start the disarmament and demobilization of FPRC armed elements and establish a special mixed security unit.

15. The strategic committee meeting on the special mixed security units chaired by the Prime Minister on 22 April decided on deployment sites for the units in the west, specifically Bossangoa, Bouar, Kouï and Paoua, and the next training site in Ndélé in the centre. On 12 May, the President presided over a graduation ceremony in Bouar for the second batch of 127 trainees for the units. On 5 June, the units started to be deployed from Bouar to Paoua.

16. MINUSCA facilitated two videoconferences between the Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization and prefects to enhance communication between national and local implementation mechanisms of the Agreement, which were supported by the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). MINUSCA used programmatic funding to implement projects in eight prefectures to strengthen the role of women in advancing the Agreement.

17. In Vakaga Prefecture, the implementation and technical security committees resumed activities on 19 March, after a seven-month suspension due to conflict. FPRC appointed its representatives to these committees throughout the Prefecture.

18. On 8 June, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, the Secretary-General of ECCAS and

the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, held a joint videoconference with the President. Subsequently, they issued a joint communiqué, in which they welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the Agreement and called for further confidence-building measures by all parties. They also encouraged the President to engage in political dialogue with national stakeholders, including the opposition, to ensure a process conducive to peaceful elections.

### **Electoral preparations**

19. Preparations for the elections continued in a politicized context characterized by scepticism about the four-month delay in launching the voter registration process and concerns about COVID-19. International partners encouraged political stakeholders to prioritize constructive dialogue and transparent messaging to citizens of the Central African Republic.

20. On 16 March, the Prime Minister expanded representation in the strategic committee on elections to include the ruling majority, political opposition and civil society. The committee held monthly meetings, enabling progress on the electoral calendar, refugee participation and National Electoral Authority operations.

21. The National Electoral Authority published a revised electoral calendar on 29 April that adhered to constitutional timelines. The electoral mapping exercise was completed in April, resulting in about 3,500 voter registration centres that will also serve as polling stations. Out of 144 Authority branches, 126 were established as at 1 June. Opposition parties protested irregularities in their establishment, pointing to limited communication and consultation. The Council of Ministers has yet to refer the law on the National Electoral Authority back to the National Assembly, following the Constitutional Court's rejection of a challenge by six opposition parties regarding the constitutionality of two provisions of the electoral code.

22. The integrated electoral security plan, including national security forces and MINUSCA, was presented to the President on 11 May. The plan outlines the deployment of an additional 2,000 national security forces, which could be impacted by the temporary suspension of recruitment and deployment owing to COVID-19.

23. On 29 April, the Prime Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to ensuring the franchise of refugees, which would require host countries to allow verification of the refugee population and the conduct of electoral operations. The Government and ECCAS convened a meeting with ambassadors from neighbouring countries on 11 May, during which the Government presented proposed legislation that would allow refugees to vote, which the ambassadors committed to support.

24. On 20 May, the Government issued two decrees crucial for the timely holding of the elections. The first set the voter registration period from 22 June to 28 July, with the final voter list released in September. The second specified that the diaspora of the Central African Republic would be allowed to vote in Belgium, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, France, Morocco, the Sudan, Togo and the United States of America. On 8 June, eight main opposition parties filed a request for annulment of the two decrees before the Council of State, arguing administrative irregularities.

25. As at 1 June, the UNDP basket fund of \$41.8 million to support the presidential, legislative and local elections through 2022 faced a funding gap of \$10.5 million. In March, the European Union disbursed \$13 million of its \$16.5 million pledge. Separate contributions totalling \$5.5 million were made to projects complementary to the basket fund, including by the European Union and the United States.

26. MINUSCA coordinated international electoral assistance and provided technical, security and logistical support, in addition to good offices and political facilitation aimed at preserving the inclusiveness and credibility of the electoral process. The impact of COVID-19 on election readiness is continuously being assessed and precautionary measures are being taken to reassure stakeholders of the safety of the poll.

#### **Local dialogue and reconciliation**

27. Efforts to resolve disputes and violence at the local level continued. In Bangassou, persistent clashes by armed groups contributed to the displacement and suspension of commercial activities, exacerbating intercommunal tensions. Local authorities, communities and armed group leaders signed a local peace agreement on 10 March to restore the free movement of goods and people on the Rafai-Dembia-Zemio axis. A monitoring committee was established to restore trust between the population and local authorities.

28. MINUSCA strengthened its strategic partnership with the African women leadership network and jointly identified projects to reinforce the COVID-19 response while enabling reconciliation in the PK5 and PK12 districts of Bangui.

### **III. Security situation**

29. As at 1 June, recorded violations of the Agreement decreased from 575 to 504 compared with the previous reporting period, although armed groups and militia continued to pose serious threats to the civilian population and national stability. Civilians were the target of more than half of the violations (286), followed by illegal military activities (120) and movement restrictions (83). As at 1 June, FPRC had perpetrated most of the reported violations (179), followed by the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) (86), Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (78), UPC (67), anti-balaka elements (58), and the national armed forces (27). Rumours and disinformation relating to COVID-19 fuelled xenophobia, particularly in Bangui, Bouar and Kaga Bandoro.

30. In the north-east, violent clashes involving armed groups continued. On 16 February, FPRC attempted to retake control of Birao from the Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice. A robust MINUSCA intervention resulted in FPRC withdrawing, having suffered 11 fatalities and several injuries. There were no civilian casualties. A weapons-free zone established on 14 March contributed to an improved security situation and, on 9 April, 142 national armed forces soldiers were deployed to Birao. Internally displaced persons reportedly fled towards the Sudan as a result of these incidents.

31. Tensions increased between FPRC factions, notably in Bria and Ndélé, splintering the group along ethnic lines. On 11 March, FPRC Gula elements, supported by the non-signatory Parti pour le rassemblement de la nation centrafricaine, attacked Ndélé, targeting the Runga community and Arabs, killing at least 29, including 18 civilians. Gula elements ambushed a MINUSCA patrol on 15 March, injuring a peacekeeper. On 25 March, Gula elements attacked the majority Runga village of Yangougale, near Ndélé. Despite mediation efforts led by the Government, Gula elements attacked Ndélé on 29 and 30 April, killing at least 27, including 21 civilians. MINUSCA launched an operation that prevented further violence and led to the arrest of nine PRNC elements, including its leader, on 19 May, sending a strong signal regarding the fight against impunity and contributing to easing tensions.

32. In Bria, tensions between the FPRC Gula and Runga factions escalated on 10 March following the death of a FPRC Fulani combatant while detained by the FPRC Runga faction. The UPC leader, Mr. Darassa, travelled to Bria with heavily armed elements without the approval of the Agreement's local committees, where he brokered a ceasefire between the FPRC factions on 18 March. He also reinforced the UPC presence in Bria.

33. Tensions rose in Ndiffa, Vakaga Prefecture, following a violent dispute between PRNC and Misseriya Arabs on 27 March, during which the Chief of Staff of PRNC and six Misseriya were killed. On 18 April, Misseriya herders ambushed five Gula merchants near Birao, killing three and seriously injuring two. MINUSCA facilitated a conflict resolution process between the two communities.

34. On 9 May, MINUSCA reinforced its presence in Obo, Haut-Mbomou Prefecture, following tensions between the national armed forces and UPC combatants, who had moved into the town following allegations that soldiers had been involved in the killing of three civilians on 10 May in Mboki, near Obo. On 20 May, MINUSCA and the armed forces exchanged fire with UPC elements in Obo. No civilian casualties were reported. The combatants were expelled from the town, while six were arrested and detained by the armed forces before being transferred to Bangui on 23 May. On 20 and 28 May, Mr. Darassa issued communiqués in which he condemned alleged armed forces abuses of the civilian population in Obo, denied UPC involvement in the clashes and claimed that the violence reflected the local population's reaction to abuses committed by the armed forces. On 2 June, a national armed forces soldier was arrested by local command for allegedly killing a civilian.

35. In February, FPRC, MPC and armed civilian traders allegedly from Chad intensified activities around gold mines in the Kouki area, leading to clashes on 29 March that resulted in the death of at least 1 person and the internal displacement of about 100 persons. Capitalizing on tensions between MPC and FPRC, UPC asserted control in the west, increasing its presence in Markounda, Ouham Prefecture, in March.

36. The Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation armed group expanded its activities in the west, particularly in Ouham-Pende, Nana-Mambere et Mamberei-Kadei Prefectures, under the pretext of protecting Fulani herders. On 10 April, MINUSCA launched an operation to mitigate expansion of the armed group. On 13 May, the armed group, led by its leader, Abbas Siddiki, occupied the gendarmerie of Besson, Nana Mambere Prefecture, forcing the gendarmes to vacate their post. In addition, in May, the armed group sought to extend its area of influence in western Ouham Prefecture to control gold mining sites. On 5 June, the leader of the armed group issued a communiqué announcing the suspension of its participation in the follow-up and monitoring mechanisms of the Agreement until further notice. On 9 June, presumed elements of the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation attacked the training camp of the special mixed security units in Bouar, injuring 14 of its members and a member of the national armed forces. On the same day, armed individuals attacked a joint MINUSCA and national forces checkpoint in Pougol near Paoua, injuring two peacekeepers.

37. Reprisal attacks over cattle theft and crop destruction led to clashes, with 40 recorded incidents in the west from February until 1 June. Between 16 and 19 February, clashes between armed Chadian herders and local communities, supported by anti-balaka elements, resulted in the death of at least four herders and two civilians near Batangafo.

38. In Basse-Kotto Prefecture, the local anti-balaka, led by Dimitri Ayoloma attacked the residence of the Sub-Prefect on 14 March. MINUSCA intervened to restore order. During the exchange of fire, a peacekeeper was mortally wounded. On

4 May, MINUSCA launched an operation to neutralize the local anti-balaka group and improve access to isolated areas.

39. In Bangui, crime levels in the PK5 neighbourhood increased by 18 per cent between 1 February and 1 June due to criminal gang activities, fuelling feelings of insecurity among the population. On 31 May, elements from the national armed forces and the Groupement spécial chargé de la protection républicaine physically threatened MINUSCA peacekeepers stationed at Camp de Roux in Bangui, injuring one.

## **IV. Regional engagement**

40. On 22 April, Mr. Touadéra undertook State visits to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo, facilitators of the Agreement. The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the ECCAS secretariat prepared for a joint assessment of subregional dynamics to form the basis for additional regional activities to support implementation of the Agreement.

## **V. Humanitarian situation**

41. Intercommunal tensions, clashes among armed groups and attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers had an impact on the humanitarian situation. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the humanitarian crisis.

42. As at 1 June, there were approximately 697,000 internally displaced persons, in addition to 616,000 refugees from the Central African Republic in neighbouring countries. The United Nations and partners provided humanitarian assistance to approximately 720,000 people.

43. Humanitarian challenges were particularly acute in Ndélé owing to clashes between armed groups. In March, local authorities and FPRC elements allegedly coerced approximately 8,000 internally displaced persons to vacate a site, despite protection and security risks. In May, further attacks led to additional displacement of nearly 17,000 persons, of whom over 13,000 sought refuge near MINUSCA premises. Most humanitarian organizations temporarily suspended their activities in Ndélé after 14 incidents targeting humanitarian workers; emergency teams were subsequently deployed to ensure humanitarian assistance for those newly displaced.

44. Humanitarian workers and facilities were also affected by security conditions in Bangui, Batangafo, Birao and Kaga Bandoro. A total of 121 attacks against humanitarians were registered, including intimidation and aggression related to COVID-19, resulting in two deaths and eight injuries. MINUSCA conducted patrols and deployed quick reaction forces to protect humanitarian workers in Bamingui, Birao and Ndélé.

45. National authorities have undertaken a series of mitigation measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, with support from the World Health Organization and other partners, including MINUSCA. As at 1 June, the Government had confirmed 1,069 cases of COVID-19, with 23 recoveries and 4 fatalities.

46. In addition to the health response, humanitarian actors identified priority locations in affected areas, where the United Nations facilitated pre-positioning of stocks, created isolation centres, including at displacement sites, and maintained critical lifesaving assistance. In addition, the United Nations supported the Government's communication efforts to sensitize 1.2 million people to COVID-19 and assisted local-level crisis committees in implementing the national plan.

47. The impact of the pandemic on the population has been considerable. The partial closure of the borders with Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo contributed to a 31 per cent increase in prices for imported goods, including basic food items. Social distancing measures resulted in a 67 per cent increase in the cost of urban transportation.

48. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification conducted in May revealed increased food insecurity. Despite ongoing food assistance, nearly 2.4 million people suffer from acute food insecurity, including 750,000 in the emergency phase.

49. Humanitarian activities remained acutely underfunded. As at 1 June, the 2020 humanitarian response plan was only 22 per cent funded, with a gap of \$428 million out of \$553 million, \$153 million of which is required for the COVID-19 response.

## **VI. Protection of civilians**

50. The Mission and United Nations country team, in coordination with humanitarian organizations, worked to strengthen national capacity to protect civilians by identifying risks, challenges and solutions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and implement contingency plans.

51. MINUSCA adjusted how it implements its protection mandate, while continuing a robust protection presence to deter possible threats. The approach included suspending the deployment of surge teams in locations without a permanent civilian presence and in-person protection training for civilian and uniformed personnel; virtual protection coordination mechanisms, with minimal impact on capacity to provide timely and appropriate response to threats; the reorientation of programmatic funding to support the Government's community outreach regarding COVID-19 and communication efforts. MINUSCA and national authorities trained more than 600 civil protection volunteers and 1,690 social mobilizers to educate the population about the pandemic.

52. MINUSCA continued to provide physical security to displaced persons seeking refuge near its bases. The Mission reinforced early warning mechanisms, which improved understanding of protection needs and response to threats in some areas.

53. Projects aimed at mitigating transhumance-related violence were implemented in various regions by UNDP, IOM and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), facilitated by MINUSCA. In Batangafo, a transhumance hotspot, MINUSCA encouraged local communities to resolve disputes between transhumant pastoralists and local populations through transhumance management committees.

## **VII. Extension of State authority and the rule of law**

### **Extension of State authority**

54. Government continued to implement its restoration of State authority strategy with the support of MINUSCA. From 17 to 19 March, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization conducted predeployment training for 44 newly confirmed local authorities, including prefects, sub-prefects and prefectural secretaries-general, as well as training for mayors.

55. Since January, the Government has continued to roll out a pilot initiative in Bambari, Bouar and Bossangoa to pay civil servant salaries through mobile networks in order to minimize absences from duty stations, improve service delivery and increase trust in State representatives.



## **Security sector reform**

56. MINUSCA continued to advocate with authorities to make progress towards integrating former combatants into the defence and internal security forces or towards creating a commission on rank harmonization, including within the framework of the special mixed security units. The Mission continued to support the establishment of stronger accountability mechanisms for the defence and internal security forces. On 27 February, the Government adopted a memorandum recommending the establishment of a national vetting mechanism for new recruits and employed uniformed personnel. On 15 May, MINUSCA provided equipment to the central inspectorates of the defence and security forces to facilitate the effective functioning of the military justice system.

## **National armed and internal security forces**

57. As at 1 June, the national armed forces had a total strength of 8,244 soldiers, including 619 women; 1,924 soldiers were deployed in 23 locations, representing an increase of 547 since the previous report. The armed forces were also newly deployed to Birao, Ndélé and Obo in addition to rotating troops in Alindao and Bangassou. The effectiveness of the deployments was compromised by logistical and financial challenges, as well as poor command and control.

58. On 18 February, national authorities, supported by MINUSCA, initiated the recruitment of 2,600 members of the national armed forces; the campaign was suspended on 27 March owing to COVID-19. On 20 May, national authorities expressed the wish to resume the recruitment campaign. The European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic trained 267 troops and the Russian Federation trained 355 troops before suspending operations in March and April, respectively, owing to the pandemic.

59. As at 1 June, 1,162 police officers and gendarmes, including 39 women, were deployed in 69 locations, representing an increase of 38 personnel since the previous report. A total of 1,000 recruits, nearly 26 per cent of them women, continued training, with the support of MINUSCA. On 2 March, national authorities integrated 200 auxiliary police personnel, including 98 women, within the police forces, while 50 young people (37 male and 13 female) were integrated into the gendarmerie following training in Angola. They are undergoing training in both police and gendarmerie academies. In line with the human rights due diligence policy, MINUSCA is not providing support to these recruits prior to proper vetting. The European Union Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic put on hold its deployment in the light of the pandemic.

60. The Mine Action Service completed the construction of a regional ammunition depot in Bouar and rehabilitated an armoury in Bangui. A total of 30 defence and internal security forces were trained in weapons and ammunition management and explosive ordnance disposal. MINUSCA has provided temporary storage facilities for weapons and ammunition in Paoua and Bouar for the special mixed security units.

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

61. No disarmament and demobilization operations were carried out during the reporting period. The resumption of operations is contingent upon the lifting of COVID-19-related restrictions on travel and on large gatherings and upon the cooperation of armed groups. On 11 May, the President instructed the responsible national institutions to plan for the launch a disarmament and demobilization operation in the centre of the country. On 29 May, the consultative and follow-up committee of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme

discussed a new calendar for operations, aiming to launch operations in the north-east by mid-June.

62. MINUSCA, IOM and the United Nations Office for Project Services continued to implement community violence reduction projects. As at 1 June, 4,014 beneficiaries, including 1,570 women, were engaged in income-generation and community projects. A total of 41 weapons of war, 1,640 artisanal weapons and 913 ammunitions have been collected since August 2019. Since 1 April 2020, projects have been reoriented to support the COVID-19 response while still achieving the objective of reducing violence, including the production of hygiene materials, access to water and the refurbishment of isolation facilities.

### **Justice and rule of law**

63. Operational first-instance and appellate courts increased from 16 to 17 and deployed judicial personnel decreased from 129 to 119 owing to insecurity, limited judicial infrastructure and a decrease in judicial missions to armed group-controlled areas. Capacity-building activities were suspended on 20 March following the outbreak of COVID-19. MINUSCA and UNDP assisted the Ministry of Justice to prevent the spread of the virus while ensuring respect for rights and judicial procedures and maintaining the basic functioning of the justice system.

64. As at 1 June, there were no reported COVID-19 cases in prisons. The Ministry of Justice, with the support of international partners, finalized a COVID-19 prevention and mitigation strategy for penitentiary establishments on 23 April. Following presidential decrees issued on 24 and 30 April, national authorities, with the support of MINUSCA, identified detainees eligible for release. Out of the total number of 1,482 detainees, 676 were released. MINUSCA worked with authorities to prevent the inadvertent or unlawful release of high-profile detainees or perpetrators of serious crimes, including crimes of sexual violence.

65. In May, MINUSCA strengthened security measures at the Ngaragba central prison and its Camp de Roux annex, following threats of possible attacks and escapes of anti-balaka-affiliated detainees. On 28 May, the reconstruction of a secure section of Camp de Roux was completed with financial support from the United States through a joint MINUSCA and UNDP project.

66. The Special Criminal Court continued to investigate eight cases, including an investigation announced in May into suspected war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ndélé. Under its urgent temporary measures mandate, MINUSCA arrested 59 persons suspected of having committed crimes.

## **VIII. Human rights and the fight against impunity**

67. MINUSCA documented 213 incidents of human rights abuses and possible violations of international humanitarian law. The majority related to attacks on civilians perpetrated by armed groups, which affected at least 391 victims (238 men, 48 women, 54 boys, 27 girls, 9 unidentified victims and 15 groups of collective victims), a decrease from the 256 incidents affecting 455 victims during the previous reporting period. A total of 48 conflict-related civilian deaths were reported. Signatory armed groups continued to be the most prevalent perpetrators, responsible for 201 incidents affecting 376 victims. State agents, primarily members of the national armed forces, were involved in 10 incidents, affecting 12 victims.

68. On 4 and 5 March, the Central African Republic participated in a session of the Human Rights Committee, which recommended that all victims be afforded an effective remedy, including before the Special Criminal Court, and that the

Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation be enabled to begin operations.

### **Transitional justice**

69. On 7 April, the President promulgated the law establishing the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation, as called for in the Agreement. The Commission will be responsible for, inter alia, truth-seeking and identifying root causes of human rights abuses; dignifying the experiences of victims; proposing a reparations programme and measures to fight injustice; and pursuing national reconciliation. MINUSCA and UNDP will provide technical and operational support to ensure the Commission's independence, including to develop its rules of procedure and budget and to train staff in human rights investigations.

### **Conflict-related sexual violence**

70. MINUSCA documented 80 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 109 victims (53 women, 54 girls and 2 men, including 72 rapes or attempted rapes, 1 of which resulted in death, 6 forced marriages and 2 sexual slavery cases). Incidents were most prevalent in transhumance areas where women and girls were attacked by armed herders possibly affiliated with ex-Séléka. Local authorities, with the support of MINUSCA, organized 10 awareness-raising sessions for 78 women and girls on access to justice.

71. An assessment of local capacity for monitoring and investigating sexual violence in Bria conducted by MINUSCA in February identified fear of reprisals and stigmatization as the main obstacles to victims reporting incidents. The Mission is intensifying awareness-raising activities, particularly in rural communities along the Bria axis.

### **Children and armed conflict**

72. On 27 February, the National Assembly adopted the child protection code, which awaits promulgation by the President. The draft bill criminalizes the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, as well as other grave acts against children, and designates children associated with national armed forces and groups as victims.

73. A total of 186 children (64 girls and 122 boys) were separated from armed groups to enter reintegration programmes run by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). An additional 127 self-demobilized children (39 girls and 88 boys) formerly associated with anti-balaka militias in villages around Kaga Bandoro were enrolled in reintegration programmes.

74. School closures resulting from the pandemic increased the vulnerability of children. MINUSCA and UNICEF developed radio announcements targeting armed groups, communities and children on child protection issues.

## **IX. Socioeconomic situation**

75. According to a rapid study conducted jointly by the Government and donors, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the Central African Republic is projected to drop by 6.2 percentage points, leading to a growth rate of negative 1.2 per cent, if the COVID-19 pandemic persists for at least six months. Gross domestic product is expected to be severely affected by the contraction of the productive sectors and the decline in exports, causing public revenue to fall and weakening the State's capacity to meet expenditures. The contraction of economic activities, including the closure of

small and informal businesses, has been amplified by the pandemic and has already led to the deterioration of living conditions, particularly as prices for basic goods have increased. The World Bank has estimated inflation at 3.5 per cent.

76. An estimated \$222.5 million will be required for the national COVID-19 response. As at 1 June, development partners committed an additional \$87.1 million in direct budget support for 2020. The United Nations developed a COVID-19 socioeconomic recovery and response plan of \$138.9 million, with immediate initiatives financed through reprogrammed funds.

## **X. United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic**

### **Military component**

77. As at 1 June, the MINUSCA military component stood at 11,370 (4.1 per cent women), out of an authorized strength of 11,650 personnel, including 311 staff officers (51 women) and 153 military observers (40 women). It comprised 11 infantry battalions; 1 high-readiness battalion; 1 battle group; 1 special forces company; 1 quick reaction force company; and enabling units, specifically 1 military police company, 5 engineering companies, 1 heavy transport company, 3 level II hospitals and 1 level I hospital with a forward surgery module. There were also three helicopter units, including an aviation unit whose advance party was deployed on 29 May. The MINUSCA force had a gap of an armed aviation unit and a quick reaction force; the latter is under deployment.

### **Police component**

78. As at 1 June, the MINUSCA police component stood at 2,008 personnel (11.75 per cent women), out of an authorized strength of 2,080, including 332 individual police officers, 1,676 personnel in 11 formed police units and 1 police support unit. The police support unit and six formed police units are in Bangui under the joint task force. Five formed police units are deployed in Bambari, Berberati, Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro. Part of the Kaga Bandoro unit is deployed in Batangafo. On 16 May, part of the formed police units from Bangui and Bambari were temporarily deployed to Ndélé.

### **Civilian personnel**

79. As at 1 June, 1,425 civilian personnel (26 per cent of whom were women), including 215 United Nations Volunteers, and 102 government-provided corrections personnel, served with MINUSCA, representing 91 per cent of the 1,559 authorized positions.

### **Status of forces agreement**

80. On 14 April, 15 trucks transporting cement for a MINUSCA contractor were impounded by the customs office but released on 7 May following discussions between MINUSCA and the Government. On 17 April, national customs and gendarmerie insisted on inspecting two containers of a MINUSCA military unit, on the grounds that they contained ammunition. The containers were released on 18 May, following MINUSCA intervention.

### **Safety and security of United Nations personnel**

81. A total of 115 security incidents involving United Nations personnel were recorded. Three personnel were killed: one during a hostile attack; one after being

kidnapped; and one accidentally. A total of 36 personnel were injured: 3 in a hostile attack, 1 by stabbing, 5 in mob attacks and 27 in road traffic accidents. In February, MINUSCA was faced with a misinformation campaign to incite violence against four international and local staff members, including through social and local media. United Nations system personnel were targeted eight times. Movements were restricted countrywide owing to security risks and COVID-19 prevention measures. As at 1 June, 21 cases of COVID-19 among Mission personnel had been confirmed, including 2 in which the affected personnel had recovered.

82. National authorities, with the support of MINUSCA, opened 21 investigations into cases of attacks against peacekeepers; 18 are under police investigation, while 3 are before investigating judges.

### **Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse**

83. Seven allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported, six against military personnel and one against a civilian contractor. A total of nine sexual exploitation and abuse allegations have been recorded in 2020.

84. MINUSCA continued to prevent misconduct through robust preventive measures and stronger coordination efforts between Mission components. Training sessions on the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse were conducted online owing to COVID-19.

85. As a result of intensive outreach activities, the training of 75 sexual exploitation and abuse focal points, and a country-wide network of 27 community-based complaint mechanisms comprising 625 members, the population has become increasingly aware of the standards of conduct expected of United Nations personnel, in addition to available reporting channels.

86. The Field Victims' Rights Advocate continued to coordinate support for victims with relevant United Nations entities to ensure that victims received appropriate and timely assistance. Services for victims were, however, affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

### **Support considerations**

87. MINUSCA continued to reduce its environmental footprint, including wastewater risk, by installing 2 treatment plants in addition to the 46 already operational. The Mission has installed 172 meters to monitor usage of the atmospheric water generator plant in Obo. Composting, incineration of solid waste and remediation of the Kolongo landfill continue, coupled with a pilot waste segregation project at the logistics base in Bangui. MINUSCA developed a master waste management plan that includes development of waste management yards and composting to reduce waste-related risk. The Mission continued to install meter readers to expand monitoring of power consumption.

### **Action for peacekeeping and performance optimization**

88. MINUSCA continued to enhance its performance in line with the Action for Peacekeeping. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, MINUSCA has adapted its approach to implementing its prioritized mandate, including through increased use of technology, with an emphasis on protecting civilians and maintaining stability; preserving gains in the peace process and viability of the Agreement; assisting in the timely holding of elections and maintenance of the rule of law; facilitating humanitarian access; and protecting United Nations personnel.

89. The Force Commander completed three evaluations of contingents, of which two were satisfactory and one was commended for exemplary performance. The

Mission evaluated one sector headquarters with satisfactory results. Identified challenges included gaps in intelligence gathering, including as a result of language barriers with the population, scattered deployment owing to the number of temporary operating bases and insufficient perimeter security. Each evaluated unit and headquarters received specific recommendations and instructions to improve performance, including military skills, language capacity, the reduction of road traffic accidents and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Evaluations have been suspended since 22 March owing to COVID-19 and are expected to resume when related mitigation measures are lifted.

90. The police component re-evaluated 10 formed police units and the police support unit. Ten units were rated as satisfactory overall, while one formed police unit was rated as needs improvement owing to equipment maintenance, availability and serviceability. Performance improvement plans were drawn up for each unit to address identified shortfalls, including major equipment and self-sustainment, expiration of life and non-lethal ammunitions of some units and insufficient perimeter security.

91. MINUSCA continued to implement the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System to improve performance assessment, coordination and integrated planning. A range of intended impacts and outcomes aligned with the mandate and priority objectives were adopted.

## **XI. Financial considerations**

92. The General Assembly, by its resolution [73/312](#) and decision 73/555, appropriated the amount of \$910.1 million for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. As at 1 June 2020, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for MINUSCA amounted to \$159.8 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$2,099.5 million. Reimbursement of the costs of troop and formed police personnel, as well as of contingent-owned equipment, has been made for the period up to 31 December 2019, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

## **XII. Observations**

93. I am encouraged that the people and Government of the Central African Republic continue to make progress in advancing the peace process, even as the country battles the COVID-19 pandemic. In the months ahead, and as the country responds to the health emergency while also continuing to advance the political process, implement the Agreement and prepare for elections, all stakeholders have to demonstrate resolve and resilience and work in solidarity to address those challenges.

94. Despite challenges to its implementation, the Agreement remains the primary framework for restoring and sustaining peace in the country. I commend the efforts made by the Government and other signatories to utilize the implementation mechanisms of the Agreement. I also welcome the proactive and constructive engagement between the Government and some armed group leaders to address their concerns through peaceful means, which is necessary for building trust. I welcome the efforts of MINUSCA to strengthen the participation of women in the local monitoring and implementation mechanisms, which is essential for sustained peace.

95. Authorities of the Central African Republic have made important progress in advancing essential political reforms in line with their commitments under the Agreement, including the passage of related legislation. I particularly welcome the

law establishing the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparations and Reconciliation, which will provide a mechanism for national reconciliation. It is important to maintain the momentum created by the establishment of the Commission in order to catalyse public support for the Agreement and contribute to local stability and social cohesion. Pending legislation on decentralization and the financing of local authorities should be passed expeditiously to address historical grievances linked to exclusion and marginalization.

96. While the continuing decrease in violations of the Agreement is encouraging, I am deeply concerned about ongoing violent confrontations involving armed groups, resulting in violence against civilians, humanitarians, national armed forces and peacekeepers, which may constitute violations of international humanitarian law. The clashes risk deepening intercommunal tensions and fragmentation of some signatory armed groups along ethnic lines. I am also concerned by the public rejection of the Agreement and the expansionist actions by some armed groups, which are in direct violation of the Agreement. I encourage all signatories to enhance dialogue and seek options for building confidence, with the support of international partners, particularly the guarantors and facilitators, while ensuring accountability for violations. In particular, I call upon all parties to comply with the Agreement, end the use of sexual violence and hold perpetrators accountable.

97. It is particularly urgent that all parties adhere to my call for a global ceasefire so that efforts may be concentrated on combating the pandemic. I welcome the positive response of some armed groups to my call, and I encourage them to immediately translate it into a cessation of violence. The time has come for stakeholders to take a firm, unequivocal stance regarding the application of sanctions under article 35 of the Agreement, as lasting peace requires justice for the victims of violence and accountability for serious crimes. I welcome the robust response of MINUSCA to protect civilians from armed group violence, as well as the continued support it provides to national authorities pursuing accountability for serious crimes and human rights abuses, including through its urgent temporary measures.

98. I am concerned that no progress has been made in advancing the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme since November 2019, a core requirement of the Agreement. While I welcome the Government's efforts to engage signatory armed groups, including in the operationalization of the special mixed security units, I urge all parties to participate earnestly, including through the creation of reintegration opportunities for former combatants and the harmonization of ranks.

99. I welcome the progressive operationalization of the special mixed security units and urge all stakeholders to work together in good faith to facilitate their long-awaited deployment before the elections. Support by all partners is crucial, including appropriate advice to the authorities regarding the management of the weapons and ammunition. At the same time, I am deeply troubled that some participating armed groups continue to violently undermine ongoing efforts to restore State authority, in flagrant violation of the Agreement.

100. The elections on the horizon will be affected by the challenges of organizing a sensitive political process in the midst of a global pandemic. I am encouraged that stakeholders across the political spectrum remain committed to constitutional order. An approach comprising inclusive, transparent dialogue and political consensus has to guide major strategic decisions in order to maintain an environment conducive to peaceful elections. I appeal to all political actors to resist any temptation to politicize the pandemic.

101. All citizens of the Central African Republic have a stake in the electoral process. It is therefore important to proactively engage with civil society, including religious

leaders, women and youth. The Prime Minister's decision to include the political opposition and civil society in the strategic committee on elections is an important step forward. However, national authorities have to expedite the establishment of a consultative framework through which political parties can engage in dialogue and resolve differences.

102. Maintaining a conducive environment for the holding of free, timely and peaceful elections mainly relies on the respect of political parties for a consensually adopted code of conduct to promote the peaceful resolution of electoral disputes through dialogue and applicable rule of law mechanisms. Equal political rights, as well as the unequivocal prohibition of hate speech and any form of collusion between political leaders and armed groups in the run-up to elections will be instrumental for successful elections across the country.

103. I commend the national electoral authority for publishing a revised electoral calendar adapted to the challenges posed by the pandemic while adhering to constitutional timelines. I also welcome the important progress made in preparing for the voter registration process, as well as advances in amending the legal framework to ensure the franchise of refugees and other citizens in the diaspora. I call upon host countries to facilitate the participation of refugees from the Central African Republic in the elections. It is critical for the electoral process to be fully inclusive, and I therefore call for enhanced efforts aimed at encouraging the active participation of women, both as voters and candidates. I welcome efforts under way to ensure safe and contamination-free voter registration and balloting, and to explain those measures to the population.

104. I welcome the generous support already provided by the European Union, the United States and other partners to the UNDP basket fund for elections and appeal to international partners for their support in filling the remaining gap. The timely availability of required resources is important for the holding of free, fair, timely and credible elections.

105. Important progress has been made in extending the authority of the State, and I welcome the further deployment of authorities and magistrates, as well as national defence and internal security forces. Continued efforts are required to support personnel in their areas of deployment in order to reduce absenteeism and misconduct, including exactions against the population which fuel discontent and conflict.

106. The Government has made commendable efforts to improve the accountability of security forces. The people of the Central African Republic have to see that the State is increasingly assuming its responsibilities to protect them and that it holds itself to account for failures to do so. Authorities of the Central African Republic have to continue their efforts to operationalize the military justice system and develop professional, accountable and inclusive forces that uphold the rule of law. It is also important for international partners to provide unified and coordinated support to the defence forces of the Central African Republic.

107. A shared respect for the rule of law is essential for lasting peace. In order for the people of the Central African Republic to have confidence in national authorities, all State actors have to demonstrate transparency and consistency in the application of the law and build trust in this challenging context. The criminal justice system should continue to effectively fight impunity. I therefore welcome the decision of the Special Criminal Court to investigate allegations of serious crimes committed during recent violent clashes in Ndélé.

108. I remain deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic, further compounded by the pandemic, which requires continued urgent support by international partners. I welcome the Government's quick action to curb



the pandemic, which the United Nations and other partners have been closely supporting. I call for full respect for the humanitarian principle of non-discrimination and urge all stakeholders to continue to pursue an apolitical approach to the COVID-19 response and refrain from misinformation or hate speech.

109. I strongly condemn continued attacks against aid workers and non-governmental organizations, as well as the targeting of peacekeepers, which may amount to war crimes. I am optimistic that enhanced collaboration between MINUSCA and humanitarian partners in Ndélé will strengthen the protection of civilians and humanitarian workers in the city. International partners working in the Central African Republic should not be the target of any act inciting violence or spreading misinformation. I call upon the authorities of the Central African Republic to uphold the rule of law in this regard.

110. Sustained support by countries of the region is essential to achieving lasting peace in the Central African Republic. I therefore look forward to the resumption of the joint bilateral commissions and other initiatives to improve the bilateral relationships with neighbouring countries. I also welcome the collaboration and cooperation that characterizes the international community's engagement in the Central African Republic. While strong partnerships remain key, the responsibility for building a brighter future ultimately rests with the people and Government of the Central African Republic.

111. MINUSCA will continue to carefully balance the good offices and political engagement of the Special Representative and a robust security posture to protect civilians and facilitate conditions conducive to peace and stability, particularly during the electoral period. It is therefore a concern that MINUSCA is still facing gaps in operational requirements for discharging its core mandated tasks, including an aviation unit. I appeal to troop- and police-contributing countries to consider deploying this essential capability and to work closely with the Secretariat to ensure the deployment of police officers with the requisite expertise and profile. I welcome the ongoing efforts of MINUSCA to meet the highest standards of performance, including by being at the forefront of initiatives aimed at optimizing resources.

112. Finally, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Mankeur Ndiaye, for his dedicated leadership. I further express my gratitude to the United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their tireless efforts to deliver on the Mission's mandate in difficult and unforeseen circumstances. I also thank all troop- and police-contributing countries, donor countries, regional and multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable support in contributing to peace and stability in the Central African Republic. I also wish to express my gratitude to the African Union and ECCAS, and to the regional partners, for their continued pursuit of sustainable peace for the people of the Central African Republic.

## Annex I

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization  
Mission in the Central African Republic: military and police  
strength as at 1 June 2020**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military component</i>				<i>Police component</i>	
	<i>Military observers</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Formed police units</i>	<i>Individual police officer</i>
Argentina	—	2	—	2	—	—
Bangladesh	12	18	999	1 029	—	—
Benin	3	5	—	8	—	20
Bhutan	2	2	—	4	—	—
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	2	—	5	—	—
Brazil	3	5	—	8	—	1
Burkina Faso	—	4	—	4	—	32
Burundi	5	6	745	756	—	—
Cambodia	5	6	200	211	—	—
Cameroon	3	5	746	754	279	20
China	—	2	—	2	—	—
Colombia	2	—	—	2	—	—
Congo	5	10	—	15	139	2
Côte d'Ivoire	—	4	—	4	—	20
Czechia	3	—	—	3	—	—
Djibouti	—	—	—	—	—	3
Egypt	8	22	982	1012	139	7
France	—	9	—	9	—	3
Gabon	—	—	450	450	—	—
Gambia	4	4	—	8	—	5
Ghana	4	10	—	14	—	7
Guatemala	2	2	—	4	—	—
Guinea	—	—	—	—	—	16
Indonesia	6	7	200	213	140	5
Jordan	3	7	—	10	—	18
Kenya	7	8	—	15	—	—
Madagascar	—	—	—	—	—	1
Mali	—	—	—	—	—	16
Mauritania	8	7	450	465	280	—
Mexico	—	1	—	1	—	—
Morocco	2	16	750	768	—	—
Nepal	5	13	720	738	—	—
Niger	1	4	—	5	—	32
Nigeria	0	3	—	3	—	—
Pakistan	9	30	1 213	1 252	—	—
Paraguay	2	1	—	3	—	—
Peru	6	9	204	219	—	—

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military component</i>				<i>Police component</i>	
	<i>Military observers</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Formed police units</i>	<i>Individual police officer</i>
Philippines	2	1	—	3	—	—
Portugal	—	9	179	188	—	16
Moldova (Republic of)	2	1	—	3	—	—
Romania	—	—	—	—	—	7
Russian Federation	3	11	—	14	—	—
Rwanda	9	18	1 360	1 387	420	17
Senegal	—	6	10	16	279	37
Serbia	2	3	72	77	—	—
Sierra Leone	4	1	—	5	—	—
Spain	—	—	—	—	—	3
Sri Lanka	—	1	110	111	—	—
Sweden	—	—	—	—	—	4
Togo	4	6	—	10	—	20
Tunisia	2	—	—	2	—	20
United Republic of Tanzania	—	5	450	455	—	—
United States of America	—	7	—	7	—	—
Uruguay	—	2	—	2	—	—
Viet Nam	1	5	—	6	—	—
Zambia	8	14	909	931	—	—
Zimbabwe	2	—	—	2	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>10 749</b>	<b>11 215</b>	<b>1 676</b>	<b>332</b>

## Annex II

## Map

