



Security Council

Distr.: General
16 February 2021

Original: English

Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution [2552 \(2020\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2021 and requested the Secretary-General to report on its implementation every four months. The present report provides an update on major developments in the Central African Republic since the report of the Secretary-General of 12 October 2020 ([S/2020/994](#)).

II. Political situation

2. The political context over recent months was dominated by developments related to the 27 December presidential and legislative elections. Political tensions significantly increased as a result of the trust deficit between the Government and the opposition over the electoral process, coupled with a marked deterioration in security in many parts of the country fuelled by some political stakeholders and armed groups aiming to disrupt the electoral process and constitutional order.

3. Tensions further escalated following the 3 December decision of the Constitutional Court to invalidate five of the 22 presidential candidates, including the former president of the Central African Republic, François Bozizé. The Court argued Bozizé failed to meet the “good morality” legal requirement for candidates because of United Nations sanctions against him and an international arrest warrant issued in 2014 for alleged assassinations, torture and other crimes. Bozizé’s political party, the Kwa Na Kwa, publicly called for calm and restraint, while denouncing the Court’s decision. Despite his public acceptance of the Court’s decision and formal support to presidential candidate and former Prime Minister, Anicet-Georges Dologuélé, Bozizé travelled to the centre and west of the country, rallying support from armed group leaders.

4. Subsequently, some armed groups escalated attempts to obstruct the elections. On 15 December, representatives of the Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation (3R), Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC), Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC), a segment of the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) and the Mokom and Ngaïssona anti-balaka factions, signed a joint statement denouncing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in



the Central African Republic and criticizing the Government's shortcomings in advancing the peace process. On 17 December, they announced the formation of the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC), which Bozizé publicly endorsed on 27 December. The Government accused Bozizé of attempting a coup. On 4 January, the public prosecutor of the Bangui Court of First Instance announced the opening of a criminal investigation against Mr. Bozizé, including for rebellion and undermining state security.

5. The electoral campaign period from 12 to 25 December was disrupted by a surge in violence by CPC-affiliated armed groups. Several independent candidates and those aligned with the presidential party were attacked. The main opposition political platform, the Coalition de l'opposition démocratique 2020 (COD-2020), announced the suspension of its campaign on 19 December, citing insecurity and irregularities in electoral preparations, demanding postponement of the elections and holding of national consultations. On 26 December, the Constitutional Court rejected multiple requests from the opposition to postpone the elections, arguing that it was necessary to preserve the constitutional timeline.

6. The first round of presidential and legislative elections took place on 27 December. Violence perpetrated by CPC-affiliated armed groups, mainly in the north-west and south-east, had an impact on voter participation. A total of 695,019 voters (37.4 per cent of the registered total) cast their ballots, while 3,243 out of 5,448 polling stations (59.5 per cent) were operational country-wide and abroad. The opposition called for the vote to be annulled, arguing that the process did not comply with constitutional and legal requirements and insecurity inhibited voting. Preliminary reports from national and international electoral observer missions deployed in Bangui and its vicinity by the National Elections Observatory, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States expressed overall satisfaction with the elections despite challenges.

7. On 4 January, the National Electoral Authority published provisional results for the presidential election, announcing that President Touadéra received an absolute majority of votes cast (53.9 per cent), followed by former Prime Ministers and opposition candidates Dologuélé (21.01 per cent) and Martin Ziguelé (7.46 per cent). On 7 January, 10 opposition candidates filed a joint appeal to the Constitutional Court contesting the results. Presidential candidates Dologuélé, Ziguelé and Gonda also filed separate appeals requesting the annulment of the elections.

8. The National Electoral Authority released provisional results for the legislative elections on 5 January. A total of 21 candidates, including two women, were elected in the first round, while 122, including 13 women, qualified for a run-off.

9. On 18 January, the Constitutional Court rejected most challenges based on insufficient evidence or because irregularities would not have changed the results. The Court validated the results of the presidential election, announcing the re-election of President Touadéra, with 53.16 per cent of the 599,416 validated votes. The Court established the overall turnout at 35.25 per cent of registered voters and annulled the results for both presidential and legislative elections in Bambari, Baoro, Bozoum, Carnot 1 and Carnot 2 owing to insecurity and destruction of electoral material. Leaders of the opposition coalition COD-2020 publicly rejected President Touadéra's re-election and the final results of the first round of legislative elections, on 19 January and 2 February, respectively.

10. There were reports of state agents targeting the political opposition. On 14 January, the Government prevented presidential candidate and former head of the transition Catherine Samba-Panza from boarding an international flight, a decision that was subsequently rescinded. Following the confirmation of his re-election, on

18 January President Touadéra addressed the nation, expressing his readiness to unite the country and engage in dialogue with the political opposition.

11. On 1 February, the Constitutional Court proclaimed the final results of the legislative elections, with 22 candidates elected in the first round, including two women, and invalidated the victory of 6 candidates. The poll was cancelled in 13 constituencies. COD-2020 announced the withdrawal of its candidates from the remaining legislative elections. On 3 February, the Union pour le renouveau centrafricain opposition party announced that it would remain engaged in the electoral process.

12. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, alongside international partners, engaged with national stakeholders, including presidential candidates, to facilitate the creation of conditions conducive to holding credible, inclusive and peaceful elections within constitutional timelines. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations reinforced this strategic engagement, including during a visit with the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security and the ECCAS Commission President to Bangui from 27 to 30 October. The Secretary-General amplified this message through radio and video messages on the eve of the launch of the campaign.

13. From 9 to 12 December, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and the ECCAS Commission President visited the Central African Republic to engage with national stakeholders. On 2 December, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa decided to support the Central African political process.

14. On 26 December, President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo, in his capacity as ECCAS president, convened an extraordinary meeting of ECCAS heads of State focused on the Central African Republic. Members condemned violence and called for inclusive political dialogue, the deployment of troops from the subregion and the prompt appointment of an ECCAS permanent mediator for the Central African Republic. On 29 January, following a mini-summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region on the situation in the Central African Republic, convened by President João Lourenço of Angola in his capacity as acting president of the Conference, a joint call was issued for dialogue and for armed groups to observe an immediate ceasefire.

Electoral preparations

15. Voter registration in the Central African Republic and the diaspora concluded on 13 October, with 1,858,236 Central Africans, including 867,167 women (46.67 per cent), registered. The Government did not provide the legal framework to enfranchise Central African refugees.

16. On 14 October, a committee comprising political parties, public administration and civil society representatives selected 11 new National Electoral Authority commissioners, who were appointed by presidential decree on 16 October for a seven-year term and sworn in on 23 October. Opposition leaders expressed the view that some new commissioners lacked impartiality and/or qualifications.

17. On 26 October, the Constitutional Court permitted 27 political parties to submit candidates for the legislative elections despite failing to meet the 35 per cent quota for female candidates, acknowledging socioeconomic and other constraints to women's political participation. On 3 December, the Constitutional Court validated 1,504 candidates, including 234 women (15.59 per cent), an increase of five per cent in women's participation compared to 2015. MINUSCA, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality

and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), established a hotline and a situation room dedicated to protecting women candidates and voters from electoral violence.

18. Throughout November, National Electoral Authority agents and service providers protested in Bangui and threatened to suspend their support for electoral operations, demanding outstanding salaries and per diem arrears. On 8 December, the Government provided UNDP with \$1.4 million to pay those arrears, and that process was completed a week before the elections.

19. On 1 February, the Constitutional Court instructed the Government and the National Electoral Authority to organize the second round and new rounds of legislative elections for the installation of the National Assembly no later than 2 May. The National Electoral Authority subsequently announced that those elections would take place on 14 March.

20. MINUSCA and the United Nations country team continued to support electoral preparations, including through the transport and distribution of electoral material. As at 1 February, the UNDP-managed basket fund for the presidential, legislative and local elections through 2022 had spent or already committed \$28.1 million of the \$29 million disbursed by the Government and its international partners. It has a gap of up to \$3 million for the legislative run-off elections and approximately \$10 million for local elections.

Peace process

21. While implementation of the Political Agreement stalled owing to the elections and security context, some progress was made, particularly in disarmament and demobilization. Following five months of inactivity, the Agreement's national level implementation mechanism convened on 5 February to recognize the two-year anniversary of the Political Agreement and discuss dialogue with stakeholders in the peace process. Local-level mechanisms met in some areas, where they promoted inclusive dialogue to reduce tensions with active engagement of women leaders. They also played a critical role in the holding of fair, inclusive and peaceful elections by raising awareness among community leaders and armed group commanders.

22. On 31 December, following the establishment of CPC, President Touadéra signed decrees rescinding the appointments of Maxime Mokom of the anti-balaka, Bi Sidi Souleymane (alias Sidiki) of 3R; Mahamat Hamat Alhissene (alias Al-Khatim) of MPC; and Ali Darassa of UPC, all involved in CPC. Mokom had been the Minister of Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion and Repatriation, while the others had been advisors to the Prime Minister for the special mixed security units.

23. The special mixed security units remained non-operational in Bouar and Paoua due to absence of military orders, while many elements reportedly deserted or defected, often with weapons. Lack of internal cohesion, command and control, and insufficient sustainment, as well as interpersonal tensions, also plagued these units. The training center in Ndélé in the north-east was completed; the start of actual training was postponed principally owing to delays by armed groups in finalizing lists of candidates. On 11 November, the President chaired a ceremony marking the launch of the integration process of 292 ex-combatants into the national defence and internal security forces, including 15 women.

Local dialogue and reconciliation

24. On 9 and 10 November, the Government, with MINUSCA support, held a conference in Bangui to foster peace between Runga and Gula ethnic groups in the Vakaga, Haute-Kotto and Bamingui-Bangoran Prefectures. Thirteen ethnic communities and eight signatory armed groups agreed to a reconciliation pact to end violence, contributing to a peaceful election process in the two Prefectures.

III. Security situation

25. The security situation deteriorated owing to armed violence by CPC-affiliated armed groups, especially in the north-west and south-east. The military and police capabilities of MINUSCA were stretched thin, while pressure on the Mission intensified owing to widespread defections and desertions among national security forces. Despite these challenges, the Mission preserved constitutional order, protected civilians and enabled the polls in most of the country, albeit at a high cost.

26. As at 1 February, recorded violations of the Political Agreement had decreased from the 644 in the previous reporting period to 530. However, the numbers fail to convey the impact of the violations on the security situation and the serious setbacks to extending state authority. Civilians were the target of 277 violations, followed by illegal military activities (130), restrictions of movement (91) and obstruction of state institutions, humanitarian organizations or the United Nations (32). The anti-balaka perpetrated most violations (127), followed by FPRC (100), 3R (100), MPC (80), UPC (78), national defence and security forces (33), Révolution et justice-Sayo Branch (RJ-Sayo) (9), Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (MLCJ) (1), Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique (RPRC) (1) and Parti du rassemblement de la nation centrafricaine (1).

27. Attacks by armed groups took place across the country before, during and after polling day in an attempt to seize power and disrupt the democratic process. Seven peacekeepers were killed and five injured. Serious incidents targeting the opposition fuelled mistrust among political actors and undermined faith in the democratic process. In early December, national security forces searched the homes of several political figures, including Mr. Bozizé, his eldest son, and Mr. Mokom, on unclear grounds. On 23 December, unidentified actors set the house of Mr. Bozizé's son in Bangui on fire under the watch of the Presidential Guard.

28. Security developments before the elections set the stage for the increase in violence surrounding polling day. On 5 October, a government delegation and guarantors of the Political Agreement met 3R leadership, which committed to the electoral process and extension of state authority. Reportedly frustrated that the President had not responded to its demands, 3R strengthened and expanded its positions in the Nana-Mambéré, Ouham-Pendé and Mambéré-Kadei Prefectures starting 12 November; attacks increased after 3R leader Sidiki Abbas met with Mr. Bozizé in mid-December. The decision on 30 November by UPC leader Ali Darassa and FPRC Chief of Staff Ali Ousta to jointly lead the command of the "mixed brigade" illustrated the growing dominance of UPC in Haute Kotto Prefecture.

29. There was an upsurge of security incidents by anti-balaka, 3R, MPC, FPRC and Révolution et justice armed groups in the northwest after Mr. Bozizé mobilized armed groups. CPC aligned armed groups launched simultaneous, coordinated attacks from three main axes towards Bangui and across the country, including on Baboua, Bambari, Bozoum, Grimari and Sibut, between 18 and 23 December. CPC further disrupted movements on the main supply route (MSR-1) connecting Bangui to the Cameroon border and temporarily cut off power to Bangui.

30. In response, MINUSCA deployed all its reserves, including two quick reaction forces, pre-positioned the joint task force for Bangui and strengthened its overall posture, in coordination with national defence and security forces within the framework of the integrated security plan for the elections. MINUSCA successfully disrupted attacks, including against national armed forces positions such as in Bossembélé and Yaloké, Ombella-M'Poko Prefecture, and Bozoum, Ouham-Pendé Prefecture. On 25 December, in Dékoa, three MINUSCA peacekeepers were killed while supporting national defence and security forces under attack.

31. On election day, in the west, CPC elements attacked voting centres in Bozoum and Bouar. In Ouham, Ouham-Pendé and Nana-Mambéré Prefectures and in part of Ombella-M'Poko Prefecture, CPC elements threatened electoral agents, resulting in the closure of polling stations, and destroyed and burned electoral material in several polling stations. Various polling stations in Bria closed following shootings by UPC and anti-balaka elements, while those in Yalinga were burned. Other polling stations in the east and centre were unable to open or closed rapidly owing to insecurity and/or absence of state electoral agents.

32. CPC continued attacks against national security and defence forces, non-governmental organizations and MINUSCA after election day, mainly in the north-west and south-east, notably in Bangassou, Bouar and Grimari. On 13 January, a significant number of CPC elements conducted simultaneous and coordinated attacks on several locations in the outskirts of Bangui. MINUSCA repelled the attacks alongside national defence and security forces and bilaterally deployed troops. One peacekeeper was killed, as were 37 combatants.

33. On 15 January, another peacekeeper was killed and two injured while repelling an ambush by CPC elements near Grimari, Ouaka Prefecture. Two others lost their lives on 18 January when ambushed by CPC on the Bangassou-Gambo axis, Mbomou Prefecture. That same day, the Mission repelled a CPC attack on a MINUSCA convoy on MSR-1 that injured three contracted drivers.

34. Electoral violence prompted a nationwide curfew on 7 January. In Bangui, internal security forces, while enforcing the national curfew, fired shots, killing two civilians and wounding six on 11 January. On 18 January, national armed forces fatally shot a civilian at a checkpoint, reportedly owing to his refusal to comply with their orders. On 21 January the Government declared a 15-day nationwide state of emergency due to the security situation, which was extended for six months by the National Assembly on 5 February.

35. The electoral security plan envisaged the national forces as first responders to security threats. MINUSCA was compelled to assume most security responsibilities owing to the failure of national forces to deploy agreed numbers before the elections and significant defections and desertions among those deployed. Out of the 2,500 national armed forces originally planned for deployment, 296 deployed, while 394 internal security forces deployed out of the planned 759. Approximately 50 sub-prefectures were not covered by either the armed forces or internal security forces owing to financial and logistical shortfalls. In the west and centre, some national forces who had abandoned their posts sought refuge and protection in MINUSCA bases with their weapons, resulting in challenges and concerns for the safety and security of United Nations personnel. In some instances, defected soldiers crossed into a neighbouring country.

36. In addition to adapting its robust posture, MINUSCA received two infantry companies and two military utility helicopters from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) through inter-mission cooperation to enhance security for civilians and the elections. Additional security support for the national defence and security forces were deployed at the request of the Government under bilateral agreements.

IV. Humanitarian situation

37. The humanitarian situation deteriorated as a result of attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers, intercommunal tensions and armed group violence. Over half the population (2.8 million people) require humanitarian assistance and protection, with 1.9 million affected by severe needs. Approximately 2.3 million people suffer from acute food insecurity, among whom 525,000 are in the emergency phase.

38. Since mid-December, it is estimated that 240,000 people were newly displaced within the Central African Republic owing to election-related violence, including 124,000 who were able to return home. In addition, an estimated 105,000 Central Africans fled to neighbouring countries. As at 31 December 2020, approximately 682,000 Central Africans were internally displaced; an additional 635,000 lived as refugees in neighbouring countries. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees facilitated the return of 4,937 Central African refugees in 2020.

39. In 2020, there were 424 incidents targeting humanitarian workers, resulting in three deaths and 29 injuries, a 39 per cent increase in comparison to 306 incidents in 2019. There were 66 incidents against humanitarian workers in January 2021, the highest number ever recorded. The most dangerous areas for humanitarian workers are Bangui, followed by Ndélé, Batangafo, Kaga Bandoro and Bria. Most recent incidents relate to interference in relief delivery, threats, diversion of aid, illegal taxation and movement restrictions.

40. COVID-19 and the sustained disruption of the main supply route owing to violence exacerbated vulnerabilities, having a severe impact on the humanitarian situation, including by preventing delivery of vital aid and inflating the prices of basic household goods. In January, there were shortages of basic food items in several local markets, with a two-fold increase in prices for key items such as sugar and cassava, deepening inequalities and aggravating the protection crisis. MINUSCA supported efforts to contain the virus' spread, including through projects to build or rehabilitate water points.

41. In 2020, humanitarian actors provided 1.64 million people per month with multisectoral assistance, 90 per cent of the target of the 2020 humanitarian response plan. This was enabled by improved access in certain areas and increased coordinated response capacities. A total of \$365 million of the 2020 humanitarian response plan target of \$553.6 million was mobilized. The 2021 humanitarian response plan requiring \$444.7 million was only 8 per cent funded as at 1 February.

V. Protection of civilians

42. MINUSCA updated contingency plans for each field office to anticipate election-related security and humanitarian risks. Capacity-building sessions strengthened community alert networks in several locations, which facilitated information-sharing with the Force, enhancing physical protection of civilians.

43. Electoral violence multiplied threats against civilians. Violence attributed to the CPC disrupted the protective environment that MINUSCA had helped create, multiplying threats against civilians such as in Bangassou, which resulted in massive displacement. MINUSCA adjusted its robust posture, operations and presence to protect civilians despite being overstretched by the end of December.

44. In October and December, civilian and police surge teams deployed to Batangafo, Ouham Prefecture, following a deterioration in security. Before election day, MINUSCA deployed human rights and police personnel to hotspots to monitor the elections and document human rights violations and abuses. MINUSCA continued to coordinate closely with humanitarian organizations and the United Nations country team to identify risks, challenges and solutions to protect civilians, as well as to strengthen civil-military coordination with bilateral forces on humanitarian principles and activities.

VI. Extension of state authority and the rule of law

45. The Government continued to implement its strategy for the extension of State authority, supported by MINUSCA and the United Nations country team. MINUSCA launched 17 projects to reinforce the capacity of executive civil servants in three pilot prefectures.

46. A total of 15 out of 16 prefects and 54 out of 71 sub-prefects remained at their post throughout the violence. They contributed to holding elections, including in areas with heightened security risks. Some discharged their duties from MINUSCA premises where they had sought refuge following threats.

Security sector reform

47. MINUSCA continued to provide strategic and technical support to national authorities to implement the national security sector strategy and respective sectoral plans. Despite this support and the training and equipment by international partners, national defence and internal security forces faced numerous challenges during the electoral period. On 6 January, the Minister of Defence requested the general inspectorate of the army to inspect the staffing and deployment of national defence forces, including operational readiness, command and control, sustainment, public expenditure management, logistical support and oversight, as well as human rights violations allegations. The European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic and MINUSCA are assisting the national authorities in this review.

National armed and internal security forces

48. Since 17 December, MINUSCA has reported numerous instances of national armed forces abandoning positions with their weapons in the prefectures of Bamingui-Bangoran, Lobaye, Mbomou, Nana-Gribizi, Nana Mambéré, Ombella M'Poko, Ouaka, and Ouham Pendé, individual cases of desertion and defection, as well as human rights violations by these forces. As part of the 2019/2020 recruitment campaign, 578 recruits had completed basic training by the European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic at the end of November. A second basic training course for 438 recruits started on 5 January. CPC attacks, including partial looting of the military camp in Bouar, undermined efforts to establish the west military defence zone.

49. As at 1 February, 4,909 internal security forces, including 2,258 police officers (597 women) and 2,651 gendarmes (351 women), were deployed to all prefectures except Basse-Kotto, MINUSCA and UNDP trained 689 police officers and gendarmes, including 197 women, on election security. MINUSCA observed cases of abandonment of position by internal security forces in Mbomou, Nana-Gribizi, and Ouaka Prefectures. In November, 1,198 recruits, including 317 women, entered police and gendarmerie training schools.

50. The Mine Action Service handed over a regional ammunition depot in Bouar to national authorities and continued coordination with the authorities for the installation of five specialized storage facilities. The Service trained more than 408 members of the MINUSCA force, United Nations entities and humanitarian actors on explosive ordnance risk.

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

51. The Government continued disarmament and demobilization operations in the centre and north-east, with MINUSCA support. Operations were conducted from 16 October to 1 December in Birao, Bria and Kaga Bandoro for 437 combatants,

including 21 women, from RPRC, MLCJ, FPRC, MPC, and Séléka-Rénové; 282 weapons of war, 10,342 rounds of ammunition and 60 explosives were collected. A total of 2,532 former combatants, including 144 women, have entered the programme since it started in December 2018.

52. Electoral violence increased the risks of youth recruitment and potential for renewed intercommunal violence. As part of community violence reduction activities, as at 1 February, 2,242 beneficiaries, including 886 women, were registered and 56 war weapons, 1,118 artisanal weapons, 20 unexploded ordnance and 143 ammunitions were collected in Bangassou, Bangui, Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, and Kaga Bandoro.

Justice and the rule of law

53. Between 1 December 2020 and 1 February 2021, 311 prisoners escaped from the Bambari, Bangassou, Bimbo women's, Bossembélé, Bouar, Carnot, Mbaïki and Nola prisons. While some individuals detained for serious crimes escaped from Bouar prison, an increasing number of high-profile detainees are in Bangui prisons. Most escapes followed attacks by armed groups or rumours of attacks, leading national prison and security personnel to abandon their posts. This situation, exacerbated by the underperformance of those responsible for perimeter security, is straining MINUSCA support to prisons. On 13 January, the training of 151 prison officer candidates was temporarily suspended owing to electoral violence in Bangui.

54. On 13 November, President Touadéra inaugurated the headquarters of the Special Criminal Court, which had been refurbished by MINUSCA and UNDP. The President appointed five international magistrates, and the Court's legal aid system became operational on 6 November 2020.

55. Electoral violence had a serious impact on the functioning of the justice sector. As at 1 February, 69 per cent of 208 planned judicial personnel were in their posts and 60 per cent of first instance and appellate courts operational. The Ministry of Justice suspended all temporary judicial missions to areas controlled by armed groups owing to violence, while MINUSCA supported the relocation of magistrates from Bangassou, Bouar and Paoua to Bangui.

56. Between 1 October 2020 and 1 February 2021, MINUSCA transferred to national authorities in Bangui 66 individuals who had been arrested, including through the use of urgent temporary measures, on suspicion of having committed various criminal offences, including 48 suspected of electoral violence.

VII. Human rights and the fight against impunity

57. The human rights situation deteriorated, as electoral violence led to widespread human rights violations beginning in December. MINUSCA documented serious human rights abuses, perpetrated mainly by armed groups, including the abduction and killing of civilians, physical attacks, death threats against voters, violation of freedom of movement, destruction of electoral materials and burning of polling stations. Since polling day, state agents have conducted several arbitrary arrests, and their enforcement of a nationwide curfew resulted in cases of disproportionate and excessive use of force.

58. Between 1 October 2020 and 1 February 2021, MINUSCA documented 267 incidents of human rights violations affecting 448 victims (262 men, 51 women, 16 boys, 15 girls, 63 groups of collective victims and 40 unidentified victims) and 41 conflict-related civilian deaths, despite COVID-19 restrictions limiting the investigative capacity of MINUSCA. This represents an increase of 60.6 per cent in

the number of incidents, 56.2 per cent in the number of victims and 87.6 per cent in the number of conflict-related civilian deaths compared to the previous reporting period.

59. Signatory armed groups, including those in CPC, perpetrated most violations and abuses and were involved in 222 incidents affecting 356 victims, a 56.2 per cent increase in the number of incidents and 46.8 per cent in the number of victims compared to the previous reporting period. State agents, primarily members of the national defence and internal security forces, were involved in 37 violations affecting 64 victims, an increase of 144 per cent in the number of incidents and 238.5 per cent in the number of victims compared to the previous period.

60. On 24 January 2021, the national authorities surrendered to the International Criminal Court Mahamat Said Abdel Kani, suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in Bangui in 2013 as a Séléka commander.

61. The Mission continued to apply the United Nations human rights due diligence policy in its support to national security forces, conducting eight risk assessments.

Transitional justice

62. After delays, on 2 December the selection committee for the future truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation commission recommended 11 commissioners, including five women, a significant advancement for gender equality in Central African institutions. On 30 December, President Touadéra confirmed their nomination for a four-year term by presidential decree. MINUSCA and UNDP provided advocacy and technical assistance, with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund.

Conflict-related sexual violence

63. Movement of troops and armed clashes linked to the elections exposed women, girls, men and boys to increased risk of conflict-related sexual violence. MINUSCA received 51 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence, mostly rape, affecting at least 111 victims (62 women, 42 girls and 7 girls of unknown age believed to be minors). Election-related insecurity had an impact on the medical, psychosocial and legal services available to victims.

64. Between October and December, MINUSCA conducted five workshops on the prevention of sexual violence in the electoral context, in addition to awareness-raising activities for over 2,300 individuals, including to prevent electoral violence against female voters and candidates.

Children and armed conflict

65. Between 26 and 30 November, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting interviewed and verified 255 children (94 girls and 161 boys) associated with FPRC from the list of 267 children it had presented on 3 November as part of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. The separated children entered reintegration programmes funded by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). On 30 November, four children accused of association with armed groups who had been detained at Ngaragba prison in Bangui were released and enrolled in reintegration programmes.

66. As part of the "ACT to protect children affected by armed conflict" campaign, MINUSCA raised awareness among 2,328 individuals on increased risks of grave child rights violations during the electoral period. On 27 December and subsequent days, CPC attacked 17 schools serving as polling stations.

VIII. Socioeconomic situation

67. COVID-19 continued to have a negative impact on the country's socioeconomic situation. The International Monetary Fund confirmed the trend of gross domestic product (GDP) contraction (minus 1 per cent in 2020), with a deterioration of the budget deficit to 6.3 per cent of GDP, against an expected 2.8 per cent. The 2021 budget law aims to improve domestic revenue and the efficiency of public spending and to strengthen governance and the business climate.

68. According to the World Bank, pre-existing structural problems in the Central African economy have exacerbated the impact of the pandemic. This impact may wipe out years of progress in human development, driving as many as an additional 92,800 people into poverty, which is estimated to have risen from 70.5 per cent in 2019 to 72.2 per cent in 2020.

69. The pandemic affected more than 2 million Central Africans, or just less than half of the entire population, with job losses particularly affecting the informal sector, which includes 90 per cent of employees. In response, the United Nations has supported job protection schemes in both the formal and informal sectors.

70. To improve the Government's ability to monitor implementation of the national reconciliation and recovery plan, its permanent secretariat launched in November a programmatic monitoring tool with World Bank and United Nations support. Training for the tool, which will provide a complete overview of all development initiatives being implemented, with real-time monitoring, began in January 2021.

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

Military component

71. As at 1 February, the strength of the military component of MINUSCA was 11,451 (5.2 per cent women), out of an authorized strength of 11,650 personnel, including 297 staff officers (57 women) and 136 military observers (35 women). It comprised 11 infantry battalions; one high-readiness protection battalion; one battle group; three quick reaction force companies, including one special forces company; and enabling units, specifically one military police company, three multi-purpose engineering companies, one reduced engineering company, one airfield construction engineering company, one heavy transport company, three level-II hospitals and one level-I-plus hospital with forward surgery and orthopedic modules, three helicopter units and four unmanned aerial vehicles. The force further improved its mobility and protection by increasing the number of mechanized companies, allowing 17 temporary operating bases to close.

72. On 23 December 2020, the Security Council authorized the two-month reinforcement, extended by an additional two months on 10 February 2021, of MINUSCA in the context of inter-mission cooperation with UNMISS, as requested in the letters from the Secretary-General dated 22 December 2020 (S/2020/1290) and 4 February 2021 (S/2021/126), following election-related violence. Two infantry companies (300 personnel) arrived in Bangui on 24 December 2020, and military utility helicopters on 30 December 2020 and 5 January 2021, for a total of two UNMISS helicopters and 355 personnel.

73. The Mission took steps to optimize the use of available resources to counter threats emerging from a deteriorating security situation. MINUSCA also took strong measures to enhance performance and protect peacekeepers in the changing context, in line with the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Adjustments to the force posture

included utilizing all reserve units and quick reaction force units, especially in Bambari, Bangassou, Bossembele, Bouar and Sibut. The defence plan for Bangui was activated to strengthen the posture in the capital.

74. All of the military capabilities of MINUSCA are fully engaged, including the temporary augmentation through intermission cooperation. In order to strengthen the ability of MINUSCA to perform its priority mandated tasks as outlined in resolution [2552 \(2020\)](#) in the evolving context, the Mission requires an increase of a maximum of 2,750 additional troops. The objectives of this augmentation would be to control and reverse the current instability while incentivizing compliance with the Political Agreement, addressing threats to civilians and creating space for a revitalized political process.

75. The additional capabilities will provide MINUSCA with greater anticipatory capacity and enhanced actionable analysis ability to rapidly respond to threats to civilians in priority geographic areas by reinforcing the Mission's pre-emptive and reactive posture. Their operational achievements would be integrated within MINUSCA strategic efforts to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian access and enhance the safety and security of United Nations personnel. These reinforcements would be deployed sequentially as outlined below, with capabilities prioritized and based on regular reviews of the political and security situation. In the short and medium term, the requested reinforcements would comprise an additional battalion to secure the main supply route; four quick reaction forces to provide intervention capacity to the four sectors; three companies to reinforce existing battalions; force and sector staff officers; and analysts, including imagery analysts. In the longer term, the requested reinforcements would include additional horizontal engineering capacity for mobility and bridging; air assets for air-to-ground targeting; and mobile unmanned aerial vehicles to enhance operations and intelligence surveillance reconnaissance capacity.

Police component

76. As at 1 February, MINUSCA police component was 2,057 personnel (12.98 per cent women), out of an authorized strength of 2,080, including 383 individual police officers (105 women) and 1,674 personnel (162 women) in 11 formed police units, including one with embedded special weapons and tactics (SWAT) capacity and one protection support unit. The protection support unit, along with six formed police units, are in Bangui under the joint task force. Five formed police units, are deployed in Bambari, Berberati, Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro. Part of the Kaga Bandoro unit remains deployed in Batangafo to improve the protection of civilians and support the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

77. Given the evolving context, the police component would require an additional 940 personnel, including, in the immediate term, officers to reinforce five formed police units, deployed outside Bangui and individual police officers to increase footprint while supporting internal security forces; and in the medium term, three new formed police units, with SWAT embedded capabilities, which would deploy in Bangassou, Bossangoa and Ndélé.

78. The additional capabilities would support MINUSCA efforts to help maintain law and order, including through urgent temporary measures; facilitate humanitarian access, including in camps for internally displaced persons, and enhance the protection of United Nations personnel and assets. In the light of the weaknesses revealed by the elections in the internal security forces, MINUSCA will work with partners to review and adjust security sector reform efforts, while supporting internal security forces by improving police monitoring, mentoring and advisory capabilities, including community-oriented policing.

Civilian personnel

79. As at 1 February, 1,477 civilian personnel (26 per cent of whom were women), including 252 United Nations Volunteers and 104 government-provided correctional personnel, served with MINUSCA. This represents 91 per cent of 1,624 approved positions.

Status of forces agreement

80. On 7 November 2020, a MINUSCA national staff member was arrested without charge by the director of the Presidential Guard based on a complaint that the staff member had filed for theft against an associate of the director. The Bangui General Prosecutor ordered the staff member's release on 9 November, following MINUSCA intervention.

81. Despite the Mission's interventions for the release of explosives intended for the purposes of training national armed forces, the national authorities have continued to date to retain the materiel, which was seized on 25 August 2020.

Safety and security of United Nations personnel

82. Between 1 October 2020 and 1 February 2021, 196 security incidents involving United Nations personnel were recorded. Twelve personnel died, including seven peacekeepers killed during operations, three in a road traffic accident and two from illness. Thirty-seven personnel were injured, including 26 in road traffic accidents, six from physical assault and five during military operations. Movements of United Nations personnel were restricted in some locations owing to increased security risks. Non-essential movement in the Mission area has been prohibited since 17 December owing to risks associated with the electoral period.

83. As at 1 February, MINUSCA recorded a total of 573 confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 11 active cases, 548 recoveries and five deaths; United Nations agencies, funds and programmes registered 54 confirmed COVID-19 cases, with 50 recoveries and four active cases. MINUSCA has established proactive preventive guidelines and measures for personnel, which include self-isolation as necessary and testing.

Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

84. Between 1 October 2020 and 31 December 2020, nine allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported against MINUSCA military personnel. A total of 27 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded in 2020, 20 of which related to incidents allegedly committed in previous years (or in one instance at an unknown time). The MINUSCA 24-hour hotline continued to serve as a critical tool in reporting misconduct.

85. Training on the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and other serious misconduct continued to be delivered remotely owing to COVID-19. MINUSCA provided guidance and material for military and police contingents to conduct self-training at post locations and supported them in undertaking self-risk assessments focused on sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as other forms of misconduct.

86. MINUSCA continued to disseminate messages on prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse, reaching out through 27 community-based complaint networks, local radio and text messages, and working in partnership with communities. Newly identified victims were referred for needs assessment and assistance, while previously recorded victims continued to be assisted.

Support considerations

87. MINUSCA continued to reduce its environmental footprint. 57 wastewater treatment plants are fully operational. Remediation of the Kolongo landfill project continued, and equipment is being procured for 13 waste management yards. MINUSCA reduced its energy consumption by synchronizing generators at 12 of its 14 sites where synchronization is possible and installed renewable energy systems, including a full solar system, at one base.

Action for peacekeeping and performance optimization

88. Through the good offices of the Special Representative, MINUSCA sought political solutions to the increased tensions and election-related violence, collaborating closely with partners. Enabling political dialogue among relevant national stakeholders remained a priority.

89. No training evaluation or operational readiness assessments were carried out during the reporting period, owing to the force's engagement in election-related security operations. MINUSCA submitted evaluations of seven formed police units; six of them were deemed satisfactory on the basis of readiness, COVID-19 prevention measures and good discipline and morale. The unit rated below satisfactory overall had shortfalls in sustainment, which is being rectified.

90. MINUSCA increased its use of analysis from the comprehensive planning and performance assessment system to support mission planning, decision-making, strategy development and budget formulation. MINUSCA continues to broaden its database of data visuals and long-term data analysis to support adaptive planning and decision-making.

X. Financial considerations

91. The General Assembly, by its resolution [74/284](#) and decision 74/571 of 30 June 2020, appropriated the amount of \$937.7 million for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. As at 2 February 2021, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for MINUSCA amounted to \$488.3 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$3,212.8 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 30 September 2020, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 June 2020, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XI. Observations

92. The courage demonstrated by the people of the Central African Republic when they cast their ballots on 27 December provides hope for the country's fragile democracy. Citizens who were not obstructed by disenfranchisement or violence fulfilled their fundamental civic responsibility, sometimes at a grievously high cost. In doing so, many braved insecurity, violence and threats. I salute in particular the Central African women who insisted on contributing to the electoral process despite systemic and other obstacles.

93. I strongly condemn by the attacks on peacekeepers, which may amount to war crimes that can be prosecuted before national or international courts. I salute the memory of the seven peacekeepers who paid the ultimate price since 25 December and call on the Central African authorities to fully investigate these crimes to ensure

that those responsible are held accountable. I pay tribute to the courage and sacrifice of all who continue to operate in highly challenging conditions in the service of peace. That collective courage and sacrifice to help preserve democratic order must be honoured, most importantly by commensurate demonstrations of resolve from Central African leadership.

94. The Central African Republic is at a critical juncture that will determine if peace and stability will be restored and put on a firmer footing. Only a political solution will achieve sustainable peace and development, and only the Central African leaders and people can determine and follow that path. It is critical to advance efforts to end the current crisis through broad and inclusive dialogue involving the voices of women, youth and religious leaders, as well as confidence-building initiatives, including accountability for perpetrators of violence, their supporters and enablers. I encourage all Central Africans to take the path of reconciliation and justice rather than revenge. Achieving and sustaining peace will require inclusive national efforts to broaden political space, continue institutional reforms and develop a shared national identity that fully embraces the rich diversity of the population. I call on President Touadéra to consolidate his legacy by prioritizing leading and consolidating national reconciliation and dialogue efforts in his second term.

95. I am encouraged by the holding of the presidential and first round of legislative elections in accordance with constitutional timelines. The timely conduct of elections was critical in preserving the country's constitutional order. I call on all political leaders to use peaceful means to resolve their differences and to commit to contributing to an environment conducive to the timely and peaceful completion of the remaining electoral process. I welcome the invaluable political and financial support of the international community and invite continued generosity for upcoming electoral processes.

96. I condemn the violence which has persisted since the invalidation of Bozizé's presidential candidacy in early December. It has had an incalculable toll on civilian lives and national institutions, including in localities that had achieved important progress toward reconciliation and the establishment of state authority. I am also concerned about the severe humanitarian and economic impact of the disruption of vital supply routes by armed groups. This violence must stop immediately, and all involved should engage in dialogue to advance the political process, preserve fragile gains and fulfil the people's aspiration for lasting peace. I welcome the participation of the Central African population in all its diversity and the involvement of religious platforms and civil society organizations in calling for non-violence. Social cohesion needs to be the goal of all political efforts.

97. The people of the Central African Republic have consistently demanded justice for those who have perpetrated serious crimes and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. I am deeply concerned by the increase in human rights violations due to electoral violence and strongly condemn all perpetrators of these violations. Furthermore, the recent targeted attacks on prisons resulting from electoral violence have undermined efforts to advance accountability. I call on national authorities to increase efforts, through the justice system, in pursuit of accountability and to advance the fight against impunity in an impartial and independent manner. I call on national authorities to denounce and prosecute any instances of hate speech and incitement to violence, including against MINUSCA and partners, and lead the country in a spirit of national healing. In this regard, I am encouraged by further steps taken towards the establishment of the truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation commission.

98. Though the second anniversary of the Political Agreement was marred by political tension and instability, important progress should be recognized. I am

encouraged that the Agreement's various implementation mechanisms have proven resilient, playing an important role in facilitating the holding of elections in some parts of the country. I call on the Government to work together with signatory armed groups to re-energize the Political Agreement's full, effective and timely implementation as the only viable path to addressing the crisis in the country, including by taking stock of the achievements and challenges thus far. I further call on newly elected parliamentarians to advance political reforms. I welcome the dialogue initiative of the Government resulting in a reconciliation pact among communities in the north-east.

99. During the tense electoral period, members of the Central African defence and internal security forces deserted their positions while facing pressure by armed elements, undermining the population's trust and confidence. This has underscored the important work that remains for Central African authorities to ensure that national institutions assume their sovereign responsibility to protect the population through an effective reform process. In addition to political will, it is essential to strengthen security sector governance and expenditure management so that the national defence and internal security forces can achieve the necessary operational readiness. I call on national authorities and international partners to draw lessons from the current reform process and to adjust their approach to security sector reform accordingly. I further call on national defence and internal security forces to abide by the rule of law and international human rights principles, including during the current state of emergency.

100. MINUSCA provided important support to defend democratic order and prevent armed groups from advancing towards Bangui, while also protecting civilians and State authorities in many locations across the country, assuming a greater share of the burden than envisaged. The deployment of troops under a bilateral agreement with the Government has helped to address the challenging security situation. I call on national authorities to continue efforts to ensure close coordination among all security partners operating in the country, including troops deployed under bilateral agreements, in order to ensure the protection of peacekeepers and to facilitate humanitarian access.

101. The electoral violence further deepened the protracted humanitarian crisis in the country. I am concerned by the resulting massive population displacement and the added constraints on an already fragile food supply. It is essential to prioritize sustaining peace and development dividends to local development interventions and durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons. I condemn in the strongest terms increased attacks against humanitarian workers and pay tribute to those who have lost their lives or suffered injuries to ensure life-saving assistance to millions. I invite all donors to generously contribute to the 2021 humanitarian response plan. I further call on all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and ensure humanitarian access.

102. Pre-existing vulnerabilities within the economy, now exacerbated by COVID-19 and the deterioration of the security situation, threaten the progress achieved through the national reconciliation and recovery plan. To further socioeconomic development, there is a need to enhance the economy's resilience and expand efforts to provide disenfranchised youth with access to economic opportunities. The country's infrastructure remains in urgent need of significant investment. I call on national authorities to prioritize in the national budget the needs of the population and to continue strengthening the nation's institutions and governance mechanisms to address structural issues that fuel violence, such as marginalization, discrimination, corruption and uneven development.

103. As the Central African Republic finds itself at a crucial turning point, the continued engagement of its international partners, particularly countries of the

region, remains essential to sustain peace and stability. The crisis in the country is inextricably linked to the dynamics in the Central African region. I call upon the region to use all means at its disposal to revitalize the political and joint security mechanisms, particularly for enhanced border security. I welcome the imminent appointment of an ECCAS permanent mediator for the Central African Republic, as well the engagement of the heads of state and government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

104. As indicated above, I recommend an increase of 2,750 military and 940 police personnel, bringing the authorized ceilings for MINUSCA to 14,400 and 3,020, respectively. These reinforcements are aimed at enhancing the ability of MINUSCA to perform its priority mandated tasks in the current evolving context and at enabling the Mission to enhance its capacity to prevent and reverse further deterioration in the security situation while creating space for the political process to advance. These new capabilities are not a substitute for the national authorities' primary responsibility to advance the peace process and protect the population and are not intended as a means for a military solution to the present challenges. I recommend that the deployment of these reinforcements be sequenced and based on regular reviews of the evolving political and security context, in the framework of my regular progress reports to the Security Council. In order to ensure the lasting impact of these capabilities, it will be crucial to integrate their operational achievements within the wider strategic efforts of the Mission.

105. Finally, I would like to express my deep appreciation to my Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Mankeur Ndiaye, for his leadership. I further express my gratitude to the United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their determination and commitment. I also thank all troop- and police-contributing countries, donor countries, regional and multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable support in contributing to peace and stability in the Central African Republic. In particular, I wish to express my gratitude to the Political Agreement guarantors, the African Union and ECCAS, and to the regional partners for their continued strong engagement.

Annex I

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization
Mission in the Central African Republic: military and police
strength as at 1 February 2021**

Country	<i>Military component</i>				<i>Police component</i>	
	<i>Experts on Mission</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Formed Police Units</i>	<i>Individual police officers</i>
Argentina	0	2	0	2		
Bangladesh	9	22	1 282	1 313		
Benin	3	3	0	6		20
Bhutan	2	3	0	5		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	2	0	5		
Brazil	1	3	0	4		1
Burkina Faso	0	6	0	6		31
Burundi	8	10	746	764		
Cambodia	2	2	204	208		
Cameroon	2	5	750	757	280	26
Colombia	2	0	0	2		
Congo	4	6	0	10	138	0
Côte d'Ivoire	0	1	0	1		27
Czechia	3	0	0	3		
Djibouti	0	0	0	0		6
Egypt	6	23	984	1 013	140	19
France	0	9	0	9		6
Gabon	0	3	446	449		
Gambia	3	4	0	7		11
Ghana	2	4	0	6		7
Guatemala	1	2	0	3		
Guinea	0	0	0	0		11
Indonesia	7	8	200	215	140	1
Jordan	1	7	0	8		31
Kenya	7	8	0	15		
Madagascar	0	0	0	0		1
Mali	0	0	0	0		16
Mauritania	8	7	450	465	278	
Mexico	1	1	0	2		
Morocco	2	18	749	769		
Nepal	4	12	718	734		
Niger	1	4	0	5		31
Nigeria	0	4	0	4		3
Pakistan	9	30	1 213	1 252		
Paraguay	1	1	0	2		
Peru	7	2	198	207		
Philippines	2	0	0	2		

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military component</i>				<i>Police component</i>	
	<i>Experts on Mission</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Formed Police Units</i>	<i>Individual police officers</i>
Portugal	0	7	180	187		2
Republic of Moldova	3	1	0	4		
Romania	0	0	0	0		9
Russian Federation	3	10	0	13		
Rwanda	6	18	1 356	1 380	418	28
Senegal	0	5	0	5	280	22
Serbia	2	2	72	76		
Sierra Leone	4	0	0	4		
Spain	0	0	0	0		3
Sri Lanka	0	3	110	113		
Sweden	0	0	0	0		3
Togo	4	5	0	9		31
Tunisia	2	0	0	2		37
United Republic of Tanzania	0	5	450	455		
United States of America	0	8	0	8		
Uruguay	0	2	0	2		
Viet Nam	1	6	0	7		
Zambia	9	13	910	932		
Zimbabwe	1	0	0	1		
Total	136	297	11 018	11 451	1 674	383

Annex II

Map

