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11. Central African region

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held six meetings and issued four presidential statements in connection with the situation in the Central African region. Against the backdrop of the destabilising effect of the crisis in the Central African Republic, the discussions at the Council focused on the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), including the implementation plan developed by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

During the period under review, the mandate of UNOCA was extended on 21 August 2012 for 18 months, until 28 February 2014, by virtue of a letter from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General.¹

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.

Briefings and decisions on the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the LRA

On 29 June 2012, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA briefed the Council on the second report of the Secretary-General on the work of

¹ [S/2012/657](http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/S/2012/657).

UNOCA, including its efforts to combat the LRA.² He focused on the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the LRA (the United Nations Regional Strategy) and elaborated on the five key objectives of the strategy, namely, supporting regional cooperation against the LRA, enhancing the protection of civilians, expanding disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration, promoting humanitarian and child protection response in LRA-affected areas, and supporting LRA-affected Governments in extending authority across their territories. Lastly, he appealed to the Council to actively support the implementation of the strategy as well as of the Regional Cooperation Initiative of the African Union.³ Following his briefing, the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army Issues also addressed the Council. He focused mainly on the Regional Cooperation Initiative of the African Union on the LRA. He mentioned that the major objectives of the Initiative were to strengthen the capacity of the affected countries to effectively respond to and neutralize the LRA threat, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected communities and to create an environment conducive to the stabilization and rehabilitation of the affected areas. He also briefed the Council on the key components and structures of the initiative but cautioned that such structure required international support, mainly on the financial and logistical fronts. In closing, he formally requested the Council to consider declaring the LRA a terrorist organization.⁴

Speakers expressed condemnation of the crimes committed by the LRA. A majority of speakers emphasized the need for concerted action and highlighted the importance of regional cooperation against the LRA. Many speakers welcomed the United Nations Regional Strategy and called for additional resources in support of the Regional Cooperation Initiative of the African Union. Several speakers called on States to cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in prosecuting and detaining perpetrators associated with the LRA.⁵

At the meeting, the Council issued a presidential statement strongly condemning the attacks carried out by the LRA and reiterating its concern at the atrocities committed by this

² [S/2012/365](#).

³ [S/PV.6796, pp. 2-3](#).

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12 (Portugal); p. 19 (Guatemala); and p. 20 (France).

group. In the same statement, the Council welcomed the development of the United Nations Regional Strategy. The Council also urged various United Nations entities to support the implementation of the strategy and called on the international community to provide assistance as possible to advance the strategic goals identified as part of the strategy.⁶

On 18 December 2012, the Council held a meeting to consider the third report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the LRA affected areas.⁷ The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA presented the report to the Council. In his briefing, he acknowledged that while there were good news coming out of Central Africa, particularly on the economic front, challenges remained in relation to the threat posed by the LRA. He emphasized the need to mobilize resources for the full implementation of the regional strategy to address the threat posed by the LRA and highlighted the disparity between the resources available to UNOCA and the tasks that it was required to perform.⁸

During the meeting, speakers expressed their support to the United Nations Regional Strategy and emphasized the importance of developing an implementation plan for such strategy. Most speakers reiterated the value of cooperation and coordination at the national, regional and international levels and encouraged UNOCA to continue to effectively carry out communication and coordination efforts within the United Nations system and beyond. Some speakers reiterated calls on the Member States to cooperate with the ICC to follow the arrest warrants issued against LRA leaders.⁹ During the discussion, speakers also raised other challenges affecting the Central African Region such as youth unemployment and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

On 19 December 2012, the Council issued a presidential statement by which it strongly condemned the attacks and atrocities carried out by the LRA, including the recruitment and use of children, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violence, and reiterated its support for the United Nations Regional Strategy. In the same statement, the Council also urged UNOCA, as well as United Nations political and peacekeeping missions to coordinate

⁶ [S/PRST/2012/18](#).

⁷ [S/2012/923](#).

⁸ [S/PV.6891](#), pp. 2-4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8 (South Africa); p. 9 (Portugal); p. 11 (Guatemala); p. 12 (France); and p. 15 (Germany).

their efforts in support of the implementation of the strategy, with UNOCA playing a key role in the coordination of these activities.¹⁰

Briefings and decisions on the Implementation Plan for the United Nations Regional Strategy

On 29 May 2013, the Council held a meeting to consider the fourth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA indicated that the implementation plan for the United Nations Regional Strategy had been finalized. He pointed out that the implementation plan identified areas in which additional resources were required and affirmed his reliance on the continued support of stakeholders, particularly LRA-affected countries. He made reference to the threat posed by Boko Haram insurgents, as well as to the political and security situation in northern Mali. In addition, he underlined the emergence of poaching as a growing phenomenon which was posing a challenge to peace and security and to growing youth unemployment as a destabilizing element in the region.¹¹

During the debate that followed, speakers welcomed the implementation plan for the United Nations Regional Strategy. However, some speakers raised concerns as to the relevance and timeliness of some of the projects described in the plan, the need for further development of the implementation plan, and the need for support and funding for the plan.¹² The crisis in the Central African Republic featured prominently in the debate with most of the speakers expressing a deep concern about the spill over effect on neighbouring countries.

At the meeting, the Council issued a presidential statement reiterating its strong condemnation of the attacks and atrocities carried out by the LRA as well as the violations of international humanitarian law, including the use of children in armed conflict. In this regard, the Council welcomed the conclusions of the working group on children and armed conflict concerning the situation of children affected by the LRA and called for their full

¹⁰ [S/PRST/2012/28](#).

¹¹ [S/PV.6971](#), pp. 2-3.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 6 (Russian Federation), p. 7 (United Kingdom), p. 8 (France), p. 9 (Guatemala), and p. 13 (Argentina).

implementation. The Council called on the international community to provide assistance where possible and urged further efforts from the countries in the region to end the threat posed by the LRA. In the same statement, the Council expressed concern at the recent pause of counter-LRA operations in the Central African Republic and encouraged continued coordination to allow regional counter-LRA operations to resume as soon as possible.¹³

Briefings and decisions on the progress made on the Implementation Plan for the United Nations Regional Strategy

On 20 November 2013, the Council held a meeting to consider the fifth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas.¹⁴ The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA informed the Council that the situation in Central Africa was dominated by concerns about growing instability in the Central African Republic and the proliferation of armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. He assessed that the potential for the crisis in the Central African Republic to spill over into the wider region was real. He noted that transnational crime remained a serious challenge to the security of the region, exemplified by the incidence of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea. He added that the region was also vulnerable to the threat posed by terrorism and extremism, mentioning Boko Haram as an example. He then briefed the Council on the work of UNOCA, emphasizing its coordination role among various stakeholders. He affirmed that in spite of the effectiveness of military operations of the Regional Task Force of the African Union in degrading the LRA, it was necessary to remain vigilant and to make progress on the implementation plan for the United Nations Regional Strategy.¹⁵

The Council was also briefed by the Special Envoy of the African Union for Lord's Resistance Army Issues, who highlighted the progress made in the region for the elimination of the LRA by the African Union in coordination with troop-contributing countries, with the support of the United States Special Forces, the European Union and the United Nations, particularly UNOCA. He explained the circumstances that led to the suspension of the counter-LRA operations in the Central African Republic, mentioning in particular the tension

¹³ [S/PRST/2013/6](#).

¹⁴ [S/2013/671](#).

¹⁵ [S/PV.7065](#), pp. 2-3.

between the Regional Task Force and the Séléka. He reported, however, that operations had resumed in early August 2013 and emphasized that the current momentum required adequate funding and logistical support to enhance the objective of eliminating the threat posed by the LRA.¹⁶

Speakers emphasized the need for wide cooperation at the national, regional and international levels to combat and eliminate the LRA threat. Most speakers commended the work of UNOCA. The representative of the United Kingdom added that UNOCA should continue adding real value to regional and subregional efforts at a time of resource constraints.¹⁷ Most speakers coincided in the analysis of the situation in the Central African region. They expressed deep concern about the unfolding of the crisis in the Central African Republic highlighting the harmful effects of transnational crime and piracy, and voicing their alarm about the growing phenomenon of poaching as a source of financing for criminal networks. Many speakers reiterated the importance of the international support to regional and subregional efforts and of redoubling support to implement the United Nations Regional Strategy.

On 25 November 2013, the Council issued a presidential statement in which it reiterated its strong condemnation of the appalling attacks, war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out by the LRA. The Council further urged UNOCA, as well as other United Nations entities in the region, to enhance efforts in support of the implementation of the United Nations Regional Strategy. The Council also encouraged the Secretary-General to optimize the efforts of UNOCA and called on the international community to support the strategy where possible. With regard to the Central African Republic, the Council emphasized the need for coordination between the United Nations and the African Union in the context of protection of civilians' activities and counter-LRA operations.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁸ [S/PRST/2013/18](http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/S/PRST/2013/18).

Meetings: Central African region

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for- against- abstaining)</i>
S/PV.6796 29 June 2012	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (S/2012/365) Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2012/421)	Letter dated 25 June 2012 from the Secretary-General transmitting the regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (S/2012/481)	Central African Republic	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army Issues	All Council members and all invitees	S/PRST/2012/18
S/PV.6891 18 December 2012	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2012/923)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA	All Council members and rule 39 invitee	
S/PV.6895 19 December 2012	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2012/923)					S/PRST/2012/28
S/PV.6971 29 May 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2013/297)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA	All Council members and rule 39 invitee	S/PRST/2013/6
S/PV.7065 20 November 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2013/671)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA, Special Envoy of the African Union for Lord's Resistance Army Issues	All Council members and rule 39 invitees	

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for- against- abstaining)</i>
S/PV.7066 25 November 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2013/671)					S/PRST/2013/18
