



Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the Security Council contained in its resolution 2088 (2013). In accordance with the Council's request, the report provides an update on the situation in the Central African Republic and an assessment of how the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) could further implement its priorities in the light of recent developments in the country.

II. Update on major developments

A. Background

2. In my last report (S/2012/956) I informed the Security Council that a new rebel offensive had begun on 10 December 2012, when elements of the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR) occupied the towns of Ndélé, Ouadda and Sam Ouandja. The UFDR forces were later joined by three other movements, the newly created Convention patriotique du salut du Kodro, and the already existing Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP-Fondamentale) and Union des forces républicaines. These movements organized themselves into a loose coalition, Séléka. Since then, the Secretariat has briefed the Security Council seven times on the situation in the Central African Republic.

3. In order to bring the conflict with Séléka to an end, peace talks were held under the auspices of the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), who appointed the President of the Congo, Denis Sasso-Nguesso, as Mediator. The peace talks resulted in the signing of three documents on 11 January 2013, namely, a declaration of principles to resolve the political and security crisis in the Central African Republic, a ceasefire agreement and a political agreement. Together, the documents are referred to as the "Libreville Agreements".

4. The Libreville Agreements established that the Constitution would be upheld and that President François Bozizé would remain in power until the end of his term of office in 2016. The Agreements also provided that a Prime Minister from the opposition, with full executive powers, would be appointed; a Government of



National Unity with representatives of all stakeholders involved in the talks would be established; the National Assembly would be dissolved after the adoption of the new Electoral Code and the establishment of the National Authority for Elections; legislative elections would be organized within 12 months; and a new follow-up mechanism would be established to ensure full implementation of the provisions of the agreements. On 18 January 2013, President Bozizé appointed a transitional Prime Minister, Nicolas Tiangaye.

5. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2088 (2013), the United Nations deployed an inter-agency strategic assessment mission to the Central African Republic from 18 to 26 February 2013. The mission determined that the Libreville Agreements, despite delays and inherent risks, remained the linchpin of any effort to re-establish stability in the Central African Republic. This conclusion remains valid. However, the specific recommendations on the mandate and priorities of BINUCA were overtaken by events.

6. Séléka resumed hostilities on 22 March 2013 and, two days later, entered Bangui and took control of the presidential palace. Michel Djotodia subsequently proclaimed himself President, while reappointing Nicolas Tiangaye as the Prime Minister. By “Presidential” decrees, the Constitution was suspended; the National Assembly, the Constitutional Court and the Government of National Unity were dissolved; and a transitional arrangement was put in place. Mr. Djotodia also appointed a new Government, composed of 34 members, including nine Ministers from Séléka, eight from the former opposition and one close to ousted President François Bozizé. The remaining 16 portfolios went to civil society representatives and smaller political parties. Mr. Djotodia also assumed the post of Defence Minister.

B. Political situation

7. While the unconstitutional change of government in the Central African Republic was condemned by the international community as a whole, ECCAS took the lead in defining new transitional arrangements in the country. In this regard, two ECCAS Extraordinary Summits of Heads of State and Government were held in N’Djamena, on 3 and 18 April 2013, respectively.

8. Meanwhile, the African Union Peace and Security Council strongly condemned Séléka’s unconstitutional seizure of power, imposed sanctions including a travel ban on its leaders, and refused to recognize the self-appointed President. The Peace and Security Council also voiced concern over the impact that the crisis might have on the deployment and effectiveness of the African Union Regional Task Force on the Lord’s Resistance Army in the eastern Central African Republic.

9. ECCAS, with the support of the international community, reaffirmed that the Libreville Agreements are the basis for transitional arrangements. The ECCAS Heads of State on 3 April recommended the establishment of a National Transitional Council that would serve as the country’s parliament. The duration of the transitional period would be limited to 18 months, extendable to a maximum of 24 months, during which presidential, legislative and local elections should be held.

10. The National Transitional Council would comprise the five entities that signed the Libreville Agreements, and would also be extended to religious leaders and the

diaspora. In addition to electing the Head of the Transition, who would serve as Head of State, the Council would elect the President and the Vice-President of the National Transitional Council. The Head of the Transition in his capacity as Head of State, the Prime Minister and other members of the Government would not be eligible to run in the next presidential elections. A follow-up committee, comprising ECCAS member States and international partners and chaired by the Mediator, would be established to guarantee the implementation of the agreements. ECCAS leaders also decided to establish an International Contact Group to help mobilize support from the international community. Finally, ECCAS decided to increase the size of its regional peacekeeping force, the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX), from 700 to 2,000 troops.

11. The transitional institutions and mechanisms that have been established in the Central African Republic as a result of the ECCAS decisions are fragile and require urgent support from the international community.

12. On 13 April, the National Transitional Council was established without prior consultation with national stakeholders and “elected” by acclamation Michel Djotodia, the only candidate, as Head of the Transition. The National Transitional Council also elected Alexander Armand Nguendet and Léa Koyassoum-Doumta, as President and Vice-President, respectively. Mr. Nguendet and Ms. Koyassoum-Doumta had organized the first march in support of Séléka in Bangui on 3 April 2013.

13. Many opposition and civil society leaders criticized the lack of transparency in the establishment of the National Transitional Council. In addition, it has been widely reported that there is a marked discrepancy between the lists of names submitted by the constituted bodies and those finally selected to participate in the National Transitional Council. For example, out of the 50 names provided by civil society, 22 were allegedly unilaterally replaced.

14. ECCAS leaders have recognized the inherent weakness of and potential longer-term problems linked with a contested National Transitional Council. They requested from the Central African Republic a revised composition for the National Transitional Council, with its membership increased to 135 members in order to better reflect the variety of national stakeholders, including the underrepresented segments of the population.

15. Although a strong collaboration has been established between ECCAS and the African Union on the Central African Republic dossier, there remain some differences in their handling of the crisis. The African Union has clearly indicated that it does not recognize Mr. Djotodia as President of the Central African Republic or Head of the Transition. ECCAS for its part, on 18 April, “took note” of the appointment of Mr. Djotodia by the National Transitional Council as the Head of the Transition — but not as President. This apparent difference of approach between the African Union and ECCAS could create ambiguity. There is a need to ensure that the international community speaks with one voice in order to avoid sending mixed signals to the Central African Republic, which could delay further the restoration of peace and stability.

16. The power-sharing arrangements also need to be clarified. While ECCAS has indicated that the Prime Minister would retain executive powers, as envisaged in the Libreville Agreements, Mr. Djotodia had originally indicated his intention to rule by decree. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of the Head of the Transition have

not been defined, thereby creating a source of potential confusion and conflict between Mr. Djotodia and Prime Minister Tiangaye. There is a need to ensure that the political process is inclusive, and that the winner-takes-all model that is considered one of the root causes of conflict in the Central African Republic does not prevail. This matter could be addressed through the new constitution to be developed by the National Transitional Council.

17. In the mean time, the Prime Minister is recognized by the international community as the legitimate political figure in the Central African Republic. He was appointed as part of the Government of National Unity, established under the Libreville Agreements, as a representative of civil society and opposition parties. However, as the security situation continues to deteriorate (see section C below) and he seems powerless to stop it from spiralling out of control, Prime Minister Tiangaye is increasingly being criticized by the constituents that he was meant to represent.

18. The United Nations has continued to provide support to the political process. In this regard, my Special Representative for the Central African Republic, together with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in the Central African Republic, embarked on extensive consultations to engage with the leaders of the subregion, the Government, the rebel groups, political parties and civil society. A United Nations mediation support team, including representatives from the Department of Political Affairs and its standby team of mediation experts, helped to structure the ECCAS mediation, advised on the process, and helped to draft its outcome documents. The United Nations also provided logistical support to rebel groups to ensure their participation in the peace talks held in Libreville.

19. Since the unconstitutional change of government, my Special Representative for the Central African Republic has continued to use her good offices to engage the country's stakeholders, advise on the transition process and advocate on behalf of local populations to improve the security, rule of law, human rights and humanitarian situation.

20. On 22 April, I dispatched the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to the region to deliver on my behalf a message of support to the people of the Central African Republic. He met with members of the diplomatic corps, political parties, civil society representatives and the local media. During his various meetings, he expressed the deep concern of the United Nations over the deteriorating security and human rights situations in the country, as well as its solidarity with the population. He stressed that the priority in the Central African Republic was to quickly restore public order and security throughout the country and to protect civilians from abuses of all sorts. Before arriving in Bangui, he met with Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye in Douala, Cameroon, on 20 April.

21. Overall, there is a need for the de facto authorities in the Central African Republic to take ownership of the transition process through the National Transitional Council and to move as quickly as possible to re-establish constitutional order. The first meeting of the International Contact Group is scheduled for 3 May 2013 and will be held in Brazzaville. It will provide an opportunity for the Central African Republic to provide an update on the measures it has taken to move forward with the transition. It will also provide an opportunity to ECCAS leaders and the international community to assess progress made and convey clear messages on areas of concern.

C. Security and the rule of law

22. Since the launch of the Séléka attacks in December 2012, the country has been facing a serious security crisis, with widespread and grave violations of human rights, including arbitrary arrests and detention, sexual violence against women and children, torture, rape, targeted killings, recruitment of child soldiers and other abuses, reportedly committed by uncontrolled Séléka elements and unidentified armed groups across the country (see section D below). Some United Nations offices and residences of national and international staff members have been looted. The country is plunging into a state of general anarchy marked by a complete breakdown of law and order.

23. The situation is particularly alarming in Bangui where the looting and plundering of homes, offices, businesses and health-care facilities, as well as car-jacking and armed robberies, is ongoing and reaching levels higher than anything the city has ever experienced. Schools and many businesses remain closed in Bangui, owing to rampant insecurity.

24. Outside the capital, the security situation continues to deteriorate, with ongoing acts of vandalism, human rights violations and assault by Séléka elements against the civilian population.

25. There are increasing signs of mounting resistance from the population. On 11 April, hundreds of people protested in Bangui against violence and looting by the Séléka elements. The demonstration was triggered by the death of a motorbike taxi driver on 10 April who was chased by rebels and killed for refusing to hand over his bike. On 13 April, heavy fighting broke out in Bangui between Séléka troops and the local population. The clashes occurred when an operation conducted by Séléka to collect civilian weapons was marred by lootings, arbitrary arrests and rapes. As a result, about 30 people were killed.

26. Meanwhile, Séléka elements are reportedly targeting non-Muslim citizens, while at the same time protecting Muslims during the pillaging and raiding of some neighbourhoods in Bangui and in the regional prefectures. This situation creates resentment in Christian communities and fuels religious tensions. In this regard, through online forums, some citizens of the Central African Republic and members of the diaspora have encouraged the population to take up arms and systematically retaliate against any and all Muslims.

27. The rampant insecurity in the Central African Republic represents a serious threat to the stability of the subregion as a whole. There is a high risk of cross-border trafficking and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region, given the reported high number of foreign combatants within the ranks of Séléka, coupled with the fact that some elements of the national armed forces, the Forces armées centrafricaines, have deserted with their weapons. In addition, reports indicate that Séléka intends to implement a weapons buy-back programme to collect weapons from uncontrolled armed groups. Such a programme may increase the risk of cross-border trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

28. There is no confirmed evidence of the presence of explosive remnants of war in the Central African Republic. However, wherever weapons systems have been deployed and utilized, there is a likely threat from explosive remnants of war to the population. Those remnants are also a potential source of bulk explosives for the

construction of improvised explosive devices. Their early removal and destruction should therefore be considered a priority.

29. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which thrives on lawlessness, is a potential additional threat to security and the rule of law in the Central African Republic. During the reporting period, seven people were allegedly killed and eight abducted by LRA, and three LRA fighters defected. On 10 January, the Uganda People's Defence Forces killed Binansio Okumu, one of the most prominent LRA commanders, north of Djema. One month later, a large cache of ivory was discovered in the same area, prompting speculation about a possible engagement of LRA in poaching as a source of funding and supplies. Indeed, the role that the exploitation of the natural resources of the Central African Republic plays in fuelling the ongoing conflict needs to be addressed as a root cause of the cyclical instability and a key factor in any future peacebuilding process.

30. At the same time, owing to the serious deterioration of security in the Central African Republic, BINUCA suspended its monitoring activities in LRA-affected areas. Uganda also announced the suspension of its operations against LRA as a result of Séléka's call for the withdrawal of non-subregional foreign troops from the Central African Republic. It was reported that Uganda's decision to withdraw has been rescinded, pending guidance from the African Union. On 30 March, Michel Dlotodia announced that his regime would eradicate LRA within three months.

31. Meanwhile, consultations among the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and field missions resulted in the development of a series of comprehensive United Nations standard operating procedures on the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of LRA. The standard operating procedures provide a framework for efforts by United Nations peace operations, complementing specific guidelines on the management of LRA repatriation operations. They were approved by BINUCA on 15 March 2013.

32. The Séléka offensive destroyed much of the justice system of the Central African Republic. In the 10 jurisdictions of the country, looting and plundering carried out by Séléka elements has destroyed most of the infrastructure that supported the justice system, including courthouses, appeal courts, court dossiers, prisons, prison registries and prosecutor files. The justice system, including prisons, will need to be rebuilt. The destruction of administrative files related to birth and citizenship will undoubtedly create a problem during the registration of voters for the upcoming elections.

33. The Séléka offensive dismantled the policing architecture. National security and defence forces (gendarmerie, police and national army) have disintegrated. Despite repeated calls for former security and defence forces to resume their duties, to date, only a small number of the police and national armed forces officers — and none from the High Command — have resumed their functions.

34. Since Séléka seized Bangui, it has taken control of the entire territory politically and militarily, yet it is unable to restore law and order across the country. Fractures have deepened within the coalition, hampering the Séléka leadership's control over its own elements. Séléka fighters refuse to be cantoned. In addition, there are persistent tensions between different factions of the Séléka coalition, each recruiting more elements, raising the risk of an all-out confrontation among them.

Furthermore, some Séléka elements are demanding the immediate payment of allowances that were promised to them prior to the capture of Bangui. In this regard, on 22 April, around 400 Séléka elements demonstrated in Bangui to demand the payment of the promised bonus. A prolongation of this situation risks creating new dynamics in the ongoing conflict that would further complicate resolution.

35. ECCAS has deployed MICOPAX, the regional peacekeeping force, since 2008. On 31 December 2012, additional troops from the Congo, Cameroon and Gabon were deployed to the Central African Republic to support MICOPAX, bringing the total number of troops to about 700 to cover the whole country. With very limited capacities in terms of equipment, 700 troops are insufficient to end the ongoing violence and help to restore security across the country. Regional leaders have recently decided to increase the strength of MICOPAX to 2,000. This deployment is urgent, and the troops will need to be fully equipped and trained.

36. The current crisis underlines the urgency of security sector reform, once the situation has stabilized and important preconditions have been met. These include political commitment and engagement on the part of national authorities, as well as the establishment of new national mechanisms to support the security sector reform process. National defence and security forces, concentrated in Bangui, are disorganized and have limited capacity to ensure even minimum security in the capital or its immediate surroundings. The recent crisis has left a dangerous vacuum in security sector governance and oversight.

37. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to create an effective and inclusive security sector capable of providing security throughout the country. Broader security sector reform should be based on political consensus. It could include the restoration of State authority, collection of small arms and light weapons, and community recovery programmes, as well as the reintegration of ex-combatants into formal security and defence forces.

D. Human rights protection

38. The existing precarious human rights situation worsened during the conflict from December 2012 to March 2013. Before March 2013, serious and widespread allegations of human rights violations were reported both in areas controlled by Government forces and in those controlled by Séléka. BINUCA received many reports of alleged summary executions and targeted assaults, motivated by the victims' religious and ethnic identity. Other alleged grave violations include arbitrary arrest and detention (targeting, among others, family members and supporters of opposition parties), torture, recruitment of children, rape, disappearances, kidnapping and attacks on schools. The existence of several mass graves has also been reported.

39. Since Séléka took control of Bangui, hundreds of unidentified bodies have been recovered from different parts of the capital. The local Red Cross reported that at least 119 people were killed since the fall of the former government. A total of 602 wounded, including 435 people injured by bullets, were registered at hospitals in Bangui. Limited electricity and running water in Bangui have hampered the ability of first-aid responders to provide medical care to the wounded. Incidents of vandalism, armed robbery and car-jacking have been widely reported throughout the

country. Various armed groups have also been accused of extortion and the looting of private and public property, including health-care facilities.

40. The prevalent state of lawlessness has had a devastating impact on women and girls in the Central African Republic. There have been ongoing and continuous reports of sexual violence, including rape, gang rape and sexual slavery. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted on 16 April that, since the fall of the former government on 24 March 2013, her office had received reports of 19 cases of sexual violence against women and girls in Berberati and 3 in Bangui. She further noted that this figure is most likely a serious underestimate of the actual numbers of victims of sexual violence. As she pointed out, “given the state of widespread insecurity, the absence of a reliable and functioning police force and justice system and the fear of harassment and stigma, many victims are believed to be unable or too afraid to report such abuses”. The current situation marks a further deterioration since the visit to the Central African Republic of my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in December 2012, just before the Séléka offensive was launched. The visit had already established that conflict-related sexual violence was a significant concern.

41. In January and February 2013, child protection professionals documented 27 cases of recruitment and use of children by elements of the Séléka alliance, predominantly in the prefectures of Ouham, Ombella-Mpoko and Bamingui-Bangoran. Government forces have also allegedly recruited and used children, and have committed other grave violations against children, including sexual violence. Meanwhile, youth groups in the capital of Bangui, who were encouraged by the former government to defend the city, were given light weapons and set up roadblocks throughout the capital. Children were observed among the groups. This is in clear violation of the Government’s obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, ratified in December 2011. Since Séléka’s offensive on Bangui, new accounts have been documented of its recruitment of children in the capital. There is also evidence of Séléka’s re-recruitment of children previously separated by the United Nations from different armed groups, including 19 children formerly associated with CPJP. Séléka has allegedly also recruited young people as informants who identify places to pillage.

42. BINUCA also received reports that non-Muslim citizens were systematically targeted and Muslims protected during pillaging and raiding of some quarters in Bangui and in the regional prefectures. The clashes along religious lines that occurred between Séléka elements and the population of Ouango and Boy-Rabe in Bangui on 13 and 14 April resulted in the killing and massive displacement of civilians.

43. In addition, in a pattern already witnessed in the areas controlled by the rebellion since December 2012, administrative and political officials have been specifically targeted. In Bangui, most of the members of the former government took refuge in the MICOPAX and BINUCA premises. BINUCA continues to receive distress calls for help and assistance from the relatives of the former government officials, as well as other executives stranded or in hiding. Moreover, government buildings have become barracks for the rebels and a parallel administration has been established, which undermines the restoration of public administration and hence of State authority in the Central African Republic.

44. The abuses and violations committed by Séléka combatants and other armed elements, including cases of rape, killing, maiming, recruitment of children and forced marriages, are a source of grave concern for the protection of civilians. They also amount to serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

45. In separate statements, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and I expressed concern about the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic, the acts of violence and the grave violations of human rights against the civilian population. In addition, my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict briefed the Security Council on the situation. The message has been loud and clear: violence must stop and perpetrators must be held individually accountable for their actions. The International Criminal Court is also closely monitoring developments in the Central African Republic. On 22 April, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court issued a statement warning that the crimes committed against civilians, including murder and pillaging, in the Central African Republic were under close scrutiny by her office.

46. In the short term, however, severe capacity and security constraints have hampered monitoring and reporting efforts, as well as investigations and prosecutions. There is also an acute lack of essential health and psychosocial services for survivors, many of whom remain in hiding. In the current state of lawlessness, verging on anarchy, the main feature of the human rights situation is the pervasive impunity for acts of violence throughout the country. Lack of accountability for past and present violations creates opportunities for new violations. Thus, impunity is a challenge for the transition, raising the risks of revenge, inter-communal and inter-confessional conflicts, as well as conflict driven by unaddressed grievances.

47. Nonetheless, the task force for monitoring and reporting grave violations against children, led jointly by BINUCA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has documented cases of recruitment and sexual violence against children, including rape, by Séléka elements. Reports of children killed and maimed while within the ranks of Séléka were also received. BINUCA and UNICEF also engaged in extensive advocacy to obtain the release of 17 of the 19 children who had been re-recruited by Séléka after having been separated by the United Nations from CPJP. Earlier, during the renewed fighting in December, UNICEF and partners evacuated 66 children, who had been separated from armed groups, from transit centres in the north-east to an emergency transit centre in Bangui. The transit centre was established to prevent their re-recruitment.

48. Within the framework of two joint communiqués of December 2012, signed by the Government of the Central African Republic, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Steering Committee and the United Nations, a technical mission on sexual violence was deployed to the Central African Republic from 25 February to 2 March to conduct a technical review and assist in developing recommendations for the implementation of the commitments made in the communiqués. These include recommendations for strengthening the national authorities' capacity to effectively address impunity and implement relevant provisions of resolutions 2088 (2013) and 1960 (2010).

E. Humanitarian situation

49. The latest crisis has exacerbated an already difficult humanitarian situation for the population of the Central African Republic. Prior to the takeover of Bangui, more than 173,000 people had been displaced in the north and north-east of the country and further displacements have since been reported from Bangui and west of Bangui. Another 45,000 people fled the country from December 2012 to April 2013 to seek asylum in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (33,127 refugees), Chad (6,728), Cameroon (1,024) and the Republic of the Congo (400).

50. More than 80,000 people are estimated to be at risk of severe food insecurity during the upcoming lean season from May to September, and 57,000 children under 5 are at risk of moderate or severe malnutrition. These figures are likely to increase with the rise in food prices triggered by the crisis. With schools closed or occupied and teachers absent, at least 656,000 children currently have no access to education.

51. Difficult humanitarian access due to insecurity and limited road networks is the number one constraint for reaching those in need of assistance. Access has become severely curtailed since December amid the breakdown of law and order, with many humanitarian offices and warehouses looted around the country. While all parties have in principle agreed to facilitate humanitarian access, insecurity is limiting humanitarian actors' ability to reach those in need of assistance, including internally displaced persons, host communities and victims of human rights violations.

52. Humanitarian operations were expanded after the signing of the Libreville Agreements and the return to Bangui of international staff (see section F below). Priority activities included activation of the UNICEF-led rapid response mechanism, a system supported with €1.9 million from the Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission. The rapid assessment carried out by United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners revealed pressing needs of protection, food, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and education.

53. Key humanitarian agencies have critical staff working from Bangui, and most of the international non-governmental organizations are in the process of returning to the country. Humanitarians have brought water purification products to Bangui and are delivering critical drugs, obstetric and surgical supplies, as well as food, to hospitals in the city. All 21 health facilities in Bangui have received emergency medical kits and technical support. UNICEF has also distributed basic health kits, drugs and obstetric surgical kits to 4 hospitals, 15 health centres and a maternity clinic in Bangui to meet essential medical needs in the capital over the months of May and June.

54. Additional funding is urgently required to support the humanitarian response capacity. The annual humanitarian appeal for the Central African Republic, totalling \$129 million, is 22 per cent funded as at 22 April. It was estimated in March that an additional \$42 million was required to respond to the new needs triggered by the crisis, and this amount is now likely to increase further. In addition to funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund, the Central African Republic Common Humanitarian Fund is being activated to provide funding to respond to critical needs.

55. While working with all parties to gain free and secure movement, in order to be able to provide humanitarian assistance to affected populations, the United Nations in the Central African Republic has conducted a programme criticality assessment to determine the immediate priority needs and the human capacity required for an effective response.

F. Impact on United Nations personnel

56. Following the unrest in December 2012, all United Nations international staff were temporarily relocated to Yaoundé. They gradually returned to their offices in Bangui and resumed operations from 13 to 27 January 2013 when the security situation improved.

57. Séléka's march on Bangui led to the decision, on 24 March, to temporarily relocate all non-essential staff to Yaoundé. A total of 40 staff, considered critical personnel, have remained in Bangui to continue United Nations operations in the country, in close collaboration with those based in Yaoundé.

58. Since then, the BINUCA compound has hosted the remaining United Nations personnel, since conditions do not allow personnel of agencies, funds and programmes to conduct activities from their respective offices and living accommodations. BINUCA and United Nations country team activities are greatly curtailed and are likely to remain so for the immediate future.

III. Observations

59. The situation in the Central African Republic, as described above, is horrifying and intolerable. The international community needs to send a strong message to Séléka leaders that there is no impunity for murder, looting, and unconstitutional changes of government. The African Union has already sanctioned seven individuals. I call upon the Security Council to consider sanctions and other steps against those who have committed gross human rights violations, including sexual violence against women and children.

60. I welcome the results of the ECCAS Summit held in N'Djamena, on 18 April 2013. I strongly support the Summit's road map, which calls for an expanded and more representative and inclusive National Transitional Council. I urge that the National Transitional Council be re-formed entirely, through an inclusive and transparent consultative process that leads to a more credible body, including with gender balance.

61. The first meeting of the International Contact Group will be held in Brazzaville on 3 May. It is an important occasion to unite the subregion, region, and the international community on a common approach to the Central African Republic. The message needs to be clear on the need to restore security and public order, to establish a representative and inclusive political process through transparent and expansive consultations, to restore humanitarian access, and to bring to justice those responsible for the recent atrocities.

62. I am concerned by the continuously deteriorating security situation and the total absence of law and order. I am particularly alarmed by what appears to be violence clearly targeted to provoke confessional fears and conflict. I call upon the Prime Minister to work with religious leaders in the country on an urgent basis to restore inter-religious harmony and prevent a tragic cycle of violence and reprisals.

63. I welcome the efforts of ECCAS and the African Union to bring about peace in the Central African Republic. I reiterate my support to the countries of the subregion for deploying the MICOPAX force to the Central African Republic. I commend the European Union for its critical financial assistance and appeal to the partners of the

Central African Republic to provide effective logistics and financial support to MICOPAX as it struggles to help restore security in Bangui and in the interior of the country.

64. In N'Djamena, ECCAS leaders agreed to raise the troop levels on the ground from 700 to 2,000. I urge that this be done quickly and with a view to the appropriate mix of troop contributors that can begin to restore stability.

65. Government authorities have had preliminary discussions with United Nations officials about the possible establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping force in the Central African Republic. There are many questions to be answered before consideration is given regarding a potential peacekeeping force. In the meantime, I urge the Council to consider short-term measures that could provide some immediate relief, such as providing support to MICOPAX, both in terms of advisory services and financing, or approving a possible mandate to other forces to play a stabilization role. I urge the Government of the Central African Republic to consider rapidly and positively the offer of South Africa to deploy troops, if requested.

66. The humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic is reaching horrific proportions. The United Nations hopes to negotiate safe passage and humanitarian corridors to move needed supplies beyond Bangui. But we need resources. The humanitarian appeal for the Central African Republic, put in place before the current crisis, is only 22 per cent funded. Many United Nations warehouses have been looted. We need additional funds now to prepare ourselves to move quickly as soon as security conditions permit. I appeal to the donor community to fill the gap in the humanitarian appeal.

67. Through its resolution 2088 (2013), the Security Council requested an assessment of United Nations priorities in the light of the new developments in the Central African Republic. As detailed in the report, there are four priority areas of action for the international community, namely (a) political dialogue; (b) security and the rule of law; (c) human rights promotion and protection; and (d) humanitarian response.

68. The United Nations will continue working closely with national stakeholders in the Central African Republic, including the Prime Minister and the National Transitional Council, as well as with ECCAS, the African Union and the international community, to help to restore constitutional order in the country as soon as possible. In this regard, we will continue to support the ongoing political process, the transitional institutions and implementation mechanisms. We will also continue monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation, and advocate with the international community to protect the vulnerable population, providing humanitarian assistance to those in need. Our ability to deliver will largely depend on the security situation and its impact on United Nations personnel.

69. I should like to thank and pay a special tribute to my Special Representative, Margaret Aderinsola Vogt, as well as to the staff of the United Nations system for their demonstrated and remarkable devotion and courage during this particularly difficult time as they discharge their duties.