

**Peacebuilding Commission**  
**Informal Country-Specific Meeting on Central African Republic**

**21 July 2010**

*Chair's Summary Note*

1. The purpose of this informal meeting was to hear a briefing by Dr. Walter Kälin, Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, on the findings of his recent visit to Central African Republic (CAR), and to hear an update on the latest political and security developments in the country, by Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of BINUCA.
2. Briefing on his third visit to CAR, Mr. Kälin described the situation of about 200,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in four geographical areas of the country. While there had been some returns since his last visit, there have also been new displacements. In the North-West (Ouham and Ouham Pendé), APRD forces have adhered to the peace process and the process of verification of lists of ex-combatants was launched recently, but APRD has not been encouraging returns to the villages and displaced populations are still living in the forest in precarious conditions. Their return is directly linked to the DDR process. Mr. Kälin highlighted two challenges in this context; the potential for a security vacuum in the region, which could benefit criminality by coupeurs de routes and other bandits, and the level of readiness within communities to absorb and deal with a potentially high number of returnees once DDR has been completed, notably in the areas of basic services, health, school, and water.
3. Two attacks by CPJP, against the town of N'Délé, had taken place in the North, in November 2009 and April 2010. The populations displaced by those attacks have meanwhile returned, except for the Runga ethnic group, leading Dr. Kälin to believe there is a hidden but real ethnic dimension to the problem. As a further consequence of the attacks, humanitarian actors had been evacuated and only recently returned. As regards the civilian populations along the roads towards Chad, reports by IDPs who had reached N'Délé indicate large scale displacements as a result of general insecurity as well as serious acts of violence committed against the civilian population. Humanitarian actors could not reach IDPs outside N'Délé as their movements were restricted by the Government for the past six months. Dr. Kälin reported that as a result of his raising the issue with the Minister delegate for Defence, the restrictions on humanitarian workers' movements had been lifted. Dr. Kälin was not able to travel to either North-East (Vakaga) or South-East (LRA operations ongoing) of the country. He was able to meet people from the regions in the South-East of the country, and get a sense of the dramatic conditions the populations of these areas are living in, with very limited humanitarian assistance being provided,

and overall security situation very precarious. Dr. Kälin recommended to step-up the deployment of FACA to provide minimum security.

4. Dr. Kälin stressed the importance of ensuring that IDPs can register and participate in the upcoming elections in CAR. While legal frameworks are available the challenge will lie at the operational level, to ensure IDPs can actually register without being hindered to do so. The legitimacy of the elections will depend on the extent to which IDPs can participate.
5. Mr. Kälin recalled the fact that the situation of IDPs had been addressed in the PBC's Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding, and that commitments had been made in this context by the Government of CAR as well as by the PBC. Dr. Kälin welcomed the strong support and real commitment he was able to observe from the Government of CAR, and from members of parliament, particularly the representatives from regions affected by internal displacement. A workshop organised in Bangui on the plight of IDPs adopted a workplan for next six months, which will ensure that progress can be made. Dr. Kälin called on the international community to support these activities, including by providing technical assistance.
6. In closing, Dr. Kälin highlighted four challenges and recommendations to the PBC. 1) Finding solutions to internal displacement in CAR will greatly contribute to peacebuilding in that country. These solutions need to include elements to facilitate the reintegration of ex-combatants into their commitments, and avoiding that ex-rebels become new IDPs. 2) Short term support and early recovery will be crucial in the initial phases of returns, which should include the provision of accommodation, basic social services, health and access to water. 3) Support for the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and to the Government of CAR to ensure proper registration of all IDPs to ensure their full participation in the elections, not only from a legal point of view, but also on the operational side. 4) Addressing the security challenges in the North-East Vakaga region after the departure of MINURCAT.
7. Dr. Kälin indicated that the focus of his office together with UNHCR in the coming weeks and months will be on supporting the Government of CAR in developing legal frameworks, and that a consultant had already been deployed to look at existing legal frameworks, and identify gaps and obstacles. A report of that analysis would be made available in August. Furthermore, support would be provided to the technical committee in charge of elaborating a draft law. In general, increased attention should be given to security and addressing humanitarian needs particularly in the N'délé region and the South-East, which will necessitate stepped-up donors support, including for providing displaced children with education.
8. In his intervention, the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations thanked Dr. Kälin for his report and for his commitment to the plight of IDPs. He stressed the commitment of his authorities to better address the needs of IDPs and incorporate them in the government's development plans. The workshop which has just taken place in Bangui and included participation from

government, the civil society and the international community was crucial to making headway, and he hoped that timeline of activities which had been adopted would yield concrete results.

- 9.** The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of BINUCA, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde briefed the commission on the latest political and security situation developments, with a focus on the ongoing DDR programme and the upcoming elections. On 13 July, the process of the verification of lists of ex-combatants was launched in the APRD stronghold, Paoua. A DDR Steering Committee delegation had travelled to Paoua to witness the beginning of the operation, during which APRD renewed its commitment to reconciliation and DDR. The Steering Committee mission travelled later in the week to the Vakaga region (Birao and Tiringoulou) in an effort to reach out to MLCJ and UFDR ex-combatants. However, technical obstacles need to be lifted before verification can start in that region, where tensions remain high, as exemplified by the recent attack on Birao, by what appears to be a splinter group of MLCJ. Despite renewing its commitment to DDR, UFDR is posing conditionalities of political nature, which it is hoped the government will find solutions to. Interlocutors in the Vakaga region expressed their hope for a reconciliation conference; a proposal which BINUCA indicated it would gladly support and facilitate.
- 10.** With respect to the upcoming elections, SRSG Zewde pointed out that the tentative new dates for the conduct of the ballot have not been officialised. Efforts are ongoing to achieve consensus on the new dates, bearing in mind a number of new elements, including the IEC's decision to move to a system of electronic electoral cards rather than manual, as initially planned. Ms Zewde informed the membership that the UNDP basket fund is empty, aside from the US\$ 1.5 million from the Peacebuilding Fund. The estimated budgetary gap remains at US\$ 7.5 millions. SRSG was encouraged by announcements, including that of Belgium, that other contributions may be forthcoming. Demarches had been made by SRSG to all resident embassies in Bangui, and non-resident embassies in Cameroon. Finally, on the question of options being considered after the withdrawal of MINURCAT, SRSG informed that the Secretary-General was finalising a report which would be submitted to the Security Council imminently, and which would provide options for the consideration of Security Council, including regional and sub-regional alternatives.
- 11.** The Chairperson of the configuration informed members of the PBC of a number of letters which he has written, notably to President Bozizé, AU Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra, and the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Margot Wallström.
- 12.** Several delegations took the floor including South Africa, the African Union, United States, Canada, Japan, Chile, and France, expressing support to the work of the PBC, and of the Chairperson of the CAR configuration. All delegations welcomed the informative briefings by the RSG Walter Kälin, and SRSG Sahle-Work Zewde, and

praised both for their commitment to the peacebuilding process in the Central African Republic.

- 13.** South African encourage all parties in CAR to increase the momentum to find solutions, and was encouraged by the desire to deepen their engagement to achieve their goals of DDR and for successful holding of elections.
- 14.** The African Union representative welcomed the timeliness of the meeting, as the AU Summit was taking place in Kampala, and which would afford the opportunity to discuss the situation in CAR.
- 15.** Questions were raised regarding the activities of the LRA, the impact on the electoral calendar in light of the IEC decision to opt for electronic electoral cards, and the fallout from the withdrawal at the end of the year of MINURCAT.
- 16.** In response, SRSZ Zewde indicated that with regards to MINURCAT, it would be advisable to wait for the issuance of the SG's report on the matter, which was being finalized in consultation with SRSZ MINURCAT. As for the timing of elections, the tentative timeline was presented last month by the IEC, but consultations were still ongoing to reach consensus with all stakeholders. These consultations included considerations to the proposal of electronic voter registration. LRA attacks were happening and creating additional displacement, while the CAR defence and security forces (FACA) had strengthened their presence in the South-East.
- 17.** The World Bank representative took the floor to announce an initiative by Ms. Obiageli Ezekwesili, Vice President of the World Bank for the Africa Region to strengthen its cooperation with the PBC, with a view to enhancing its support to CAR. Discussions had been ongoing between PBC and the SRSZ in this regard to maximize complementary of efforts. The World Bank welcomed any advice on what the next steps should be and how the World Bank could help.

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