



Security Council

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Letter dated 17 November 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution 2149 (2014), by which the Council established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and resolution 2217 (2015), by which the Council extended its mandate to 30 April 2016, as well as Council resolution 2162 (2014), by which the Council established a quick reaction force within the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

As you are aware, I am deeply concerned about the heightened tensions in the Central African Republic. On 26 September, the killing of a young man in Bangui triggered intercommunal strife and clashes between elements of the anti-balaka and former Séléka armed groups, which lasted approximately four days and left some 77 civilians dead and 414 injured. This rapid escalation highlighted the fragility of the situation and the destabilizing effect of actions taken by spoilers. A violent mob sought to take control of the national radio station, attacks by armed elements targeted the headquarters of the gendarmerie and attempts were made to control access to the airport. There were also widespread roadblocks and lootings. During the events, nearly 700 prisoners, including some high-profile individuals, escaped from the central prison with the complicity of the Central African armed forces, who were in charge of access to the facility. The period also saw attacks directly targeting MINUSCA and humanitarian personnel and premises. The events brought Bangui to a standstill for more than a week.

A month later, the deadly attack on 26 October in Bangui on a delegation from the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique faction of the former Séléka in Bambari triggered a cycle of reprisal attacks between Christian and Muslim communities, leaving some 26 people dead, scores injured and a further 2,000 displaced. Since then, regular attacks and reprisals have continued in Bangui, the robust posture adopted by MINUSCA notwithstanding. Tensions have also been high elsewhere in the country, including in Kaga Bandoro (Nana-Grébizi Province) where the movement of armed former Séléka elements from the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) towards Dekoa led to the temporary displacement of some 10,000 people and culminated in a clash, on 10 October, between the Sangaris force and MINUSCA and the FPRC elements near Sibut, resulting in at least 12 deaths.

Meanwhile, preparations for the elections have continued. On 9 November, the National Electoral Authority announced a revised electoral calendar that foresees the holding of the constitutional referendum on 13 December, the first round of



presidential and legislative elections on 27 December, a second round on 31 January 2016 and the proclamation of final results by 24 February 2016.

In view of the volatile security situation and the revised electoral calendar, it will be critical for the United Nations to do its utmost to assist the Central African authorities to ensure and promote a calm environment in Bangui and throughout the country that would be conducive to the timely holding of free and fair elections in order to bring the political transition to an end. MINUSCA, pursuant to its mandate, will need to effectively support this important process in terms of security, logistics and taking robust action against spoilers. The planned visit to Bangui of Pope Francis in late November will also require MINUSCA to provide additional assistance in support of the transitional authorities.

The full complement of the authorized strength of MINUSCA should be deployed shortly. However, the Mission is still in the deployment phase of its authorized military and police units. Lessons from the crises of October 2014 and September 2015 demonstrate that the situation in the capital has a direct impact on security and stability throughout the country. Therefore, ensuring security on the ground, upholding public order and the rule of law, preventing increased tensions and containing spoilers will be key. The current presence of MINUSCA in the capital includes one full and two reduced infantry battalions, eight formed police units and two police protection support units. However, the Mission is still facing considerable challenges in securing Bangui, even with the welcome support of the Sangaris force.

The deployment on 7 November of two Senegalese attack helicopters, which are expected to be operational by 17 November, and the planned deployment of a 250-strong advance party of the Egyptian battalion, together with the planned deployment of a Mauritanian formed police unit in November, will provide much-needed reinforcements in Bangui. However, pending their full deployment and operationalization, as well as that of the special forces company from Bangladesh, additional capabilities will be needed to provide the degree of support to the Central African authorities required for creating an environment conducive to the holding of elections and in ensuring security during the polls and the papal visit.

To address the challenges in the critical period ahead, taking into account the ongoing logistical challenge that deploying reinforcements to the Central African Republic represents, I should be grateful if the Security Council would approve the temporary deployment and the immediate transfer to MINUSCA of a detachment of 300 personnel from the quick reaction force deployed in UNOCI, for a period of eight weeks after its induction, under inter-mission cooperation arrangements. The detachment would provide additional security at this critical time, including by undertaking robust patrolling to deter spoilers and protect civilians and rapid reaction tasks. In conjunction with other arrangements being put in place in Bangui, this would enable MINUSCA to significantly improve the security situation in its area of operations, thus ensuring a safer and more secure environment for the elections and enhancing security during the upcoming papal visit. The rest of the unit would remain operational in UNOCI, which would assess its own operational requirements and identify the risk mitigation measures necessary to ensure the continued implementation of its mandate.

The Secretariat is obtaining the formal consent of the troop-contributing country concerned, of the host country and of Côte d'Ivoire for these arrangements. To ensure the timely redeployment of personnel and assets from UNOCI to

MINUSCA, I should be grateful if the Security Council would grant advance approval of the proposed arrangements.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) **BAN** Ki-moon
