Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2605 (2021), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2022 and requested the Secretary-General to report on its implementation every four months. The present report provides an update on major developments in the Central African Republic since the previous report of 16 June 2022 (S/2022/491).

II. Political situation

2. On 29 August, national authorities adopted a timeline of priority activities to accelerate implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic through the joint road map for peace in the Central African Republic of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. In line with the timeline, the Government engaged with representatives of armed groups that remain committed to the Political Agreement for their full dissolution. The ongoing initiative to reform the Constitution contributed to deepening polarization in the country.

Political developments

3. Following the conclusion of the republican dialogue, recommendations that reflected key outcomes of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation of 2015 and the Political Agreement were submitted to the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadera, on 19 April. On 8 July, the President issued a decree establishing an 11-member committee to follow up on the recommendations. The committee was tasked with offering strategic guidance to the presidency on the implementation of those recommendations as well as of the residual recommendations from the Bangui Forum. On 1 August, the President signed a decree designating the representatives of the committee from the presidential majority, opposition parties, including Gabriel Jean-Edouard Koyambounou as the coordinator leading the committee, civil society organizations and religious leaders. Meanwhile, internal divisions within the political opposition that emerged during the republican dialogue persisted. On 5 August, the Mouvement de libération du peuple centrafricain formally excluded Mr. Koyambounou from its ranks.

4. During its press conference of 14 July, the Groupe d’action des organisations de la société civile pour la défense de la Constitution du 30 mars 2016, a civil society platform...
created on 8 July, called for mobilization against constitutional reform. Pro-government organizations Front républicain and Galaxie nationale centrafricaine publicly supported constitutional revision. On 6 August, the presidential majority organized peaceful demonstrations across the country to garner support for constitutional reform.

5. On 9 August, the Bureau of the National Assembly requested the Government to initiate the constitutional referendum process and to establish an inclusive constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. On 26 August, a drafting committee comprising 53 members from the National Assembly, the Government, political parties including the opposition, civil society groups and religious leaders, among others, was established by presidential decree. The committee was tasked with submitting a draft proposal for a new constitution to the presidency within three months following its instalment. The President of the Central African Republic appointed the members of the drafting committee by decree on 12 September. Various political and civil society actors, including the Catholic Church, refused a seat on the committee.

6. On 27 August, the Bloc républicain pour la défense de la Constitution, a group created on 22 July involving key opposition figures, organized a peaceful demonstration against any reform to the current Constitution.

7. Between 22 August and 14 September, the Constitutional Court received three separate challenges with regard to the constitutionality of the decree establishing the committee to draft a new constitution from the President of the opposition party, the Parti africain pour une transformation radicale et intégrale des États, and civil society groups Bloc républicain pour la défense de la Constitution and Groupe d’action des organisations de la société civile pour la défense de la Constitution du 30 mars 2016. During rallies supported by the pro-government Galaxie nationale centrafricaine on 8 and 9 September, attendees called for the resignation of the President and Vice-President of the Constitutional Court.

8. On 23 September, the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the processes undertaken to draft a new constitution, thereby annulling the presidential decrees establishing and appointing the drafting committee for a new constitution. The Court clarified that the President could initiate constitutional reform through a referendum procedure in accordance with the Constitution. On 26 September, a government spokesperson issued a statement welcoming the Court’s decision, attributing it as evidence of judicial independence.

9. On 26 September, Radio Ndeke Luka, a Central African radio station, reported that it had received threats to stop covering matters relating to constitutional reform. On 5 October, the High Council of Communication issued a press release expressing concern regarding censorship and urged the media to exercise their freedom to inform.

10. On 20 and 21 July, the Bank of Central African States and the Central African Monetary Union held extraordinary sessions to discuss the implications of the law on cryptocurrency, which had been adopted as legal tender in the Central African Republic on 21 April. Recommendations focused on the acceleration of efforts to develop a regulatory framework for cryptoassets in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community. On 25 July, the Government launched its national cryptocurrency market, the Sango Project, with the online sale of Sango Coin, aiming to streamline required procedures for investments by tying Sango Coin to government services. On 29 August, the Constitutional Court issued a decision declaring several features of the Sango Project as unconstitutional, including the proposed sale of Central African citizenship, e-residency and national land and resources through the purchase of Sango Coin.

11. On 1 September, the National Assembly adopted an amended budget bill for 2022, which reduced appropriations from $514 million to $392 million, of which $187 million is expected to be generated from domestic resources and $205 million
from external resources. The Minister of Finance and Budget recalled that the national budget had been adversely affected by rising oil and food prices, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and decreased international financial support. Parliamentarians appealed to the Government to take measures necessary to address the deficit through the improved management of public finances.

12. On 2 September, the National Assembly concluded its special session on the amended budget bill for 2022, during which it also adopted laws against human trafficking and on magistrates’ pensions.

Peace process

13. On 4 June, the Government organized a strategic review meeting in Bangui to remobilize regional and international support for the peace process. The President of the Central African Republic presided over the meeting, which was co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie and the Diaspora of the Central African Republic and the mediators mandated by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, namely the Minister for External Relations of Angola and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda. The meeting was attended by national stakeholders as well as international partners, including representatives of the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, as guarantors of the Political Agreement, and of international organizations and diplomatic missions. Participants agreed to meet on a quarterly basis to monitor progress in implementing the joint road map. Subsequently, the President designated the Prime Minister to coordinate the implementation of the joint road map.

14. At the request of the President, the Prime Minister convened coordination meetings on 3 and 29 August and on 8 September to review the government-proposed timeline of priority activities aimed at accelerating implementation of the joint road map. The meetings were attended by representatives of countries in the region, regional organizations and international partners, resulting in the endorsement of a timeline for the period from August to December 2022, comprising deliverables to monitor progress in the implementation of all six components of the joint road map. In accordance with the timeline, on 14 September, the Government met with representatives of 11 of the armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement to chart a course for their dissolution. On 3 October, at a fourth coordination meeting, progress in the implementation of the timeline was reviewed.

15. Women’s participation in the peace process remained limited: 2 of the 11 members of the follow-up committee for the republican dialogue were women, comprising only 17 per cent of participants in the dialogue. The establishment of the national parity observatory for the implementation of the law on gender parity has been pending since 2020 owing to the lack of political commitment and resources for its operationalization.

Electoral process

16. On 7 September, the National Electoral Authority completed the electoral mapping for the local elections with the support of the Government, MINUSCA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The mapping established 3,859 voter registration and polling centres on the basis of population distribution, representing an increase of 300 compared with the previous polls, serving to enhance the inclusivity of the local elections.

17. On 21 September, the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the strategic committee for elections, during which the Government confirmed its commitment to holding local elections in 2023, separate from a potential constitutional referendum.
18. To support women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in the elections, since October 2021 Central African women’s organizations have conducted awareness-raising campaigns with support from MINUSCA and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). A total of 6,574 politicians and community leaders (3,796 women) participated. Over 400 women were identified as potential candidates for the local elections.

19. As at 1 October, MINUSCA had organized 1,180 outreach and civic education sessions in support of the efforts of the National Electoral Authority to promote participation in the local elections, reaching 112,107 people (54,288 women).

20. As at 1 October, some $4.8 million pledged out of a total budget of $14.8 million for the conduct of the local elections had yet to be disbursed to the UNDP-managed basket fund for electoral operations. Some $10 million has yet to be mobilized.

Local dialogue and reconciliation

21. From June to September, most local implementation mechanisms of the Political Agreement were inactive as a result of a lack of government funding. MINUSCA nevertheless continued to engage with members of the mechanisms to address security concerns and advocate for a resumption of their activities. In Haut-Mbomou Prefecture, a reconciliation initiative conducted under the aegis of the Comité de mise en oeuvre préfectoral and the Comité local de paix et de réconciliation led to the gradual return of displaced members of the Muslim community to Obo.

22. On 1 and 6 June, MINUSCA organized two capacity-building workshops for 52 local actors, including 22 women, on the management of local peace processes and peacebuilding techniques in Bossangoa and Obo. From June to September, MINUSCA conducted nine awareness-raising sessions involving 515 participants (204 women) to facilitate acceptance of the return of displaced persons in Bambari, Batangafo, Bossangoa and Obo and the free movement of people and goods in Sam Ouandja and Ouanda Djallè.

III. Security situation

23. The security situation across the country remained volatile. Fuel shortages owing to global supply chain constraints, particularly in June, restricted operations by national defence and security forces, as well as MINUSCA. Armed groups attacked areas where national defence and security forces were less present or completely absent, taking advantage of the fuel crisis. They regained control of some mining sites, committed abuses against civilians and imposed illegal taxation. MINUSCA maintained its operational tempo in identified hotspots, prioritizing the centre and the east of the country, while preventing armed groups from taking control of other areas in the west.

24. As at 1 October, 431 security violations of the Political Agreement had been recorded, an increase from 374 in the previous reporting period. Most of the violations targeted civilians (312), followed by illegal military activities (65), violations related to restrictions of movement (17) and obstruction of State institutions, humanitarian organizations or the United Nations (37). The Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique perpetrated the largest number of violations (133), followed by the national defence and security forces and other security personnel (93), the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (80), Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (56), anti-balaka elements (52), and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (17).

25. The presence of explosive ordnance in the west continued to pose threats to civilians and the safety and security of peacekeepers. Between 2 June and 3 October, eight explosive ordnance-related incidents were reported, killing three peacekeepers
and injuring 11 civilians and one peacekeeper. MINUSCA maintained its mobility in
the west despite the presence of landmines by using its recently deployed explosive
ordnance teams.

26. In the west, anti-balaka and Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation elements
affiliated with the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement took advantage of the
fuel crisis and the rainy season to seek to recapture strongholds lost in early 2021.
They increased their presence in many localities and mining areas, targeting traders
in Lim-Pendé, Mambéré-Kadéï, Ouham, Ouham-Fafa and Ouham-Pendé Prefectures.
Between 26 and 28 June, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation committed armed
robberies and racketeering in mining sites in Abba, Nana-Mambéré Prefecture.

27. In mid-July, with an improved fuel situation, national defence forces and other
security personnel reinforced their presence in mining sites in Mambéré-Kadéï and
Ouham Prefectures, resulting in numerous clashes with armed groups and posing
major security threats to civilians.

28. From 15 July to 28 August, national defence forces and other security personnel
conducted various military operations against Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation
and anti-balaka combatants to retake control of mining sites and localities in Nana-
Mambéré, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé Prefectures. However, those groups continued
to perpetrate extortion, illegal taxation and sexual violence against the civilian
population throughout the west. On 25 and 26 July, they perpetrated 12 attacks against
civilians in Mambéré-Kadéï, Nana-Mambéré, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé Prefectures.
On 3 August, anti-balaka elements attacked a mining site in Nassoya, killing four
civilians, including a woman. On 7 September, the armed group attacked a national
defence forces base and burned 24 civilian houses in Nsamari village, killing three
civilians, including a woman, and causing population displacement.

29. On 3 October, on the Kouï-Bohong road in Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, a
MINUSCA patrol hit an explosive ordnance device, killing three peacekeepers and
seriously injuring another. On 4 October, MINUSCA cordoned off the incident area
and conducted a search operation; subsequently, a MINUSCA force explosive
ordnance disposal team and post-blast investigation team were deployed.

30. In the centre of the Central African Republic, armed groups continued to commit
exactions against the population along the main axes in Bamingui-Bangoran, Basse-
Kotto, Nana-Grébizi and Ouaka Prefectures. Other security personnel continued to
recruit demobilized Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique dissidents and anti-balaka
elements as proxies to fight against the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique and other
armed groups affiliated with the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement. These
proxies often resorted to violence against the population, in particular the Fulani
community, accusing them of collusion with armed groups.

31. In Basse-Kotto and Ouaka Prefectures, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique
sporadically attacked villages and isolated national defence forces positions. It also
increased its presence around Dimbi, Basse-Koto Prefecture, a strategic area rich with
natural resources, with the apparent intent to retake its former strongholds. In
response, national defence forces and other security personnel, using anti-balaka
proxies, conducted large-scale operations on 13 June and gained control of Dimbi.
On 3 July, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique attacked a national defence forces
position in Dimbi, but was repelled by MINUSCA. The national defence forces
soldiers who had withdrawn subsequently returned to their base with the support of
other security personnel and anti-balaka proxies.

32. In June and July, suspected Front populaire pour la renaissance de la
Centrafrique elements fled Ndélé in Bamingui-Bangoran Prefecture following the
arrival and successive reinforcement of national defence forces and other security
personnel, perpetrating acts of banditry along the Tiri-Golongosso axis. The Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique and the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique also engaged in predatory behaviour towards civilians in Mbrès and surrounding areas in Nana-Grébizi and Ouaka Prefectures from June until the end of August.

33. In the east, the situation deteriorated in Haute-Kotto, Mbomou and Vakaga Prefectures as the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique mobilized against operations conducted by national defence forces and other security personnel in and around mining areas in the Ouadda-Sam Ouandja-Ouanda Djallé triangle and on the outskirts of Bakouma and Nzacko. Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique combatants also harassed Fulani herders along the Bangassou-Rafai-Zemio axis in Mbomou Prefecture. The Arab Misseriya, under the command of Mohamed Adam, also known as “Abou Kass”, erected barriers at Am Kourmay on the Birao-Am Dafock axis and extorted civilians along trade routes towards the Sudan.

34. On 16 June, suspected Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique elements attacked Ouanda Djallé, Vakaga Prefecture, forcefully displacing thousands of civilians. The national defence forces attempted to defend the town the following day but were overpowered, leaving the town under the control of groups affiliated with the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement. From 26 June to 14 August, MINUSCA launched operations in Ouanda Djallé and Sam Ouandja, forcing armed combatants to withdraw from the towns and facilitating the safe return of displaced civilians.

35. On 23 June, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique attacked the positions of national defence forces in Bakouma, Mbomou Prefecture. National defence forces and other security personnel conducted operations in Nzacko, Mbomou Prefecture, on 24 and 25 June, forcing armed groups to retreat from the town. From 11 July to 10 August, MINUSCA deployed a quick reaction force and a special weapons and tactics team in Bakouma and its surroundings to protect civilians and contribute to restoring security in the area.

36. In Bangui, the security situation remained relatively calm. The national curfew remained from 12 a.m. to 5 a.m. Recorded incidents of criminality decreased to 2,583, compared with 2,866 in the previous reporting period (from 16 February to 15 June 2022), against the backdrop of security operations in the city and surrounding areas.

37. Following rumours of infiltration of armed combatants, national defence and security forces and other security personnel jointly conducted cordon-and-search operations in Bangui from June to September. On 22 September, in the PK5 neighbourhood, national defence and security forces fired warning shots and teargas to disperse the protestors as the demonstrations against those operations turned violent, injuring four civilians. The operations recovered eight handguns, seven AK-47s and an undisclosed amount of grenades and ammunition. A total of 38 persons were arrested, 16 of whom were released.

IV. Regional engagement

38. The fifty-third meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held from 29 May to 4 June in Yaoundé, resulting in the adoption of a ministerial declaration on the Central African Republic to support the country’s efforts towards peace and reconstruction.

39. On 31 August, the President received a Chadian delegation led by the Minister of Finance and Budget, Tahir Hamid Nguilin. Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen bilateral relations. Central African authorities expressed their support for the ongoing national dialogue in Chad.
V. Humanitarian situation

40. Continued armed clashes, military operations and reprisals against the civilian population contributed to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation, which was exacerbated by rapidly rising commodity prices and persistent fuel shortages. Approximately 63 per cent of the population, or 3.1 million Central Africans, required protection and humanitarian assistance.

41. Violence continued to trigger displacement. As at 1 October 2022, 484,335 Central Africans were internally displaced and 744,000 had taken refuge in neighbouring countries. From April to August 2022, 2.2 million people, nearly 50 per cent of the population, experienced high levels of acute food insecurity, including 638,000 who were in an emergency situation (phase 4, “emergency”, of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification). Insecurity and displacement reduced areas for cultivation and hampered access to markets.

42. The fuel crisis had an impact on life-saving assistance by suspending or curtailing activities of humanitarian actors. In June and July 2022, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service reduced its flight schedule from five to two flights per day, while the amount of food transported by air was reduced by nearly half owing to space limitations for light cargo. While the situation improved in August, the fuel shortage persisted, posing challenges for humanitarian actors already facing access constraints.

43. Since June, 85,300 people have been affected by torrential rains in Bangui and in Bamingui-Bangoran, Basse-Kotto, Nana-Grébizi, Nana-Mambéré, Ombella-Mpoko, Lobaye, Ouaka, Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Mbomou and Vakaga Prefectures. The floods caused over 6,000 people to be newly internally displaced and destroyed over 2,600 houses.

44. Humanitarian personnel continued to be targeted. From June to October, 68 incidents affecting humanitarian workers or property were recorded. Thefts, robberies, looting, threats and assaults accounted for 65 per cent of the incidents. On 21 June, Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique combatants abducted a humanitarian team on the Obo-Bambouti axis in Haut-Mbomou Prefecture. The hostages were released the following day after negotiations.

45. As at 1 October 2022, 71.5 per cent of the $461.3 million required to provide life-saving assistance to 2 million people in accordance with the 2022 humanitarian response plan had been mobilized, leaving a funding gap of $132 million. In the first half of 2022, the humanitarian community provided multisectoral assistance and services to 1.2 million people. Some 4,249 refugees have repatriated voluntarily during 2022, mostly from Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; facilitated repatriations have been temporarily suspended owing to a combination of factors, including the fuel shortage, funding limitations and the rainy season.

46. As at 1 October, of the 105,662 people tested for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, 14,956 had tested positive and 113 had died. Official figures did not fully reflect the impact of the pandemic, owing to limited testing. As at 1 October, 1.9 million people had been vaccinated with doses received through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility and bilateral agreements.

VI. Protection of civilians

47. Civilians were under major threat in Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Mbomou, Ouaka and Vakaga Prefectures as a result of forced displacement, serious human rights violations and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation. In Haute-Kotto and Vakaga Prefectures, military operations conducted by national defence forces and
other security personnel, particularly in the mining areas of Ouadja, Ouanda Djallé and Sam Ouandja, resulted in reprisals by the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique and the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique. The armed clashes exacerbated intercommunal tensions among the Banda, Runga and Yulu communities, resulting in the increase of hate speech and incitement to violence. The national defence forces reportedly used anti-balaka combatants as proxies, notably in September in Gobolo, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, potentially further fuelling intercommunal tensions.

48. MINUSCA continued to prioritize creating a protective environment for the population. The Mission deployed integrated civilian and uniformed surge teams to hotspots, including in Sam Ouandja, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, from 24 to 31 August and from 7 to 14 September. Across the west, centre and east of the country, MINUSCA successfully responded to alerts through robust operations, including joint patrols with national defence and security forces. In some parts of the country, civilians were able to return to their places of origin, while some civil servants and members of the national defence forces returned to their places of deployment.

49. During the reporting period, the Mission carried out a total of 7,471 patrols on its own, 1,015 joint patrols with the national defence and security forces and 146 operations with the primary aim of protecting civilians. MINUSCA also maintained static presences and established temporary operating bases and check posts. In addition, the Mission’s robust mobile presence contributed to bridging potential operational gaps, mitigating risks of security vacuums. For example, in Pouloubou, Basse-Kotto Prefecture, MINUSCA deployed regular long-range patrols to protect civilians following the closure of the temporary operating base there.

50. MINUSCA, in coordination with the national defence and security forces, collected and destroyed 1,538 explosive remnants of war. A total of 1,194 civilians (419 women, 586 men, 101 girls and 88 boys) participated in education sessions on explosive ordnance risk, as did 128 United Nations personnel and humanitarian actors (39 women). The MINUSCA mine action service conducted explosive ordnance threat mitigation training for 84 MINUSCA military personnel (11 women) in Berberati and Bouar; 38 personnel (1 woman) were trained in search-and-detect operations.

VII. Extension of State authority and the rule of law

Extension of State authority

51. As at 1 October, 127 (or 72 per cent) of 174 local officials (prefects, sub-prefects and secretaries-general of prefectures and sub-prefectures) were deployed to their duty stations outside Bangui. During the reporting period, an additional 63 civil servants (9 women) were deployed to their duty stations in Bamingui-Bangoran, Basse-Kotto, Haut-Mbomou, Haute-Kotto, Mambéré-Kadéï, Mbomou, Nana-Grébizi, Ouaka, Ouham and Vakaga Prefectures.

Security sector reform

52. On 27 and 28 June, the Ministry of Defence organized a seminar, with support from MINUSCA and the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, to raise the awareness of senior military officers and parliamentarians about military doctrine, standard operating procedures and the importance of strengthening the democratic control of security institutions.

53. MINUSCA supported the national commission on border management in organizing four working sessions to draft a national border management policy, one of the seven national security sector reform priorities and a priority in the joint road map.
54. On 15 July, the strategic committee on demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation, security sector reform and national reconciliation, chaired by the President, endorsed the new national security policy and the draft national security sector reform strategy, both of which emphasized governance, accountability and the coordination of actors in the security sector. The President also endorsed the recommendations of the National Security Sector Reform Coordination on strengthening security sector oversight bodies.

National defence and internal security forces

55. As at 1 October, 6,904 internal security forces, including 3,612 police officers (903 women) and 3,292 gendarmes (525 women), were deployed across the country; a total of 5,174 remained in Bangui. MINUSCA and UNDP supported the training of 1,921 police officers and 3,926 gendarmes (539 women) on such issues as community policing, judicial police, conduct and discipline, and gender-based and conflict-related sexual violence. Information on the total strength of the national defence forces, including their deployments, remains unknown.

56. As at 1 October, national authorities and MINUSCA had conducted 83 quality verification visits to weapons and ammunition storage facilities of the national defence and internal security forces in Bangui and had carried out 33 maintenance and rehabilitation activities on 11 of those premises. From 25 to 29 July, in support of the National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the implementation of the national action plan, MINUSCA coordinated a refresher training course on arms marking for 12 members of the defence and internal security forces. The presidential decree on arms marking, drafted with MINUSCA support, was signed on 7 September, in line with the arms embargo benchmarks. Following the issuance of the decree, the Commission launched arms marking operations in Bangui.

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

57. From 13 to 21 June, the Government’s mobile teams carried out the first disarmament and demobilization operations in the south-east with MINUSCA support. In Haut-Mbomou Prefecture, 51 combatants (all men) from a dissident group of the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique were disarmed and demobilized. In Mbomou, as part of the operations in the south-east from 10 August to 3 September, an additional 239 anti-balaka and one Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique combatants (39 women) were disarmed and demobilized. A total of 255 weapons, 11,738 rounds of ammunition, 12 grenades, 22 rockets and 13 rocket launchers were collected during those operations. MINUSCA continued to engage with national authorities to address challenges in the implementation of the national programme, including to regularize the cases of approximately 470 combatants from the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique affiliated with the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement who had been disarmed by national defence forces and other security personnel in Bambari outside of the national programme.

58. Community violence reduction programmes continued in Bangui, Birao, Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, Kaga Bandoro and Ndélé. In June, all 5,799 registered beneficiaries (2,466 women) completed their vocational training, including on farming, hairdressing, driving, auto mechanics, soap-making, welding, carpentry and agriculture. As at 1 October, 96 per cent of them had received their start-up kits to launch income-generating activities.

Justice and the rule of law

59. Between 2 June and 1 October, MINUSCA transferred and handed over to national authorities in Bangui eight individuals who had been arrested in Batangafo,
Birao, Obo and Ouanda Djallé, including through urgent temporary measures. As at 1 October, 28 investigations by national judicial authorities into attacks against peacekeepers were ongoing.

60. From 29 April to 21 June and from 20 June to 15 July, the Bangui and Bouar courts of appeal, respectively, held their first criminal sessions since February 2020, with MINUSCA and UNDP support. The sessions heard cases of serious crimes, including cases of crimes allegedly committed by members of the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement, sexual violence and one attack against peacekeepers. All cases of sexual violence resulted in convictions, while the majority of individuals accused of crimes or affiliation with armed groups were acquitted because of a lack of evidence. The case of the attack against peacekeepers was referred to the juvenile court owing to the age of the accused at the time of the crime.

61. On 19 August, the Special Criminal Court started its deliberations after completing the hearings in its first trial, on the attack on Koundjouli and Limouna, Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, in May 2019, allegedly committed by Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation members. Two suspects were formally charged by the Court’s Investigating Chamber in two separate proceedings on 15 July and 26 September. They were both charged with several crimes against humanity; one was also charged with war crimes. The investigative proceedings before the Investigating Chamber are ongoing.

62. As at 1 October, 69 of 75 national civilian penitentiary personnel were present in their posts in 12 operational prisons outside of Bangui. On 25 June, 145 civilian prison officers, who had started work in December 2021, went on strike demanding the full payment of salary arrears and their definitive incorporation into the government payroll. A second group of 150 trainees who completed training on 30 June are awaiting integration into the civil service.

VIII. Human rights and the fight against impunity

63. Between 2 June and 1 October, MINUSCA documented and verified 402 incidents representing 625 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law that affected 1,552 victims, including 597 men, 133 women, 196 boys, 137 girls and 27 unidentified children; 425 unidentified civilians; and 37 groups of collective victims, causing 66 conflict-related civilian deaths and one enforced disappearance. This illustrates a deteriorating human rights situation in the country, with a 90.2 per cent increase in the number of victims compared with the previous reporting period (816 victims). A high number of violations by State authorities, including arbitrary and illegal detention, ill treatment and torture, were also documented in prisons and other detention facilities, as MINUSCA began to systematically report on human rights violations in detention facilities. This expanded focus partially explains the increase in the number of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law as well the number of victims of State agents during the reporting period.

64. Armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement were responsible for 44.3 per cent of the documented abuses during the reporting period. MINUSCA documented 178 incidents representing 277 human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law perpetrated by armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement, affecting 730 victims, which represents a 61.5 per cent increase in the number of victims compared with the previous reporting period (452 victims). Among those armed groups, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique was responsible for 91 abuses and 167 victims; Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation for 84 abuses and 161 victims; and the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique for 34 abuses and 153 victims. Armed groups are notably responsible for 49 of the 66 victims of
killings and conflict-related civilian deaths, with Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (17 victims), Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (11 victims) and anti-balaka combatants (8 victims) combatants being the main perpetrators. The other main human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law perpetrated by armed groups include ill-treatment, maiming and injuries, rapes and other conflict-related sexual violence, and destruction or appropriation of properties.

65. State agents were responsible for 45 per cent of the documented violations during the reporting period. MINUSCA documented 206 incidents representing 281 human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law perpetrated by State agents, affecting 788 victims. National defence forces and other security personnel were responsible for 106 incidents representing 166 violations and abuses, affecting 211 victims, which represents a 36.6 per cent decrease in the number of victims compared with the previous reporting period (333 victims). Among State agents, national defence forces acting alone committed the most human rights violations (120 violations and 138 victims), in addition to violations perpetrated jointly with other security personnel (16 violations and 34 victims) or with internal security forces (4 violations and 5 victims). Arbitrary arrest and illegal detention represented a high number of documented violations, in particular by the national police (45 violations and 277 victims) and the gendarmerie (57 violations and 280 victims); targeted arrests and torture disproportionately affected specific communities, such as the Fulani, especially in the east.

66. In July and August, 10 of 20 individuals allegedly accused of criminal association with the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement and illegally held at the Office central de répression du banditisme and the Section des recherches et d’investigations for more than a year were referred to the public prosecutor’s office, placed under an official detention order and incarcerated in Ngaragba prison in Bangui. Four others were released; the remaining six remain in custody at the Office central de répression du banditisme.

67. MINUSCA consistently engaged the Government on human rights violations committed by national defence and security forces and other security personnel and their implications for MINUSCA support to national defence and security forces. The Mission supported the Government to put in place the recommendations and mitigation measures in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy.

68. MINUSCA continued to support the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, including by completing 20 awareness-raising field missions to enhance popular participation in the transitional justice process. With funding and technical support from MINUSCA, the Commission facilitated workshops attended by 600 civilians, informing them of the Commission’s mandate and the outcomes of proceedings.

Conflicts-related sexual violence

69. From 2 June to 1 October, MINUSCA documented 47 conflict-related sexual violence incidents representing 51 violations and 70 victims (28 women and 42 girls, aged from 2 to 17 years), mostly rape against 55 survivors (21 women and 34 girls). Armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement were responsible for 53 victims (27 girls), with the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique being responsible for 19 victims (6 girls) and Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation for 18 victims (7 girls). National defence and internal security forces were responsible for 11 incidents affecting 11 victims, all of whom were children. Haute-Kotto Prefecture had the highest number of reported incidents (12), while Ouham-Pendé Prefecture recorded the highest number of victims (18 victims, including 7 girls).
Children and armed conflict

70. As at 1 October, the country task force on monitoring and reporting verified 366 grave violations directly affecting 334 children (205 boys and 129 girls) attributed to armed groups (334), national defence and security forces and other security personnel (27), and unidentified armed individuals (5). Grave violations included the recruitment and use of children (286), killing (7), maiming (19), rape and other forms of sexual violence (30), abduction (11), attacks against schools (3) and denial of humanitarian access (10). Among the 286 children recruited and used by armed groups (280) and pro-government forces (6), 273 were self-demobilized children identified and screened in Bamingui-Bangoran and Haute-Kotto Prefectures.

71. On 22 June, the Government held a technical-level validation workshop with MINUSCA support to address the handover protocol for children associated with armed forces and groups for their transfer to a representative of the Ministry for the Promotion of Gender, Family and Protection of Children and child protection partners.

72. On 30 June, following engagement by the country task force on monitoring and reporting with the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement, the Coalition’s military coordinator and leader of the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique, Ali Darassa Mahamat, issued a directive stressing the need for strict respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians.

IX. Economic situation

73. The disruption of fuel supplies, which started in June, led to parallel illicit fuel sales, with an average price increase of 38 per cent and a corresponding increase of approximately 33 per cent in the cost of transportation in Bangui.

74. On 3 June, the World Bank approved $208 million for programmes, including $138 million for clean energy and $70 million for the health system. The International Monetary Fund visited Bangui from 7 to 15 July for the second review of the country’s staff-monitored programme, warning of the risk of slow growth owing to fuel shortages, accelerating inflation and external financing shortfalls. At the request of national authorities, the programme was extended for three months until the end of September.

X. United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Military component

75. As at 1 October, the military component of MINUSCA had deployed 12,751 troops (7 per cent women) out of an authorized strength of 14,400 personnel, including 421 staff officers (105 women) and 154 military observers (50 women).

76. As at 1 October, 1,505 of the 2,750 troops authorized under Security Council resolution 2566 (2021) had been deployed, including 525 during the reporting period. Planning and preparations continued in order to complete most of the deployments by December 2022.

Police component

77. As at 1 October, the MINUSCA police component had deployed 2,631 personnel (12.69 per cent women) out of an authorized strength of 3,020 personnel. They comprised 510 individual police officers (113 women) and 2,121 personnel (221 women) in 13 formed police units and one protection support unit.
78. As at 1 October, 567 of the 940 police personnel authorized under Security Council resolution 2566 (2021) had been deployed, including 23 during the reporting period. Planning and preparations continued in order to complete most of the deployments by December 2022.

Civilian personnel

79. As at 1 October, 1,499 civilian personnel (27 per cent women), including 584 national staff, 282 United Nations Volunteers and 104 government-provided correctional personnel, were serving with MINUSCA. This represents 90 per cent of the 1,671 approved positions.

Status-of-forces agreement

80. Between 2 June and 1 October, MINUSCA recorded five violations of the status-of-forces agreement, representing a reduction from 23 incidents recorded during the previous reporting period. On 23 June, in Bakouma, national defence forces temporarily obstructed the freedom of movement of a MINUSCA patrol. On 19 August, national defence forces seized incoming contingent-owned equipment, which was released on 1 September after engagement by the MINUSCA leadership with the Central African authorities.

Safety and security of United Nations personnel

81. From 2 June to 3 October, 272 security incidents involving United Nations personnel were recorded, including direct attacks, threats, criminal acts, violent demonstrations, robberies, detentions and road traffic accidents. Eight personnel died during the reporting period, three in a mine incident, one of sudden death, two of illness and two from road traffic accident injuries. Two personnel were injured in an armed attack, one in a mine incident and 27 in road traffic accidents. Fifteen personnel were evacuated, including those injured in road traffic accidents. Four armed attacks, seven armed robberies, 11 cases of theft, six attempted intrusions into a United Nations compound/residence, 125 road traffic accidents and 12 fire incidents were reported. Seven demonstrations against the United Nations were recorded.

82. As at 1 October, the United Nations had administered 31,514 doses of COVID-19 vaccine to United Nations personnel and staff of eligible non-governmental organizations. A total of 1,641 cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed among United Nations personnel, including 27 active cases, 1,594 recoveries, 9 repatriations and 11 deaths.

Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

83. Between 1 May and 31 August, MINUSCA recorded six allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving military personnel. Those allegations involved one incident from 2021, with the remaining reports concerning alleged incidents that took place between 2017 and 2020. MINUSCA referred 22 victims, including two children, to humanitarian partners for medical, psychological and protection assistance.

84. MINUSCA provided capacity-building and logistical support to 77 members of local community prevention and response networks that support the Mission’s prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse, including to victims. With 1,086 volunteers, including women and youth representatives, teachers, religious leaders, police officers and media representatives, the networks cover 39 locations and axes across the country.
Support considerations

85. Fuel shortages in the country were further aggravated in June owing to low river levels that delayed the import of larger quantities of fuel to Bangui by barge. As a result, MINUSCA temporarily scaled down operations to the most critical requirements. The Mission’s fuel reserves were replenished by the end of July when fuel deliveries by barge resumed.

86. MINUSCA continued to improve the conditions of temporary operating bases by constructing ablation units with wastewater treatment facilities, which also addressed potential wastewater risks. The construction of centralized waste management yards at several Mission locations commenced.

Action for peacekeeping and performance optimization

87. MINUSCA continued to work in close cooperation with key stakeholders to revitalize the Political Agreement through the implementation of the joint road map, including through improved coordination and support for the operationalization of key priority areas of the peace and political processes.

88. During the reporting period, two military units (one infantry and one hospital unit) were evaluated and both were rated as satisfactory. Good practices were identified, including regular training and firing exercises with updated training programmes. Identified shortfalls included base defence and weapons maintenance. Recommendations were also made to improve quick response and information-gathering to enhance the protection of civilians and the safety and security of peacekeepers.

89. The Mission’s police component conducted 16 performance assessments of 13 formed police units. All the units were deemed satisfactory, including in terms of mandate, command and control, protection of civilians, training, welfare and health. The MINUSCA police component continues to review and correct any identified lapses and is developing exercises on base defence as well as fire and evacuation plans for formed police unit personnel.

90. From June to September, the Mission conducted 10 table-top exercises to strengthen crisis preparedness and improve communication flow, which enhanced coordination and preparedness across the Mission.

91. As part of its ongoing efforts to address disinformation campaigns hindering mandate implementation, MINUSCA strengthened partnerships with local media and civil society organizations to monitor online hate messaging and enhance the visibility of its activities. During the reporting period, MINUSCA conducted 3 field visits and held 6 capacity-building workshops to support local media professionals. These efforts contributed to the temporary reduction of disinformation campaigns against MINUSCA. Monitoring of the media showed an increase in the positive perception of MINUSCA by the population from 48.24 per cent in 2021 to 69.3 per cent in 2022.

XI. Financial considerations

92. By its resolution 76/282 of 29 June 2022, the General Assembly appropriated the amount of $1,074.4 million for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. As at 26 September 2022, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for MINUSCA amounted to $500.8 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $4,763.6 million. The reimbursement of the costs of troop and formed police personnel, as well as for contingent-owned equipment, has been made for the period up to 30 June 2022, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.
XII. Observations

93. The revitalized peace process in the Central African Republic is essential in order to put the country on the path of durable peace, consistent with the desires of the Central African people expressed during the Bangui Forum in 2015 and reiterated during the republican dialogue convened by the President in March. I welcome the increased national ownership of the peace process, as demonstrated by the convening in June of a strategic review meeting bringing together national and international partners of the peace process to agree on modalities and timelines for implementing the Political Agreement through the joint road map of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Peace is in the hands of the Central Africans and their ownership is key to making progress.

94. I particularly welcome the ongoing engagement between the Government and representatives of armed groups that remain committed to the Political Agreement, which seeks the dissolution of those armed groups. This approach is consistent with the need for durable political solutions to be anchored in national political will and regional and international support with a view to bringing lasting peace to the country. The guarantors and facilitators of the Political Agreement have an essential role to play in that regard. MINUSCA will continue to optimize its good offices and convening mandate to facilitate the Government’s efforts to mobilize its partners for peace in the Central African Republic.

95. Continuous political dialogue is an essential component of peace. I welcome the establishment of the follow-up committee tasked with advancing the recommendations of the republican dialogue and those remaining from the Bangui Forum. I encourage the Government to devote the resources necessary to advance the work of this committee. It is regrettable, however, that relatively few women are participating in the peace process.

96. I strongly condemn the continued excessive use of force and targeting of civilians by all parties to the conflict and call upon them all to take immediate steps to commit to the unilateral ceasefire. While the primary responsibility to protect civilians rests with the Government, the Mission’s robust response contributed to establishing in many areas a secure environment for civilians, facilitating the return of displaced persons and the safe provision of humanitarian assistance, a precondition for the advancement of the peace process.

97. I welcome the ongoing progress in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation of armed groups within the framework of the Political Agreement and the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. This national programme is the main framework that can lead to a sustainable reintegration of demobilized combatants. The reported instances of demobilized combatants being remobilized by all actors to the conflict which risk undermining the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process. It is critical that the Government fulfils its commitments to ensure that all demobilized combatants, including women and youth, are protected from stigmatization and to regularize the status of those combatants who have disarmed outside of the national programme. I call upon all armed groups to lay down their weapons and demobilize, taking advantage of the socioeconomic benefits offered by reintegration and community violence reduction initiatives. Sustaining these reintegration initiatives requires the ongoing support of development and financial partners to the Government.

98. I welcome the presidential endorsement of the new national security policy and national strategy for security sector reform. I call upon the national authorities, with the coordinated support of partners, to prioritize their implementation as well as the
capacity-building of security institutions focusing on governance, democratic
oversight and command and control.

99. I am encouraged by the determination of the national authorities to advance
justice for victims of serious crimes as a fundamental element of long-term
reconciliation and peace efforts. The holding of the criminal sessions of the courts of
appeal of Bangui and Bouar, as well as the completion of hearings in the first trial of
the Special Criminal Court, which are crucial milestones in the fight against impunity
and transitional justice, are welcome. I also encourage the Government to ensure the
timely renewal of the mandate of the Special Criminal Court in advance of its
expiration in October 2023, while stressing the importance of the continued support
of international partners for the Court.

100. I strongly condemn the continued human rights violations and abuses and
violations of international humanitarian law perpetrated by all parties to the conflict,
including conflict-related sexual violence and grave violations against civilians. I am
also concerned about the targeting and harm caused to civilians by national defence
and internal security forces and other security personnel during their operations. I
welcome the adoption of the law against human trafficking and further commend the
Government for its ongoing activities to roll out its action plan to combat the
trafficking of children, including the use of children by national defence forces, and
for endorsing the action plan to fight conflict-related sexual and gender-based
violence. I urge the Government to issue a command directive prohibiting grave child
rights violations.

101. I remain deeply concerned by the deterioration of the humanitarian situation,
with far too many Central Africans requiring protection and humanitarian assistance,
exacerbated by rapidly rising commodity prices and persistent fuel shortages. I
commend humanitarian actors for their continued efforts to deliver life-saving
assistance to those in need, despite the risks.

102. I strongly condemn the use of explosive ordnance by armed groups, which has
killed and injured peacekeepers and civilians and limited the access of persons
affected by conflict to life-saving humanitarian assistance. I salute the memory of the
three peacekeepers who paid the ultimate price on 3 October and pay tribute to the
courage and sacrifice of all who continue to operate in highly challenging conditions
in the service of peace. As I reiterate that all attacks targeting civilians, humanitarian
personnel and peacekeepers must stop immediately, I urge the Government to make
every effort to ensure investigations and the subsequent prosecution of all perpetrators
so that they can be brought to justice swiftly.

103. The worsening economic and fiscal situation continues to have a negative
impact on the people of the Central African Republic, particularly the most
vulnerable. I reiterate my call for the Government and development and humanitarian
partners to work together in ensuring the delivery of basic services to the population
in line with the national recovery and peace consolidation plan, with the effective
presence of the United Nations country team across the country.

104. The completion of the electoral mapping exercise and the review of the
integrated elections security plan are commendable. Required legislation for the local
elections should be passed as soon as possible to enable voter registration and other
critical processes. I reiterate my call to international partners to support these efforts,
including by providing the necessary financial and technical support.

105. I welcome the continued decrease of targeted disinformation campaigns against
MINUSCA. However, I remain deeply concerned about continued incitement on
social media to hatred and violence by certain groups, particularly those targeting the
political opposition, members of the Constitutional Court, legal counsels, judges and
journalists, exacerbated by continued debates on the constitutional reform. Recent incidents of intimidation against media professionals are also concerning. I urge the Government to take action to put an end to these practices, as they have a negative impact on people’s right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

106. I reaffirm my commitment to zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and condemn any such act committed by United Nations staff and non-staff personnel or other humanitarian actors. MINUSCA and the United Nations country team continue to take actions to enhance prevention and response measures through strengthened risk management and by stepping up assistance to victims. I call upon all troop- and police-contributing countries to uphold their obligations by addressing allegations referred by the United Nations, with a view to holding perpetrators accountable, including by resolving paternity and child maintenance claims for children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse.

107. I welcome the continuous engagement of MINUSCA with the national authorities for full respect for the status-of-forces agreement. I note the recent decrease in violations, although I am concerned about the persistent search and seizure of the equipment for MINUSCA contingents and interference with its freedom of movement, including the continued restriction on night flights. I urge the Government to uphold its unequivocal commitment to take appropriate measures to prevent these violations. I also stress the importance of ensuring the efficient movement of the United Nations supply chain in support of peacekeeping operations, including MINUSCA.

108. The posture of MINUSCA to operate proactively has paid dividends. However, limited infrastructure continues to pose challenges for rapid deployment to protect civilians. To optimize the implementation of the Mission’s mandate, I encourage all stakeholders, including troop-contributing countries and other partners of the Central African Republic, to support the enhancement of the Mission’s mobility, including its engineering capabilities.

109. MINUSCA continues to play a critical role in support of the efforts of the people and the Government of the Central African Republic to sustain peace in the country. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the current mandate of MINUSCA for one year, until 15 November 2023, at its current authorized military, police and corrections strength.

110. I wish to thank my Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Valentine Rugwabiza, for her proactive and effective leadership. I remain grateful for the dedication of civilian and uniformed personnel of MINUSCA and the United Nations country team in performing their mandate. I highly appreciate the Mission’s troop- and police-contributing countries whose personnel serve the Organization in often difficult contexts. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to regional, multilateral and non-governmental organizations and all other partners, including donor countries, for their invaluable contributions to peace in the Central African Republic.
Annex I

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic: military and police strength as at 1 October 2022

<table>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Military component</th>
<th>Police component</th>
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| Total                       | 154                | 421            | 12 144 | 12 751 | 2 121              | 510                      |
Annex II

Map