8. The situation in the Central African Republic

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held 8 meetings and adopted 3 resolutions in connection with the situation in the Central African Republic. It received several briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) as well as other officials of the United Nations and regional organizations, including the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

The Council gave sustained consideration to this item, particularly in 2013, after armed conflict resumed in the Central African Republic. The Libreville Agreements, signed on 11 January 2013, included a ceasefire and defined modalities of a political transition. In that context, the Council extended the mandate of BINUCA once for a period of 12 months and subsequently reinforced it to allow the mission to support the implementation of the transition process. In addition, the Council authorized the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA), imposed an arms embargo and expressed its intention to consider additional targeted measures against individuals who acted to undermine security and peace.

The table at the end of the section lists the meetings at which this item was considered, and gives information on, inter alia, invitees, speakers and decisions adopted.
Briefing by the Special Representative on progress of political dialogue and demobilization, disarmament and reintegration process

On 6 June 2012, the Security Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of BINUCA who introduced the seventh report of the Secretary-General and informed the Council on political, security, socioeconomic, humanitarian and human rights developments in the Central African Republic. Despite continued instability at the political and security levels, she highlighted the commitment of the Government in regard to political dialogue, disarmament, the demobilization and reintegration process, and stabilization efforts in the north-east region through the deployment of a force under a tripartite agreement with Chad and the Sudan. She provided information on the role of BINUCA in supporting security sector reform, local mediation initiatives, and the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative on the Lord’s Resistance Army; and stressed the need to continue building on the momentum created by the Government on the political and security fronts. The representative of the Central African Republic said that the 2011 elections had triggered a new political and institutional order. Though security remained the fundamental concern of the Government, the State was progressively regaining control over a large part of the national territory, allowing for a gradual return of internally displaced persons and refugees. He stressed the importance of the reform of the security sector and, in that connection, reaffirmed the commitment of the Government to establishing a State that genuinely protected human rights.

Briefings on the rebel offensive and the Libreville peace agreements, and adoption of resolution 2088 (2013) extending the mandate of BINUCA

On 11 January 2013, the Council heard briefings by the Special Representative and head of BINUCA and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The former informed the Council of a rebel offensive against the Government of the Central African Republic, launched on 10 December 2012 in the northern regions by the newly formed Séléka coalition, seizing control of several towns and

1 S/2012/374.
2 S/PV.6780, pp. 2-5.
3 Ibid., pp. 5-7.
overshadowing positive developments reported in the latest report of the Secretary-General.\textsuperscript{4} She noted that the failure of the army to repel the attacks was “indicative of the depth of decay within the national armed forces” and highlighted the prompt response by regional actors to the crisis, including the deployment by Chad of an interposition force, a decision by the Heads of States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to facilitate peace talks in Libreville, and the reinforcement of the Mission de Consolidation de la Paix (MICOPAX) of ECCAS by deploying troops from Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and Chad to help defend Bangui. However, rebel progression towards Bangui had triggered the evacuation of United Nations system, African Union and international non-governmental organizations personnel. On the political front, the Special Representative indicated that peace negotiations held in Libreville between representatives of the presidential majority, the politico-military movements that have adhered to the Libreville Peace Agreement, the opposition, and Séléka had resulted in the signing of three agreements: a declaration of principles to resolve the political and security crisis (signed by the Government, the politico-military movements that have adhered to the Libreville Peace Agreement, Séléka and the democratic opposition, as well as ECCAS and the follow-up committee of the Libreville Peace Agreement); a ceasefire agreement (signed by the Government and Séléka and witnessed by ECCAS and the follow-up committee); and a political agreement defining the modalities of a power-sharing arrangement (signed by the presidential majority, the politico-military movements that have adhered to the Libreville Peace Agreement, the democratic opposition and Séléka); pursuant to which the President would remain in power until the end of his mandate in 2016, a Prime Minister would be appointed from the opposition, and an inclusive Government of national unity would be established for 12 months, to restore peace and stability and to organize legislative elections. Stressing that BINUCA had not anticipated such a quick overrun of half the country, she spoke of the need to address the reasons for lack of implementation of previous peace agreements. In regard to the consequences of the crisis, the Special Representative provided an update on the humanitarian conditions of 800,000 people living in the affected areas, citing the continued displacement of population fleeing from their homes into the bush, constant looting of humanitarian organizations premises and constrained humanitarian access due to insecurity. She concluded that despite its gravity, the crisis offered an opportunity for

\textsuperscript{4} S/2012/956.
parties to undertake dialogue and seize the chance to establish an efficient Government in accordance with the agreements of Libreville. She also recommended that BINUCA lead a strategic assessment to review its priorities and redefine its needs.\(^5\)

Reporting on her recent visit to the Central African Republic from 5 to 13 December 2012, the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict indicated that widespread sexual violence was committed in the country, including rape in areas controlled by armed groups, forced abductions of women, girls and boys into armed groups, forced marriage, incidents of sexual violence committed by elements of the national security forces as well as widespread violations by the Lord’s Resistance Army. She stated that ensuring better monitoring, analysis and information as a basis for evidence-based action was a critical priority, and stressed the need for armed forces and groups to immediately issue clear orders prohibiting sexual violence through their respective chains of command, hold perpetrators accountable, and release women and children from their ranks. She emphasized the extremely limited capacities of national institutions to implement measures to address sexual violence and the absence of State authority and structures in most areas outside Bangui. During her visit she had sought to deepen cooperation with the Government and engage with the leadership of the main politico-military groups in order to secure concrete protection commitments from them. She informed the Council that a follow-up technical visit by the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence would follow, and stressed the critical importance of deploying a women’s protection adviser to BINUCA.\(^6\)

Underlining the threat of war in his country, the representative of the Central African Republic stated that the peace talks in Libreville were “the last lifeline for the Central African Republic” and reaffirmed the commitment of the Government to dialogue and to implementation of the outcome decisions of the talks.\(^7\)

On 24 January 2012, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2088 (2013) by which it extended the mandate of BINUCA for a year. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to provide a report on the situation on the ground as well as an assessment on the ability of the mission to further implement its priorities in light of recent events. In addition, it called upon the Government, Séléka, armed groups and the democratic opposition

\(^5\) S/PV.6899, pp. 2-7.

\(^6\) Ibid., pp. 7-8.

\(^7\) Ibid., pp. 9-10.
to abide in good faith by their commitments made in the Declaration of Libreville of 11 January 2013, and requested BINUCA to use its good offices to work with all parties to facilitate the full implementation of the Libreville agreements. The Council also welcomed the continued efforts of MICOPAX in support of peace and security in the Central African Republic and called on countries in the subregion, and regional and subregional organizations to consider, upon request of the Central African Republic, appropriate measures to improve the security situation.

Following the vote, the representative of the Central African Republic welcomed the extension of BINUCA and stated that a post-crisis assessment would be conducted in order to identify the necessary measures for reconstruction.8

**Briefings on political and security developments following the coup d’état of 24 March 2013**

On 15 May 2013, the Special Representative presented to the Council the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2088 (2013), which described the situation in the Central African Republic since the rebel offensive of 10 December 2012, in particular the coup d’état of 24 March that had led to the ousting of the President and the degradation of the security situation in the entire country which, she noted, had collapsed “into a state of anarchy and total disregard for international law” citing indiscriminate and targeted killings, rape, assault on the population, recruitment of children as soldiers, and looting of homes. The crisis also constituted a direct threat to regional peace and security, particularly for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad and Cameroon. At the political level, she reported that the roadmap of tasks established in the Libreville Agreements for the restoration of constitutional order was not implemented accordingly, noting that the self-proclaimed President continued to run the country by presidential decrees. The Special Representative noted that following the Séléka offensive, the justice and police institutions had collapsed and gross human rights violations were the cause of great concerns in terms of the protection of civilians. In that regard, she believed that the time was ripe for the Council to consider the imposition of individual sanctions against the architects and perpetrators of such violations,

---

8 *S/PV.6907*, p. 3.
warning against the risk that the population “[took] the law into its own hands”. Additional funding was required to support the humanitarian response and urgent action was needed to help restore security and stability in the country. In that connection, while she welcomed the intention of ECCAS to increase its force to 2000 personnel, she emphasized that such short-term initiative should be followed by an expanded regional force, possibly under the African Union and supported by the international community. Finally, the Special Representative insisted on the critical role of the Prime Minister in the transition process, adding that a system of impunity in a situation where a democratic order was overturned by force of arms, even when confronted with serious governance challenges, should not be encouraged. United Nations support to ECCAS and the African Union in re-establishing the basic principles of Libreville was essential.  

The Prime Minister of the Central African Republic informed the Council of upcoming political steps, including the establishment of a Government of national unity and the abolition of the illegally elected Office of the National Transitional Council. On the security situation, he noted that acts of vandalism by Séléka elements primarily targeted non-Muslims and sparing Muslims created resentment in the Christian communities and inflamed religious tensions. In addition, despite seizing control of all political and military levers, Séléka was not able to restore order. In that context, the Prime Minister asked the Council to inscribe the situation of the Central African Republic on its agenda in order to ensure that it would no longer be a forgotten crisis, asking France in particular, to intervene by force to disarm Séléka with the support of the European Union and the African Union. He also called for the appointment of a special rapporteur to investigate human rights violations and suggested that a Chairman be appointed to the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.  

The representative of Chad, speaking on behalf of the presidency of ECCAS, indicated that following the coup, ECCAS had held an extraordinary summit in N’Djamena with the participation of the Presidents of South Africa and Benin, the United Nations, the European Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie. All condemned the seizure of power, called the leader of the Séléka coalition and self-proclaimed President to

---

9 S/PV.6967, pp. 2-5.  
10 Ibid., pp. 5-8.
comply with the Libreville Agreements, and agreed to support the transition through a
monitoring committee and an International Contact Group.11

On 14 August 2013, the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-
General and head of BINUCA12 informed the Council that some progress had been achieved
on the political front, including the promulgation of a Transitional Charter and the reshuffling
of the Government of National Unity. However, taking into account persisting tensions
between the Prime Minister and the President of the National Transitional Council over the
management of the transition process, he noted that political gains were fragile and that the
road map for elections remained to be established. Despite slight improvement on the security
front, particularly in Bangui, with the establishment of sites of cantonment of Séléka and
elements of the former national army, and the resumption of joint patrol by Séléka and
MICOPAX troops, the breakdown of law and order continued to allow for widespread human
rights violations. Police officers who reported to work were inadequately equipped and no
screening system to absorb Séléka elements in the national army was yet in place. He further
indicated that on 19 July 2013, the African Union Peace and Security Council had authorized
the deployment of the International Support Mission in the Central African Republic for an
initial period of six months. Composed of 3,652 police and military personnel, mainly
contingents serving in MICOPAX, the mission was mandated to protect civilians, restore
security, public order and State authority, reform the defense and security sectors, and create
conditions conducive to humanitarian assistance. He encouraged the Council to lend its full
support to the force. The United Nations, he added, would participate in a technical
assessment mission to refine the concept of operations for the mission, in an advisory
capacity.13

The Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs underscored that the situation
in the Central African Republic had deteriorated dramatically and had shifted from a long-
term crisis of poverty to a complex emergency characterized by violence, acute needs and
grate protection issues. The 4.6 million people affected by the crisis included 206,000
internally displaced and nearly 60,000 refugees in neighbouring countries. During her visit to

11 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
12 In an exchange of letters dated 12 June 2012 (S/2013/343 and S/2013/344), the Security Council took note of
the intention of the Secretary-General to appoint a new Special Representative for the Central African Republic
and Head of BINUCA.
13 S/PV.7017, pp. 2-4.
the Central African Republic, she was encouraged by the commitment of the national authorities to make the restoration of security and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration a priority. However, she underlined the considerable challenge such a task represented, given the lack of command and control over the Séléka forces, and the presence of foreign fighters. Stressing the urgent need for a comprehensive response to the crisis, and prioritizing the restoration of security and addressing humanitarian, recovery and development needs the Under Secretary-General formulated various requests to the Council, including to support the newly established mission of the African Union and to help the authorities in expediting the swift return of public services officials to areas outside Bangui. She warned that a failure to act would not only exacerbate the appalling conditions endured by the population, but also increase the risk of regionalization of the conflict.14

The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights stated that the systematic destruction of public registries had fuelled suspicions of an attempt by the Séléka coalition to modify the ethnic and religious balance in the country. The absence of public records to establish voter lists would create an additional challenge to organizing free and fair elections in the upcoming 18 to 24 months. Given the general climate of fear, and the difficulty to collect accurate data on violations due to a lack of access to areas outside Bangui and to the “much-too-limited” human rights monitoring capacity of BINUCA, he stressed the need to urgently establish a national commission for human right and fundamental freedoms. He presented a number of recommendations to the Council including the need to establish a credible and legitimate national security force composed of a limited number of former regime security elements and Séléka forces screened and vetted under international guidance to exclude perpetrators of human rights violations. In addition, he underscored the importance of deploying a large international force with a strong protection mandate, and reinforcing the human rights component of BINUCA. With regard to accountability, he encouraged the Council to send a clear message to the military commanders and the transition authorities that they were criminally responsible for preventing crimes and punish perpetrators.15

The representative of the Central African Republic called on the Council to adopt sanctions targeting the perpetrators of violations of human rights, to strengthen the resources of BINUCA and to appoint a penholder for the Central African Republic.16

14 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
15 Ibid., pp. 6-8.
16 Ibid., p. 9.
Briefings by the Deputy Secretary-General and adoption of resolutions 2121 (2013) and 2127 (2017)

On 10 October 2013, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2121 (2013) by which it demanded the swift implementation of transitional arrangements in view of the holding of free, fair and transparent elections 18 months after the beginning of the transition period. The Council also expressed its readiness to consider appropriate measures against those who took actions that undermined peace and stability, including those who violated transitional agreements, impeded the transitional process and fuelled violence. The mandate of BINUCA was reinforced and updated to allow the mission to support the implementation of the transition process, support conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, support stabilization of the security situation, promote and protect human rights, and coordinate international actors involved. The Council also welcomed the prompt establishment of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA), encouraged the African Union and ECCAS to expedite their efforts toward the transition from MICOPAX to MISCA and expressed its intention to consider options for support to MISCA. In that connection, the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a written report on the planning of MISCA detailing options for international support to the mission, including the possible option of a transformation of MISCA into a United Nations peacekeeping operation, subject to appropriate conditions on the ground.

On 25 November 2013, the Council heard briefings by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, and the Senior Adviser for Peacebuilding and Development of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations. The Deputy Secretary-General presented the report of the Secretary-General on the findings of the technical assistance team deployed pursuant to resolution 2121 (2013), stressing that the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Central African Republic presented a test of international solidarity and of the responsibility to prevent atrocities. He expressed grave concerns at the breakdown of law and order and its consequences, including the use of children, sexual violence, and an increase in intercommunal violence. In that regard, he noted that the manipulation of religious affiliations for political purposes had fuelled unprecedented sectarian violence between
Muslims and Christians, citing violations by former Séléka elements on the one hand, and by “anti-balaka” self-defense groups on the other hand. Stating that urgent measures to end impunity and hold perpetrators accountable were needed, he appealed to the Council to consider accountability mechanisms, such as a commission of inquiry and/or targeted sanctions. He warned that, if left to fester, the situation may develop into a religious and ethnic conflict, or even a civil war that could spread into neighbouring countries. With regard to peacekeeping, he noted that the capacity of MICOPAX to protect civilians was very limited and that some of its contingents were perceived as siding with particular communities based on religion. The report, he said, presented five options for international support to MISCA: from bilateral and multilateral support arrangements to the transformation of MISCA into a United Nations Peacekeeping operation; adding that the latter option was favoured by a majority of actors in the Central African Republic, including a number of civil society organizations.  

The representative of the Central African Republic warned against the risk of genocide in his country in case no action was taken and announced that the transitional authorities had written to the Secretary-General and the Security Council to seek their agreement to their request that France provide military assistance in support to MISCA. He emphasized the need to provide MISCA a strong mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Similarly, the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States stressed that such a mandate was required to enable MICOPAX, which was the core of MISCA, to fully carry out its stabilization mission in the country and create the best conditions possible for the civilian component of MISCA, with the support of a reinforced BINUCA. The Central African Republic needed to establish a representative democracy that served the general interest of its people, rather than those of a clan or ethnic or religious group. In addition, the Senior Adviser for Peacebuilding and Development of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the African Union highlighted the contribution of the African Union from the onset of the crisis, including through the suspension of the participation of the Central African Republic in its activities and the imposition of targeted sanctions against some individuals, seeking the support of the Security Council in that regard.

17 S/PV.7069, pp. 2-4.
18 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
19 Ibid., p. 6.
He emphasized the role of ECCAS in convening peace talks, deploying peacekeepers and providing financial assistance in support of the Central African Republic. The transfer of authority between MICOPAX and MISCA was scheduled for 19 December 2013, and the African Union and ECCAS were united in addressing the challenges at hand. He further stated that the role of the international community, particularly the United Nations, should be to enhance such efforts, through the provision of adequate support, which he stressed, was consistent with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter on the role of regional arrangements in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. To conclude, he looked forward to a Security Council resolution that would enhance the joint efforts of ECCAS and the African Union.\textsuperscript{20}

On 5 December 2013, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2127 (2013) by which it inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to rapidly establish an international commission of inquiry in order to investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and abuses of human rights in the Central African Republic by all parties since 1 January 2013 and to help identify the perpetrators of such violations. In addition, the Council authorized the deployment of MISCA for a period of twelve months to take all necessary measures to contribute to the protection of civilians, the restoration of security and public order, the stabilization of the country and the restoration of State authority over the national territory, the creation of conditions conducive to the provision of humanitarian assistance, and to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and security sector reform led by the Transitional Authorities and coordinated by BINUCA. Furthermore, the Council authorized the French forces in the Central African Republic to take all necessary measures to support MISCA in the discharge of its mandate. It also requested the Secretary-General to undertake contingency preparations and planning for the possible transformation of MISCA into a United Nations peacekeeping operation, stressing that a future decision of the Council would be required to establish such a mission. Additionally, the Council decided to impose an arms embargo to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms and related material of all types to the Central African Republic, and expressed its strong intent to swiftly consider imposing targeted measures, including travel bans and assets freezes, against individuals who acted to

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., pp. 7-8.
undermine the peace, stability and security. Accordingly, the Council established a sanctions committee to monitor the implementation of the arms embargo and requested the Secretary-General to create, for an initial period of thirteen months, a panel of experts to support the work of the Committee.

Following the vote, three Council members, the representative of the Central African Republic and the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations made statements. Invoking the risk to see the Central African Republic become a safe haven for terrorist and criminal organizations, the representative of Togo welcomed the deployment of MISCA, supported by the French force, and called upon the international community to contribute to the trust fund that the Council requested the Secretary-General to establish in resolution 2127 (2013). The representative of Morocco commended the mobilization of the international community and the Council on the urgent need to intervene in order to restore security and end the crisis, and stated that his country was actively working to deploy soldiers to serve as a guard unit for BINUCA. The representative of France said that given the crisis in the Central African Republic which had long been a forgotten one, indifference and inaction were not an option, invoking with regard to its support to the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States a collective duty to prevent mass atrocities. He added that resolution 2127 (2013) provided MISCA with a strong Chapter VII mandate which would allow the mission to take all necessary measures to protect civilians and to neutralize armed groups that refused to comply with instructions for cantonment and disarmament; and for the French forces, to support MISCA in accordance with the request made by the African Union and the transition authorities of the Central African Republic. Finally, the Permanent Observer of the African Union welcomed the collaboration between his organization and the Security Council which had led to the adoption of the resolution, and expressed appreciation for the ability, without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Council, to share views with Council members, offer suggestions in the formulation of the text and indicate modalities of support favoured by his organization. He added that work was underway in view of the successful transfer of authority between MICOPAX and MISCA on 19 December 2013, and that the African Commission had appointed key officials of MISCA.

21 S/PV.7072, pp. 2-3.
22 Ibid., p.3 See also exchange of letters dated 22 and 29 October 2013 (S/2013/636 and S/2013/637) and letter dated 26 November 2013 from the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/2013/696) on the establishment of a guard unit to enable the implementation of the mandated tasks of BINUCA.
23 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
He announced the intention of the African Union to implement the mandate of MISCA “in an aggressive manner, in the spirit of the expectations expressed by the leadership of ECCAS”, giving immediate attention to the humanitarian situation. ²⁴

²⁴ Ibid., pp.5-7.
### Meetings: the situation in the Central African Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting and date</th>
<th>Sub-item</th>
<th>Other documents</th>
<th>Rule 37 invitations</th>
<th>Rule 39 and other invitations</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S/PV.6899 11 January 2013</td>
<td>Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2012/956)</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of BINUCA, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td>All invitees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/PV.6967 15 May 2013</td>
<td>Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/261)</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of BINUCA (Prime Minister), Chad</td>
<td></td>
<td>All invitees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/PV.7017 14 August 2013</td>
<td>Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/470)</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of BINUCA, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td>All invitees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part I – Overview of Security Council Activities in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security

### Part I – Overview of Security Council Activities in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting and date</th>
<th>Sub-item</th>
<th>Other documents</th>
<th>Rule 37 invitations</th>
<th>Rule 39 and other invitations</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>