



# Security Council

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## Letter dated 24 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; and Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa, European Union External Action Service, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Tunisia (on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference convened on Monday, 22 June 2020, on the situation in the Central African Republic. A statement was also delivered by the representative of the Central African Republic, Her Excellency Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baipo Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Nicolas de Rivière  
President of the Security Council



**Annex I****Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations,  
Jean-Pierre Lacroix**

It is my pleasure to present the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2020/545). I am glad to be joined by Ms. Sylvie Baipo Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic; Commissioner Smaïl Chergui of the African Union (AU); and Mr. Koen Vervaeke of the European Union (EU).

At the outset, I strongly condemn the ambush of a joint patrol of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic in Nana-Mambéré prefecture yesterday allegedly by the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation armed group. This cowardly attack resulted in the death of two national soldiers and seven injured. I express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the killed and to the Government and people of the Central African Republic. I wish the wounded a prompt recovery. I encourage the national authorities to continue taking the necessary measures to apprehend and bring to justice the perpetrators of such unacceptable attacks. I also wish to reiterate my solidarity with the people and Government of the Central African Republic, whose challenges have been compounded by the pandemic that has affected us all.

The political situation remains fragile, dominated by the preparations for the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for December 2020. Political parties are forming coalitions, increasing public statements, announcing candidacies for the presidential elections and challenging legal frameworks for the elections. However, as the report before the Council observes, political tensions were amplified by an attempt by a group of parliamentarians from the presidential majority to extend the tenures of the President and the National Assembly in the event that the elections cannot be held within constitutional timelines due to “unforeseen circumstances”. The proposal was rejected by the Constitutional Court on 5 June, which has helped to de-escalate political tensions.

To encourage political dialogue and support an environment conducive to peaceful, free and inclusive elections, the Special Representative, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, continued to work closely with partners, including the group of five plus in Bangui. As part of these efforts, there were several joint engagements with the Government, the presidential majority, opposition parties and civil society organizations, which are helping to ease tensions among stakeholders. However, it is important that national actors increase their efforts to engage directly in an effort to find constructive and consensual solutions to these political and other issues and refrain from any destabilization activity. In that context, there is a need for the Council and the broad international community to be vigilant and remain engaged as we approach these crucial elections in December 2020.

In that regard, important progress has been made with respect to the electoral preparations, including the launch today of the voter registration process. MINUSCA continues to support the electoral preparations as mandated by the Council. However, the issue of the participation of refugees is still not resolved; securing their franchise is essential for the full inclusivity of the electoral process, and therefore for the credibility of the electoral outcomes. The Government has engaged in consultations with neighbouring countries to advance that process, with support from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). There is also progress regarding the funding for the elections, with the generous contributions of partners, including the European Union and the United States. However, the

\$41.8-million basket fund of the United Nations Development Programme still faces a funding gap of \$10.5 million, which does not account for the costs of conducting elections in neighbouring countries to accommodate Central African citizens who are refugees. I would encourage partners to provide technical and financial support for the elections, as well as electoral observers, as they are essential for the further consolidation of democratic order in the Central African Republic.

The security situation remains volatile due to continued threats posed primarily by armed groups and militias against civilians, humanitarian workers, State authority and peacekeepers. Some of the armed groups, including signatories of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, have acknowledged the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, while, at the same time, using violence for expansionist aims.

In the north-east, violent clashes between rival factions of the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique, which began in April, have exacerbated communal tensions in the region and led to mass population displacement. To protect civilians and mitigate serious criminal activities by armed groups and militias, MINUSCA reinforced its forces in the area and launched military operations in Ndélé and in the Sibut-Grimari-Kouango triangle, in the Ouaka and Kemo prefectures, in May. These ongoing operations, as well as arrests, have helped to stabilize the situation. We will continue to combine our approach to the protection of civilians with support for the rule of law and the fight against impunity.

In the north-west, the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation armed group continues to expand and challenge State authority. While claiming the protection of its community against attacks by anti-balaka elements, the expansion of the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation armed group contributed to the deterioration of the security situation in that region. In response, MINUSCA is conducting two military operations to protect civilians, combined with criminal investigations, in order to mitigate the threat posed by that armed group and to prevent its further expansion.

While MINUSCA maintains its robust posture, it is also engaging with national and local stakeholders to facilitate dialogue, reconciliation and social cohesion and to advance the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, in close coordination with the guarantors and other facilitators of the agreement.

Implementation of the Political Agreement has become more challenging in the present context, although I welcome the significant progress that has been made, particularly by the Government. The adoption of political reform legislation as required by the Political Agreement, the meetings of the follow-up and monitoring mechanisms, the ad hoc high-level engagements between signatories and the deployment of the special mixed security units in the west are encouraging signs of progress.

However, I am deeply concerned by continued violations of the agreement, mainly by some signatories. Our main concern at the moment is the tensions between the Government and the leader of Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation, who announced that his armed group would suspend participation in the follow-up and monitoring mechanisms of the Political Agreement and has adopted an aggressive response that does not align with his commitments.

In order to preserve the viability of the Political Agreement, MINUSCA is working closely with the guarantors and other partners and engaging with the parties to encourage and facilitate dialogue, while maintaining a robust posture to protect civilians and mitigate threats posed by armed groups and militias.

Our partnership with the African Union, the Economic Community of the Central African States, the European Union and other international partners remains crucial, particularly at this delicate juncture for the peace process and in the electoral context. We have adapted our strategic engagement, taking into account the new context of working during a global pandemic. Two weeks ago, we held a joint United Nations-AU-ECCAS-EU high-level video-conference with President Touadera to encourage and support efforts to advance the political process. We will continue to jointly engage with other stakeholders to advance peace and stability.

The continued armed clashes and the coronavirus disease pandemic are further exacerbating the humanitarian situation and making the work of the humanitarian community in the Central African Republic more challenging. Some 2.6 million people in the Central African Republic are still in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. This is more than half of the population. I appeal to donors' generosity to continue supporting the 2020 humanitarian response plan to help to address the critical humanitarian needs in the Central African Republic. Furthermore, the partial closure of the borders with Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo has contributed to an increase in prices for imported goods, including basic food items. This situation could lead to negative socioeconomic impacts, affecting the most vulnerable population.

Although the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is impacting our operations, MINUSCA continues to ensure business continuity with a view to performing its mandate, while taking a series of mitigation measures to protect United Nations personnel and prevent the spread of the virus. For example, our uniformed personnel adapted their patrols and operations to ensure that civilians are protected. The Mission's contingency plan includes an integrated framework to ensure a consistent and coordinated response across the United Nations system in the Central African Republic, taking into account the fluid nature of the situation. The Mission is also strictly complying with the Government's response plan, while supporting national efforts to mitigate the risks of the pandemic. This includes information awareness, delivery of sanitary equipment and building the capacity of the State authorities and civil society. Ensuring the effective participation of women in the COVID-19 response efforts is crucial.

I wish to conclude by underscoring the need for continued support to the Central African Republic at this sensitive and complex juncture. The pandemic is exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. Despite great strides in the implementation of the Political Agreement, it remains fragile, and the upcoming elections will be a major test for all of us. We must therefore redouble our collective efforts in support of peace and stability in the Central African Republic, including by making full use of our respective leverage. The continued active engagement and support of the Council is still needed, as it remains essential to mitigate the risk of a strategic reversal of the hard-won gains made since MINUSCA's deployment.

I would like to conclude by commending the leadership of the Special Representative, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, and express my admiration for the commitment and dedication demonstrated by the women and men serving with MINUSCA, who continue to advance the mandate provided by the Council in a very challenging context. I also wish to pay tribute to MINUSCA personnel who lost their lives while serving the cause of peace in the Central African Republic.

## Annex II

### **Statement by the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smaïl Chergui**

I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to address the Council in the presence of Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, Ms. Sylvie Baipo Temon. The invitation extended to us is once again another demonstration of the growing partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security in Africa.

At the outset, allow me to express the African Union's solidarity with the Government and people of the Central African Republic in their efforts to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic. Since the outbreak of the virus in the Central African Republic in March of this year, the Government has taken a number of measures to contain the spread of the virus. We commend the Government's relentless efforts despite many challenges. I wish to also take this opportunity to salute the solidarity shown by some African countries by providing testing kits and other forms of assistance. The African Union, through the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, will continue to lead the way in providing a consistent response across the continent.

Although the pandemic has delayed the implementation of some important provisions of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, the preparations for the elections have continued uninterrupted. On 5 June, the Constitutional Court of the Central African Republic issued a ruling that there will be no extension of the presidential mandate due to the coronavirus, ending a debate that had pitted the ruling party against the opposition. The decision of the Constitutional Court is a demonstration that the institutions of the Central African Republic are coming of age, and this is a development that should be welcomed.

Meanwhile, I am pleased to note that, following the Court's decision, the Government as well as political stakeholders are now engaged in the preparations for the elections in accordance with the electoral calendar. Although the country, particularly the National Electoral Authority, will still require support for its electoral process, there is no doubt that it will be possible to hold the upcoming elections within the constitutional deadlines. In that regard, it is important for the Government to submit to the parliament an organic law that will ensure the renewal of the National Electoral Authority's term, which expires on 23 December 2020, so as to avoid a vacuum.

In that same context, we welcome the promulgation by President Touadera on 11 June of the law establishing the pension plan granted to former Presidents, which is part of the recommendations of the Political Agreement. This will go a long way towards the promotion of national reconciliation. We further welcome the meeting held in January between the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadera, and the four former Presidents — Mr. Michel Djotodia, Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, Mr. François Bozizé Yangouvonda and Mr. Alexandre Ferdinand Nguendet. It is our hope that other important legislation regarding political reforms will be submitted to the parliament ahead of the elections.

After three months of suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Monitoring Committee of the agreement was able to hold its eighth session, on 22 May, to take stock of the implementation of the Agreement. The general consensus is that significant progress has been made, in particular, with regard to the adoption and enactment of all the laws provided for in the agreement, preparations for the launch of the major disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, and

the installation of special mixed security units camps in the north-eastern and south-eastern parts of the country.

Allow me to highlight some important achievements, notably, first, the deployment of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and defence and security forces in several localities, including Birao and Ndélé; secondly, the deployment of the first group of the African Union (AU) military observers in Bangui, which will later be deployed at the same time as special mixed security unit elements in the north-west; thirdly, the restoration of State authority and deployment of prefects and sub-prefects; fourthly, collaboration between the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in several provinces of the country to protect populations and restore order and State authority; fifthly, improved collaboration and permanent consultation among the Government, guarantors and facilitators in the search for solutions to inter-communal conflicts through facilitation and mediation; and sixthly, the facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the launch of several quick-impact projects.

As part of the continuous and concerted joint efforts of the AU, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the United Nations and the European Union (EU) in support of the peace process, ECCAS Secretary-General Mr. Ahmad Allam-Mi, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Mr. Josep Borrell and I held a virtual meeting with the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadera, on 8 June to take stock of the progress and challenges. The AU, ECCAS, the United Nations and the EU recommitted to redoubling their efforts to assist the CAR to consolidate peace.

Despite progress on the political front, there has been an increase in security incidents involving some of the signatory armed groups to the peace agreement. Incidents were reported in Ndélé, Bamouti and Obo, where armed groups clashed with each other, in some instances exacerbating existing intercommunal violence, particularly in the north-eastern and north-western parts of the country.

The AU is also deeply concerned by the recent coordinated attacks perpetrated by armed men, on 9 June, in the prefectures of Nana-Mambéré and Ouham-Pendé, in particular in Bouar, against the special mixed security unit training camp, and in Pougol, against the checkpoint of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and MINUSCA, localities of the north-west of the country, which caused several injuries, including to two peacekeepers and members of the special mixed security unit who were in the process of being deployed following their training in May.

As mentioned on numerous occasions, the AU, as one of the two guarantors, with ECCAS, of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, is determined to continue its efforts to reach out to all the signatories who still profess their commitment to the agreement in order to understand what is behind the resurgence of violence. We shall leave no stone unturned.

The crisis in the Central African Republic has impacted the region and we will continue to encourage the involvement of the neighbouring countries in implementing the agreement. We welcome the establishment of joint committees by the Central African Republic and some of its neighbours. It is more urgent than ever to take appropriate measures to guarantee not only the free movement of goods and people, but also the fight against all forms of trafficking, which could jeopardize peace and security in the region.

The humanitarian situation in the country demands the attention of the international community. More than 697,000 internally displaced persons, in

addition to 616,000 refugees from the Central African Republic in neighbouring countries, still require immediate assistance. In the time of COVID-19, their plight is even more precarious.

In conclusion, one year on from the signing of the peace agreement, progress has been recorded in its implementation, elections are being prepared and there is no doubt that the Government has expanded State authority across the country. Despite security challenges, I believe that the majority of signatories to the agreement remain committed to the accord. The active partnership between the AU, United Nations, ECCAS and the EU on this matter has yielded tangible results. The AU, however, is under no illusions: the task ahead remains fraught with many difficulties. In the end, a peace process is always a marathon, not a sprint.

## Annex III

### **Statement by the Managing Director for Africa of the European Union External Action Service, Koen Vervaeke**

I am honoured once again to brief the Security Council on behalf of the European Union (EU). I am thankful for the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mankeur Ndiaye, and of the Special Representative of the African Union (AU) for the Central African Republic, Matias Matondo.

I would first like to start by expressing the solidarity of the European Union in the fight the Central African authorities and population are conducting against the coronavirus disease pandemic. The Central African Republic was the first country to benefit from the humanitarian air-bridge launched in May by the EU and its member States. We have also reoriented our programmes to better support the authorities.

This pandemic hits the Central African Republic in the middle of an electoral process of critical importance. Despite the adverse circumstances, we would like to pay tribute to the authorities, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Development Programme for the important progress made in the preparations and we welcome the commitment by the authorities to adhere to the constitutional time frame. Our significant financial support for the organization of these elections and our decision to deploy a mission of electoral experts and mobilize additional support testify to our trust in, but also to our expectations of, this process. It is essential to reinforce its inclusivity and foster dialogue, and for all political actors to act responsibly, resisting those trying to destabilize the process, including through disinformation campaigns, also targeting international partners. We will remain particularly vigilant.

In such a context, it is critical that the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic remains a priority. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/545) gives a clear picture of the accomplishments in the implementation of the peace process as well as of the remaining challenges. I would, in particular, subscribe to one of the assessments made in the report, indicating that “While advances were made in implementing the agreement, progress was undermined by a resurgence of violence perpetrated by armed groups” (S/2020/545, para. 10). The latest attacks by an armed group in the west of the Central African Republic are unfortunately another illustration of the double game played by some armed groups. I would like to present my sincere condolences to the Central African Republic authorities and to the families affected regarding the death of several soldiers, and we hope for a speedy recovery for those wounded.

Dialogue and confidence should certainly be strengthened between the parties; the inclusivity of the process reinforced, in particular with women and youth being given a stronger role; and some key elements of the agreement accelerated — I am thinking, in particular, of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation, whose independence must be ensured, and of the decentralization process. The stalled disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process must be relaunched, with armed groups abiding by their own commitments to disarm and demobilize. The special mixed security units, whose operationalization benefits from significant EU financial support, represent another opportunity that members of armed groups should seize.

But when parties and, in particular, armed groups severely violate the provisions of the agreement, killing civilians, reinforcing their positions and opposing the expansion of State authority, I align myself with the call of the



Secretary-General for “stakeholders to take a firm stance regarding the sanctions to be applied” (*ibid.*, *para.* 47), as foreseen under article 35 of the agreement. A year and half after the signing of the agreement, it is high time for this sanctions regime finally to be defined and applied. These violations are unacceptable and cannot continue without a firm reaction; the credibility of the agreement would otherwise be at stake, with the population losing trust in the process. I welcome in that regard the arrests by MINUSCA together with the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, upon request of the Special Criminal Court, of several members of armed groups suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and, more recently, the actions conducted against the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation armed group. I would like to pay tribute, on this occasion, to MINUSCA’s work. The fight against impunity and the strengthening of justice are indispensable for lasting peace and reconciliation.

In this overall challenging context, I would like to end by reiterating the full commitment of the EU to supporting the Central African Republic in its peace, stabilization, democratization and development process, supporting the strengthening and expansion of State authority, notably as part of the ongoing security sector reform with our military EU Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, as well as our forthcoming civilian EU Advisory Mission, which will be deployed as soon as COVID-19-related sanitary conditions allow.

In these efforts, we are more than ever committed to closely cooperating and coordinating with the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, as well as with all partners involved, including in particular the neighbours of the Central African Republic, which have a critical role to play.

**Annex IV****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Karen Van Vlierberge**

Belgium thanks the briefers.

We welcome the Central African Republic's rapid and measured response to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and are mindful of the additional stress this pandemic places on the country's population and institutions. In order to tackle the pandemic more efficiently, however, there is a need to reinforce internal solidarity and coordination and to improve coordination with international partners, including the European Union (EU). We also salute the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) aimed at mitigating the spread of COVID-19, in line with its mandate, under these challenging circumstances.

However, COVID-19 should not distract from the need to fully implement the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. We welcome the adoption of the law creating the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation, which will facilitate the country's transitional justice process. All parties must commit themselves to the peace process and prioritize efforts for the full and proper implementation of the peace agreement through dialogue. Violations of the agreement are unacceptable and should not go unchallenged. Appropriate measures should be considered, as foreseen in the agreement itself. Attacks against civilians, including crimes of sexual violence, and against humanitarian and United Nations personnel are unacceptable. In this regard, we remind spoilers that the Security Council can also impose sanctions, as it did very recently.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and efforts to reform the security sector have to continue, with the help of MINUSCA, and the EU Military Training and Advisory Missions in the Central African Republic. Progress on the operationalization of the special mixed security units also remains essential. In this regard, we believe it is important to continue efforts to establish the next unit in the north-east as soon as the security situation allows.

Finally, we see the upcoming legislative and presidential elections as an important milestone in the peace process. Only a peaceful, inclusive and transparent process will make them credible and can pave the way towards the sustainable stabilization and democratization of the Central African Republic. We welcome the progress made by the Government to organize these elections in line with the electoral calendar and call on all political actors to respect the democratic process and refrain from disinformation, hate speech or other destabilization attempts. We believe it is important to maintain the planned electoral calendar and have full confidence that these elections can be organized in a smooth and timely manner. It is why the EU is ready to shoulder almost half of the expected costs of the elections. We call on all partners of the Central African Republic to follow suit and mobilize additional resources for the organization of these important elections.

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**Annex V****Statement by the acting Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Yao Shaojun**

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Ambassador Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, and Mr. Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa at the European External Action Service, for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Foreign Minister of the Central African Republic in this meeting.

The current political situation in the Central African Republic is generally stable. Progress has been made in implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. China welcomes the efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic to engage in inclusive dialogue with armed groups, and commends the passage of several laws by the National Assembly, including on the creation of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparations and Reconciliation. At the same time, we still see severe challenges arising from continued violent attacks by armed groups, which seriously endanger the safety of civilians, and the pandemic has added new complexities. The international community needs to continue to provide support to the Central African Republic for lasting peace and development there.

Holding successful elections is a priority task for the political process in the Central African Republic this year, and it is essential for the maintenance of peace and stability in the country. We noted that the National Electoral Authority revised the election calendar according to the latest developments, and hope all parties in the Central African Republic will enhance communication and coordination, and work together to carry forward the preparation process as scheduled. Differences related to the elections should be resolved through peaceful dialogue and consultation. The international community needs to create an enabling environment for the smooth conduct of elections, and provide the necessary support while respecting the ownership of the Central African Republic.

Achieving sustainable peace and stability in the Central African Republic will require a holistic approach. The current focus should be on maintaining security and stability. We are concerned about the continuing violent conflicts among armed groups, and call on all parties to the conflict to positively respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire. We call on all relevant parties to show political will and continue the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. From a long-term perspective, the international community should assist the Government of the Central African Republic in improving its capacity to protect the security of its people, provide social services and promote economic and social development, in order to help the country achieve lasting peace through sustainable development. We will continue to support the work of the Special Representative and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and hope that MINUSCA will strengthen coordination with other United Nations agencies and regional and subregional organizations in order to create synergies.

The Central African Republic is also facing the serious challenge of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The international community must continue to provide material, technical and personnel-related support. China recently delivered the second batch of medical supplies to the Central African Republic, including 150,000 surgical masks and 30,000 testing kits. During the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19, held last week, President Xi Jinping emphasized that China will continue to do whatever it can to support

Africa's response to COVID-19. We will start ahead of schedule the construction of the headquarters of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention this year. We also pledge that, once the development and deployment of the COVID-19 vaccine has been completed in China, African countries will be among the first to benefit. China will continue to work with the international community and to help the Central African Republic and other African countries to overcome the pandemic and to make new contributions to peace, stability, development and prosperity in the Central African Republic.

## Annex VI

### **Statement by the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic, José Singer Weisinger**

We would like to thank the briefers for the information provided today and for their efforts in the maintenance of peace and security in the Central African Republic.

The fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is a global endeavour. Its impact is overarching in the Central African Republic owing to the multiple challenges that the country faces. We express our solidarity with the people of the Central African Republic and welcome the measures adopted by President Touadera to mitigate the spread of the pandemic.

We acknowledge the Government's efforts to continue maintaining, with the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the Economic Community of the Central African States, high-level contact with the leaders of armed groups.

With regard to accountability, we welcome the approval of the various laws required by the provisions of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and the creation of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation.

We commend the progress made by the strategic committee on elections, and we are pleased with the presentation of a revised electoral calendar that complies with the constitutional deadlines set by the National Electoral Authority.

Nevertheless, preparations for the next elections constitute a real challenge for the Central African Republic as a result of the increased political tensions and, certainly, the impact of COVID-19.

To create the right environment, one that is conducive to free, transparent, fair and inclusive elections, the security situation in the Central African Republic, where armed groups signatories to the agreement continue to perpetrate violent acts against civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers, needs to be addressed.

Before concluding, we would like to draw attention to the humanitarian situation. It is necessary to redouble our efforts to support the country in these very difficult times and to contribute to the humanitarian response plan to assist the most vulnerable.

To conclude, we would like to acknowledge the role of MINUSCA and the guarantors of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic for the efforts made in the quest for a lasting and sustainable peace in the Central African Republic.

## Annex VII

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I wish to thank you, for President, for having convened today's meeting, and I should also like to express my gratitude to the speakers for their valuable insights. As has been expressed by many today, the full implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic is the only path towards lasting peace in the Central African Republic. I should like to highlight three developments.

First, it is good to hear that the preparations for the upcoming elections are in full swing. I hope that this work can continue safely in respect of the ongoing health crisis. The Government of the Central African Republic has demonstrated its ability to utilize innovative solutions in difficult circumstances, for example, the payment of civil-servant salaries using mobile networks.

Secondly, the law establishing the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation has finally been promulgated. That is great news. I hope that the next steps necessary to operationalize the Commission will follow swiftly, including the naming of commissioners. The Commission will be an invaluable tool in the fight against injustice and impunity, and assist in national reconciliation. I hope that the health crisis will not hinder the continued capacity-building of justice and the rule of law in the country.

Thirdly, but perhaps most important, violence and the abuse of human rights in the Central African Republic continue, with new hotspots emerging. Although the number of human rights abuses has decreased, it is important to remember that the monitoring and reporting of incidents has, unfortunately, been affected by the pandemic. Attacks on civilians and the abuse of human rights are direct violations of the peace agreement and as such are unacceptable. The most visible of such actions by some armed groups, spoilers, if you will, has been the announcement by the group *Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation* of the suspension of the armed group's participation in the agreement's follow-up and monitoring mechanisms, expanding the area of its activities and directly attacking the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and national forces. *Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation*, together with five other groups, has also been listed in the Secretary-General's report on patterns of conflict-related sexual violence (S/2019/280). In that light, I fully support the call made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 97 of his report (S/2020/545) "to take a firm, unequivocal stance regarding the application of sanctions under article 35 of the Agreement".

I should like to end my statement by commending the robust cooperated response of MINUSCA, the authorities of the Central African Republic and partners to protect civilians from armed group violence and support the peace agreement.

## Annex VIII

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I would like to thank our briefers for their presentations and to welcome the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic and express to her our condolences following the terrible attack that just took place in her country.

I would like to highlight three points.

First, I would like to express France's solidarity with the Government and the people of the Central African Republic in the face of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences. In that context, France has strengthened its bilateral support to the Central African Republic in the health sector and underlines that humanitarian access must remain a priority. That is why we have contributed, jointly with the European Union, to the organization of a humanitarian air bridge to several African countries, including the Central African Republic. France also welcomes the efforts made by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to continue delivering on its mandate, and I take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for the Special Representative, Mankeur Ndiaye.

Secondly, I would like to welcome the progress made in the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. The implementation of the agreement must continue, under the leadership of President Touadera and his Government, because it remains the only path to lasting peace in the country. I am thinking, for example, about the continued deployment of the special joint security units, the effective creation of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation and the implementation of the decentralization process.

However, France remains very concerned by the violations of the peace agreement committed by some armed groups, in particular attacks against civilians, humanitarian personnel and security forces, grave violations against children, sexual violence and unilateral declarations of withdrawal from the agreement. Our message must be clear: those who engage in such acts must be brought to justice and the measures provided for in article 35 of the agreement must be implemented. On our initiative, the Security Council recently sanctioned Abdoulaye Miskine, an armed group leader; it must continue to sanction those who deliberately hinder the return of peace.

I would like to welcome the progress made in the preparation of the 2020-2021 presidential and legislative elections. The elections must be held in a peaceful, inclusive and transparent manner and according to constitutional deadlines. In that context, France calls on all actors in the Central African Republic to engage in an inclusive dialogue on all questions related to the holding of the elections. France also cautions against attempts to destabilize the country's institutions and against disinformation campaigns.

Lastly, France calls on the partners of the Central African Republic to contribute without delay to the funding of the elections. In addition to our contribution through the European Union, we will therefore provide an additional €300,000.

**Annex IX****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Juergen Schulz**

Let me extend a particularly warm welcome to His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic. Like others, we also want to start by strongly condemning yesterday's ambush and extending our condolences to the people of the Central African Republic and to the families of those who were killed or wounded.

I would like to focus on three brief points.

First, on the elections and the political situation, we fully agree with the assessment expressed by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix that the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for the end of this year are absolutely crucial. We commend all actors, and particularly the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the Government of the Central African Republic, for their ongoing efforts to ensure free, fair, inclusive, credible and transparent elections within the constitutional time frame. In that context, we would also like to welcome and commend the Constitutional Court's decision on this issue and the time frame. We call on all actors in the Central African Republic to engage constructively in the political process before the elections and to resolve potential difficulties through an inclusive dialogue.

Election campaigns must be conducted in a reasonable and responsible manner, given the highly fragile security situation. Although it is important that there be active and meaningful participation on the part of all societal groups in the Central African Republic, including women who have been internally displaced and refugees outside the country, all of this must be guaranteed.

Another important factor that obviously influences the election and campaign is the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Many of the previous speakers alluded to that issue. Let me just say that this is also, from our point of view, crucial to the safety and the conditions for the elections. We very much welcome the European Union's substantial contribution of \$13 million to the United Nations Development Programme basket fund in support of the elections. We believe that the international community needs to provide even more help to the Central African Republic, and we listened to what Under-Secretary-General Lacroix said about the funding gap of approximately \$10.5 million. In that context, let me just say that Germany is planning to contribute €500,000 additional to support democratic elections.

My second point concerns the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. We would also agree with others who have said that the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/545) gives a very clear picture of, on the one hand, the accomplishments made in the implementation of the peace agreement and, on the other, of the remaining challenges. This is certainly not a sprint but a marathon, but a marathon very much worth running.

Germany welcomes the progress achieved, particularly the legislative progress in implementing the peace agreement that has been made, such as the official establishment of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation in April. It is important that the Commission become operational as soon as possible. We also welcome the ongoing work of the Special Criminal Court. For Germany to fight against impunity, the rule of law, transitional justice and reconciliation remain essential elements in achieving sustainable peace and stability.

At the same time, we remain, as others, very deeply concerned about the ongoing violations of the peace agreement committed by various armed groups. In



this conflict, the recent exit of the rebel group Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation from the peace agreement sets a very negative precedent. The expansion of the group and its challenges to State authority are serious threats that we follow with growing concern. We believe that if other groups were to follow suit, this could be harmful to the peace process as a whole. We are also worried about the lack of progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and call on both the armed groups and the Government of the Central African Republic to resume their efforts.

My last point is on the humanitarian situation. We remain very concerned about the ongoing human rights violations and conflict-related sexual violence. Attacks against the civilian population and infrastructure, internally displaced persons and humanitarian workers must certainly stop. Germany is one of the largest donors to humanitarian aid in the Central African Republic, and we feel that it is heartbreaking to see the people suffer not only from acute food insecurity but also from the toll taken by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is inflicting additional socioeconomic harm. Germany therefore supports the COVID-19 response by United Nations agencies and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in humanitarian emergencies with additional funding of €300 million. The funds can be used for all countries covered by the United Nations and International Committee of the Red Cross appeals — the Central African Republic, of course, being one. We therefore must step up international support, and we commend the timely and recent efforts by the Peacebuilding Commission to address the impact of COVID-19 in the region.

We would like to seize this opportunity to once again reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and call on the armed groups to translate their rhetorical commitment into action on the ground. Finally, we feel that we need to continue to support the authorities of the Central African Republic in their commendable work on the elections, the political situation, the implementation of the peace agreement and current challenges.

**Annex X****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

At the outset, allow me to thank the briefers, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; and Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa at the European External Action Service. I also welcome Her Excellency Ms. Sylvie Baipo Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic.

Before I begin, allow me to offer my heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims of the ambush on the joint United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and Armed Forces of the Central African Republic patrol yesterday in Nana-Mambéré prefecture.

Allow me to focus on three points.

First, we need to ensure the implementation of the Bangui agreement by all parties. Allow me to congratulate you, Madam Minister, and the people of the Central African Republic, on the first anniversary of the Bangui Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic in February. The Agreement remains the primary framework for restoring and sustaining peace in the country. We join the Secretary-General in commending the efforts made by the Government and other signatories to utilize the Agreement's implementation mechanisms, as well as their proactive and constructive engagement to build trust. National ownership is the key to success. The presence and ability of the Government to enforce the Agreement are indeed crucial. We welcome all efforts to enhance the Government's capacity and acknowledge MINUSCA's crucial role in ensuring the country's stability.

Secondly, upon hearing the updates from the briefers, it is apparent that the role of MINUSCA is more important than ever, as it must support Central African stakeholders in creating an environment conducive to a peaceful electoral process this year. MINUSCA should continue its efforts to win the hearts and minds of the people, including through community engagement.

We are concerned about the humanitarian situation in the country, including the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the country. The situation requires ongoing humanitarian support from international partners. We commend MINUSCA's continued efforts to carry out its mandate despite virus-related restrictions.

In addition, we are deeply concerned about the number of attacks against MINUSCA's uniformed and civilian personnel. We also concur with those who have emphasized the importance of making the safety, health and security of peacekeepers a top priority. We have to ensure that they are safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are some Blue Helmets who have contracted the virus. We wish them a speedy recovery and hope they can soon resume their noble duties. As the Council's largest contributor of peacekeepers to MINUSCA — with 358 peacekeepers, including 18 women — Indonesia will continue to make the safety, health, and security of peacekeepers a top priority.

Thirdly, given what has transpired in the region, we need to provide the necessary support and space for democratic elections to take place in the Central African Republic. As the country prepares for the elections, we urge partners to increase their financial assistance.

As an archipelagic State, Indonesia has witnessed first-hand the logistical complexity of organizing democratic elections. The democratic process is anything but easy. It is a vast logistical undertaking that requires thorough planning to anticipate all challenges, especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. We look forward to hearing updates on the preparations leading up to the election and MINUSCA's role in supporting the country.

We should continue to pursue the path of peace in the Central African Republic and the region, as laid out last year. For its part, Indonesia renews its commitment as a true partner for peace, including in the Central African Republic.

**Annex XI****Statement by the First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy**

At the outset, I would like to thank today's briefers for their informative presentations. I would also like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic to our video-teleconference.

Despite a number of challenges, the parties to the conflict in the Central African Republic managed to achieve tangible progress in advancing the political process launched in February 2019. We see a gradual improvement in the security and human rights situation and a decrease in the level of armed violence. National armed forces and internal security forces are expanding throughout the territory of the Central African Republic. Considerable progress was also made in the training and deployment of special mixed security units. We encourage the authorities of the Central African Republic to resume the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme for combatants as soon as the restrictions related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) are lifted.

Given the current challenging circumstances, all parties should strictly comply with the provisions of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and refrain from undermining the political situation in the country. Russia, for its part, will continue to use its influence to encourage the signatories to refrain from all forms of violence in the interests of restoring peace and security to the country.

We commend the steps by the Central African Republic authorities to curb the spread of COVID-19 and would like to echo the Secretary-General's call for all political actors to resist any temptation to politicize the pandemic.

We strongly believe that it is in the interest of the Central African Republic to fulfil the critical task of organizing and conducting peaceful, free and transparent presidential and legislative elections as an important milestone in the further stabilization and normalization of the country. We are pleased to note that a revised electoral calendar, published on 29 April, adheres to constitutional timelines.

We welcome President Touadera's efforts to de-escalate political tensions, including his decision to launch a frank dialogue with the country's political actors and partners in order to best prepare for the elections. We are encouraged by the fact that the National Assembly adopted several important laws that conform with the Agreement.

The Russian Federation is ready to continue to provide comprehensive assistance to the Central African Republic with a view to resolving the crisis, including by facilitating security sector reform. We are convinced that increasing the combat readiness and professional training of the national army and law enforcement agencies will effectively counter the activities of illegal armed groups, ensure the protection of civilians and help restore State authority in all parts of the country.

We will continue to follow closely the process of national reconciliation, acting in coordination with the Central African Republic authorities, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the country's international partners. It is high time to render our collective support to Bangui to overcome the current challenges.

## Annex XII

### Statement by the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations

I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting to discuss the situation in the Central African Republic.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of South Africa, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and my own country, Tunisia (A3+1).

We would like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security; and Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa of the European Union External Action Service, for their briefings and insights on the situation in the Central African Republic.

We welcome the progress made thus far in implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Central African Republic. Our delegations are encouraged by the continued commitment of the Government and other signatories to utilize the Agreement's mechanism despite the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak. We also welcome the Government's efforts to improve its relations with neighbouring countries through holding bilateral commissions and tackling the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

We commend the role played by the AU and the Economic Community of Central African States in supporting the implementation of the Agreement, including through the use of programmatic funding by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to strengthen the role of women in advancing the Agreement. We continue to encourage all parties to fully implement the Agreement in order to help extricate their country from the cycle of continuous conflict.

We are fully aware of the challenges ahead as the country prepares for the forthcoming presidential and legislative elections scheduled for December while it responds to the health emergency posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend the National Electoral Authority for publishing the revised electoral calendar to facilitate elections within the constitutional timelines while adapting to the challenges of COVID-19.

On the security front, our delegations are concerned about the resurgence of violence perpetrated by some armed groups, particularly in Birao, Bria, Ndélé and Obo — in direct violation of the Agreement. Regrettably, in some areas, the violence has not only displaced civilians but also resulted in civilian and peacekeeper casualties. Equally concerning are the violent attacks on the Central African Armed Forces and humanitarian workers, which constitute violations of international humanitarian law.

The A3+1 also remains concerned about the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic amid the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. We deeply regret that violent confrontations among armed groups are still taking place, thus deepening the divide between signatory armed groups along ethnic lines and fomenting intercommunal tensions. Armed groups should utilize the dispute resolution mechanisms provided for in the Peace Agreement in order to resolve their differences.

It is possible that COVID-19 could exacerbate the conflict. The A3+1 therefore welcomes the Government's quick response to contain the pandemic. We also welcome the support extended by the United Nations and other international and regional partners. We encourage the international community to provide further

support to address the root causes of insecurity in the Central African Republic in line with the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and in accordance with the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We welcome that the Central African Republic authorities have undertaken essential political reforms, including the adoption of appropriate legislation, in line with the terms of the Peace Agreement. The recent adoption of the law establishing the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation attests to the determination of the Central African authorities to adhere to the Agreement requirements.

This is a significant step towards achieving stability and social cohesion. It is in that context that we welcome the desire of the Government and other signatories to utilize the Agreement's implementation mechanisms to that end.

It is our hope that further advances in the composition of the special mixed security units and in the process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation will be made in the coming months, in line with the requirements of the Peace Agreement.

We applaud MINUSCA's efforts to promote the participation of women in the implementation of the Peace Agreement, mainly through local monitoring and implementation mechanisms. We continue to encourage the meaningful and sustained participation of women in the peace process, as well as in the forthcoming elections.

We welcome MINUSCA's commitment to protecting civilians from armed group violence, as well as the valuable support it extends to the Central African authorities in order to hold accountable the perpetrators of serious crimes and other human rights abuses, including the use of sexual violence.

Finally, we commend MINUSCA and other regional and international partners for facilitating the implementation of the Political Agreement and assisting the Central African authorities in organizing free and fair national elections. To that end, we welcome the generous support already provided by all partners, including through the Peacebuilding Commission. We call on all stakeholders to demonstrate resolve and work together for the successful holding of the forthcoming elections, which, in our view, are crucial for the stability of the country.

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**Annex XIII****Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Roscoe**

I want to start by thanking our briefers. We share much of their analysis. I join others in paying tribute to the peacekeepers in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, especially those who lost their lives. I also want to express our solidarity with the Government and the people of the Central African Republic as they face the twin threats of continued violence and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic remains the only viable framework for sustained peace in the Central African Republic, and it must be protected. While condemning the repeated violations of the peace agreements by members of some signatory armed groups, we welcome the recent progress, including ongoing high-level engagement and the legislation adopted by the National Assembly.

The Central African Republic is at a crossroads as it approaches the presidential and legislative elections later this year. As many here said today, those elections must be a turning point. In that regard, I want to underline three points.

First, the elections must be held in a peaceful, free and transparent manner, and within constitutional deadlines. All Central Africans must have the chance to be heard. The United Kingdom is in the process of reviewing its financial support to the elections, and we hope to make a contribution shortly.

Secondly, as certain signatories withdraw participation, we must not be complacent about the risks to the Peace Agreement. We stand ready to impose appropriate measures, including sanctions, in line with article 35 of the Agreement, in response to violations.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom reiterates the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire amid the COVID-19 pandemic in order to allow health and humanitarian needs to be met. We recognize that the secondary impacts of COVID-19 will require support to address the longer-term fallout from the pandemic.

In conclusion, while challenges still remain in the Central African Republic, we should reflect on how far the country has come. Let us all today recommit to ensuring that this year marks a turning point for the Central African Republic and leads to long-term stability and prosperity for the people, because they deserve it.

**Annex XIV****Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Cherith Norman-Chalet**

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Commissioner Chergui and Managing Director Vervaeke for their briefings today.

First and foremost, today we wish to congratulate the Government of the Central African Republic on its efforts to advance preparations for credible, free and fair elections. We were especially heartened by the Constitutional Court's recent decision emphasizing that "any slippage of the electoral calendar should derive from broad national consultations seeking a consensual solution."

We further commend the Government for issuing two decrees that are crucial for the timely holding of the elections. The first set the voter registration period, which starts today and ends on 28 July, with the final voters list released in September. The second decree specified that the Central African diaspora will be allowed to vote overseas in 13 countries, including the United States.

According to the Secretary-General's most recent figures, the United Nations recognizes there are approximately 697,000 internally displaced persons in addition to the 616,000 Central Africans registered as refugees in neighbouring countries. Today we reaffirm our support for efforts aimed at enabling and encouraging the full participation of refugees and internally displaced persons in the elections.

The United States remains committed to helping the Central African Republic hold credible and timely elections that will confirm the legitimacy of the elected Government, improve the long-term stability of the country and reinforce the democratic progress achieved by Central Africans in recent years. We also continue to support the United Nations Development Programme's role in providing, together with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), essential assistance, and we will conduct complementary programming ourselves. However, the United States remains deeply concerned that some armed groups continue to interfere with the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic with the resurgence of acts of violence perpetrated by armed groups in Birao, Bria, Ndélé, and Obo.

Following the Secretary-General's 23 March call for a global ceasefire to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, we note that the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain, and the Retour, réclamations et réhabilitation armed groups publicly declared their adherence. However, the Secretary-General has observed that those declarations have yet to translate into action on the ground. It is deeply troubling that the same armed groups professing a commitment to a ceasefire are conducting military operations against their competitors and unarmed civilians.

As we have said before, MINUSCA's top priority, as directed by the Security Council, is the protection of civilians. There is no contradiction between protecting civilians and using MINUSCA's good offices to support the success of the peace agreement. Indeed, the two efforts are mutually reinforcing.

Finally, we understand MINUSCA suffered its first fatality from COVID-19 on 11 June, and we would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere condolences to the entire Mission and to the late staff member's family.



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**Annex XV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baipo Temon, at today's meeting.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Ambassador Chergui and Mr. Vervaeke for their insightful briefings.

It is encouraging to see the positive developments in the Central African Republic with respect to the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. We commend the efforts made by the Government to that end. It is vital that this momentum be maintained, especially at the present crucial juncture, with important elections approaching. We are therefore deeply troubled by the reported violations of the Agreement, which may undermine recent achievements, and the ongoing acts of violence committed by armed groups threatening the safety and livelihood of civilians.

Against this backdrop, we would like to stress the following points.

First, we call on all signatories to fully respect the Agreement and work towards a favourable political climate by building trust and constructively engaging in dialogue. This approach will pave the way for the success of the upcoming presidential and legislative elections, which is a critical juncture for bringing peace, stability and sustainable development to the people of the Central African Republic. We support the call of the Secretary-General for a ceasefire in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and urge all parties to heed this call.

Secondly, we stress the importance of maintaining support for Central African Republic, both technically and financially, so that it can continue its peace process and electoral preparations as well as strengthen its capacity to protect civilians, address humanitarian challenges, minimize the impact of COVID-19 and so forth. We commend and express our support for the contribution of the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, as the guarantors of the Agreement, as well as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and other international and regional partners for their work.

Thirdly, we would like to emphasize the importance of ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. They are on the ground to help and should never be the target of attacks.

**Annex XVI****Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic, Sylvie Valérie Baïpo Temon**

[Original: French]

This is a rather sensitive period for the Central African Republic, and it is important for me to be able to address the Security Council. Through me, the Central African Republic has the honour of addressing the Security Council at this crucial time, when humankind is fighting the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like very humbly to extend my warm and heartfelt congratulations to the President on his country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to thank all previous speakers for the encouragement they have given to the Government of the Central African Republic. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the President for convening this important meeting of the Security Council and to express, on behalf of the people and the Government of the Central African Republic, our gratitude for the kind attention we have received and for the unwavering esteem in which my country is held. Allow me also to reiterate our confidence in Secretary-General António Guterres as well as our complete gratitude for his sustained commitment to peace and development in the world. We are above all grateful for the constant and multifaceted support the United Nations has extended to the Central African Republic.

My thanks also go to Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, and Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). I particularly thank Mr. Ndiaye for the work carried out by MINUSCA and all the contingents represented therein, who, despite the diversity of their nationalities, are working together in the service of peace.

As MINUSCA is the expression of tremendous international solidarity, the Central African Republic, through me, wishes to pay a vibrant tribute to the peacekeepers who have fallen on Central African soil. I would also take this opportunity to call on the Security Council to support the renewal of MINUSCA's mandate in order to meet the many challenges that remain, including this year's specific challenges, namely, the presidential and legislative elections and the return to peace.

On 6 February 2019, the Central African Republic took a major political step forward with the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (S/2019/145, annex), whose first anniversary we celebrated this year and which indisputably testifies to our determination to make progress and transcend inertia and resistance to stability and to our desire to achieve prosperity for the Central African people. It is important to recall that the Agreement was drawn up on the basis of, on the one hand, the 2015 popular consultations, which led to the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, and the demands of the armed groups, on the other hand. The proper implementation of the Agreement, which was reached after lengthy negotiations, requires that we — the Government, the 14 armed groups, the facilitators, the guarantors, the countries of the subregion and the international community — work synergistically to address the challenge of achieving lasting peace. The successful implementation of the Agreement requires the firm and unanimous support of the international community.

Silencing the guns in the Central African Republic, in line with campaign organized by the African Union for this year, is not only achievable but inevitable. The crusade for peace, within which we have been building, for more than four years and through a multisectoral strategy, our gradual return to stability and the rule of law, is a commitment by the Government that has been implemented under the leadership of the President of the Republic and Head of State, Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera. It is therefore incumbent upon all of us who wish to promote the culture of peace — the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and all States members of the Security Council — to make the Central African experience a successful model for conflict resolution in Africa.

The Government of the Central African Republic has consistently demonstrated its good will in the implementation of the main provisions of the Political Agreement, in particular through the formation of an inclusive Government and the adoption and promulgation of the laws called for therein, including those on decentralization, the status of former Heads of State and the regulation of political parties. The Government of the Central African Republic has also consistently demonstrated its good will by making progress in the restoration of the State, including the recruitment, training and redeployment of defence and security forces; undertaking efforts to mobilize the countries of the subregion; supporting the work of the facilitators and guarantors of the Political Agreement that has contributed to stability in the country; and participating in the joint commissions initiated in 2019 with Cameroon, the Congo and Chad, and in other joint commissions planned for 2020. Despite the fact that we had to postpone some recent meetings owing to restrictions stemming from COVID-19, these meetings are still being planned, specifically those with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and South Sudan.

With the support of the international community since 2015, several initiatives have been undertaken by the Government as part of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR) process. Following the pilot programme in September 2017, a full DDRR programme was launched in December 2018. In April 2019, these efforts resulted in the implementation of the programme in the north-west, with the disarmament of combatants from a number of armed groups and their reintegration into the socioeconomic fabric of the country, the special mixed security units or the national defence and security forces, including the armed forces. In Ndélé, in the north-east, the full DDRR programme is being operationalized. In fact, the teams responsible for implementing the programme in the north-east arrived in the area this weekend and were due to begin their work today. With regard to the special mixed security units, the legal framework associated with their concept of operations has also been set up. On 12 May 2020, the first contingents of these units, which were trained in Bouar, officially received their certificates of completion.

Despite its stated commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Political Agreement and the tireless struggle for the return to peace, the Government continues to face several challenges, including many forms of violence resulting from the non-compliance with or outright violation of the provisions of the Agreement by armed groups that are signatories thereto. As a consequence, there has been a resurgence of violence in the hinterlands and a rearming of certain armed groups, in particular the *Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique*, the *Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique* and the *Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation* group. Nevertheless, the Government remains committed to continuing its efforts aimed at engaging in constructive dialogue with all actors, combating impunity and strengthening the rule of law, including through arrests and the redeployment of the judicial administration.

In the light of the multiple violations of the Agreement by recalcitrant armed groups, a majority counterweight to build peace is imperative. To remain passive would mean disassociating ourselves from the counterbalancing effort; it would be tantamount to choosing not to oppose the violence of others. We cannot be spectators of human interactions of a nature that discourages our ideals and values nor can we be mere witnesses to the fatalities suffered by the Central African armed forces during the recent cantonment operation in the west of the armed group Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation.

The Government of the Central African Republic is also showing its determination to organize inclusive, free and transparent elections. I therefore take this opportunity to express the Central African Government's thanks and encouragement to the European Union for funding the elections in the country. I would also take this opportunity to appeal to international partners and other friendly countries to mobilize resources in order to preserve the efforts made and strengthen the democratic foundations in memory of the victims. Respect for the constitutional deadline for the upcoming elections is a collective commitment by all — and one that it is important to keep.

Despite the difficulties relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Electoral Authority is working hard to do everything possible to ensure that the constitutional deadline is met. Dismemberments at the national level have been finalized and voter-registration operations are being initiated. To this end, the electronic equipment, the software for managing the electoral register and all related equipment have been purchased and delivered. The resources mobilized for this purpose have already surpassed the 50 per cent mark.

Progress has also been made in the promulgation of decrees establishing the period for establishing the electoral lists and the list of countries where Central Africans abroad will be allowed to participate in the presidential elections. All of that is sufficient evidence of the Central African Republic's firm commitment to moving forward in holding the 2020-2021 elections. In addition, the law on the National Electoral Authority is being drafted at the legislative level, and it will be taken up at an extraordinary session of the National Assembly starting on 25 June. It should also be noted that the Government is allowing Central African refugees to participate in the vote, subject to the agreement of the countries concerned to take the steps necessary to ensure the exercise of the civil rights of Central African refugees present on their territories.

I would conclude by reiterating the request of my country, the Central African Republic, for a strengthening of multifaceted support of MINUSCA, in particular in terms of its equipment and human-resource capacity. We make this request because we must compel peace, which would be possible if MINUSCA had a more robust mandate. I hope that the international community will remain mobilized alongside the people and the Government of the Central African Republic and continue to support us in our efforts to restore our country and achieve the complete lifting of the embargo that still hangs over us — a people who aspire only to genuine peace.

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