



## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

### Expected Council Action

The Council is expected to issue a presidential statement in the coming days endorsing the Secretary-General's proposal to transform the UN Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) into an integrated UN presence in Central African Republic (CAR). The mandate of BONUCA expires on 31 December.

### Key Recent Developments

The political situation in the CAR has witnessed some improvement over the past three months following the successful convening of the inclusive political dialogue from 8 to 20 December 2008 in CAR's capital, Bangui. But security concerns have continued, in particular in the north of the country. The dialogue, which was the culmination of two years of strenuous national and international efforts, aimed at achieving a genuine nationally owned vision for building sustainable peace and development in CAR. The meeting brought together about 150 participants from the government and its allied political parties, opposition parties, rebel movements and civil society, and culminated in the adoption of a number of key recommendations spanning political and governance issues, security and socioeconomic matters, including:

- establishment of a broad based government;
- implementation of security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR);
- holding of municipal, legislative and presidential elections in 2009 and 2010;
- holding of independent audits of revenue generating state institutions;
- introduction of measures to identify and indemnify victims of past conflicts;
- implementation of the poverty reduction strategy for the period 2008 to 2011;
- reform of the management of natural resources; and
- development of national human resources.

In line with the dialogue's recommendation to appoint a government of national unity, CAR President François Bozizé appointed a new government on 20 January.

On 3 March the Secretary-General wrote to the Council recommending that an integrated UN presence should be set up in CAR, against the backdrop of the outcome of the December inclusive political dialogue. He proposed that BONUCA should be succeeded, initially until 31 December 2009, by a UN integrated peacebuilding office to be headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the Assistant Secretary-General level, with a revised mandate and structure including the following:

- assisting national and local efforts in implementing the dialogue's outcomes, in particular through support for governance reforms and electoral processes;
- supporting the successful completion of the DDR process and the reform of security sector institutions;
- assisting efforts to restore state authority in the provinces and enhance national human rights capacity and promote respect for human rights and the rule of law, justice and accountability;
- coordinating with and supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), "as well as the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding and projects supported through the Peacebuilding Fund"; and
- sustaining support for the UN Mission in CAR and Chad (MINURCAT).

This revised mandate would enable the integrated office to provide enhanced support to stakeholders by coordinating UN development work (provided by agencies) on the ground and lend political support (including supporting national reconciliation and dialogue and assisting efforts to strengthen democratic institutions—key components of the mandate of BONUCA) for various UN programmes in CAR. (On 26 November 2008 the Secretary-General had submitted his latest report on BONUCA in which he recommended the extension of the mission for an additional year. He also conveyed his intention to prepare proposals for an integrated UN presence in CAR. In a letter to the Secretary-General on 23 December the Council renewed the mandate of BONUCA until 31 December 2009 and requested recommendations on setting up an integrated office by 28 February.)

On 10 March the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of BONUCA, François Lonsény Fall, briefed the Council on the situation in CAR. Fall said that the successful conclusion of the inclusive political dialogue had provided a window of opportunity for efforts towards consolidating peace in the country. Also, a dialogue follow-up committee and a steering committee responsible for DDR had been established and had engaged the rebel movements as part of the possible implementation of a DDR programme.

Fall, however, noted that there had been heightened tension and unrest in the north of the country, following attacks against government institutions and the military. Responsibility for most of the unrest was attributed to the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace, a rebel group that was not known until these recent attacks and the Democratic Forces for the People of Central Africa, a rebel group which had participated in the dialogue, both of which claimed that the government had reneged on its promise to implement the outcome of the dialogue. Riots had also broken out in Bangui following attacks on the chief of police by members of the presidential guard.

The chairman of the country-specific configuration of the PBC for CAR, Belgian Ambassador Jan Grauls, indicated during the meeting that the dialogue's proposals were being implemented and the PBC's strategic framework for CAR would soon be finalised. He echoed the concern about the security situation in northern CAR and indicated that the most pressing issues were preserving the momentum of the dialogue and finalising the disarmament programme. Grauls supported the Secretary-General's recommendation for the setting up of an integrated peacebuilding office in CAR. Similarly, during the meeting, the CAR permanent representative, Ambassador Fernand Poukrè-Kano, welcomed the proposal for the setting up an integrated UN office in his country.

On 15 March the mandate for the EU mission in eastern Chad and northeastern CAR ended. This force was succeeded by a new UN military component to MINURCAT, which includes 300 troops based in Birao, a town in northeastern CAR. The military presence in CAR is intended to help create the security conditions conducive to a voluntary and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons.

### **Developments in the Peacebuilding Commission**

On 22 December the Peacebuilding Support Office submitted a document on the mapping of resources for peacebuilding in CAR to the PBC country-specific configuration for that country. It detailed the resources and gaps for peacebuilding in the country and aimed at assisting the commission in its elaboration of an integrated peacebuilding framework as well as improved resource mobilisation and coordination of international support strategy for the country.

On 20 January the chair of the CAR configuration issued a statement (PBC/3/CAF/4) welcoming the outcome of the December inclusive political dialogue and stressing the need to sustain the momentum created by the positive outcome.

On 9 March the CAR configuration issued a statement which noted positive developments in the country but expressed concern about the resurgence of violence in the northern part of the country and the consequent insecurity and displacement of thousands of civilians. It indicated that necessary action needed to be exercised in order to sustain the momentum of the dialogue and the successful implementation of the DDR programme.

On 10 March Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fall briefed the PBC on developments in CAR, during which he expressed his pleasure that the outcomes of the inclusive political dialogue were at the core of the draft integrated peacebuilding framework, which was being developed by the PBC. The general expectation at press time was for the strategic framework to be finalised by the end of March. The adoption of the framework would also provide a response to the 30 May 2008 request from the Security Council to the Peacebuilding Commission for advice and recommendations on the situation in CAR.

### **Key Issues**

The key issue for the Council is how to adequately respond to the Secretary-General's proposal to set up an integrated UN presence in CAR. A closely related issue is ensuring consolidation of peace and security in the country in light of ongoing serious political, economic and humanitarian challenges confronting CAR despite the peace agreement, including the deteriorating security situation in the northern part of the country.

### **Options**

Options for the Council include:

- endorsing the Secretary-General's proposals for transforming BONUCA into an integrated UN mission; or
- delaying a decision on the Secretary-General's recommendations until after a strategic framework for CAR has been finalised by the PBC.

### **Council Dynamics**

Council members seem comfortable with the Secretary-General's proposal to transform BONUCA into an integrated mission because of the outcome of the inclusive political dialogue, which is seen as positive, and a feeling that an integrated mission is the right tool at this stage to meet the peace consolidation needs of CAR. During the Council's informal consultations on the matter, following the open meeting on 10 March, members were reported to have been in agreement with the recommendation and tasked France with coming up with a related presidential statement. The Council is therefore expected to approve the setting up of an integrated UN office in CAR.

France is the leading country on this issue in the Council.

## Underlying Problems

High levels of poverty and unemployment, together with poorly motivated state security forces, banditry and rebel activity (especially in the northern parts of the country), the proliferation of small arms and lawlessness, impunity and the absence of state authority in large parts of the country continue to pose threats to peace and security in the country. Another key concern is whether CAR may be affected by an influx of refugees from Sudan if the humanitarian situation deteriorates, following Sudan's expulsion in early March of 13 international humanitarian organisations from Darfur in the wake of the International Criminal Court's issuance of an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

## UN Documents

<b>Latest Secretary-General's Report</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>S/2008/733 (26 November 2008) was the latest report of the Secretary-General on CAR and BONUCA.</li></ul>
<b>Relevant Letters</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>S/2009/128 (3 March 2009) was the letter from the Secretary-General recommending the establishment of an integrated UN presence in CAR.</li><li>S/2008/809 (23 December 2008) was the letter from the president of the Council to the Secretary-General extending the mandate of BONUCA for an additional year and requesting for recommendations on the setting up of an integrated UN office in CAR.</li><li>S/2008/383 (30 May 2008) was the letter from the president of the Council to the chair of the PBC supporting the request by CAR to be placed on the agenda of the PBC and requesting advice and recommendations on the situation in the country.</li></ul>
<b>PBC Related Documents</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>PBC/3/CAF/4 (20 January 2009) statement by the chair of the PBC country configuration welcoming the outcome of the inclusive political dialogue.</li><li>PBC/3/CAF/3 (11 December 2008) was the report of the PBC mission to CAR from 30 October to 6 November 2008.</li><li>PBC/3/OC/5 (30 June 2008) was the letter from the acting chair of the PBC to the president of the Security Council informing him of the composition of the country configuration for CAR.</li><li>S/2008/417 (24 June 2008) was the report of the PBC on its second session.</li><li>S/2008/419 (17 June 2008) was the letter from the chair of the PBC to the president of the Security Council informing him of the addition of the Central African Republic on the agenda of the PBC.</li></ul>
<b>Council Meeting Records</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>S/PV.6091 (10 March 2009) and S/PV.6027 (2 December 2008) were the briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of BONUCA and the chair of the CAR country configuration of the PBC.</li></ul>

## Other Relevant Facts

<b>Special Representative of the Secretary-General</b>
Vacant
<b>BONUCA: Size</b>
<i>Strength as of 31 January 2009:</i> 26 international civilian staff, five military and six police, 56 local civilian
<b>BONUCA: Duration</b>
<i>15 February 2000 to present; mandate expires 31 December 2009</i>

<b>MINURCAT: Special Representative of the Secretary-General</b>
Victor da Silva Angelo (Portugal)
<b>MINURCAT: Size, Composition and Cost</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Authorised strength</i> (commencing of 15 March): 300 police, 25 military liaison officers, 5,200 military personnel and an appropriate number of civilian personnel</li> <li>• <i>Strength as of 31 January 2009</i>: 235 police, 44 military observers, 2300 military personnel (as of 15 March), 325 international civilian personnel, 190 local civilian staff and 98 UN volunteers</li> <li>• <i>Main police contributors</i>: Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Benin and France</li> <li>• <i>Main military contributors</i>: France and Ireland</li> <li>• <i>Cost</i>: approved budget 1 July 2008–30 June 2009: \$315 million</li> </ul>
<b>MINURCAT: Duration</b>
September 2007 to present; mandate expires on 15 March 2010

#### Useful Additional Resource

- *Mapping of Resources and Gaps for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic*, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, 22 December 2008