



Security Council

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Letter dated 15 May 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

In paragraph 14 of its resolution [2648 \(2022\)](#), the Security Council requested that I, in close consultation with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), including the Mine Action Service and the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, report on the progress achieved by the Central African authorities on the key benchmarks established in the statement by the President of the Security Council dated 9 April 2019 ([S/PRST/2019/3](#)). The benchmarks had been established to serve as a basis for the Council to assess the contribution and relevance of the arms embargo in supporting the relevant aspects of the security sector reform process, the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process, and the management of weapons and ammunition. The present letter serves to provide an update on progress made against the five key benchmarks since my letter dated 14 June 2022 ([S/2022/489](#)).

An assessment team from the United Nations Secretariat visited the Central African Republic from 7 to 11 March 2023. The present letter reflects the consultations of the Secretariat team with the Central African authorities, MINUSCA, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the World Bank, the diplomatic community based in Bangui, and civil society in the Central African Republic, including women's groups.

In response to appeals from the authorities of the Central African Republic, as well as in recognition of the progress made against the benchmarks, the Security Council has made significant adjustments to the arms embargo measures since 2019. Most recently in its resolution [2648 \(2022\)](#), the Council further decided that the arms embargo exemption approval process should no longer apply to supplies of weapons and ammunition or provision of related assistance to the country's security forces, including State civilian law enforcement institutions. At the same time, the Council decided to retain a notification process to inform the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic on deliveries of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment and the provision of related assistance.

The Government of the Central African Republic, while acknowledging the significant easing of the embargo, has continued to appeal for the complete lifting of the arms embargo on the country, most recently during the 9265th meeting of the Security Council, on 21 February 2023. In this regard, national authorities repeated their concerns over the increased arms capacity of armed groups, as well as the



continued presence of foreign combatants. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union, in the communiqué of its 1116th meeting, held on 31 October 2022, with regard to the situation in the Central African Republic and the operations of the African Union Military Observer Mission in the Central African Republic, “reiterate(d) its request to lift the arms embargo to enable the National Defence and Security Forces of the Central African Republic to effectively discharge their constitutional mandate of defending and protecting the country and its citizens”. The Peace and Security Council further encouraged the authorities of the Central African Republic to take the necessary measures to meet the benchmarks to facilitate lifting the embargo. During consultations in the Security Council, the African members commended the Council’s decision to significantly ease the arms embargo. In addition, they welcomed steps taken by the Central African Republic to strengthen its arms and ammunition management system and expressed support for the country’s request for the full lifting of the embargo.

The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic continues to play an essential role in the management of notifications and exemptions relating to the arms embargo. Since the imposition of the embargo on 5 December 2013, the Government of the Central African Republic has submitted a total of 22 exemption requests and 26 notifications to the Committee. Member States and international organizations, including MINUSCA, the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union, have also submitted a total of 73 exemption requests and 125 notifications. To date, the Committee has approved all exemption requests submitted under the framework of the arms embargo. This brings the total number of weapons and rounds of ammunition approved by or notified to the Committee since December 2013 to approximately 28,922 weapons and 34,638,297 rounds of ammunition, an increase of 8,176 weapons and 5,283,668 rounds of ammunition since June 2022. The national armed forces continue to be the primary recipient of weapons and ammunition, followed by the internal security forces (police and gendarmerie).

The progress against the benchmarks achieved by the authorities of the Central African Republic should be assessed in the context of the political, security and socioeconomic developments in the country. As detailed in my progress report submitted to the Council in February ([S/2023/108](#)), the Government of the Central African Republic continued to take steps to enhance its ownership of the peace process, amid persisting political and socioeconomic tensions. This included the defining, in coordination with national and international stakeholders, of modalities and timelines for the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic of 2019 through the joint road map of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. On 6 December 2022, the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin-Archange Touadera chaired a ceremony marking the dissolution of four armed groups of the 14 signatories to the Political Agreement: the Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique, the Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice, the Union des forces républicaines and the Union des forces républicaines fondamentales. On 28 April 2023, the President chaired a second ceremony marking the dissolution of five additional armed groups of the remaining 10 signatories to the Political Agreement: the Séléka rénovée pour la Paix et la Justice, the Révolution et justice-Belanga Branch, the Front Populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique. On 24 March 2023, the Prime Minister, Félix Moloua, with the support of MINUSCA, chaired a meeting to further the implementation of the peace and political process at the local level, which resulted in the revitalization of the local implementation mechanisms for the peace process ([S/2023/108](#)).

The security situation across the country remained volatile. Military confrontations continued, in particular between armed groups affiliated with the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement and the national defence and internal security forces supported by other security personnel. In this context, between 15 June 2022 and 5 April 2023, 30 explosive ordnance-related incidents were reported, including the first confirmed use of an improvised explosive device, as well as the alleged use of uncrewed aerial vehicles. In its midterm report of February 2023 (S/2023/87), the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2648 (2022) highlighted the increasing use of explosive devices, from improvised explosive devices to artisanal airdropped bombs, to conventional anti-vehicle, -tank and -personnel mines. While the perpetrators remain unknown, these incidents mostly targeted national armed forces and other security personnel as well as civilians.

Update on progress achieved on benchmark A

Benchmark A relates to the effective implementation by the Government, within sustainable budgetary resources, of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, and in particular the socioeconomic reintegration of former members of armed groups and the integration of vetted former members of armed groups into all uniformed personnel.

Since my letter dated 14 June 2022, the Government of the Central African Republic has continued its efforts to implement the national programme. The implementation unit of the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme, which was established within the Office of the President of the Republic at the end of 2016, continued to focus its efforts on armed groups committed to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, as well as on dissident factions or elements that had dissociated themselves from the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement and expressed willingness to join the national programme.

Since my previous assessment, disarmament and demobilization activities have been conducted in localities within Haut-Mbomou, Haute-Kotto, Lim-Pendé, Mbomou, Nana-Grébizi, Ouaka and Ouham Prefectures. The operations were carried out between August 2022 and April 2023 and resulted in 431 combatants, including 38 women, eligible for the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme, who were subsequently disarmed and demobilized. In the process, 380 weapons, 25 grenades and other unexploded ordnance and 18,243 rounds of ammunition were collected.

When the pilot project of the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme was being launched in mid-2017, it was estimated that some 5,000 ex-combatants would become eligible. However, following its most recent assessment, the implementation unit of the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme in 2021 increased the caseload target to 7,000, mainly owing to additional combatants joining the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement after December 2020. As of mid-April 2023, a total of 4,308 ex-combatants, including 257 women, have been disarmed and demobilized since the official launch of the national programme in December 2018, which, together with the 439 elements disarmed and demobilized in the pilot phase of mid-2017, brings the overall total to 4,747 elements disarmed and demobilized. A total of 3,168 weapons, 1,617 grenades and other unexploded ordnance, 153 mortar shells, 327 rockets and 157,929 rounds of ammunition were collected.

While some interlocutors raised concerns about possible isolated parallel disarmament activities in conflict zones, the Government of the Central African

Republic highlighted its efforts to address the case of combatants who had been disarmed by the authorities in Bambari in 2022 outside of the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme. From 3 to 6 April, 80 of those combatants, including three women, whose weapons had been retrieved and therefore eligible for the national programme, were disarmed and demobilized. In the process, 66 weapons, 4,569 rounds of ammunition of various calibres and 1 grenade were collected.

The disarmed and demobilized ex-combatants have all been registered regularly, and all received the three-month demobilization and reinsertion allowance on time. National authorities and MINUSCA indicated that the gap in time between the demobilization of combatants and the start of their reintegration process had been reduced consistently, from around 12 to 6 months. As at 1 April, the socioeconomic reintegration of 1,753 ex-combatants, including 125 women, had been completed since the launch of the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme. As of March 2023, 1,059 ex-combatants (of a target of 1,218 elements, including 58 women) were effectively participating in vocational training in Bangassou, Bangui, Birao, Bouar, Bossembele, Bria, Ouanda Djallé, Markounda and Zemio with a view to their socioeconomic reintegration.

Funding for the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme comes primarily from international donors. In this framework, the United States of America has played a role in supporting the national programme since its inception; the grant provided by the United States to fund disarmament and demobilization activities received a no-cost extension of three months until 30 June 2023. In the meantime, MINUSCA will continue to support disarmament and demobilization activities.

Since 2017, socioeconomic reintegration has been funded by the World Bank through the Reintegration of ex-Combatants Project and the implementation unit of the national programme through its implementing partners, namely, the International Organization for Migration and the Agence d'aide à la coopération technique et au développement, an international non-governmental organization. However, this \$30 million project aimed at reintegrating around 4,000 elements will be completed at the end of June 2023. The Secretariat assessment team was informed that the World Bank was developing a new five-year, \$90 million project on socioeconomic support that will also include continuing support to socioeconomic reintegration for the benefit of ex-combatants and local communities. While it is anticipated that the new project will be approved towards the end of the year, a financial gap is expected in the meantime. National authorities explained to the assessment team that a project proposal for the Peacebuilding Fund was being finalized by the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to bridge the funding gap.

Efforts to integrate ex-combatants into the security sector continued. The National Technical Committee in charge of the integration of ex-combatants into the defence and security forces, established in September 2020, resumed its activities in November 2022. The work of the Committee is also focused on the reincorporation of former defence and security forces members who had joined armed groups. With regard to the selection process to identify ex-combatants who could be integrated into the national security sector, a structured and standardized vetting system has yet to be established.

In the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, the establishment of special mixed security units for an initial transition period of 24 months was envisioned. The units were intended to include around 2,000 elements, with a

composition of 40 per cent government troops and 60 per cent former armed group elements (consisting of approximately 400 ex-combatants, 200 elements from the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and 66 elements from the police and gendarmerie) for each of the three planned units. As of today, ex-combatants from the special mixed security units of Bouar and Paoua have been pre-selected after a medical screening and transferred to Bangui for basic training at Camp Kassai. Upon completion of the training, national authorities indicated that these elements would be integrated into the national defence and internal security forces. Another batch of elements from Ndélé and Birao are being pre-selected to follow the same curriculum as those from the special mixed security units of Bouar and Paoua. Ex-combatants not designated for integration through this process have been selected for socioeconomic reintegration activities supported by the European Union, through the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action. The assessment team was informed that future activities related to special mixed security units will not be pursued owing to lack of resources.

In parallel with the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, MINUSCA continued to implement community violence reduction programmes in operational partnership with the United Nations Office for Project Services. The programmes include activities focused on vocational training, start-up income-generation, awareness-raising of social cohesion, cash for work, and weapons collection. The programmes are targeted at elements affiliated with armed groups who do not meet the eligibility criteria of the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme, young people prone to violence and at high risk of being recruited by armed groups, and other community members, with an emphasis on women.

Since my letter dated 14 June 2022, such programmes have continued to target localities in nine prefectures (Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto, Kémo, Nana-Mambéré, Mbomou, Nana-Grébizi, Ombella-Mpoko, Ouham and Vakaga) and 20 sub-prefectures, plus various districts in Bangui and its outskirts, demonstrating the extension of activities from the capital city to regional capitals and to towns.

As of April 2023, a total of 4,321 beneficiaries, including 2,118 women, were enrolled in ongoing community violence reduction projects across the country. Since the inception of community violence reduction programmes in late 2015, over 30,000 beneficiaries (34 per cent of whom are women) have participated in such programmes, which have also resulted in the collection of 597 weapons, 15,102 artisanal weapons, 28,437 rounds of ammunition and 829 items of unexploded ordnance.

On 24 February, the Prime Minister conducted a joint visit to Sam Ouandja, in Haut-Kotto Prefecture, near the border between the Central African Republic and the Sudan, with representatives of MINUSCA, United Nations specialized agencies and development partners to collectively take stock of early signs of recovery and stabilization in the area since the deployment of MINUSCA peacekeeping contingents in August 2022. The visit represented a milestone in the extension of the State authority of the Central African Republic in an area that had not been visited by government representatives for 20 years. The visit served to highlight the role of community violence reduction activities in strengthening social cohesion and laying the foundations for sustainable peace in the area, through the provision of educational and water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructures, while simultaneously building the vocational skills of target groups. Since December 2022, the community violence reduction programme has launched projects in Sam Ouandja to provide temporary employment opportunities for 800 young people, of whom 60 per cent are women.

Update on progress achieved on benchmark B

Benchmark B relates to the establishment, by the Government of the Central African Republic, of a planning document detailing the needs of the national authorities in terms of weapons and ammunition storage facilities and of the training and vetting of national armed forces and internal security forces for the management of the weapons, ammunition and facilities, as well as in terms of working effectively towards the increase in adequate storage and management capacity and towards the training of national defence and security forces, consistent with the final needs of the national authorities identified in the planning document.

The Government of the Central African Republic produced a planning document in 2019. In the document, the Government estimated that it would need 295 facilities for the storage of 28,826 weapons of different categories and at least 9,492,562 rounds of ammunition, as well as 1,180 trained and vetted personnel responsible for their storage and management, by 2023. During the visit of the Secretariat assessment team, the national authorities indicated that they were in the process of finalizing a new planning document. The document would take into account specific findings of the comprehensive national weapons and ammunition management baseline assessment conducted by authorities of the Central African Republic in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in 2022 and covering the strategic needs and activities for the period 2023–2028. In February, participants in a national workshop further discussed the findings of the 2022 reference baseline follow-up assessment and confirmed a national commitment to continuing to enhance the Government’s regulatory framework on weapons and ammunition management.

Since 2014, MINUSCA has supported the national authorities by building 59 temporary storage facilities for weapons and ammunition and rehabilitating more than 64 additional facilities. Since June 2022, 19 activities aimed at the rehabilitation of weapons and ammunition storage facilities were conducted in 11 locations in the Central African Republic. In addition, the Mine Action Service confirmed that the regional depot in Bouar had been fully reconstructed in December 2022.

During the assessment visit, national authorities indicated that a detailed project for the development and standardization of military infrastructures had existed since June 2021 and covered the building of permanent weapons and ammunition storage facilities as well as the resources needed to implement the project.

During the period under review, MINUSCA, through the Mine Action Service, continued to support activities related to the storage of weapons and ammunitions, as well as the training of personnel on weapons, ammunition and explosive devices management and disposal. During its previous visit to Camp Kassai in 2022, the Secretariat assessment team had observed that not all ammunition and explosives had been properly stored, which represented a risk for the safety of all personnel on site. During this year’s visit, the team observed the building of a security perimeter with a defensive barrier anti-explosion fence around the storage area to address safety concerns. In Camp Kassai, the team visited an ammunition storage facility (the contents of which included obsolete ammunition to be destroyed) and a classroom dedicated to the training of staff on the management of arms, ammunition and explosive devices.

The assessment team observed the strong cooperation between national authorities and the Mine Action Service, for which national authorities have expressed appreciation. Since my letter dated 14 June 2022, a total of 62 quality assessment visits to weapons and ammunition storage facilities have been conducted by the Mine Action Service in Babouoa, Bangui, Bambari, Beloko, Boali, Bouar, Damara, Grimari, Kaga Bandoro, Sibut and Yaloké. The visits are conducted jointly

with representatives of the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and senior commanders of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic.

The Mine Action Service has provided ongoing training on international standards for the management and disposal of weapons, ammunition and explosive devices. Since June 2022, the Service has trained 115 additional members of the national armed forces and internal security forces on weapons and ammunition management. This brings the total number of members of national defence and internal security forces trained in the management of weapons, ammunition and explosive devices to 567 since 2014. Furthermore, in March 2023, the Service delivered various training courses on explosive ordnance disposal to 22 new trainees of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, including one woman.

National authorities explained that the current number of trained personnel assigned to weapons and ammunition management facilities, some 160 elements, was adequate for the needs of the armed forces and internal security forces. They acknowledged the ongoing challenges in ensuring the effective management of trained personnel, which was attributed in part to the lack of career prospects in weapons and ammunition management. However, they were confident that other reforms would allow for better management of staff in terms of career progression, promotion and transfer.

Further to my letter dated 14 June 2022, the Government has yet to establish a standardized procedure in the national armed forces and internal security forces for a specific vetting process to select and evaluate personnel dedicated to the management of weapons and ammunition. During the Secretariat assessment visit, the national authorities indicated that, for the time being, they were relying on the standard vetting process currently in place within the national armed forces.

Update on progress achieved on benchmark C

Benchmark C relates to the finalization, by the Government of the Central African Republic, of an arms registration and management protocol for weapons delivered to its armed forces and internal security forces. It also relates to the establishment of a system of individual receipt of weapons and of a system for applying individual accountability measures in case of loss, theft, or diversion of weapons and for working effectively towards proficiency in arms registration and management and towards investigation in cases in which weapons have been inappropriately managed, in line with national legislation.

The national authorities have continued to work on several decrees to implement law No. 20.021 on the general regime for conventional weapons and their components, parts and ammunition in the Central African Republic, which was promulgated by the President on 7 August 2020. During the reporting period, pending the issuance of the decree on transfers, as envisaged in the law, national authorities continued to apply the technical guidelines adopted in 2019 for the verification of weapons and ammunition entering the country. The National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons explained that the decree and other protocols had not yet been finalized, as the alignment and harmonization of relevant procedures was ongoing.

The authorities of the Central African Republic have made notable progress on the national marking format and the national plan and standards for the tracing of State-owned weapons. During the assessment visit, national authorities indicated that the national marking format had been approved by decree on 7 September 2022. A UNODC-supported pilot project conducted from 8 to 16 September in cooperation with the Mine Action Service resulted in the marking of 510 weapons collected during

the demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme, with specifically assigned marks for the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, police, gendarmerie, customs, water and forestry. The national authorities committed to continuing with the marking process for additional weapons used by the police and gendarmerie.

The implementation unit of the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme informed the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons of its intention to mark all weapons collected through the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme and stored in Camp Mpoko. However, the authorities stressed the need for continued international support in terms of resources to continue the marking of small arms and to finance additional capacity for marking heavy weapons, as well as in terms of resources in the zones of Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria and Sibut, near Bangui. In this context, on 21 March, a third arms-marking machine was donated to the national authorities by the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States. The donation was followed by a three-day training course on arms marking and record keeping for 10 members of the national defence and security forces, including three women.

During its visit to the armoury of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic located at Camp de Roux, the Secretariat assessment team observed that an individualized system was in place for the withdrawal and return of weapons from and to the central armoury. The system includes paper logbooks, in which information on the military staff was recorded, including names, ranks, military service numbers, national identification numbers and the weapons assigned to them.

As previously reported with regard to the establishment of a system for applying individual accountability measures, the assessment team was informed by national authorities that, in the event of the loss or theft of weapons, the Penal Code, the Military Justice Code and the military discipline rules allowed for the application of individual sanctions to ensure accountability. The national authorities highlighted that the Military Justice Code applied to all uniformed personnel of the national armed forces and internal security forces, as well as to their civilian employees, should they commit such acts while performing their official duties.

Update on progress achieved on benchmark D

Benchmark D relates to the completion, by the Government of the Central African Republic, of the operationalization of the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the beginning of the work of the Commission.

The Commission has made progress in implementing the national action plan, including through its role as Chair of the Committee for the Coordination of Mechanisms for the Control and Management of Arms and Ammunition in the Central African Republic, which was established on 26 February 2021. Issues such as the aforementioned national marking format, the pilot marking project and the drafting and oversight of the implementation of relevant decrees are addressed within the framework of the Committee. During the visit, the technical staff of the Commission informed the assessment team that they were preparing the Government's report, due to the Council by 15 May 2023, on the progress achieved on the security sector reform, on the demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation process in line with the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and on the management of weapons and ammunition.

The Commission employs 22 staff members and has been allocated 220 million CFA francs (\$320,608) from the national budget to ensure the implementation of the national action plan. This mainly covers the operational costs of the office and the payment of the staff salaries. Operational activities outlined in the national action plan continue to be financed mostly through funding from international donors.

In 2022, the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons planned to create four new regional offices in Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, and Sibut to facilitate the countrywide implementation of the national action plan on small arms and light weapons. The Commission indicated that staff would soon be deployed to those locations as part of the decentralization of the National Commission but that additional resources would be needed in order to fund their activities, as the Government would only be able to finance operational costs and salaries. MINUSCA planned to support the Commission by providing vehicles and office equipment for the regional offices by June 2023 to a total value of \$249,000. In addition, the National Commission is implementing another awareness-raising campaign for the voluntary surrender of weapons and ammunition by the population, which was launched in Bouar on 10 April 2023.

Update on progress achieved on benchmark E

Benchmark E relates to the establishment of a protocol for the collection and destruction or transfer to the national armed forces or internal security forces of surplus, unregistered or illicitly held weapons and ammunition seized by the national authorities.

The Committee for the Coordination of Mechanisms for the Control and Management of Arms and Ammunition in the Central African Republic has approved a protocol which was jointly signed by the Minister of the Interior and Public Security and the Minister of National Defence and Restructuring of the Army on 26 April 2023.

During the reporting period, the Mine Action Service assisted the national authorities with the disposal of obsolete ammunition, including ammunition collected from armed groups, destroying a total of 36,510 rounds of small arms ammunition (through incineration), 215 rounds of larger-calibre ammunition and 165 rounds of other ammunition since June 2022. A total of 943,575 rounds of ammunition have been destroyed since 2014.

At the regional level, the national authorities met with counterparts from the Sudan in December 2022 in the Vakaga Prefecture to discuss cross-border security matters. Nevertheless, it was stressed during the assessment visit that the responsibility for combating the proliferation of weapons in the region was shared by all concerned States and that the national authorities also relied on their neighbours to prioritize those challenges and cooperate on addressing them, including through the establishment of institutional capacities similar to the National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Conclusions

I would like to express my appreciation to the authorities of the Central African Republic for the cooperation extended to the assessment team from the Secretariat during its visit. I welcome the expressed commitment of the authorities to achieving the five key benchmarks. I also welcome the positive steps taken by the Government to make progress towards meeting the benchmarks with the support of MINUSCA and other regional and international partners. I am encouraged that the five benchmarks have provided a framework for constructive engagement between the national authorities and their partners to support the relevant aspects of the security sector reform, the national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and

repatriation process and the management of weapons and ammunition. I invite the Government to continue its efforts, in cooperation with regional and international partners, in order to make further progress towards the achievement of these benchmarks.

As noted in my previous letters, activities aimed at making progress towards the five benchmarks require significant funding, and I would encourage the international community to continue to support the efforts of the Central African Republic so that it can meet its commitment in this regard. The countries in the region also have a critical role to play in addressing the illicit transfers of arms and ammunition, including explosive ordnance, to the armed groups across borders, and I urge them to step up their efforts to engage in meaningful dialogue to improve the humanitarian and security situation in the Central African Republic. Furthermore, progress within the framework of joint bilateral commissions contributes to ensuring durable border management in the interests of peace and development in the Central African Republic and the wider region.

The Panel of Experts continues to play an important role in reporting on violations of the sanctions measures and identifying the supply routes of seized weapons and ammunition, as well as the suppliers and facilitators of illegal transfers of arms to the armed groups. In this connection, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) can support the Central African Republic and regional States in taking the necessary actions against arms traffickers, some of whom have been named in the reports of the Panel of Experts since 2017.

As the security challenges in the Central African Republic continue to evolve, further efforts in support of the capacities of national authorities in demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation and in weapons and ammunition management will be paramount in reducing the availability, diversion and proliferation of weapons and ammunition fuelling violent conflict, with a view to sustaining gains and bringing lasting peace and stability to the Central African Republic and its people.

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

(Signed) António **Guterres**
