



Security Council

Seventieth year

7578th meeting

Monday, 14 December 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Pressman (United States of America)

Members:

Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
Chad	Mr. Cherif
Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
China	Mr. Shen Bo
France	Mr. Delattre
Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
New Zealand	Mr. Taula
Nigeria	Mr. Laro
Russian Federation	Mr. Ilichev
Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2015/918)

Letter dated 10 December 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/943)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2015/918)

Letter dated 10 December 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/943, annex)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/918, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic. I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/943, which contains a letter dated 10 December 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Hervé Ladsous and by Her Excellency Ms. Raimonda Murmokaitė, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, in her capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to share the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2015/918) and the update on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

Despite the many challenges and repeated attempts by spoilers to derail the process — in particular during the outbreaks of violence in late September and October — I believe that we are nonetheless in a position to say that the Central African Republic is moving ahead with the transition, in line with the revised electoral calendar. Yesterday, as we are all aware, the

constitutional referendum was held, ushering in the final and most sensitive phase of the electoral process.

As Council members know, the first round of the presidential and legislative elections is scheduled to take place in two weeks on 27 December. In that regard, the constitutional referendum is perhaps a dry run for the first set of national elections. Yesterday, the constitutional referendum was held successfully throughout most of the country, including in a number of hotspots, such as Bambari. Some 60 per cent of eligible voters were able to vote yesterday, and I remind the Council that the elections continue today in certain localities in order to complete the process.

Clearly and unfortunately, efforts were made by certain anti-Balaka elements and members of the ex-Séléka Front populaire pour la renaissance de la centrafricaine led by Nourredine Adam to disrupt the consultations in certain parts of Bangui and in the regions. In Bangui and in Bria in particular, the proactive and preventive measures taken by MINUSCA allowed the voting to proceed in most polling centres despite localized security incidents. In the towns of Birao, Bossangoa, Ndele and Kaga Bandoro, spoilers resorted to violence and intimidation of voters and electoral staff, thereby preventing the holding of the referendum despite MINUSCA attempts to thwart them. A total of three peacekeepers were injured in incidents in Bangui and Bria. That is why, as I said, the voting period has been extended today in certain locations where the voting was unable to proceed appropriately.

It must be noted that the unprecedented registration of nearly 2 million voters, representing 95 per cent of the estimated electorate, demonstrates the people's strong desire for change. The situation for refugees is more complicated. Despite considerable efforts, only one-third of potential voters among refugees were able to register to vote. We must not allow the actions of a few to disrupt the hopes and aspirations of the many for a successful electoral process that will return their country to constitutional order. We must ensure that Central Africans — whether inside or outside the country — can cast a vote to elect their future Government, free from intimidation. MINUSCA and the wider United Nations system will continue to lend their full technical, logistical and security support to enable the Transitional Authority to achieve these objectives.

I welcome the signing of the electoral code of conduct by the presidential candidates on 9 December.

Further to yesterday's launch of the electoral campaign, I appeal to all candidates to campaign peacefully. I note the decision of the Constitutional Court approving the final list of 30 presidential candidates, including one woman, whereas 14 candidates were deemed ineligible. I call on the supporters of those applicants not approved by the Constitutional Court to respect the decision and to avoid doing anything that could complicate or jeopardize the electoral process.

The continued support of the countries of the subregion, the wider international community and the Council is absolutely essential at this moment. In that regard, I welcome the communiqué issued by the Economic Community of Central African States on 25 November endorsing a final technical extension to allow for the completion of the transition, in line with the revised electoral calendar. I also thank all donors that have supported the electoral process, and welcome in particular the recent pledges by Gabon and Equatorial Guinea to close the remaining funding gap for the elections. Pledges are one thing, however, and honouring them is another. I would strongly encourage all countries that have not transferred their funds to disburse them now without delay, because the process is under way and expenses must be covered immediately.

The timely visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Bangui on 29 and 30 November brought new hope to the Central Africans and undoubtedly helped to reduce intercommunal tensions. The remarkable image of His Holiness' visit to a mosque in the PK5 neighbourhood of Bangui demonstrated once again that religion is not at the heart of the difficulties facing the Central African Republic. We must continue to promote the dialogue between all communities by every means available and support the Central Africans in further advancing the reconciliation process at all levels.

Although the security situation naturally remains fragile and pockets of insecurity persist throughout the country — including in Bangui and, most importantly, along the main road to the border with Cameroon — MINUSCA, with the support of Operation Sangaris, continues to adopt as robust a posture as possible to protect civilians and create a safe environment for the holding of free and fair elections. The Mission has redeployed some of its forces in areas identified as potential hot spots, and efforts have been made to strengthen the Mission by accelerating ongoing deployments and in redeploying, on a temporary basis, the Senegalese rapid reaction contingent from the United

Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire in the framework of inter-mission cooperation. I thank the Security Council for having approved that redeployment.

I am encouraged by the efforts being made to support the stabilization of the security situation and open a space for dialogue, especially before the elections. The successful launch of the precantonment disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, which allowed the cantonment of approximately 1,700 combatants without obligation to disarm, should be considered a first step towards the genuine DDR that we will strive to achieve with the new Government that emerges from the elections. The recent organization of a round table on security helped to spur the development of a national vision for security sector reform. Addressing the integration of members of armed groups into the security and defence forces will, however, be essential to making sustainable progress in DDR and security sector reform, although, as recent events have demonstrated, that will not be enough.

We must therefore be firm and fight impunity for perpetrators of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law. I urge the authorities of the Central African Republic, with the support of MINUSCA, to continue to prosecute the instigators and perpetrators of serious crimes and to protect victims and witnesses. The international community must also support the Central African authorities in the establishment of the special criminal court.

Three days ago, on 12 December, the central prison in Ngaragba, Bangui, was reopened thanks to the joint support of MINUSCA and the European Union. Council members will recall that the reopening was made necessary by the mass escapes that took place during the crisis of late September, which, I recall, were abetted by uniformed Central African troops. More broadly, I think we must remain committed to finding solutions with regard to national capacities to manage security and prison facilities, which also touches on the security of MINUSCA prison staff.

In conclusion, the efforts we have seen on the part of some to undermine yesterday's constitutional referendum demonstrate that there are actors who remain determined to derail the political process in the country. With only two weeks until the first round of elections, it is very important to further contain such attempts by spoilers. The entire international community must therefore remain united in its uncompromising message in rejection of any attempt to derail the political process

from any quarter and to demonstrate that there will be consequences for those who seek to do so.

Looking ahead, we must be mindful that, as important as the elections are, they are not an end in themselves. More than ever, we must try to address the root causes of the crisis, for which we will need a new Government that works in a spirit of unity, inclusivity and reconciliation. To address all of the priorities at the heart of the crisis, including the humanitarian situation and the need to reinvigorate the economy, the support of the Council and key partners will be vital. The people of the Central African Republic, who have experienced such tragedy for so long, deserve nothing less.

The President: I thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Murmokaitė, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013).

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I have the honour to brief the members of the Security Council in my capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic. In my statement, I intend to highlight the main findings of the final report of the Panel of Experts and briefly touch upon the discussion of the report and its recommendations during the Committee's meeting on 20 November. I also intend to highlight the work of the Committee and the Panel of Experts since my last briefing to the Council (see S/PV.7331), on 9 December 2014.

On 20 November, the Committee met with the Panel of Experts to consider its final report and recommendations. According to the report, armed groups remain in control of, or still exert influence over, almost all inhabited areas of the Central African Republic. Armed groups are also continually rearming, and present a key risk to the holding of elections in the country. Attacks against peacekeepers have also been ongoing. The report also highlighted that the Lord's Resistance Army continues to be a major threat in the Central African Republic and is using the country to gather resources. The report furthermore underlines that the local population in the Central African Republic has turned out in unprecedented numbers to register for the elections, thereby demonstrating the strong will of the country's people for the polls to be held. In connection with the recommendations contained in the

Panel's report, letters have been sent out to the relevant States and organizations.

With regard to the work of the Committee and the Panel of Experts since my last briefing to the Council, I wish to recall that, on 9 February 2015, the United Nations Mine Action Service provided the Committee with an overview of its work in the Central African Republic. During the Committee's informal consultations of 31 March, the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts presented the Panel's programme of work.

On 22 April, in its fourth formal meeting, the Committee held deliberations on the reported travel ban violations by sanctioned individuals François Bozizé and Nourredine Adam. During the meeting, members heard statements from the representatives of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda. Committee members also received a short briefing from the Office of the Special Representative of INTERPOL to the United Nations.

On 12 June, Committee members heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts via telephone link with regard to the Panel's progress update submitted to the Committee on 20 May. During the presentation, the Panel drew attention to the lack of cooperation from some States in the region and noted scepticism with regard to the prospect of the agreement on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration being implemented as signed.

On 3 August, the Committee discussed the arms embargo and related exemptions procedures via video teleconference with representatives of the Government of the Central African Republic, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the arms expert and armed groups expert/Coordinator of the Panel of Experts. Following that meeting, and in connection with a request from the Central African authorities, the Committee agreed to revise its guidelines to allow the Central African Republic itself to submit arms embargo exemptions requests, in addition to supplying States.

On 21 August, during its fifth formal meeting, the Committee again discussed the arms embargo and related exemptions procedures with representatives

of the Permanent Missions of the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, and South Sudan.

The formal meeting on 21 August was followed by informal consultations of the Committee, during which the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts presented the Panel's mid-term update, submitted on 29 July. In addition to providing an overview of the findings and recommendations of the mid-term update, the Coordinator expressed the view that the Committee's decision on 20 August to add four additional names to its sanctions list had been timely and important, with real consequences on the ground. He called on the Committee to consider adding the names of more individuals and entities to its sanctions list.

With regard to the mid-term update, the Coordinator furthermore noted that the management and storage of weapons stockpiles still remained a major issue in the Central African Republic. He highlighted that the Panel had continued to investigate armed groups in the country that had committed grave violations of international humanitarian law, while meeting the criteria set by the Security Council for sanctions designations. Following the meeting, the Committee proceeded to arrange for the dispatch of letters in line with the Panel's recommendations.

On 10 September, I briefed the Committee on my trip to the Central African Republic from 25 to 28 August. The trip represented a long-awaited opportunity to receive feedback from the ground on the implementation of the sanctions regime from a wide range of actors in the Central African Republic, including Government officials, diplomatic missions, MINUSCA senior management and mining authorities, as well as local religious, civil and opinion leaders. The visit also served to pave the way for improved communication and collaboration between the Panel of Experts and country authorities. During my visit, I also met with representatives of the Economic Community of Central African States and the African Union. I concluded that the arms embargo was still very much useful and essential in the Central African Republic context, and recommended the improvement of the weapons-storage capacity of the armed forces of the country. I also noted the extent to which violence against children was a major issue in the Central African Republic. In that connection, I recommended that there was a need to add more names to the Committee's sanctions list, in

particular in relation to the exploitation of children and to sexual violence.

Also on the issue of children, on 3 December, members of the Committee and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict held a joint meeting with Ms. Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, with regard to the impact of conflict on children in the Central African Republic. Citing names of perpetrators, the Special Representative called upon the Committee and the Panel of Experts to continue to conduct investigations on armed groups recruiting and using children in the Central African Republic. In that regard, I would like to inform the Council that I have encouraged members of the Committee to consider further designations in connection with statements of case that were proposed by the Panel of Experts in July and October 2014 and in January and November 2015. With the latest statements of case submitted on 18 November, the total number of cases submitted by the Panel stands at 25, of which 20 pertain to individuals and five to entities. As the names of only five individuals and one entity are currently on the Committee's sanctions list, I hope more names will be submitted in the remaining weeks of my chairmanship.

I also would like to inform members of the Council about the follow-up efforts made by the Chair with the delegations of Kenya and South Africa with regard to the reported travel ban violations, respectively, of sanctioned individuals François Bozizé and Nourredine Adam to South Africa, and the letters transmitted by the Chair in that connection on 30 October, which requested both delegations to reply by 6 November.

On 5 November, the Permanent Mission of South Africa replied to the Panel of Experts, indicating that South Africa was unable to meet the deadline of 6 November and would respond in a timely manner once the necessary processes had been completed. Since then, the Committee has not yet heard again from the delegation of South Africa. With regard to the Permanent Mission of Kenya, while I am aware that the Panel of Experts met in New York with Kenya's Director of the United Nations and Multilateral Affairs Directorate, who was visiting from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nairobi, no reply has been received from Kenya in connection with my letters of 30 October concerning Adam's flight to Nairobi.

With the agreement of the President of the Council and the members of the Council, therefore, and along the lines of a similar initiative undertaken by the Council's President and the Chair of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Committee in November, I would like to propose that the President and myself hold joint bilateral meetings with the delegations of Kenya and South Africa with a view to obtaining a definitive response regarding the Committee's letters of 30 October. It is my firm conviction that, if Member States continue to be unable or unwilling to implement the Council's travel ban in the context of the Central African Republic sanctions, the Council's silence will

send the wrong message not only to Member States in the region and beyond, but to the sanctioned individuals themselves — a message that there are no consequences when one violates a travel ban imposed by the Security Council.

The President: I thank Ambassador Murmokaité for her briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.