

**Peacebuilding Commission advice to the Security Council
on MINUSCA mandate renewal
October 2021**

Consistent with the Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), the Peacebuilding Commission is providing the following observations and advice to the Security Council ahead of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) mandate renewal, with a view to supporting ongoing and required efforts for peacebuilding and sustaining peace and stability in the country.

Despite the deterioration of the security situation due to various disruptions, including an armed rebellion as well as the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Central African Republic (CAR) Government remained engaged alongside its partners, including MINUSCA to move forward with the implementation of its commitments for peace and stability.

This engagement has resulted in many achievements, the most important of which were the presidential elections in December 2020, the conclusion of the legislative elections in July 2021, the launch of preparatory works for the Republican Dialogue by President TOUADÉRA, the adoption of the Joint Roadmap for Peace by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) on September 16, 2021, followed by the declaration of a unilateral cease-fire by the H.E President TOUADÉRA on October 15, 2021.

Building on the practice established since 2018, and in order to continue supporting the Government's efforts, the CAR Configuration of the PBC wishes to bring the following elements to the attention the Security Council:

(i) Continued support to the implementation of the Political Agreement

- In 2021, the Government undertook an assessment of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR), in an effort to revitalize it. The assessment identified the weaknesses and bottlenecks of the peace instrument and ways to remedy them. Renewed commitment for the effective implementation of the APPR, by all the signatories and the APPR's formal guarantors, remains essential for peace, even more so after the adoption of the ICGLR Joint Roadmap and the declaration of the unilateral cease-fire, as well as the Republican Dialogue initiative, scheduled for December 2021.
- In complementarity with its mandate of protection of civilians, MINUSCA should support efforts aimed at implementing the roadmap. Mediation and good offices initiatives to facilitate rapprochement between the parties are required in this regard, as well as continued support for DDRR (Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and repatriation) programs and the continuation of CVR (Community Violence Reduction) activities, particularly in the context of voluntary disarmament operations. The Mission's good office, strategic advice and coordination will also be critical to foster coherence and sustainability of national SSR (Security Sector Reform) efforts in line with the Government's commitments on SSR, the roadmap and the APPR.

- The cease-fire should contribute to launching the operational phase of the ICGLR Joint Roadmap and help create an environment conducive to revitalization of the implementation of the APPR and the smooth running of a transparent and inclusive Republican Dialogue. In support to this effort, MINUSCA's mandate should emphasize on its political and convening role to facilitate inclusive, concerted and coordinated efforts from the national stakeholders and CAR's partners towards the coherence and effectiveness of the broader political process. MINUSCA could continue support dialogues at the local and community level, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, particularly women and youth representatives, centered on promoting social inclusion and respect for human rights.
- The continued lack of funding prevents the bodies responsible for the implementation of the APPR from discharging their mandates. MINUSCA should also support the mobilization of the funds pledged by the international partners, including international financial institutions, for the execution of the APPR and provide support for the Government to take further ownership of this process. MINUSCA's continued advocacy, advice and support to developing national institutions' coordination and leadership capacities, in view of their roles and responsibilities in the political peace process remain a major priority for the national reconciliation and social cohesion processes.
- Given the regional and transboundary dimensions of the conflicts in CAR, MINUSCA should continue to provide technical expertise to the CAR authorities in its engagement with neighboring countries, e.g. through bilateral joint commissions, and regional and sub-regional organizations, in consultation and coordination with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to resolve issues of common and bilateral interest and to promote their continued and full support for the peace process in CAR with a view to address the root causes of the conflicts. Good offices and consultations with the guarantors of the APPR, the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), as well as the ICGLR will be necessary to coordinate and consolidate regional support and to address the root causes of the conflicts.

(ii) Preparation and organization of local elections

- Supporting the electoral process was among MINUSCA's priorities over the last period. Efforts in this regard have included good offices, technical, logistical and operational support, election security as well as coordination of international support. Despite the extremely complex context, marked by increased violence, including against its personnel, MINUSCA has made every effort to deliver electoral materials throughout the country and enable the restoration of state authority. The conclusion of the presidential and legislative elections was a very important step for institutional renewal and stability.
- Holding local elections planned for 2022 will maintain this positive momentum and allow for a reinforced democratic process through decentralization, good governance, as well as better security, inclusive engagement and opportunities for more development at the local level. The provisional budget for these elections is estimated at \$10 million, for which the

Government has mobilized \$3 million. Any delay in funding the organization of these elections would jeopardize the implementation of the peace framework.

- An extension of MINUSCA's electoral assistance mandate to support local elections is necessary. MINUSCA is particularly needed for the mobilization of additional resources, raising awareness about the laws on territorial communities and administrative districts to enhance national ownership and compliance with the electoral code, securing the electoral process and providing technical assistance. MINUSCA has to continue its support to the National Elections Authority's (ANE) leadership and institutional capacity to prepare the local elections and ensure that all the conditions are met to hold genuine, free, credible, transparent, peaceful and inclusive local elections, with the participation of IDPs and refugees who have voluntarily returned. Particular efforts should be made to encourage women and youths' participation as voters and as candidates in these elections in line with the UNSC resolution S/RES/1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. Local elected officials need to be supported over time in understanding their mandates and responsibilities, and how to implement them with support from the central Government.

(iii) *Strengthening the Rule of Law*

- The deteriorating security situation in the CAR, including the upsurge of explosive ordnance incidents in the West, had a major impact on civilians and the delivery of humanitarian aid, as well as on the safety and security of peacekeepers and the implementation of MINUSCA's mandate. The humanitarian situation is particularly alarming: nearly two-thirds of Central Africans are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and nearly 700,000 people are at risk of starvation. The humanitarian response plan remains underfunded. Collaboration between MINUSCA, UN agencies, funds and programmes, regional organizations, international, technical and financial partners is essential to support humanitarian efforts in the CAR. MINUSCA should be provided robust and necessary resources and capabilities to secure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the populations in need throughout the territory in an enhanced humanitarian-development-peace nexus framework. Additionally, MINUSCA with relevant national and international partners should support the CAR authorities for the prevention, mitigation and response to the threat posed by explosive ordnance.
- MINUSCA continues to be the target of attacks and hate speech, resulting from the population's lack of understanding of the Mission's objectives as well as coordinated disinformation campaigns on social networks and local media. Sustained engagement with local populations to raise awareness about MINUSCA's role and objective, as well as enhanced efforts to prevent and counter hate speech and disinformation and support investigations, arrest, prosecutions, and judgement of those responsible of attacks against peacekeepers are necessary to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers and in turn, ensure the effective protection of civilians.
- The implementation of the cease-fire should allow for the restoration of state authority to different parts of the country. Due to the violence, administration buildings were destroyed

and need to be rebuilt and rehabilitated to facilitate the population's access to justice through the deployment of judiciary and penitentiary actors. MINUSCA's mandate needs to be reinforced to support the Government in delivering basic social services and upholding the rule of law within the country and key social basic services are delivered. Financial support is needed to cover the necessary budget for the deployment of judiciary and penitentiary actors outside Bangui as well as the efficient operation of the courts. Meanwhile, MINUSCA could continue supporting the deployment of temporary judicial missions to ensure that populations in different parts of the country have access to justice.

- The Government has shown strong will to put an end to impunity for human rights violations and other grave crimes, including sexual violence. It has operationalized transitional justice mechanisms, notably the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Criminal Court, as well as established a special commission of inquiry to investigate allegations of human rights abuses. MINUSCA's support to the entire judicial system through technical assistance, construction, rehabilitation and equipment of court premises outside Bangui remains necessary, in particular with a view to facilitating the functioning of the Special Criminal Court in accordance with the national laws and CAR's international obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. It is worth noting that the Special Criminal Court's budget relies almost entirely on MINUSCA's support.