7. Central African region

During the period under review, the Council held a total of two open videoconferences in connection with the Central African region. The Council considered developments in Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Gulf of Guinea and the Sahel. More information on the videoconferences is given in the table below.

During the period under review, consistent with the six-months reporting period requested by the presidential statement of 10 August 2018, the Council heard two briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), further to the reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Region. The Special Representative apprised the Council on the activities of UNOCA, its continued cooperation with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), and its activities as the Secretariat for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC). The Special Representative updated the Council on the human rights and security situation in the region, including the continued threats posed by terrorism and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the impact of climate change on the security and prosperity of Central African countries. Throughout 2020, the Special Representative also briefed the Council on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, particularly the negative socioeconomic effects of the pandemic and the efforts of countries in the region, UNOCA and regional organizations to combat the threats posed by the disease.

On 12 June 2020, the Special Representative recalled that a major consequence of the pandemic was the economic crisis. He noted, however, that Central Africa’s governments and regional institutions had been able to adapt to the new crisis context and ensure the continuity of

---

169 S/PRST/2018/17, last paragraph.
certain crucial activities. In that regard, he briefed the Council on the extraordinary ECCAS ministerial meeting held on 3 and 4 June 2020, which resulted in the adoption of the four axes of a regional response strategy to combat COVID-19, namely, preventing the spread of the virus; limiting the death rate and managing positive cases; addressing the socioeconomic and security impact of COVID-19; and responding to the cross-border security issues created by the pandemic. Regarding political and security developments in the region, in addition to briefing the Council members on specific situations in each of the countries of the region, the Special Representative strongly condemned the deliberate attacks on civilians and the destruction of private property and public infrastructure by terrorist and armed groups, and welcomed the mobilization of the armies of Cameroon and Chad, including within the framework of the Multinational Joint Task Force, to fight terrorism in the Lake Chad basin. He informed the Council that Operation Wrath of Boma, launched by the Chadian army between late March and early April 2020, seemed to have considerably weakened Boko Haram. He also updated the Council on the activities of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) which, although also weakened, continued to kill and abduct civilians, and called on regional actors, including the African Union and ECCAS, as well as international partners, to strengthen their cooperation and mobilize the resources necessary to defeat the LRA, within the framework of the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the Lord’s Resistance Army.\(^\text{171}\)

On 9 December 2020, the Special Representative reported to the Council that the pandemic seemed generally under control in the subregion, indicating that the early measures enforced by the governments of the subregion to contain and reduce the spread of the pandemic had proven effective. He noted, however, that this effectiveness came at a high socioeconomic cost, as the economic slowdown triggered by the pandemic and the different restrictive measures had further depleted the already limited capacity of States to provide basic social services to their populations. Regarding political developments in the region, the Special Representative updated the Council on the preparations for the holding of elections in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe, as well as on other political developments in the region, including the implementation of a special status for the

\(^{171}\) See S/2020/542.
North-West and South-West regions in Cameroon, political consultations to discuss preparations for the 2021 presidential election in the Republic of the Congo, and votes on the amendments to the Constitution in Chad. Regarding the security situation, the Special Representative recalled with great concern the violence in the Far North, North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, the increase in attacks and kidnappings by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin and the intensification of attacks by terrorist groups in Cameroon and Chad. He also addressed the issue of transhumance in Central Africa and the increase in maritime organized crime in the Gulf of Guinea, particularly drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, stressing in that regard the need for coordination between Central and West Africa through existing mechanisms, such as the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa, to effectively respond to threats. The Special Representative also briefed the Council on his engagements with key United Nations, national and international partners in the subregion on various issues, including during his recent visits to Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo and the meeting of the Heads of United Nations presences in Central Africa on strengthening coordination in supporting regional efforts to address the impact of climate change, prevent election-related violence and fight against hate speech.¹⁷²

In 2020, the Council’s deliberations focused on major political and security developments, as well as on the humanitarian, human rights and socio-economic challenges affecting the Central African region, including those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. On the political front, several Council members specifically addressed the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and the issue of elections in the country scheduled for 2020/2021.¹⁷³ Council members also discussed the national dialogue in Cameroon and the steps taken by the Cameroonian government to implement the recommendations of the October 2019 Major National Dialogue, including the

¹⁷² See S/2020/1188.
passing of legislation granting special status to the North-West and South-West regions. Some Council members welcomed the efforts aimed at improving relations among Central African States, particularly those of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ease tensions and strengthen relations between the countries of the Great Lakes region.

Concerning the security situation, deliberations focused on the continued security threats posed by Boko Haram and the LRA to the Central African region and beyond, maritime organized crime and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as tensions in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. Some Council members also addressed the adverse effects of climate change on security in the region. With respect to the humanitarian, socio-economic and human rights challenges, Council members focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of Central African populations and the security in the region as well as the work of UNOCA. The Council also continued to address the adverse effects of climate change on the populations of Central Africa and the region’s geopolitical situation. Some Council members acknowledged that the effects of climate change had triggered displacement and negatively impacted the efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and some

---

174 S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and United Kingdom; S/2020/1188, Belgium, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and United Kingdom.
175 See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, and Viet Nam; S/2020/1188, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and Viet Nam.
176 See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, France, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and Viet Nam; S/2020/1188, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, and Viet Nam.
177 See S/2020/542, France, and Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); S/2020/1188, China, France, Russian Federation, and Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
178 See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, and United States; S/2020/1188, Dominican Republic, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, and Viet Nam.
179 See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and Viet Nam; S/2020/1188, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and United Kingdom.
180 See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic and Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
discussed the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad basin, including malnutrition, spread of diseases and displacement of thousands of people into neighbouring countries.\(^\text{181}\)

In addition, in 2020, Council members continued to focus on the role of UNOCA and its cooperation with the African Union, ECCAS and other international, regional and subregional organizations and United Nations regional offices in resolving conflicts, addressing the humanitarian and human rights challenges and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.

### Videoconferences: Central African region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Videoconference date</th>
<th>Videoconference record</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 June 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/542</td>
<td>Letter dated 16 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 December 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/1188</td>
<td>Letter dated 14 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{181}\) See S/2020/542, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and United Kingdom; S/2020/1188, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Viet Nam.