



# Security Council

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## Central African Republic

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. By its resolution [2659 \(2022\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2023 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 previous report of 13 October 2022 ([S/2022/762](#)).

#### II. Political situation

2. The political context continued to be marred by increasing political contestations over constitutional changes. The peace process advanced incrementally amid persisting tensions, which significantly intensified with the dismissal of two judges from the Constitutional Court, including its President. The Court ruled that the decree of 3 October 2022 retiring its President, Danièle Darlan, and another Court justice was unconstitutional. Ms. Darlan later announced publicly that she would not return to the Court. The political opposition continued to contest the legitimacy of the Court after the removal of two of its justices.

##### Political developments

3. On 10 October, the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reform issued an administrative decision on the retirement of 28 civil servants in the higher education sector, including the President of the Constitutional Court and the President of the National Assembly, Simplicie Mathieu Sarandji. On 19 October, in a letter addressed to the Minister in charge of the General Secretariat of the Government, Ms. Darlan stated that Constitutional Court judges could not be removed before the end of their seven-year term, in accordance with the Constitution, and reaffirmed the exclusive competency of the Court to interpret the Constitution.

4. On 24 October, the President, Faustin Archange Touadera, signed two related decrees resulting in the dismissal of Ms. Darlan from the Constitutional Court. On 26 October, the political opposition, including such prominent figures as Martin Ziguélé of the Mouvement de libération du peuple centrafricain and Crépin Mbolli-Goumba of the Parti africain pour une transformation radicale et intégrale des États



and the Bloc républicain pour la défense de la Constitution (BRDC), strongly condemned those decisions and appealed to the Court to annul the presidential decrees of 24 October. On 3 January, the Court deemed unconstitutional the decree of 3 October, by which the retirement age in the higher education sector had been lowered. The Court, however, rejected the petition to declare unconstitutional the decree of 24 October by which the composition of the Court's Bureau had been modified.

5. On 1 November, the opposition platform, Conseil de Résistance et de Transition (CRT), was created to organize political and civic opposition to the Government's initiatives to change the Constitution. On 8 November, the Public Prosecutor of the Central African Republic issued a communiqué in which he accused the CRT leadership of calling upon Central Africans to mobilize against the legitimate national authority. He indicated that judicial measures had been initiated against the leader of CRT and others in the movement opposing the constitutional referendum for acts including threat to public security and incitement to grave political instability. CRT adopted its manifesto on 1 November, while exchanging letters with BRDC on the creation of a larger alliance against the constitutional change.

6. During the sixty-fourth anniversary of the proclamation of the independence of the Central African Republic, on 1 December, the President stressed his commitment to the consolidation of the country's national sovereignty. In his speech, he referred to BRDC and CRT as a threat to public security and order, linking them to *ex-Séléka*, anti-balaka and the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement, an accusation later denied by the political opposition. MINUSCA encouraged the Government, opposition leaders and the religious platform to advocate the resumption of dialogue among key political actors, who all renewed their commitment to initiating discussions on vital issues of national interest.

7. From 1 October to 30 December, the National Assembly held its second regular session, at which it adopted the national budget for 2023. The budget amounts to \$397 million, of which \$216 million is expected to be generated from domestic resources and \$181 million from external resources. Overall spending is estimated at \$480 million, resulting in a deficit of \$83 million. The Assembly also passed a law establishing a procedure for holding referendums, including on constitutional reforms. On 20 January, the Constitutional Court validated the law, a decision welcomed by pro-government figures, who argued that it paved the way for the holding of a referendum on constitutional changes.

### **Peace process**

8. The Prime Minister continued to coordinate efforts to implement the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and the joint road map for peace in the Central African Republic of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. On 2 November, he convened the fifth coordination meeting to review progress, which was attended by the relevant ministries and international and regional partners. The meeting resulted in the reactivation of monitoring mechanisms for the deployment of public servants and the establishment of an institutional and operational framework for border management.

9. On 6 December, the President chaired a ceremony marking the dissolution of four armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and current members of the Government, namely, the Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique (RPRC), the Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice, the Union des forces républicaines and the Union des forces républicaines fondamentales.

### **Electoral process**

10. On 18 November, the leaders of 16 political parties from the opposition, 13 of which are members of BRDC, signed a joint declaration in reaction to the Government's announced financial support for the local elections. The signatories claimed that the National Electoral Authority had lost its impartiality and set some conditions for their participation in the elections, namely, a complete overhaul of the electoral authority, the reappointment of the dismissed members of the Constitutional Court, assurances that local elections would be separate from any potential constitutional referendum and the guaranteed safety of voters and candidates.

11. On 21 November, the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the strategic committee for elections, during which the National Electoral Authority presented a new electoral calendar for local elections, with a first round of elections scheduled for 16 July 2023 and a second round for 15 October 2023. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the Government's intention to separate local elections from a potential constitutional referendum.

12. On 30 November, the Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed an agreement for the Government's contribution of \$4.5 million to the UNDP basket fund for voter registration and the reopening of local branches of the National Electoral Authority. As at 1 February, the Government had disbursed \$0.2 million, and approximately \$6.5 million of the total electoral budget remained to be mobilized.

13. On 5 December, electoral preparations resumed in accordance with the new electoral calendar and with technical, logistical, operational and security support from MINUSCA and UNDP. On 9 January, the National Electoral Authority completed the countrywide establishment of its 134 local branches.

14. On 23 December, the National Assembly adopted a law on the delimitation of administrative districts, resulting in the establishment of more than 200 constituencies for the local elections.

15. During the reporting period, MINUSCA held 2,076 outreach and civic education sessions, including on gender equality, which brought together 165,104 people, including 79,099 women, in support of the National Electoral Authority, to promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of Central Africans in the elections.

### **Local dialogue and reconciliation**

16. In October, MINUSCA held nine awareness-raising sessions on the culture of peace for 536 participants, including 246 women, to strengthen social ties among communities affected by the resurgence of armed groups in Bambari, Bangassou, Birao, Bocaranga, Bossangoa, Bria, Kaga Bandoro, Kouango, Obo, Paoua, Sam Ouandja and Zemio. On 21 October, in Obo, Haut-Mbomou Prefecture, MINUSCA facilitated a peace forum attended by government ministers and 230 participants, including 65 women. After those sessions, some 500 internally displaced persons from the Muslim community returned to Mboki and Zemio, in the same Prefecture; the movement of goods and persons between Mboki and Obo was also restored.

## **III. Security situation**

17. The security situation across the country remained volatile. The robust and proactive posture of MINUSCA, including through ongoing joint missions to achieve area domination in coordination with national defence forces in Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Ouham and Vakaga Prefectures, contributed to hampering the movements of

armed groups. Those operations resulted in the establishment of protective environments for civilians in those hotspots, followed by a gradual return of State agents and social services, as well as humanitarian and development actors. With the beginning of the dry season, armed groups markedly shifted their tactics. They targeted isolated positions and patrols of the national defence and security forces, while also committing acts of illegal taxation, extortion and kidnapping against civilians. Fuel shortages and higher prices resulted in increased social tensions and restricted the movement of national defence and security forces to conduct security operations.

18. Between 4 October 2022 and 1 February 2023, 21 explosive ordnance-related incidents were reported, including the first confirmed use of an improvised explosive device, on 26 October, in Carnot, Mambéré-Kadéï Prefecture, killing the alleged perpetrator and injuring one civilian. On 28 November, three such devices detonated in and around a camp of national armed forces and other security personnel near Bossangoa, Ouham Prefecture. On 21 January, in Ndélé, the position of other security personnel was reported to have been attacked by a suspected unmanned aircraft, damaging a helicopter. Perpetrators remain unidentified. Referring to the evolving security situation, the Minister of National Defence and Reconstruction of the Army issued a communiqué on 3 February suspending all unmanned aerial system flights in the country until further notice, except for those owned by the national defence and security forces, which resulted in the restriction of the MINUSCA unmanned aerial system operations.

19. As at 9 January 2023, 314 security violations of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation had been recorded, a decrease from 431 during the previous reporting period. Most of the violations targeted civilians (225), followed by illegal military activities (61), restrictions of movement (20) and obstruction of State institutions, humanitarian organizations or the United Nations (8). The Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique perpetrated the highest number of violations (92), followed by the national defence and internal security forces and other security personnel (71), Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (55), anti-balaka (43), the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (41), and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (12).

20. In the west, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation operated mostly in Lim-Pendé and Ouham-Pendé Prefectures, while anti-balaka remained active in Ouham, Ouham-Fafa and Nana-Mambéré Prefectures. These Coalition des patriotes pour le changement-affiliated armed groups continued their attempt to gain access to mining sites, committing exactions, including the kidnapping of civilians and members of non-governmental organizations, while attacking national defence forces. On 13 October, in Ndiba Moelle, Nana-Mambéré Prefecture, anti-balaka attacked the mining sites in Gbembo, killing two civilians and injuring four others. On 19 October, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation attacked a position of the national defence force in Mann, Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, injuring two soldiers and one civilian. The national defence and security forces subsequently conducted an operation in the village of Garo, Ouham-Fafa Prefecture, killing four armed combatants.

21. From 12 to 19 December, other security personnel conducted operations at five mining sites around Kouki, Ouham Prefecture, reportedly killing 12 suspected armed combatants and one civilian. On 7 January, unidentified armed combatants attacked a detachment of the national defence forces in Yenga, Nana-Mambéré Prefecture, killing two soldiers and injuring two civilians.

22. On 23 December, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation attacked a convoy of the national defence forces in Zougbe Nassala, Nana-Mambéré Prefecture, near the main supply route, killing two soldiers and injuring three others. On 21 January, Retour,

réclamation et réhabilitation combatants attacked the Beloko customs office, killing two soldiers and one other security personnel and injuring one civilian. Seven vehicles and 23 trucks containing goods parked in the customs compound were burned during the incident. On 24 January, in Besson, Nana-Mambéré Prefecture, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation combatants attacked a position of the national defence and security forces, killing one soldier and one internal security force.

23. The presence of Chadian individuals claiming to be members of the so-called Révolutionnaires tchadiens sudistes has been reported since October in Benerme, Lim-Pendé Prefecture. This development adds to the challenge of border control between the Central African Republic and Chad, including incidents between Chadian and Central African security forces over the past two years.

24. In the centre of the Central African Republic, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique increased movements and operations in Ouaka and Basse-Kotto Prefectures. The beginning of the dry season was marked by robberies, including of humanitarian convoys, acts of intimidation and attacks against national defence forces. Despite operations by national defence forces and other security personnel, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique maintained control, establishing checkpoints and collecting taxes, in Zangba Sub-Prefecture, which is in a strategic area for trade in weapons and ammunition with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following the launch of joint missions by national defence and security forces and MINUSCA to achieve area domination and the establishment of a MINUSCA temporary operating base on 22 October in Gbada, Basse-Kotto Prefecture, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique partially withdrew from Zangba, adopting evasive tactics to avoid direct confrontation and dispersing its combatants along the Bambari-Alindao axis. Between 10 and 17 December, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique attacked national defence forces positions in Boyo, Bokolobo, Lioto and Ngakobo, Ouaka Prefecture. MINUSCA established a temporary operating base in Bokolobo on 13 December and conducted robust patrolling in the area to protect civilians.

25. At the end of December, the national defence forces and other security personnel extended their presence around Ndélé, Bamingui-Bangoran Prefecture, dispersing armed combatants affiliated with the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique towards Vakaga Prefecture and the border with Chad.

26. In the east, there were growing tensions related to the presence of Arab Misseriya combatants in Am Dafok Sub-Prefecture. Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique combatants from Haute-Kotto Prefecture moved north to Vakaga Prefecture and were also reported in Ndiffa and Gordil.

27. Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique combatants were also observed moving from Haute-Kotto Prefecture to Vakaga Prefecture, seemingly reorganizing around mining sites and along the border areas for resupply. The town of Tissi-Fongoro, located at the intersection of the borders with Chad and the Sudan, was identified as one of their main assembly points. A concentration of armed combatants from the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, RPRC, the Parti pour le rassemblement centrafricain and Arab Misseriya was observed in the Vakaga Prefecture. On 28 December, there was a meeting between Central African and Sudanese military representatives of the tripartite force, following which the border between the two countries was closed on 2 January.

28. In Bangui, the security situation remained relatively calm, while recorded criminal incidents increased to 2,615, compared with 2,583 in the previous reporting period. Since the end of November, national defence and security forces with other security personnel have conducted patrols and search operations in several neighbourhoods. On 16 December, the Head of the Russian House Cultural Centre was injured in the detonation of a parcel bomb. The number of fire incidents in Bangui

increased as a result of the emergence, owing to fuel shortages, of parallel markets and illegal or unauthorized fuel depots. The national curfew from 12 to 5 a.m. remained in effect.

#### **IV. Regional engagement**

29. From 30 November to 1 December, in Luanda, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic took part in a high-level meeting with special representatives and special envoys working on the Central African region to develop a common strategic vision to enhance the United Nations engagement in the subregion. The meeting resulted in the identification of key priority areas for concerted actions, including on the effective management of natural resources and the continued mobilization of regional and international support to advance the peace process in the Central African Republic.

#### **V. Humanitarian situation**

30. The humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate, as a result of the cumulative impact of conflict, displacement, rising commodity prices and limited access to basic services. In 2023, 3.4 million Central Africans, or 56 per cent of the population, are projected to need humanitarian assistance, while three out of five do not have access to safe drinking water and sanitation. A high level of acute food insecurity persisted, with 2.7 million people in an emergency or crisis situation from September 2022 to March 2023, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, and a risk of their number increasing to 3 million during the lean season, from April to August 2023, if the necessary assistance is not provided. A total 641,500 Central Africans are at risk of starvation, in a country where 40 per cent of children suffer from chronic malnutrition.

31. Violence continued to trigger displacement: one out of five Central Africans is either internally displaced or a refugee. As at 1 February, 515,665 Central Africans were internally displaced, while 740,833 had taken refuge in neighbouring countries. The crisis has had a devastating human cost, with 23,644 cases of gender-based violence recorded in 2022, a more than 100 per cent increase compared with 2021.

32. Humanitarian personnel continue to be targeted. In 2022, at least one security incident affected humanitarian workers or property every two days, including one aid worker killed and 24 injured. While the reported security incidents decreased by half, from 396 in 2021 to 179 in 2022, the decline can be partially attributed to the restricted mobility of humanitarian actors caused by periods of fuel shortages. Thefts, robberies, lootings and threats accounted for 68 per cent of the incidents, while 31 per cent were cases of obstruction of humanitarian access.

33. As at 1 February, 15 per cent of the \$466 million required to provide live-saving assistance to 2.4 million people, in accordance with the 2023 humanitarian response plan, had been mobilized, leaving a funding gap of \$396 million. In 2022, the humanitarian community provided multisectoral assistance to 1.9 million people.

#### **VI. Protection of civilians**

34. Armed groups shifted their tactics after many had been dislodged from their strongholds. They increasingly targeted national defence and security forces, while continuing to attack civilians, including herders, and to target villages, mining sites and commercial and humanitarian convoys. At the start of the transhumance period,

in October, national defence forces and other security personnel conducted operations against Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation in Ouham and Ouham-Pendé Prefectures and the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique in Basse-Kotto and Ouaka Prefectures, which resulted in the displacement of civilians and obstacles to freedom of movement and humanitarian access. The Mission took steps to decrease threats to civilians in identified hotspots by deploying joint missions to achieve area domination. Those operations forced armed combatants to withdraw and contributed to enhancing the population's safety and freedom of movement, including by repairing broken bridges.

35. The presence of MINUSCA in Ouanda Djallé, Vakaga Prefecture, and Sam Ouandja, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, facilitated the return of displaced persons. The Mission, including through the implementation of community violence reduction projects, fostered a conducive environment for the restoration of social cohesion. Notably, MINUSCA, in coordination with the Government, launched a community violence reduction project in Sam Ouandja, which included the construction of two primary schools and one secondary school and the digging of watering holes.

36. The Mission continued to strengthen the effectiveness of its early warning and response mechanisms, including through collaboration between uniformed and civilian mission personnel. In November, MINUSCA held workshops for national defence and security forces and its own uniformed personnel in Bambari, Birao and Kaga Bandoro, to enhance collaboration in the protection of civilians.

37. During the reporting period, MINUSCA trained 628 peacekeepers in practical explosive ordnance threat mitigation operations and conducted awareness-raising sessions on explosive ordnance risk for 57 MINUSCA personnel and humanitarian actors and 7,501 civilians, including 3,913 women, in local communities.

## **VII. Extension of State authority and the rule of law**

### **Extension of State authority**

38. The presence and capacity of local officials in the regions and prefectures continued to improve with support from MINUSCA and other partners. As at 1 February, 141 (or 81 per cent) of 174 local officials (prefects, sub-prefects and secretaries-general of prefectures and sub-prefectures) were deployed to their duty stations outside Bangui. Furthermore, 128 civil servants and State agents were deployed across the country during the reporting period, reaching 4,549 in 2022, an increase from 3,418 in 2021. MINUSCA supported the training and deployment of central inspectors from the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Local Development to improve the quality control of State services. MINUSCA also supported the nationwide dissemination of the two decentralization laws, in collaboration with the Government, the World Bank and UNDP. In December 2022, for the first time since its adoption in 2017, the Government allocated \$820,000 from the national budget to the National Strategy for the Restoration of State Authority.

### **Security sector reform**

39. On 15 November, the national authorities, with support from MINUSCA, launched the process to develop a national defence policy, updating the national defence plan of 2017. The new policy is aimed at reaffirming the national strategic priorities to establish a garrison army.

40. In line with the priority areas of the joint road map of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, MINUSCA facilitated and advised an interministerial consultative process on the development of a national policy on the management of border areas. On 30 January, the Minister of Territorial

Administration, Decentralization and Local Development endorsed the technical provisions of the document, which delineate the responsibilities of the various national security forces in border management.

41. MINUSCA provided technical and logistical support to inspections of the national defence forces in Bangassou and Ndélé conducted by the Army Inspectorate General to document their deployment conditions. On 21, 22 and 24 November, the National Assembly, with support from MINUSCA, held a follow-up workshop on budgetary control of the security sector for parliamentarians, to raise awareness of their role in the democratic control of that sector.

#### **National defence and internal security forces**

42. As at 1 February, 6,941 internal security forces personnel, comprising 3,602 police officers, including 902 women, and 3,339 gendarmes, including 541 women, were deployed across the country, including 5,175 who remained in Bangui. MINUSCA is supporting the ongoing process to recruit 500 police officers and 500 gendarmes. MINUSCA and UNDP supported the training of 76 police officers, including 10 women, and 67 gendarmes, including 13 women, on such issues as community policing, judicial police, conduct and discipline, and gender-based and conflict-related sexual violence.

43. MINUSCA continued to support the implementation of the national strategy and action plan of the National Commission for the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. As at 1 February, national authorities and MINUSCA had conducted 54 quality assurance assessment visits to weapons and ammunition storage facilities of the national defence and internal security forces in Bambari, Bangui, Damara, Grimari and Sibut. In addition, MINUSCA trained 11 members of the national defence and security forces in Bambari on weapons and ammunition management and undertook 11 technical assistance initiatives in Bambari, Damara, Grimari and Sibut.

#### **Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation**

44. From 11 to 15 October, in Bria and Sam Ouandja, 27 combatants from armed groups affiliated with the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement were disarmed and demobilized by the Government's mobile team. During the operations, 20 war weapons, 2,703 rounds of ammunition, two rockets and two propellers were collected. In mid-December, in Markounda, during a similar operation, six combatants, comprising four anti-balaka/Mokom individuals and two individuals from the Révolution et justice/Sayo Branch, were disarmed and demobilized, and six weapons of war were collected.

45. On 15 November, the Minister of State in charge of Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation and the Follow-up to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic convened a meeting with international partners to discuss the gaps in the funding of socioeconomic reintegration for demobilized combatants, including livelihood opportunities. A socioeconomic reintegration project is ongoing for the residual and the most recent caseloads of demobilized ex-combatants. As at 1 February, a total of 764 ex-combatants had been profiled and were participating in training activities in Bangui (82), Birao (86), Bossembele and Bouar (72), Bria (295), Markounda (102) and Ouanda Djallé (127).

46. Community violence reduction activities for 2022–2023, targeted at 4,300 beneficiaries, were launched in Bangui and in Bamingui-Bangoran, Haut-Kotto, Kémo, Mbomou, Nana-Gébrizi, Nana-Mambéré, Ouham and Vakaga Prefectures. As at 1 February, 3,880 beneficiaries, including 1,885 women, were registered for access



to livelihood and other activities, including vocational trainings, cash-for-work activities in community projects and start-up income-generating activities.

### **Justice and the rule of law**

47. On 7 December, the Bangui Court of Appeals closed its second criminal session of 2022. Of the 25 cases on the docket, 21 were heard, including 11 cases of sexual violence, leading to a total of 17 convictions. The Court tried one case of violence against peacekeepers and acquitted the defendant as he was a minor at the time of the incident. As at 1 February, 25 investigations by national judicial authorities into attacks against peacekeepers were ongoing. On 28 November, a presidential decree granted pardons to minors in detention as a protective measure and to alleviate prison overcrowding.

48. Between 2 October and 1 February, MINUSCA transferred to national authorities six individuals who had been arrested in Bangassou and Birao locations, including through urgent temporary measures.

49. The functioning of courts and tribunals outside Bangui was temporarily disrupted in early October until personnel were deployed to their new assigned locations. As at 1 February, 47 per cent of judicial personnel were in their posts outside Bangui. Magistrates resisted their deployment to their assigned jurisdictions, citing insecurity and a lack of sufficient housing.

50. On 31 October, the Special Criminal Court delivered its first verdict and found three *Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation* combatants guilty of war crimes (murder and humiliating and degrading treatment) and crimes against humanity (murder and other inhumane acts) for their role in the massacre of at least 46 civilians in May 2019 in Koundjouli and Limouna, Ouham-Pendé Prefecture. The Court also convicted one of them for rapes perpetrated by his subordinates, both as a war crime and as a crime against humanity, on the basis of his command responsibility. The verdict has been appealed.

51. On 9 January, the President promulgated the law renewing the mandate of the Special Criminal Court until October 2028. MINUSCA assisted in drafting the law and strongly advocated its adoption. At least six individuals indicted for international crimes by the Court were arrested during the reporting period. As at 1 February, a total of 22 individuals had been indicted by the Court since October 2018.

52. Several prisons outside Bangui lack sufficient security as a result of the continued strike of 145 civilian prison officers who have not yet been incorporated in the government payroll.

## **VIII. Human rights and the fight against impunity**

53. Between 2 October and 1 February, MINUSCA documented and verified 380 incidents, representing 608 human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law that had affected 1,619 victims comprising 1,317 men, 96 women, 125 children (84 boys, 39 girls and two unidentified children), 26 unidentified civilians and 55 groups of collective victims, and caused 140 conflict-related civilian deaths. This represents a 5 per cent decrease in the number of incidents, a 3 per cent decrease in the number of violations and a 4 per cent increase in the number of victims compared with the previous reporting period (402 incidents, 625 violations and 1,552 victims). During the reporting period, MINUSCA documented a resurgence of cases of arbitrary arrests and detentions linked to search and military operations by national defence and security forces conducted in areas primarily populated by Fulani and Muslim communities.

54. Armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation were allegedly responsible for 35 per cent of the total number of violations and abuses during the reporting period. MINUSCA documented 214 human rights abuses allegedly perpetrated by armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement, which affected 425 victims, including 323 men, 41 women, 27 children (15 boys and 12 girls) and three adults of unknown sex. This represents a 42 per cent decrease in the number of victims compared with the previous reporting period (730 victims). During the reporting period, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation appeared to be the main perpetrators of human rights abuses, in particular in the western sector.

55. State agents were allegedly responsible for 58 per cent of the documented violations during the reporting period. MINUSCA documented 351 violations allegedly perpetrated by State agents, 61 of which were allegedly perpetrated by other security personnel. They affected 1,109 victims, including 947 men, 43 women, 60 boys, 14 girls and one child and 23 adults of unknown sex. This represents a 25 per cent increase in the number of violations and a 41 per cent increase in the number of victims compared with the previous reporting period (281 violations and 788 victims). MINUSCA documented 145 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention affecting 763 victims, the Fulani community being the most affected, especially in the centre and in the east of the country. Detention conditions remained extremely poor in most facilities, with limited access to courts, ablutions, health care and food.

56. During the reporting period, MINUSCA continued to monitor hate speech and incitement to violence linked to the political and security situation. Individuals, political parties and associations opposed to or critical of the Government were victims of threats, intimidation, house searches and police harassment; their personal details were also published online, prompting acts of violence against them. Women faced threats, including of sexual violence, or saw their personal details and photographs of their children published on social media. During the reporting period, MINUSCA, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, continued to engage with major social media companies and established a procedure to report on those who spread hate speech and incitement to violence on their platforms.

### **Transitional justice**

57. As at 1 February, the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission held 10 workshops, five in Bangui and one each in Baoro, Bouar, Carnot, Kaga Bandoro and Mongoumba, to raise awareness of its mandate. The workshops were attended by 400 participants, including 161 women, comprising religious leaders, students, representatives of civil society, including women organizations, and community leaders, who were invited to assist the Commission with, inter alia, the referral of cases and victims.

### **Conflict-related sexual violence**

58. Between 2 October and 1 February, MINUSCA documented 29 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, representing 30 violations, mostly rape, against 44 survivors (14 women, two men, 27 girls and one group of collective victims). In addition to those verified violations, MINUSCA was investigating 10 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 16 victims.

59. Armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation were allegedly responsible for 11 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, representing 12 violations and 16 victims. Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation was the main perpetrator, with seven cases affecting 10 victims, including four girls.

Another armed group that is not a signatory to the Political Agreement, the Lord's Resistance Army, was responsible for two cases, affecting 11 girls. During the period under review, 13 girls were subjected to sexual slavery by the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation and Lord's Resistance Army armed groups, while the former committed multiple gang rapes, often against vulnerable girls. National defence and security forces were allegedly responsible for 15 cases affecting 17 victims. Among them, national defence forces, whether alone or with other security personnel, were responsible for most cases, with 11 cases affecting five women, one man and seven girls. Ouham-Pendé Prefecture had the highest number of reported conflict-related sexual violence incidents, with eight cases representing nine violations, while Haut-Mbomou documented the highest number of victims (two women and 11 girls).

60. On 22 December, 77 cases were submitted to the Special Criminal Court following investigations conducted by the national joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and children, supported by MINUSCA, UNDP and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. The investigations focused on conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique in Haute-Kotto and Mbomou Prefectures.

#### **Children and armed conflict**

61. Between 2 October and 31 January, the country task force on monitoring and reporting verified 97 grave violations against children committed by armed groups (78), national defence and security forces (10) and unidentified armed actors (9). Grave violations included the recruitment and use of children (31), killing (3), maiming (5), rape (19), abduction (31) and the denial of humanitarian access (8). In 2022, children accounted for 50 per cent of civilian victims of explosive remnants of war, compared with 6 per cent in 2021.

62. The Lord's Resistance Army factions were responsible for 53 per cent of the violations (51). They abducted, recruited and used 20 children (12 girls and eight boys). All 12 girls were victims of sexual violence. Two of the girls escaped during the reporting period. On 14 November, local authorities and peace committee members from Zemio, Haut-Mbomou Prefecture, met "Doctor" Achaye, commander of a Lord's Resistance Army splinter group, to advocate the release of children. On 23 November, the task force visited his camp and registered 18 children (10 girls and eight boys). Advocacy for their release is ongoing. MINUSCA continues to engage with the Government for the group's rapid disarmament.

## **IX. Economic situation**

63. The combined impact of global supply chain disruptions and rising oil and fuel prices on the international market placed further pressure on the already fragile Central African economy, leading to fuel shortages and inflation. As a result, the Government significantly increased the fuel prices in the country at the beginning of January, including for gasoline (by 50.3 per cent) and diesel (by 70 per cent), which may exacerbate the already difficult living conditions of the population. Meanwhile, international financial support for the Central African Republic continued to decline, putting pressure on the country's public finances.

64. The new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023–2027) was signed on 12 December by the United Nations and the Government, in the presence of representatives of technical and financial partners, the private sector, civil society and faith-based organizations, among others. The stakeholders approved the Framework as the basis for their cooperation and expressed commitment

to the implementation of the agreed priority areas, including the promotion of peace, prosperity and partnership, the preservation of natural heritage and the advancement of the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

## **X. United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic**

### **Military and police component and civilian personnel**

65. As at 1 February, the military component of MINUSCA had deployed 13,930 troops, of which 7 per cent are women, of an authorized strength of 14,400 personnel, including 406 staff officers (101 women) and 145 military observers (47 women), including one explosive ordnance disposal reserve platoon. The MINUSCA police component had deployed 2,987 personnel (13.72 per cent women) of an authorized strength of 3,020 personnel, comprised of 571 individual police officers, including 139 women, and 2,416 personnel, including 271 women, in 14 formed police units and one protection support unit. Of a total of 3,690 troops and police authorized under Security Council resolution [2566 \(2021\)](#), 3,179 had been deployed, including the full deployment of the police reinforcement in January. A total of 1,498 civilian personnel (28 per cent women), comprising 632 international staff, 580 national staff and 286 United Nations Volunteers, and 103 government-provided correctional personnel were serving with MINUSCA, representing 90 per cent of the 1,671 approved positions.

### **Status-of-forces agreement**

66. Between 2 October and 1 February, MINUSCA recorded 17 violations of the status-of-forces agreement, compared with five incidents recorded during the previous reporting period. Most violations were restrictions of freedom of movement, unauthorized searches of properties and arrest and detentions of United Nations personnel.

67. During the period under review, several United Nations personnel were arrested or detained. On 6 December, in Bangui, one staff member was detained by the gendarmerie; on 15 December, in Bangui, Mine Action Service contractors were arrested and held in detention for eight days with no charges brought against them; on 22 December, in Birao, two MINUSCA staff members were briefly arrested by national defence forces and other security personnel.

68. The increase in violations of the status-of-forces agreement was partly due to obstructions of MINUSCA patrols by national defence forces, especially in December 2022. The violations decreased in January, following discussions between the Mission's senior leadership and the Government, including with the President and the Prime Minister. MINUSCA and the Government continued to work together towards full compliance with the status-of-forces agreement.

69. I welcome the Government's lift of the ban on night flights for medical and casualty evacuations and to support MINUSCA or national security and defence forces engaged in operations. The requirement to notify the appropriate authority 48 hours in advance of flights related to training for pilots is maintained.

### **Safety and security of United Nations personnel**

70. Between 2 October and 1 February, 206 security incidents involving United Nations personnel were recorded, including direct attacks, threats, criminal acts, robberies, detentions and traffic accidents, representing a decrease from 272 security incidents reported in the previous report. Six personnel died during the reporting

period, one during a fight, one shot dead by armed individuals and four of illness. Eight personnel were injured, including one in a shooting incident, two in an assault and five in traffic accidents. Three personnel were medically evacuated. Two armed attacks, one armed robbery, 12 cases of theft, 68 road traffic accidents and 11 fire incidents were reported.

71. On 24 November, in Obo, Haut-Mbomou Prefecture, a MINUSCA contingent detachment in charge of securing MINUSCA air operations at the airfield discovered the body of one of its soldiers at that location. The personal weapon and ammunition of the deceased were missing. The investigation is in progress; three suspects have been identified. This incident brought the total number of cases of crimes against peacekeepers under investigation to 25, including two cases currently ready for trial, one of which is on the docket of the ongoing criminal session of the Bangui Court of Appeal.

### **Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse**

72. Between 1 September and 31 December, MINUSCA recorded 12 new allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Five cases related to events that had taken place in 2022, while the remaining concerned incidents that had taken place between 2015 and 2021. The allegations involved military personnel from five different troop-contributing countries and five civilian personnel. The Mission referred 32 victims, including four children, to humanitarian partners for appropriate medical, psychological and protection assistance. Six allegations of other serious misconduct, including prohibited conduct, fraud and theft that took place in 2022, were also reported and referred for investigation.

73. In coordination with the United Nations country team, MINUSCA reinforced assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, including by strengthening the role of the Senior Victims' Rights Officer. The Humanitarian Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Working Group put in place 48 victim referral pathways, disseminated across 88 organizations, and developed a mapping of complaints and feedback mechanisms. The use of the Mission's local sexual exploitation and abuse prevention and response networks and the humanitarian community feedback mechanisms allowed for greater geographical coverage and increased the number of entry points for reporting alleged cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, helping to optimize outreach and improving the channelling of new complaints through the appropriate reporting lines.

### **Support considerations**

74. MINUSCA increased its renewable energy consumption by completing the installation of two solar photovoltaic systems in two of its bases in Bangui, on 7 July and 11 September 2022, respectively. MINUSCA continued to improve the conditions of temporary operating bases and intensified the monitoring of wastewater risks and the implementation of actions to address them.

### **Performance optimization**

75. In keeping with Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities, MINUSCA, with support from the United Headquarters, continued efforts to optimize its performance, including by enhancing the accountability of the uniformed component. In the context of rapidly evolving security dynamics in the country, MINUSCA continued to adjust its footprint and posture, including by enhancing its mobility with the aim to better respond to the shifting tactics of the armed groups, combined with the optimization of its bridging capacity. Subsequently, MINUSCA closed nine temporary operating bases in the centre and the west of the country during the reporting period to

accommodate its robust, decisive, pre-emptive and mobile posture, in close consultations with national stakeholders and without prejudice to the provision of humanitarian assistance, building on community-driven early warning arrangements. From October to February, MINUSCA carried out of a total of 31,016 patrols to protect civilians, an increase from 7,471 compared with the previous reporting period. The Mission will continue its protection of civilians work in the centre and the west through long-range patrols and other preventive measures.

76. MINUSCA also sought to improve its strategic communication as an enabler to facilitate its mandate implementation and to enhance understanding of the its role and mandate by the host Government and local populations across the country. To proactively address misinformation and disinformation targeted at MINUSCA, the Mission sponsored a training session on the peace process and fight against misinformation and disinformation, held by the High Council for Communication for 25 representatives of media organizations, while also regularly organizing joint press conferences in which the heads of field offices and local authorities participate. From October to February, Guira FM launched a campaign in Bangui and across the country against disinformation, hosting interactive programmes with the population and local leaders.

77. MINUSCA continued to monitor traditional and social media platforms on a daily basis to assess popular perception. Positive perception of MINUSCA increased from 68 per cent of positive perception in the previous reporting period to 86 per cent. Of the 145 posts sampled in December, 122 showed a positive perception of MINUSCA, against 23 negative or hostile postings. The continuous engagement of MINUSCA with media professionals, combined with its outreach initiatives on its new mandate involving civil society organizations and community-based groups across the country, contributed to this positive trend. Other regular avenues for raising awareness on the mandate and countering disinformation included dedicated radio programmes explaining the MINUSCA interventions and rebutting falsehoods about the Mission.

78. To enhance the safety and mobility of United Nations personnel and facilitate the deployment of patrols in areas of potential explosive threats, MINUSCA delivered explosive ordnance risk awareness-raising sessions to its personnel and conducted explosive ordnance threat mitigation training for force units. The Mission prioritized improving information-gathering and data exploitation mechanisms to better monitor trends in and the evolution of the explosive threat and proactively address it.

79. From 15 to 29 October, MINUSCA completed operational readiness assessments for five contingents (three infantry and two engineering units), concluding that four exceeded and one met the established standards. The contingents displayed high standards in all aspects of administration, civilian-military coordination, communications, intelligence, logistic, operations and training, and recommendations were made to improve specific aspects. MINUSCA also conducted 17 performance assessments of 13 formed police units. All units were deemed satisfactory, including in terms of command and control, health, mandate, protection of civilians, training and welfare.

## **XI. Financial considerations**

80. The General Assembly, by its resolution [76/282](#) of 29 June 2022, appropriated the amount of \$1,074.4 million for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. As at 2 February 2023, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for MINUSCA amounted to \$459.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to

\$2,973.6 million. Reimbursement of the costs of troop and formed police personnel, as well as for contingent-owned equipment, has been made for the period up to 30 September 2022, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

## **XII. Observations**

81. An inclusive and open political dialogue remains critical to advance the peace process in a manner that has a positive impact on the lives of the Central African people. I welcome the leadership of the Government to implement the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation through the joint road map of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The dissolution of four armed groups, which remain committed to the Political Agreement, is commendable. I call upon the Government and remaining armed groups to engage in good faith to accelerate the implementation of the peace process.

82. As the initiatives to change the Constitution continue to dominate the political scene, I am concerned about the deepening political polarization, which may risk to undermine the country's fragile political gains. I therefore reiterate the urgent need to create an environment conducive to an open and meaningful dialogue and an inclusive political process. Such dialogue should further the aspiration of the Central African population for a durable peace. I call upon the Government to demonstrate leadership in maintaining such space and finding solutions to move forward with the political and peace processes. The support of the guarantors and facilitators of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, as well as that of international, regional and subregional partners, remains critical. MINUSCA will continue to use its convening authority to nurture regional dynamics to facilitate the Government's efforts to mobilize its partners for peace in the Central African Republic.

83. I welcome the new electoral calendar for local elections and the resumption of electoral preparations enabled through national funding. I call upon the national authorities to ensure that ongoing electoral operations are rooted in an inclusive and credible political dialogue involving all electoral stakeholders to create an environment conducive to peaceful elections that can contribute to widening the democratic space with a stronger participation of women. I reiterate my request to all the country's international and development partners to provide financial and technical support to ensure the continuation of electoral operations beyond voter registration.

84. While the security situation remains concerning, the efforts of MINUSCA and the national security forces continue to make a difference. It is important that the State quickly establish a protective environment in areas where the joint efforts of the Government and MINUSCA have forced armed groups to leave. Stabilizing conflict-affected areas in a sustainable manner requires the restoration of State presence, allowing the resumption of service delivery and the restoration of livelihoods. These gains, however, remain fragile, as armed groups continue to target the population and use explosive ordnance indiscriminately. It is essential that the Government act soon on its commitment to engaging with all active armed groups to bring them back into the peace process. I call upon all the remaining armed groups to stop all violence and recommit to the peace process.

85. The security of the Central African Republic and that of the region are mutually dependent. Concerted regional efforts are required to address the deterioration of the security situation in the border areas. I urge the Government to redouble its effort to revitalize the tripartite force, comprised of troops from the Central African Republic, Chad and the Sudan, to address the persistent insecurity in the areas bordering Chad and the Sudan, while also taking steps to re-activate the bilateral commissions with

both countries. I also call upon the region to maintain and increase its support for the Central African peace process.

86. Progress on the dialogue with the remaining armed groups within the framework of the peace process remains critical to advance the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. I welcome advances made by the Government with MINUSCA support in strengthening the democratic oversight of security sector institutions, which remains essential for the sustainable redeployment of the national defence and internal security forces. I call upon the Government, with the support of development and financial partners, to consolidate the gains in disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation through the provision of long-term socioeconomic opportunities to ex-combatants and local communities.

87. The worsening economic situation and its impact on the population is concerning. I welcome the signing of the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and call upon all stakeholders, under the leadership of the Central African Government, to accelerate their unified support for recovery and development programmes to support the restoration of State authority. Government leadership is essential to foster coherent long-term socioeconomic programmes in priority geographical areas. I call upon the Government to continue its efforts to create a climate of trust to enhance the support of all its partners.

88. I welcome the renewal of the mandate of the Special Criminal Court and the holding of the second criminal session of the Bangui Court of Appeals, demonstrating progress in the fight against impunity. It is critical to build on those commendable achievements and improve the functioning of the courts outside Bangui to guarantee equal access to justice for all.

89. I remain deeply concerned about continued violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated by all parties to the conflict. I condemn acts of violence that affect or are targeted at the civilian population and undermine humanitarian access. I call upon all parties to take immediate action to stop the violence and urge the Government to investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute any such incidents.

90. I condemn any act of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel and reaffirm my commitment to zero tolerance for any such incidents. MINUSCA and the United Nations country team continue to enhance prevention and response measures. I encourage strong system-wide efforts to address such wrongs.

91. I am deeply disturbed by the continued threats to the safety and security of United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers. I commend humanitarian actors for their continued efforts to deliver life-saving assistance to those in need, despite the risks. I strongly condemn the continued targeting of humanitarian personnel performing their duties and urge all parties to the conflict to strictly abide by international humanitarian law. I equally stress that all attacks against peacekeepers may constitute war crimes, while threats and attacks against humanitarian personnel and assets are violations of international humanitarian law.

92. I welcome the Government's lifting of the ban on night flights for medical and casualty evacuations and its support to MINUSCA and national defence and security forces engaged in operations. However, the flight restrictions imposed on the unmanned aerial system by the Government of the Central African Republic are concerning, as they may undermine the operational capability of MINUSCA, as well as the safety and security of the United Nations personnel. I am equally concerned about hostile incidents involving national defence and internal security forces targeted at MINUSCA. I urge the Government to take concrete steps to end actions



that pose grave risks to the safety and security of peacekeepers or impede their ability to implement their mandate.

93. Lastly, I wish to express my support and deep appreciation to my Special Representative for the Central African Republic, Valentine Rugwabiza, for her continued dedication to the peace process in the Central African Republic. I call upon all stakeholders to provide her with their full support in furtherance of lasting peace, stability and sustainable development. I also thank all MINUSCA personnel; troop- and police-contributing countries and donor countries; regional, multilateral and non-governmental organizations; and all other partners for their invaluable contributions.

## Annex I

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the  
Central African Republic: military and police strength as at 1 February 2023**

Country	Military component			Total	Police component	
	Experts on mission	Staff officers	Troops		Formed police units	Individual police officers
Argentina	–	1	–	1	–	–
Bangladesh	12	33	1 410	1 455	–	3
Benin	4	3	–	7	–	40
Bhutan	2	5	180	187	–	–
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	2	–	5	–	–
Brazil	3	7	–	10	–	2
Burkina Faso	–	5	–	5	–	66
Burundi	7	12	745	764	–	–
Cambodia	4	6	219	229	–	–
Cameroon	3	7	750	760	320	13
Colombia	2	–	–	2	–	–
Congo	3	8	–	11	180	1
Côte d'Ivoire	–	2	–	2	–	48
Czechia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Djibouti	–	–	–	–	180	15
Ecuador	–	2	–	2	–	–
Egypt	7	26	989	1 022	140	20
France	–	7	–	7	–	2
Gabon	–	1	–	1	–	–
Gambia	3	5	–	8	–	13
Ghana	4	9	–	13	–	1
Guatemala	2	2	–	4	–	–
Guinea	–	–	–	–	–	18
India	–	2	–	2	–	–
Indonesia	2	9	215	226	140	19
Jordan	3	7	–	10	–	68
Kazakhstan	–	2	–	2	–	–
Kenya	7	10	–	17	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mali	–	–	–	–	–	28
Mauritania	8	8	450	466	319	–
Mexico	1	1	–	2	–	–
Morocco	5	25	751	781	–	–
Nepal	4	16	1 219	1 239	–	–
Niger	–	6	–	6	–	32
Nigeria	–	5	–	5	–	3
Pakistan	8	31	1 274	1 313	–	–
Paraguay	2	2	–	4	–	–

<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>
Peru	6	9	219	234	–	–
Philippines	2	1	–	3	–	–
Portugal	–	11	215	226	–	5
Republic of Moldova	3	1	–	4	–	–
Romania	–	–	–	–	–	8
Russian Federation	3	11	–	14	–	–
Rwanda	8	29	2 110	2 147	638	52
Senegal	–	12	179	191	499	14
Serbia	2	3	71	76	–	–
Sierra Leone	4	4	–	8	–	–
Spain	–	–	–	–	–	3
Sri Lanka	–	1	145	146	–	–
Sweden	–	–	–	–	–	5
Togo	3	8	–	11	–	30
Tunisia	3	11	760	774	–	51
Türkiye	–	–	–	–	–	11
United Republic of Tanzania	–	6	570	576	–	–
United States of America	–	10	–	10	–	–
Uruguay	–	3	–	3	–	–
Viet Nam	1	7	–	8	–	–
Zambia	6	10	908	924	–	–
Zimbabwe	2	2	–	4	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>13 379</b>	<b>13 930</b>	<b>2 416</b>	<b>571</b>

Map

