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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution [2448 \(2018\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2019 and requested me to report on its implementation on a quarterly basis. The present report provides an update on major developments in the Central African Republic since my report of 17 June ([S/2019/498](#)) and recommendations on the extension of the mandate of MINUSCA.

II. Political situation

2. Progress was made in implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, with considerable efforts by the Government, including the establishment of its follow-up mechanisms. Security incidents and human rights violations linked to the conflict decreased. However, significant challenges remain, including abuses against civilians and violent clashes between signatory armed groups. Popular distrust of the Agreement, in particular within the political opposition, continued as crucial preparations began for the presidential, legislative and local elections scheduled for 2020 and 2021, integral to an inclusive political process, indispensable to consolidate democracy and vital to ensure political stability.

Peace process

3. For the first time since the signing of the Agreement, the Government and 13 out of 14 signatory armed groups met in Bangui on 23 and 24 August, co-chaired by the Prime Minister, Firmin Ngrebada, and the Special Representative and Head of Office for the African Union Office in the Central African Republic. My Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Mankeur Ndiaye, and representatives of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Angola, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea participated. The parties agreed, inter alia, to cease violence against civilians, expedite cessation of hostilities and restoration of State authority and improve communication. They underscored the need to sanction non-compliant signatories.



4. Most of the Agreement implementation and monitoring mechanisms are operational, although with limited participation of women. The highest decision-making body, the executive follow-up committee, met on 14 June, 31 July and 27 September, focusing on violations of the Agreement. Government and civil society representatives called on the guarantors and facilitators, including MINUSCA, to play a more proactive role, including by applying punitive measures against violators, pursuant to article 35 of the Agreement.

5. Considerable efforts were made to maintain the signatories' commitment to the Agreement by my Special Representative, together with the guarantors of the Agreement, namely the African Union and ECCAS. Their representatives conducted several joint visits, including with the Government, to areas controlled by signatory armed groups to strengthen their commitment to the Agreement, impressing on them the need to participate in the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme and cease violations of the Agreement.

6. On 18 June, a joint delegation met with the leader of the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation group in Ouham-Pendé prefecture to follow up demands by the Government and international community that the group surrender those involved in the massacres near Paoua in May and lay down its weapons. The group's leader agreed to start disarmament and demobilization on 29 June, and that was conducted for 58 combatants. He thereafter stalled on his commitments, announcing his resignation as military adviser in charge of the Unité spéciale mixte de sécurité for the northwest on 4 September.

7. In June, a joint delegation engaged with the leader of UPC in Ouaka prefecture, urging him to remove illegal barriers, cease illicit taxation and vacate occupied administrative buildings. UPC lifted five checkpoints and vacated the gendarmerie building in Ngakobo. He maintained that the joint security units (Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité) should be established before his combatants would participate in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme.

8. On 30 August, a joint delegation travelled to Kaga Bandoro, Nana-Grébizi prefecture, to engage the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) leader. He expressed his group's readiness to start disarmament and demobilization but requested more information on conditions for reintegration of ex-combatants and reabsorption of members of the national defence and security forces who had joined armed groups.

9. On 15 July, the Minister of Justice presided over the inaugural session of the national committee that oversees the prefectural committees. The African Union and ECCAS called upon the committee to play a more proactive role in addressing challenges, including violations. As at 1 October, 15 of 17 prefectural-level committees and 14 of 17 technical security committees were operational, with Government and United Nations support.

10. Significant progress was made towards completing the startup phase of the first Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité. On 4 July, the Prime Minister issued a decree establishing strategic and technical committees for their planning and swift establishment. A training site is under preparation in Bouar and ex-combatants for the first unit selected. The European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic completed a "training of trainers" programme for 30 instructors from the national defence and security forces in August. The first unit will begin two months' training in October.

11. The Mission increased efforts to disseminate the Agreement to civil society organizations, including women's, youth and religious groups. Three campaigns were conducted, in collaboration with the United Nations country team. After training

15 civil society organizations, they conducted campaigns across the country to grass-roots communities and local authorities, resulting in improved ownership and understanding of the Agreement.

12. In the margins of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, I held a high-level meeting on the Central African Republic with the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadéra, the President of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, Ahmad Allam-Mi. Participants discussed the implementation of the Agreement and highlighted the need to further strengthen national, regional and international cooperation to consolidate peace and strengthen development and humanitarian action.

13. From 5 to 7 October, the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Smail Chergui, my Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and the Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service of the European Union, Koen Vervaeke, visited the Central African Republic to take stock of the implementation of the Agreement. They met with the Government, political parties and civil society, as well as diplomatic missions and international organizations. They called on all signatories to respect their commitments; immediately end violence and promote dialogue; and ensure the rapid operationalization of the Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité. They encouraged the adoption of draft laws essential to implement the Agreement and hold peaceful, inclusive and credible elections, emphasizing that they must be held within the constitutional time frame. The delegation further called for peace dividends to be accelerated and encouraged progress in deploying security forces and State administration within the framework of the Agreement. It stressed that those violating the agreement should be sanctioned, and that MINUSCA use its agile posture to safeguard the integrity of the Agreement. The delegation underscored the continued support of the international community.

Political developments

14. Developments related to the Agreement and electoral process dominated the reporting period, contributing to an increasingly tense political context, characterized by lack of trust, with some parties seeking to consolidate political advantage. MINUSCA continued to engage with political and social actors to find consensus on the electoral process.

15. On 19 July, the National Assembly adopted the electoral code amended after the decision of the Constitutional Court of 5 June to the effect that some aspects of the code were unconstitutional. It was declared consistent with the Constitution on 14 August following the revocation of certain articles, including one requiring Government members to resign from their posts to be eligible to contest legislative seats. In addition, political parties are now responsible for ensuring that at least 35 per cent of their candidates are women. President Touadéra promulgated the code on 20 August.

16. Tensions continued between the Government and E Zingo Biani – Front Uni pour la Défense de la Nation, an opposition coalition comprising political and civil society and trade union actors created in May to protest government concessions to armed groups within the framework of the Agreement, among other political and governance concerns. The group denounced the inclusion of armed group members in the Government, characterizing it as “high treason”. Attempts by Government officials to engage the group in dialogue were unsuccessful. The Mouvement des Requins de Centrafrique, an amorphous group that emerged to counter E Zingo Biani, announced its dissolution in July.

17. The former ruling Kwa Na Kwa party held its third convention from 12 to 18 August, during which it announced its departure from the presidential majority and intention to align with opposition political parties. The party also announced that the former President, François Bozizé, would be its candidate in the upcoming presidential election, reiterating its demand that the Government allow Mr. Bozizé, who remains subject to a national arrest warrant and international sanctions, to return to the country.

18. On 30 July, the president of the opposition party, Union pour le Renouveau Centrafricain, Anicet Georges Dologuélé, publicly deplored corruption in the Government, in reaction to the findings of a parliamentary investigation into gold mining activities by foreign companies in Ouham-Pendé prefecture. The report highlighted legal anomalies in granting mining permits and negative environmental and health impacts of mining activities.

19. Abdou Karim Meckassoua, the former president of the National Assembly, continued to publicly oppose the Government. On 17 August, he claimed that the court of auditors had exonerated him of allegations that had led to his impeachment as president. He called for governance reforms, alleging mismanagement of the Assembly.

Electoral preparations

20. The National Elections Authority began preparations for voter registration, scheduled from January to April 2020. The Government pledged approximately \$2 million of the \$49 million required for its electoral operations.

21. On 5 September, the Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a project document establishing a basket fund of around \$42 million for United Nations support for the elections. The European Union pledged \$17 million (to be disbursed in March 2020) and UNDP \$2 million, leaving a funding gap of \$23 million at the present stage. No additional pledges have been made to date, entailing the risk of compromising credible and timely elections.

22. As at 1 October, the procurement process for voter registration material, which usually takes three months, had not started, owing to lack of resources. Delays in voter registration would result in the entire electoral calendar slipping. The Government and partners continue to stress that strong support by MINUSCA is essential throughout the electoral process, given the limited capacity of national counterparts and the significant technical, logistical, operational and security challenges.

Local dialogue and reconciliation

23. Local peace and reconciliation committees were established in Bambari, Bangassou, Bouar, Bossangoa, Bria, Kaga Bandoro, Paoua and Sibut, reaching a total of 29 across the country. MINUSCA continued to support local authorities in their dialogue to, inter alia, reconcile Muslim and Christian communities and facilitate the return of displaced persons in the third district of Bangui. MINUSCA supported intercommunal dialogue to de-escalate tensions following clashes between criminal gangs and local traders in July there. MINUSCA launched a community policing project involving the third district commissariat to enhance community engagement and build confidence in national security forces. MINUSCA intensified support for intercommunal dialogue in Birao following armed clashes and displacement of civilians.

III. Security situation

24. Violations of the Agreement dropped from 230 in April to 104 in September. However, activity by armed groups in violation of the Agreement continued, including violence against civilians, illegal taxation and obstruction of State authority. After abating in June and July, violence renewed in August and September, including in areas previously unaffected by conflict. The Front populaire pour la renaissance de centrafrique (FPRC) was responsible for most reported violations against civilians, followed by signatory and non-signatory anti-balaka groups.

25. The most significant clashes since June took place in Vakaga prefecture between the Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (MLCJ) and FPRC. On 14 July, they clashed in Am Dafok, and nine combatants were killed. FPRC reinforced its position in Birao with 80 combatants from Ndélé. On 31 August, FPRC killed the son of the sultan of Birao, resulting in two days of clashes. One civilian and 24 combatants were killed, and an estimated 13,000 civilians who had sought refuge near the MINUSCA compound and the airport were displaced. The African Union, ECCAS and MINUSCA denounced the clashes, demanding an immediate cessation of hostilities. Despite the engagement of my Special Representative and the African Union Special Representative with the FPRC military leader, the group attacked MLCJ positions on 14 September, and an additional 39 combatants were killed. To date, 24,000 civilians have been displaced.

26. MINUSCA took a robust posture to protect civilians, prevent further fighting and facilitate humanitarian work, including flying in humanitarian supplies, deploying a quick reaction force and assessing risks from unexploded ordnance. MINUSCA reinforced dialogue involving internally displaced persons, local authorities and civil society. MINUSCA took measures to mitigate the risk of conflict with ethnic undertones in other areas by reinforcing early warning networks in hotspots, increasing deployment of protection missions and developing procedures to better protect civilians.

27. Anti-balaka groups, FPRC and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) attacked humanitarian organizations seven times between 1 June and 1 October in and around Batangafo, Ouham prefecture. On 4 and 7 August, ex-Séléka erected two new checkpoints there. MINUSCA deployed a formed police unit on 7 September to reinforce protection at internally displaced persons camps.

28. MPC and FPRC continued to reinforce their presence north of Paoua. On 15 July, suspected MPC combatants ambushed villagers and looted villages in the region. The movement of civilians and humanitarians between Kouki and Markounda was restricted during the week of 22 July on account of a dispute over control of a new mining site.

29. Following a communiqué of 19 July by the FPRC leader, FPRC lifted 18 barriers around Bamingui-Bangoran and between Bria and Ippy, and vacated 13 public buildings in Birao, Vakaga prefecture. He issued a press release on 26 July announcing a permanent cessation of hostilities. During the reporting period, FPRC committed at least 100 violations against civilians and continued to operate a detention facility in Kaga Bandoro with MPC. FPRC also continued to illegally detain civilians in Bria. On 21 June, a senior FPRC leader published a communiqué illegally declaring that all military movements in Haute-Kotto prefecture required prior FPRC approval.

30. Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation continued to carry out military movements and harass civilians around Boukaya and Nguio-Bouar, despite commitments to cease hostilities in June. Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation reinforced its position around the Dilapoko, Amada-Gaza and Abba mining sites in June and July and began illegal taxation in the Baboua area. Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation maintained its

presence in Bang, Ngaoundaye and Niem-Yelewa, but did not return to Létélé and Boukaya, from where MINUSCA had expelled them in May.

31. On 26 September, MINUSCA launched an operation against Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation in Ouham-Pendé, Nana-Mambéré, and Mambéré-Kadéï prefectures, to protect civilians, confine combatants back into designated zones, and compel Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation to comply with the Agreement, in particular with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. During the operation, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation elements were expelled from three bases and equipment and weapons seized, and some 10 combatants were injured, with no civilian casualties. On 27 September, a MINUSCA helicopter with four peacekeepers crash-landed near Bouar, killing all on board. On 5 October, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation attacked a MINUSCA patrol near Niem; no casualties were reported.

32. During the reporting period, UPC reportedly committed at least 40 violations against civilians in Ouaka and Basse-Kotto prefectures. It increased military movements and reinforced its position in Alindao: 100 new combatants arrived on 18 June. It re-established its presence in Bambari, after being expelled by MINUSCA in January. Following engagement by the Government, the African Union, ECCAS and MINUSCA, the group lifted two barriers along the Alindao-Bambari axis in July and handed over a police station and a school. UPC continues to operate approximately 92 barriers. From July to September, UPC recruited combatants in Obo and Mboki in Haut-Mbomou prefecture. In August, local authorities reported the presence of UPC elements in Bambouti area, near South Sudan. Following pressure from MINUSCA, UPC elements returned westward towards their previous positions in early September. In August, in Mingala subprefecture, UPC elements took over a mining site, displacing civilians. On 27 September, UPC and anti-balaka clashed in Bangao village; 15 civilians were killed and 28 structures destroyed, including a mosque.

33. Bangui remained generally calm, notwithstanding a slight increase in criminality. In the third district, armed clashes between Arab traders and a criminal gang on 10 and 11 July resulted in 11 dead, including 3 civilians, and 26 wounded. MINUSCA deployed its joint task force and quick reaction forces to contain the situation, which was resolved with community-led dialogue.

IV. Regional engagement

34. The fifth session of the joint cooperation commission for the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo was held on 5 and 6 August in Bangui, the first such meeting in 32 years. Agreements were reached on the fight against wildlife poaching and trafficking, digital interconnectivity, health, roads and mining. Joint subcommittees were established on, inter alia, security and defence cooperation and borders. In the margins, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) facilitated the signing of a tripartite agreement on the voluntary repatriation of refugees from the Republic of the Congo.

35. The Government of Chad closed its border north of Paoua and around Gore on 24 June, citing rising insecurity and failure to contain cross-border cattle theft. The border at Bembéré unofficially reopened on 16 September. The Government of the Sudan closed its border at Am Dafok in late September.

V. Humanitarian situation

36. The humanitarian situation showed some improvement, including increased returns and improved access. The number of people requiring humanitarian assistance decreased from 2.9 million to 2.6 million, while small-scale returns started in Mbomou, Haut-Mbomou, Nana-Mambéré, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé prefectures. As at 1 September, 355,000 persons had returned to their areas of origin, an 18 per cent increase as compared with the same period in 2018. UNHCR facilitated the return of 7,142 refugees (48 per cent women), mainly in Lobaye Prefecture, a 400 per cent increase as compared with 2018. Over 90,000 refugees returned spontaneously, mainly in Sangha Mbaéré, Mambéré-Kadéï, Nana-Mambéré, Ouham-Pendé, Ouham, Nana-Grébizi, Basse-Kotto, Ouaka and Bamingui-Bangoran prefectures.

37. A fifth of the population remains displaced, with 581,000 internally displaced and over 605,000 registered refugees as at 31 August. Emergency operations were required to assist more than 24,000 people newly displaced in Birao. Conditions for comprehensive and sustainable voluntary returns in safety and dignity remained precarious owing to insecurity. Protection concerns remain an obstacle to durable solutions; returnees often found their homes looted, destroyed or occupied.

38. Humanitarian actors continue to operate in a complex, volatile environment. The relative decrease in clashes in some areas allowed humanitarian workers to sporadically reach previously inaccessible areas, in particular in Basse-Kotto, Mbomou, Haut-Mbomou and Haute-Kotto prefectures. As at 1 September, 1.1 million people had been reached, as compared with 700,000 people in the same period in 2018. The improved access led to a 6 per cent increase in people with acute needs.

39. Access challenges, weak government capacities and lack of development posed risks for the spread of disease and epidemics. A total of 15 health districts were prioritized for strengthened surveillance and preparedness further to the Ebola preparedness plan approved by the Ministry of Health and Population in September. The humanitarian country team prepared a three-month operational plan to support the Ministry. MINUSCA is developing risk-assessment and contingency plans for a possible Ebola outbreak.

40. The country remained one of the most dangerous countries for humanitarian workers. Three humanitarian workers have been killed in 2019, although a decrease in the number of incidents affecting humanitarian workers, premises and assets has been registered since January (188 incidents between January and August, as compared with 277 during the same period in 2018). The severity of incidents increased and the number of humanitarian actors wounded more than doubled (28, as compared with 13 in 2018).

41. The 2019 humanitarian response plan requires \$430.7 million to provide critical assistance to 1.7 million extremely vulnerable people. As at 7 October, it was 52 per cent funded. International humanitarian assistance remains the primary, or sole, social safety net for the population.

VI. Protection of civilians

42. In line with its strategy, the Mission strengthened early warning systems, focusing on threat analysis, community engagement and conflict prevention. MINUSCA aligned its early warning mechanisms with the dialogue and conflict prevention role of prefectural implementation committees.

43. The Mission continued to deploy teams to Batangafo, Ouham prefecture, and Alindao, Basse-Kotto prefecture, where it does not have a permanent civilian

presence, for early warning and conflict prevention. On 30 June, a team deployed to Bocaranga, Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, to bolster protection while signatory armed groups disarmed and demobilized. Since the eruption of the clashes in Birao, MINUSCA has provided security to displaced persons seeking refuge near its bases and surrounding area and engaged with the two factions and community leaders to minimize civilian casualties.

44. MINUSCA expanded its training of uniformed personnel on protection of civilians. Since January, 98 uniformed personnel have received tactical training. The Mission conducted predeployment training sessions using an integrated protection of civilians training module developed by the Mission.

VII. Extension of State authority and the rule of law

Extension of State authority

45. As at 1 October, all prefects and over 90 per cent of sub-prefects were in place in the 16 prefectures. Progress was observed in sectoral Ministry deployments. A recent civil servant mapping identified 3,418 (including 386 women) civil servants in their positions across the country as compared with 1,315 in 2015; this remains significantly lower than the goal of 6,500 civil servants by 2020 in the national strategy for the restoration of State authority. The Government continued to face challenges, including lack of infrastructure, financial resources, insecurity and obstruction by armed groups.

46. The Government, with MINUSCA support, disseminated the civil servants' charter at the prefectural and local levels. On 24 June, a presidential decree established resident ministers for all 16 prefectures, to improve State interventions. MINUSCA facilitated a series of videoconferences between the technical secretariat of the Agreement's implementation mechanism and prefects to provide guidance on policy priorities on the extension of State authority and social services. The Government's electronic database for tracking the deployment of civil servants was established in August with MINUSCA and UNDP support. It will enable the Government to better control the presence of civil servants and tailor strategic decisions to future deployments.

Security sector reform

47. In June 2019, the Government concluded, with MINUSCA support, a nationwide awareness-raising campaign on the military code of justice to increase compliance by uniformed personnel with legal norms and human rights standards. The campaign reached 2,448 uniformed personnel, including 456 women.

48. On 25 July, the action plan for the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation and Illegal Movement of Small Arms and Light Weapons was adopted by the National Assembly and endorsed by President Touadéra. The United Nations Mine Action Service supported its development.

National armed and internal security forces

49. The Central African armed forces (FACA) and internal security forces continued to make progress, albeit slow, in expanding deployment with MINUSCA support. FACA deployed to Birao and Bria, where they had not been present since the crisis; 1,346 FACA personnel are now deployed in 20 locations, an increase from 855 deployed in 2018 in three locations from the prior period. The local population reportedly welcomed their deployment. In August, the Government received a donation of 4,695 weapons from the Russian Federation, which also provided tactical

training for approximately 175 FACA from units trained by the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic. On 13 August, France donated 2,800 magazines to complement rifles donated in December. To date, the Military Training Mission has trained a total of 4,104 personnel. On 24 June, it started training 1,020 new recruits in Bangui and Bouar, following a nationwide recruitment campaign.

50. The number of internal security forces deployed outside of Bangui remained steady, with 1,075 deployed as at 1 October, as compared with 1,024 in June, but also deployed to areas where they have not been present since the crisis, such as Birao and Obo. The gendarmes and police officers recruited in 2018 continued to work in Bangui, owing to a lack of logistics, infrastructure and equipment to deploy in the regions. The 2019 recruitment process is ongoing: of 18,815 applications received as at 1 October, 24.7 per cent were from women.

51. MINUSCA continued to support the Government in investigating allegations of criminal offences and misconduct against national uniformed personnel. The Mission supported human rights vetting and efforts to reinforce national command and control and oversight. MINUSCA applied the human rights due diligence policy to its support for non-United Nations forces.

52. During the reporting period, UNMAS built and rehabilitated weapons and ammunition storage facilities for the national security forces in Bambari, Bangassou and Bouar. Some 17 FACA personnel were trained in management of specialized storage facilities and self-sustained ammunition disposal.

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

53. National disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation efforts regained momentum in the west. While *Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation* reluctance to enter the process represents a major challenge, during the reporting period, 356 combatants from five armed groups were disarmed and demobilized; and 235 war weapons, 302 explosives and 11,274 rounds of ammunition collected. Since December 2018, a total of 583 combatants from seven armed groups – the *Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC)*, *Révolution et justice/-Belanga* Branch, *Révolution et justice-Sayo* Branch, *Union des forces républicaines fondamentales* and most anti-balaka-associated militia – have disarmed and demobilized. To date, 178 ex-combatants expressed a preference for joining the future *Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité*; 83 wished to reintegrate into their communities; and 95 would like to integrate into the security forces.

54. Further to the Agreement, the Government presented signatory armed groups with a calendar on 9 August which sets out that the disarmament and demobilization operations of all 14 armed groups will be finalized by January 2020. Representatives of the armed groups present endorsed the calendar, except for *Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation*.

55. MINUSCA, with partners, completed implementation of all community violence reduction activities for 2018 and 2019. In August, MINUSCA launched its programme for 2019/2020 in seven priority locations across the country for new beneficiaries.

Justice and the rule of law

56. While the number of first instance and courts of appeal remained steady, the Court of Appeal in Bouar, with MINUSCA and UNDP support, heard 29 criminal cases during its August session. of which 27 were adjudicated, including two pertaining to armed groups. The Court sentenced 5 members of the *Mouvement national pour la libération de la Centrafrique* to 15 years of forced labour and 1 *FDPC*

member to 20 years. The Bangui Court of Appeal session began on 13 September and will conclude on 23 October. A total of 16 cases will be heard, including 8 involving armed groups and 3 on sexual- and gender-based violence.

57. On 20 June, the Special Criminal Court announced that the Special Prosecutor's office had identified 22 priority cases. Four preliminary investigations were opened, investigating judges seized of three cases transferred from ordinary courts; and 27 complaints received directly from the public. On 6 August, the Special Prosecutor announced that the court had assumed responsibility for the case against members of Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation implicated in the massacres near Paoua in May. MINUSCA and the United Nations country team continued to support the court under the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law arrangement, including by establishing a special legal corps to protect the rights of the accused. The president of the court appointed three lawyers for the corps; however, none were women.

58. On 18 September, the Government adopted a national justice sector policy, following a year-long consultative process supported by MINUSCA and UNDP. It provides a five-year framework for justice sector reform, elements of which will support the extension of justice institutions outside Bangui to provide needed legal and justice services to populations. The reform will also help to implement the justice and reconciliation provisions of the Agreement.

59. The population of Ngaragba prison reached 1,103 prisoners, more than quadruple its capacity, posing security, health and other risks for detainees and corrections personnel. The partial rehabilitation of the Camp de Roux annex, which holds high-profile and high-risk detainees, continued, with MINUSCA and UNDP support. On 1 July, the recruitment of 150 new civilian prison officers began, with UNDP and MINUSCA support. Some 22 per cent of the 3,068 applicants were women.

60. MINUSCA, under its urgent temporary measures mandate, arrested 90 individuals, including one woman, suspected of committing crimes, including murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, torture, looting and illegal detention.

VIII. Human rights and the fight against impunity

61. Human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law continued, although the number of incidents and victims decreased during the reporting period. From June to October, 304 incidents were reported, affecting 494 victims, as compared with 597 incidents and 1,077 victims reported during the same period in 2018. Incidents included attacks against civilians, sexual violence, restrictions on freedom of movement and abductions. Some 70 per cent of recorded human rights abuses and violations were attributed to signatory armed groups, with FACA allegedly responsible for others, including the killing of a civilian in Bambari in August.

Transitional justice

62. On 20 June, President Touadéra launched national consultations on the law to establish the future Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation further to the Agreement. MINUSCA supported consultations in Bambari, Bangassou, Bangui, Berberati, Damara and Sibut. The inclusive commission established on 28 May to review the events of the conflict and propose justice-related action to the Commission received a 90-day extension of its mandate.

63. On 19 July, the President launched a national action plan on the prevention of hate speech after a five-week public sensitization campaign by the high council of communication, with MINUSCA support. The plan calls upon authorities, non-State

actors, civil society and media to prevent the spread of hate speech; identifies measures to address its root causes; and calls for the establishment of an early warning and monitoring mechanism. MINUSCA is strengthening these efforts by helping to develop an integrated response plan to counter public incitement to violence.

Conflict-related sexual violence

64. Conflict-related sexual violence continued, with most incidents of rape of girls and women allegedly perpetrated by members of signatory armed groups, although national armed and security forces were also implicated.

65. In June, an awareness-raising campaign on resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#) on the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence was conducted in Bangui with mayors, neighbourhood chiefs, youth and women's associations. In August, MINUSCA organized training on conflict-related sexual violence prevention and response in Paoua for 57 former members of Révolution et justice-Sayo Branch.

66. Following reports of widespread sexual violence along transhumance corridors near Kaga Bando, the national police and gendarmerie joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and children deployed from 19 to 26 August, with United Nations support. This resulted in the investigation of 59 cases of sexual violence involving 264 victims heard. The cases were transmitted to the prosecutor in Kaga Bando for further action.

Children and armed conflict

67. On 24 June, FPRC signed the action plan to end and prevent grave violations against children for which the group is listed in annexes of my annual report on children and armed conflict. On 21 August, following four years of dialogue, UPC signed the action plan. In July, 37 self-demobilized children, including one girl, from anti-balaka groups, FPRC and Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique in Bria entered reintegration programmes led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partners.

IX. Socioeconomic situation

68. The Bank of Central African States released a report in July in which it noted that the Central African Republic gross domestic product growth increased from 3.8 per cent in 2018 to 4.7 per cent in 2019, primarily due to the building and public works sectors. The projected budget surplus for 2019 stands at 2.8 per cent, as compared with 0.4 per cent in 2018. However, the inflation rate rose from 1.7 per cent in 2018 to 3 per cent in 2019, and currency in circulation decreased from 15 per cent in 2018 to 9 per cent in 2019. The consequent rise in the prices of goods decreased the purchasing power of households and negatively impacted the local economy.

69. On 8 July, the joint executive committee of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, chaired by the Ministry of Economy and the United Nations, decided to extend the Plan for two years until 2023, to allow full implementation and complementarity with the Agreement. The implementation of the Plan made progress, with the disbursement of close to \$2.4 billion out of \$3.5 billion as at 1 October, bringing the financial delivery rate to 67 per cent. These disbursements pave the way for improving delivery of peace dividends to the population, with around 400 projects ongoing in several social and economic sectors. Its extension will also allow development actors to focus their efforts on social services and productive sectors.

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

Military component

70. As at 1 October, the strength of the MINUSCA military component stood at 11,299 (4.4 per cent women), including 319 staff officers and 160 military observers, out of an authorized strength of 11,650 personnel. It comprises 11 infantry battalions; 2 high-readiness battalions; 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; 1 level I-plus forward surgery module; and 3 helicopter units, including an attack helicopter unit. MINUSCA close air support capacity became limited to casualty evacuation and reconnaissance after the crash of the attack helicopter in September; three other military helicopters await repair.

Police component

71. As at 1 October, the strength of the MINUSCA police component stood at 2,048 personnel (11 per cent women), out of a total authorized strength of 2,080, including 398 individual police officers and 1,670 personnel in 11 formed police units and 2 police support units. Two police support units and six formed police units are in Bangui under the joint task force; formed police units are deployed in Bambari, Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro.

Civilian personnel

72. As at 1 October, 1,389 civilian personnel (25 per cent women), including 204 United Nations Volunteers, were serving with MINUSCA, representing 89 per cent of 1,558 authorized positions.

Status-of-forces agreement

73. Since June, MINUSCA and the Government have resolved four outstanding violations of the status-of-forces agreement. In May, MINUSCA and the Government of Cameroon reached an agreement regarding the supply line from Douala to Bangui further to the status-of-mission agreement, addressing issues of the invoicing of MINUSCA escorts by Cameroonian uniformed personnel.

Safety and security of United Nations personnel

74. Between 1 June and 1 October, 98 security incidents involving United Nations personnel were recorded, including 7 injured in armed attacks and 20 in road traffic accidents, a decrease from the same period in 2018. Seven personnel died due to accident or illness, including 4 in the helicopter crash, to whom we pay tribute for their sacrifice. The United Nations was targeted by armed attacks 22 times; non-governmental organizations 35 times. Movement was restricted in some locations, including areas of Bangui, owing to security risks.

75. MINUSCA continued to support national judicial authorities in the investigation and prosecution of crimes perpetrated against peacekeepers, including the 30 fatalities. Judicial investigations into the 2017 attacks in Yongofongo and Bangassou concluded and await adjudication. Judicial investigations are ongoing in two other cases, while another is under way into the killing of a national staff member in October.

Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

76. From 1 June to 31 August, four allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse implicating military personnel were reported; one allegedly occurred in 2019, others in previous years. A total of 16 allegations were reported in 2019; 2 were found to be unsubstantiated, 1 was substantiated, and 13 remain under investigation. In 2018, 20 allegations were reported, while in 2017 and 2016, the numbers were 19 and 52, respectively. Also, from 1 June to 31 August, two allegations of other types of serious misconduct implicating uniformed personnel were received and are under investigation.

77. Despite some progress, challenges remain in implementing my zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, including command and control of some contingents (although some commanders have been replaced); lack of accessibility and communication in some locations; length of investigations by Member States; and widespread poverty in the country, which increases vulnerability. To address challenges, MINUSCA continued to implement a three-pronged strategy focused on prevention, enforcement and remedial action. All civilian and uniformed personnel receive induction training upon deployment. In July, a comprehensive risk management workplan was adopted, following which mitigating measures were implemented for MINUSCA camps in high-risk areas, including improved lighting and fencing, improved welfare conditions for military personnel and the construction of contingent water points.

78. The Mission reached out to local communities through public campaigns and its toll-free hotline, including 24 community-based complaint mechanisms staffed by trained community members, including women. These efforts contributed to prompt reporting of allegations of misconduct against all categories of personnel. The 2018 information-sharing protocol between the Mission and humanitarian community contributed to timely reception and assessment of allegations, specifically through UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund, to better coordinate support to victims. The victim-centred approach was integrated into the training of personnel, including national investigation officers in military contingents.

Support considerations

79. MINUSCA continued efforts to reduce its environmental footprint. The Mission installed water efficient taps and flushing systems in ablution facilities. Recycled water from modular waste water treatment plants is used for non-drinking purposes; systems to monitor water consumption are being strengthened; and equipment is being acquired for rainwater harvesting in water-scarce areas such as Bouar and Obo. Segregation of solid waste at source was initiated at the Mission's headquarters and logistics base in Bangui to reduce waste sent to landfill. A pilot project on biodegradable waste will be replicated in field offices.

Action for Peacekeeping and performance optimization

80. MINUSCA made progress to enhance its effectiveness in line with my Action for Peacekeeping initiative to advance lasting political solutions and the political impact of peacekeeping. United Nations strategic partnerships, in particular with the African Union, ECCAS, the European Union and other partners, and its strong political engagement have brought concrete results in support of the political process and implementation of the Agreement. The Mission is also undertaking significant efforts to recruit more women. MINUSCA continued efforts to reduce peacekeeper fatalities. The Force closed two temporary operating bases in the centre on the grounds of risk management, although their closure may affect protection tasks. A

short-loop casualty evacuation process launched in August reduced evacuation decision time.

81. The Force and Police established mechanisms to monitor and improve performance, including conduct and discipline. The MINUSCA Force has evaluated seven contributing countries since May, focusing on mandate understanding, command and control, training and discipline, sustainment and health, as well as willingness and ability to protect civilians. All indicated that units are performing at satisfactory level in line with standards required to ensure robustness and protection of civilians. Further to the violence in Alindao in November 2018, 300 personnel from the contributing country concerned have been repatriated. The reduced unit received supplementary predeployment evaluation of training and performance capacity and was assigned to a new area of operation.

82. MINUSCA took measures to improve mobility, although additional capability is required, including air assets. Statements of unit requirements for infantry battalions were revised to include two mechanized companies for protection and mobility. A quick reaction force deployed to Birao contributed to minimizing civilian casualties, while a formed police unit deployed to the west protected displaced persons. The Mission continued to temporarily deploy civilian and police teams to prevent violence such as in Alindao.

83. MINUSCA scaled up implementation of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System. It has improved performance assessments, inter alia, through the development of a mission-wide results framework and monitoring tools to assess the extension of State authority and implementation of the Agreement.

XI. Financial considerations

84. The General Assembly, by its resolution [73/312](#) of 3 July 2019, 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 4 October 2019, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for MINUSCA amounted to \$240 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$3,736.8 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 31 July 2019, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 March 2019, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XII. Observations and recommendations

85. Over the past year, there has been significant change, the most visible of which was the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. It has already had a positive impact on the situation, with a decrease in security incidents and human rights violations linked to the conflict.

86. I would emphasize that the Agreement remains the only viable path for sustained peace in a country whose people have been devastated by protracted violent conflict. Central Africans must grasp this opportunity. At the same time, the peace process must continue, including through local level dialogue and community engagement, to ensure inclusivity. I call upon the Government to ensure that this inclusivity delivers the benefits envisaged in the Agreement to the entire population. I hope that the participation of women will be expanded to further enhance credibility and effectiveness.

87. I welcome the constructive engagement of most signatories in advancing the overdue peace, and the proactive engagement of the guarantors and facilitators. I am encouraged by the steady steps forward, although I am concerned at reports about delays in implementing some of the key political and security provisions, as well as serious violations of the cessation of hostilities. All signatories should be held accountable to implement the Agreement in good faith and in a timely manner, as well as non-signatories who obstruct implementation. MINUSCA will continue to use all means necessary to implement its mandate, including in support of the Agreement and to protect civilians.

88. All signatory armed groups must immediately cease hostilities and violence against civilians, humanitarian actors, peacekeepers and State representatives. While the Agreement has offered many civilians some reprieve from the devastating cycle of attacks, the levels of violence remain concerning, affecting the most vulnerable, in particular women and children. Attacks against those who are serving peace in the country and delivering lifesaving assistance are unacceptable.

89. The violent clashes in Birao between signatory armed groups in a previously stable part of the country are unacceptable, as is the egregious violence against civilians in Paoua. Such incidents are destructive to the lives of many and undermine trust and confidence in the Agreement. I welcome the robust response by MINUSCA to such violence, to protect civilians and pursue accountability for serious crimes against them. I call upon all Central Africans to resolve their disputes peacefully and through legal means, including through the follow-up and dispute resolution mechanisms of the Agreement at the national and local levels. I welcome efforts made to pursue community dialogue to prevent conflict, and encourage additional conflict prevention initiatives, including as led by women.

90. National ownership of the Agreement is essential for its success. I welcome the efforts of the Government and its partners to ensure that all segments of the population understand it. Those efforts should be intensified, complemented by dialogue and confidence-building initiatives to overcome public scepticism about concessions given to armed groups. Such engagement will resonate only if violations cease and all signatories abide by their commitments. I encourage national authorities to advance political reform, specifically legislation pertaining to decentralization, the status of former presidents and political parties, which assumes renewed urgency with the electoral period already under way.

91. I welcome the encouraging improvements in the humanitarian situation. Increased returns and improved access, although limited, demonstrate that we are on the right path. However, too many Central Africans continue to face displacement and deprivation.

92. Peace cannot be sustained until this trend is reversed. I appreciate the work of the humanitarian community, which continues to provide life-saving assistance in a challenging and dangerous environment. Their operations remain chronically underfunded, and access challenges impede their work. I call upon the international community to redouble support for ending this human tragedy and urgently contribute to the humanitarian response plan.

93. Peace cannot be sustained in the absence of tangible improvements in the lives of Central Africans, who have legitimate grievances relating to historic marginalization and neglect of large swaths of the country. Many communities are isolated and require significant infrastructure and other investment to access basic services. I welcome the extension of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan until 2023, with generous donor support. It provides an opportunity for laying the foundation of sustainable peace in a manner that complements the Agreement and delivers peace dividends. Real development gains must be visible, in particular

economic recovery initiatives to boost the productive sectors and offer the population, especially youth and women, livelihood and employment opportunities. I reiterate my call upon the Government and all partners to invest in recovery and development programmes that complement and eventually replace humanitarian assistance, in particular in the most remote areas.

94. I welcome the limited, but important, progress made in extending State authority throughout the country. The State must be present throughout its territory to protect and provide services to the population and accompany development actors. The limited capacity of the State outside Bangui must therefore be addressed, including in the context of the Agreement and taking into account the upcoming elections. Officials must be empowered and equipped to provide services, while issues of governance are addressed. Much more is required to overcome obstacles to the deployment of more national armed and internal security forces outside Bangui, where communities face the greatest protection concerns. The Government must be able to perform its sovereign responsibilities of securing the country and protecting its civilians.

95. Urgent action is needed to overcome delays in implementing the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme and establishing the Agreement's interim security measures. The speedy establishment of the Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité remains crucial to shore up confidence between signatory parties and to encourage their commitment to the Agreement. While all armed group members participating in these units will be subject to disarmament and demobilization, as well as human rights vetting, it is important to balance due diligence with pragmatism and flexibility. This is without prejudice to security sector reform and national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation processes, which will continue simultaneously and in parallel. These processes should be strategically and operationally coherent and mutually reinforcing.

96. Continued improvements in the human rights situation, observed since 2017, are welcome. Many abuses, however, continue to be inflicted on the population. I strongly condemn all perpetrators of human rights violations, including gender-based violence and other abuses that disproportionately affect the most vulnerable. Vigilance and the ability to pre-empt and respond to threats to civilians are essential.

97. The Agreement acknowledges that peace cannot be sustained without justice and respect for the rule of law. The people of the Central African Republic have long called for an end to impunity and reasonably expect that perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses and criminal acts will be held accountable. Strengthening the penal chain is an integral aspect for the extension of State authority. I welcome ongoing efforts to deploy justice officials throughout the country. I call upon Member States and other partners to support the justice sector, including the Special Criminal Court. I also welcome the decision of the Special Criminal Court to assume responsibility for the case involving alleged perpetrators of the massacre near Paoua. The establishment of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation must be expedited, engage affected communities and take a victim-centred approach. In this regard, the inclusive commission should aim to complete its work.

98. The presidential, legislative and local elections scheduled for 2020 and 2021 are essential for consolidating democratic order and the peace process and must be held in accordance with constitutional timelines. I call upon all political stakeholders to pursue their ambitions in a constructive manner that advances meaningful dialogue about the vision Central Africans have for their country without re-litigating the Agreement. It was important to agree expeditiously on a code of conduct for elections,

which should align with the national action plan on the prevention of inflammatory rhetoric and hate speech.

99. I welcome the consensus reached on the electoral code and encourage national authorities and political parties to actively promote the meaningful participation of all segments of society, including as candidates. It is the responsibility of the Government and national institutions to protect the franchise of all citizens, including women, youth, the displaced and others who may face obstacles in providing proof of identity. These elections are an invaluable opportunity for important advances on issues relating to citizenship and inclusion. The United Nations system, including MINUSCA, will continue to support Central African stakeholders in creating an environment conducive to a peaceful electoral process.

100. Neighbouring countries have an essential role in building and sustaining peace, including as facilitators of the Agreement, and to address transnational threats, which continue to compromise the stability of the Central African Republic. I call upon the region to use all the resources at their disposal in actively supporting the peace process. I therefore welcome the convening of the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo joint commission for the first time in 32 years, as well as that earlier this year between the Central African Republic and Cameroon. I would encourage the countries concerned to uphold the agreements reached in a spirit of good neighbourliness. I would encourage the Central African authorities to continue ongoing efforts to build partnerships with other neighbouring countries, including through bilateral mixed commissions. I also call upon countries hosting Central African refugees to sign the agreements necessary to allow them to participate in the electoral process.

101. MINUSCA's presence and robust mandate is crucial for the country's stability. It plays a central role in supporting the people and Government in building peace in their country. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of MINUSCA for one year, until 15 November 2020, at its current authorized military and police strength.

102. I recommend that the Security Council mandate MINUSCA to provide operational, logistical and security support for the elections, as well as coordination of international support, in addition to its current electoral mandate of good offices and technical assistance, as detailed in my report of 15 October 2018 ([S/2018/922](#)). MINUSCA will require the necessary resources to perform these essential tasks. The Mission's electoral support alone will not suffice in helping the national authorities deliver credible and timely elections. I welcome pledges of funding already committed and appeal to partners to generously support the national electoral authority, as well as contribute to the UNDP basket fund.

103. I also recommend that the strong political, technical and operational support of MINUSCA for the peace process, the implementation of the Agreement and the extension of State authority be reinforced, and without caveats that could preclude the Mission from seeking resources commensurate to its tasks. The mobility and flexibility of the Force will need to be assured, including through additional aviation assets, within existing authorized troop strength, for the recommended strengthened mandate, as well as to protect civilians in an evolving context. The coordination and convening role of MINUSCA will become even more important in the year ahead.

104. I welcome the strong strategic partnerships of the United Nations with international partners in the Central African Republic, in particular with the African Union and ECCAS, including as guarantors of the Agreement, as well as the other facilitators, and other important multilateral and bilateral partners, including the European Union. These strategic and operational partnerships are crucial to collectively make a difference on the ground for the country and its people. I call upon

all international and regional stakeholders to continue to coordinate and cooperate in a transparent manner and to sustain international attention and support on peace and recovery efforts.

105. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative for the Central African Republic, Mankeur Ndiaye, for his leadership. I also extend my sincere gratitude to all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel, troop- and police-contributing countries, donor countries, regional and multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable support. I pay particular tribute to the essential role played by the African Union and ECCAS, including as guarantors of the Agreement, as well as the crucial role of the region, including as facilitators, to continue their strong engagement to bring sustainable peace to the Central African Republic.

Annex I

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization
Mission in the Central African Republic: military and police
strength as at 1 October 2019**

Country	Military component			Total	Police component	
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops		Formed Police Units	Civilian Police
Argentina	–	2	–	2	–	–
Bangladesh	10	18	998	1 026	–	–
Benin	3	5	–	8	–	23
Bhutan	2	2	–	4	–	–
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	2	–	5	–	–
Brazil	3	6	–	9	–	–
Burkina Faso	–	1	–	1	–	38
Burundi	7	13	747	767	–	–
Cambodia	6	6	200	212	–	–
Cameroon	3	7	747	757	280	28
Colombia	2	–	–	2	–	–
Congo	5	10	–	15	137	3
Côte d'Ivoire	–	3	–	3	–	45
Czech Republic	3	–	–	3	–	–
Djibouti	–	–	–	–	–	5
Egypt	9	19	986	1 014	140	3
France	–	9	–	9	–	6
Gabon	–	3	450	453	–	–
Gambia	3	3	–	6	–	7
Ghana	5	11	–	16	–	7
Guatemala	2	2	–	4	–	–
Guinea	–	–	–	–	–	18
Indonesia	6	8	200	214	140	6
Jordan	3	7	–	10	–	17
Kenya	8	7	–	15	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	–	–	1
Mali	–	–	–	–	–	25
Mauritania	5	8	450	463	277	–
Mexico	–	1	–	1	–	–
Moldova (Republic of)	3	2	–	5	–	–
Morocco	2	12	750	764	–	–
Nepal	5	14	720	739	–	–
Niger	3	7	–	10	–	33
Nigeria	–	2	–	2	–	–
Oman	–	–	–	–	–	–
Pakistan	12	28	1 213	1 253	–	–
Paraguay	2	1	–	3	–	–

<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>Civilian Police</i>
Peru	7	8	202	217	–	–
Philippines	2	–	–	2	–	–
Portugal	–	8	180	188	–	9
Romania	–	–	–	–	–	10
Russian Federation	2	7	–	9	–	–
Rwanda	9	18	1 360	1 387	416	22
Senegal	–	12	100	112	280	36
Serbia	2	3	71	76	–	–
Sierra Leone	2	1	–	3	–	–
Spain	–	–	–	–	–	4
Sri Lanka	5	2	109	116	–	–
Sweden	–	–	–	–	–	4
Togo	4	7	–	11	–	18
Tunisia	2	–	–	2	–	30
United Republic of Tanzania	–	7	435	442	–	–
United States of America	–	8	–	8	–	–
Uruguay	–	3	–	3	–	–
Viet Nam	1	4	–	5	–	–
Zambia	8	14	909	931	–	–
Zimbabwe	2	–	–	2	–	–
Total	161	321	10 827	11 309	1 670	398

Annex II

Map



Map No. 4522 Rev. 16 UNITED NATIONS
October 2019 (Colour)

Office of Information and Communications Technology
Geospatial Information Section