



SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT

UPDATE REPORT



5 July 2006 No.1

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Expected Outcome

The Council is scheduled on 7 July to discuss the findings the Secretary-General's report on the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA). The Council will likely be briefed by Lamine Cissé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to CAR. Because of growing concern about the CAR being affected by the situations in Chad and Darfur, a statement to the press is expected.

Key Issues

The biggest issue for the Council stems from the fact that CAR appears to be increasingly caught up in events related to the situation in neighbouring states of concern to the Council, which are in turn affecting CAR. The Secretary-General points out that CAR has been a victim of tensions between Chad and Sudan. Forces opposed to CAR President Francois Bozize seem to have forged links with rebels fighting against Chad's Idriss Deby, who is a Bozize ally. Chadian rebels exploited the inability of the CAR government to control its northern territory during their April attack on N'Djamena and continue to do so, a fact that the Secretary-General emphasised in his report. The report notes that, in April, an Antonov aircraft unloaded armed men and military equipment in north-eastern CAR. (The inference is that this support originates in Khartoum). At the end of June, Chadian rebels attacked in the northeast, clashing with CEMAC peacekeepers and government forces.

The Sudan sanctions Panel of Experts – which has previously observed Khartoum's use of Antonov aircraft to deliver supplies to *janjaweed* forces – also noted that the country's porous borders have worsened security problems in Darfur and Chad by facilitating the movement of arms into the country through the city of Birao. Cattle stolen from Darfur have been passing through CAR.

Notably, the African Union has established a fact-finding mission to investigate the April attack by Chadian rebels on N'Djamena.

Key Facts

CAR has experienced recurrent political turmoil and coups d'état since its independence from France in 1960. Events that prompted the Council's involvement with CAR began in 1996, when, provoked by a crisis over salary arrears alongside pervasive social and economic difficulties, there were three mutinies by members of the armed forces of the CAR. The Presidents of Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali helped mediate a peace agreement between the rebels and then-CAR President Ange-Félix Patassé, which resulted in the 'Bangui Agreements' signed on 27 January 1997.

An 800-strong force under Gabonese command, with the logistical support of France – the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) – was deployed with the Council's endorsement in resolution 1125 on 6 August 1997. When French support was due to be phased out by mid-April 1998, the Secretary-General recommended a subsequent UN peacekeeping operation – the UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) – which the Council authorised in resolution 1159 of 27 March 1998.

MINURCA supported legislative elections in November and December of 1998, and began preparations for a presidential vote in September of 1999.

The vote on 19 September 1999 was deemed a success, despite several postponements. Patassé was re-elected with 51.6 percent of the vote, and brought several members of the opposition into his cabinet. Nevertheless, political tensions remained high in CAR after the 1998 election produced near equal representation in the national assembly between government and opposition supporters. Hostility between the army, dominated by the southern Yakoma tribe of former-President General Andre Kolingba – a candidate against Patassé – and the Presidential Guard, dominated by Patassé's northern Sara group, threatened to reignite conflict. The UN had difficulty raising the necessary donor funds to restructure the forces, strengthen civilian police capacity and demobilise and reintegrate soldiers in accordance with the Bangui Agreements.

In October, 1999, MINURCA was extended a final time until 15 February 2000. Patassé implored the Council to extend the mission through the end of 2000 to no avail.

Following the conclusion of MINURCA, the Secretary-General established the UN Peace-Building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), which was to consolidate progress towards peace and reconciliation. The Council welcomed this decision in February 2000. UN officials and others, however, continued to express the view that MINURCA's withdrawal had been premature. Unrest in CAR persisted: The capital was divided between the north, loyal to Patassé, and the south, which was an opposition stronghold.

In May 2001, former-President Kolingba launched a coup. The putsch was defeated with the assistance of Libyan and Chadian troops and Congolese rebels. In intervening to defend Patassé, Chad hoped to prevent destabilisation from affecting its oil reserves, which lie near the CAR border. Patassé's government was accused of atrocities against members of Kolingba's Yokomba tribe in its response, while the capital was racked by looting.

Following the failed coup, then-Army Chief of Staff General Bozize was sacked and subsequently refused to answer the questions of a special inquiry committee. The refusal sparked a political crisis that resulted in a government attempt to arrest Bozize in November, whereupon Bozize fled to Chad – which refused to extradite him – and began an insurgency. Tensions remained high in Bangui, where opposition parties lambasted Patassé's actions in the wake of the coup. The continued presence of Libyan troops, who battled soldiers supporting Bozize, was a further popular grievance. (Libya had signed an agreement with Patassé's government that awarded it the right to exploit oil and mineral resources in CAR for 99 years.) Thousands of Yakoma fled to the DRC, while animosity developed between Centrafricaine people and Congolese rebels supporting Patassé, who were accused of looting and violence. Congolese civilians living in CAR reported being victimised in retaliation. The Chad-CAR border was the scene of several skirmishes during 2002.

A January 2002 request by the Organisation for African Unity that the Council consider deploying UN peacekeepers to CAR was not heeded. With pro-Bozize forces controlling one-third of the country,

the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) decided to deploy a force to CAR in November to replace Libyan troops. The 300-strong force known as the Multinational Force of the CEMAC (FOMUC) remains in CAR.

Libyan troops departed by the end of the year and Bozize gained ground through February 2003, finally succeeding in overthrowing Patassé on 15 March while the President was out of the country. The new president suspended the constitution and dissolved Parliament, promising to hold elections. After initially excluding himself from running and postponing elections for two years, Bozize was a candidate for elections in March 2005 and after a May run-off, Bozize was declared the winner.

Starting in September 2005, skirmishes between the army and anti-government forces intensified. Rebels include former supporters of Boizize who claim he has not paid them promised bonuses. Bozize has responded by sending elite presidential guard units into the northwest, which has further provoked civilian fears as these soldiers are accused of burning villages. Throughout the region, armed bandits are interfering with agriculture and commerce, often extorting money at roadside checkpoints. Reports of unrest in the north were confirmed by the government in March when it accused former-President Patassé of recruiting foreign mercenaries along the CAR-Sudan border. The CAR government has asked the International Criminal Court to investigate Patassé, and the matter remains in the pre-investigative phase.

The humanitarian and human rights situation in CAR is also a matter of increasing concern. In his most recent report, the Secretary-General noted many reports of arbitrary detention, summary execution and torture. Thousands of refugees – the majority of whom are of the same ethnicity as former-president Patassé – have fled from northern areas into neighbouring Chad. Over 12,000 arrived in the last half of 2005, with the total number of refugees reportedly as high as 45,000. Major backlogs of refugees waiting to be processed exist in Chadian villages just over the border, where tensions with the local population are rising.

In addition, the number of internally displaced within northern CAR has been estimated as high as 50,000. Some villages are completely deserted. Considered too dangerous for international staff, northern CAR has no UN presence while few humanitarian agencies are operating on the ground. Held amidst the refugee crisis and lawlessness in the north, an international donor's conference in February 2006 drew no new financial commitments.

Council Dynamics

The UN's presence in CAR has not been the subject of much discussion within the Council in recent years. However, members are now increasingly sensitive to the regional implications of the unrest in CAR and the potential for linkages with other situations on the Council agenda. Notably, Cissé accompanied the Council on its recent visit to Sudan, and the SRSG has also launched a discussion process among surrounding states.

Whereas previous Council consultations on CAR have focused on internal issues, the upcoming discussion will likely focus on the regional situation. The Secretary-General's report notes that regional tensions seriously threaten CAR's stability and calls for a "subregional approach" to peacebuilding that would involve CAR's neighbours. He also called upon the international community to help secure borders between Chad, CAR and Sudan. Cissé's briefing may also discuss measures to adjust BONUCA's activities to better address the situation along CAR's northern borders. The Council may encourage this in its statement alongside support for Cissé's efforts at regional dialogue.

There remains some optimism among members that the situation in CAR is improving. Most members, however, have limited diplomatic representation in the country and are largely reliant on the Secretary-General's report and Cissé's briefing.

Given that the Council's attention will be on the regional dimension, splits within the Council over how to deal with Khartoum in the context of the Darfur conflict are likely to be mirrored in the Council's discussion on CAR.

Underlying Problems

CAR is one of the world's least developed countries. Labelled last January as "the world's most neglected crisis" by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, CAR continues to experience severe economic and social instability, which has been exacerbated by floods in August 2005 that left 20,000 homeless. The country's tax base is too meagre to meet expenditure demands, with the result that government salaries have been in arrears for as long as three and-a-half years. Foreign aid funds have been scarcer since the tension following the elections in 2005, with past appeals funded at below 40 percent. The military remains divided along ethnic lines and its capabilities are thought to be too low to pacify the insurgency without external assistance. The HIV prevalence rate of 15 percent is the highest in central Africa, and the country is home to over 100,000 AIDS orphans.

UN Documents

Selected Security Council Resolutions

- [S/RES/1271](#) (22 October 1999) noted elections and extended mandate of MINURCA for a final period until February 2000.
- [S/RES/1230](#) (26 February 1999) Extended MINURCA's mandate until 15 November 1999 and announced the Council's intention to close the mission by that date, and to review the mandate every 45 days on the basis of reports by the Secretary-General on the implementation of commitments made by the CAR president.
- [S/RES/1201](#) (15 October 1998) welcomed announcement of elections and extended MINURCA mandate.
- [S/RES/1182](#) (14 July 1998) extended the mandate of MINURCA until 25 October 1998 and requested that the Secretary-General report to the Council by 25 September on the progress of MINURCA and toward the implementation of commitments expressed in the letter of the President of CAR of 8 January 1998.
- [S/RES/1159](#) (27 March 1998) established MINURCA.
- [S/RES/1155](#) (16 March 1998) Extended the Chapter VII authorisation for MISAB until 27 March 1998 and affirmed that it would take a decision on a UN Peacekeeping force by that date.
- [S/RES/1152](#) (5 February 1998) Extended the Chapter VII authorisation for MISAB until 16 March 1998 and requested that the Secretary-General report by 23 February 1998 on recommendations for the establishment of a UN peacekeeping operation.
- [S/RES/1136](#) (6 November 1997) Authorised for three months, under Chapter VII, the Member States participating in MISAB and those states providing logistical support to ensure the security of their personnel with expenses borne on a voluntary basis.
- [S/RES/1125](#) (06 August 1997) authorised Inter-African Mission to monitor the implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) peacekeeping.

Selected Presidential Statements

- [S/PRST/2005/35](#) (22 July 2005) expressed concern about the deterioration of security and the worsening humanitarian situation.
- [S/PRST/2004/39](#) (28 October 2004) welcomed the work of Central Africans, BONUCA, and the multinational CEMAC force while expressing concern about the deterioration of state finances and the public sector.
- [S/PRST/2001/25](#) (26 September 2001) requested the Secretary-General to regularly inform the Council on CAR and welcomed BONUCA.
- [S/PRST/2000/5](#) (10 February 2000) recognized significant progress made by the government of CAR toward implementing the Bangui Agreements and welcomed the Secretary-General's Decision to establish BONUCA.

Selected Secretary-General's Reports and Letters

- [S/2006/441](#) (27 June 2006) is the latest Secretary-General's report on BONUCA.
- [S/2006/65](#) (30 January 2006) transmitted to the Council a report of the sanctions Panel of Experts on the Sudan, which noted that CAR territory was reportedly used for arms smuggling.
- [S/2005/831](#) (19 December 2005) was the Secretary-General's report on BONUCA for July-December 2005
- [S/2005/758](#) (30 November 2005) was a letter to the Council from the Secretary-General declaring his intention to extend BONUCA's mandate through 2006 and to raise the rank of his Representative to "Special Representative" (ASG level).
- [S/2005/679](#) (27 October 2005) was a response from the Secretary-General to the Council's statement of 22 July 2005 in which he outlined short- and medium-term development priorities for CAR and BONUCA's role within this framework.
- [S/2003/661](#) (20 June 2003) was the Secretary-General's report for the first half of 2003, which noted that the coup by Bozize had interrupted the national dialogue process, noting that the situation was being brought under control with difficulty, but remained fragile.
- [S/1999/98](#) (29 January 1999) The Secretary-General reported on the January visit of his Special Envoy to CAR, Hédi Annabi, and recommended an extension of MINURCA until August 1999, subject to a determination that the Government of CAR has made adequate process in carrying out reforms.
- [S/1998/61](#) (23 January 1998) was the Secretary-General's report in response to resolution [1136](#), which recommended that, given the imminent French withdrawal from MISAB amidst continuing instability in CAR, another peacekeeping mission with a structure and role similar to MISAB was necessary, while MISAB should be extended until 15 March 1998.
- [S/1997/561](#) (4 July 1997) was a letter from President Angé-Felix Patassé to the Secretary-General requesting the Council to authorise the members of MISAB to carry out their operations under Chapter VII.

Historical Background

January - March 2006 Bozize was authorised by the National Assembly to rule by decree.

January 2006 Significant fighting took place in Paoua, south of Chad border. Bozize government sent a referral to the ICC to investigate crimes committed by Patassé and his supporters since 2002.

August 2005 Flooding occurred in the capital, Bangui, leaving up to 20,000 people homeless.

8 May 2005 Former coup leader François Bozize was elected president.

April 2004 There were violent confrontations between former Bozize supporters and government.

15 March 2003 Bozize successfully staged a coup.

2 October 2002 CEMAC, meeting in Libreville, decided to deploy CEMAC peacekeeping troops to CAR.

10 April 2002 President Patasse met President Idriss Deby in N'djamena, Chad, to discuss ongoing tensions between the two countries.

1 February 2002 The OAU asked the Council to redeploy a peacekeeping force to help consolidate peace in CAR.

4 November 2001 The government attempted to arrest Bozize, who fled to Chad and began a rebel insurgency.

26 October 2001 Bozize was sacked as head of the CAR army.

28 May 2001 Former president Kolingba led an unsuccessful coup against Patassé. Libyan, Chadian and Congolese troops came to the president's aid.

15 February 2000 BONUCA's political and peace-building mission commenced.

February 2000 The mandate of MINURCA expired.

27 March 1998 MINURCA deployed in CAR.

06 August 1997 The Council authorised MISAB forces to intervene in CAR at the request of Patassé.

27 January 1997 The Bangui Agreements were signed between President Patassé and dissident members of armed forces.

1996-1997 A series of mutinies by members of CAR armed forces threw the country's politics into turmoil.

Other Relevant Facts

Special Representative of the Secretary-General

Lamine Cissé (Senegal)

Size and Composition of Peacebuilding Support Office

Strength as of 27 June 2006: 25 international civilians, 5 military advisers, 6 civilian police, 44 local civilians and 2 UN volunteers