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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1221ST MEETING

11 JULY 2024
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BN.1221 (2024)

BRIEFING NOTE

SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) considered the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) at its 1157th meeting held on 13 June 2023. While it appears that the political, security, and humanitarian situation of the country, as well as the implementation of the peace processes, have been characterized by various developments, the PSC called for the use of all available avenues to ensure cooperation among the country's stakeholders. Similarly, the Council called for the continuous strengthening of efforts concerning the *Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (PAPR-CAR)* and the *Luanda Joint Roadmap* in order to create synergies. While acknowledging the need to continue the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes and the fight against the illicit flow of arms, the PSC called for all other the armed groups outside of the PAPR-CAR to unconditionally commit to the peace and reconciliation process, and comply fully with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) to ensure complete disbandment. In addition to echoing concerns over the provision of the necessary humanitarian aid to the CAR, Council called for the full implementation of the 2022 Yaoundé Declaration and urged the international community to support the process.

II. REASON AND BACKGROUND TO THE CONVENING OF THE MEETING

2. In line with its previous decisions on the situation in the CAR contained in Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1116.1 (2022)] adopted at its 1116th meeting held on 31 October 2022, Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1093 (2022)] adopted at its 1093rd meeting held on 25 July 2022 and Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1011 (2021)] adopted at its 1101st meeting held on 21 July 2021; and recalling its previous statements on the situation in the Central African Republic contained in Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1157 (2023)] adopted at its 1157th meeting held on 13 June 2023, this briefing note draws attention to the issues considered after which Council:

- (i) Commended the efforts made by the Government of the Central African Republic, in collaboration with its neighbouring countries and partners, to implement the PAPR-CAR.
- (ii) Urged all signatories of the PAPR-CAR to honour their commitments and ensure the full implementation of the agreement;
- (iii) Encouraged all political and social stakeholders in the CAR to exercise their right to participate in and ensure the credibility of the electoral processes;
- (iv) Expressed concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic;
- (v) Encouraged the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission to redouble its efforts and accelerate the implementation of the transitional justice process;
- (vi) Reiterated its call for the full lifting of the arms embargo imposed on the CAR in order to enable the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (FACA) to effectively discharge its constitutional mandate of defending and protecting the country; and
- (vii) Underscored the urgent need to identify long-term development needs and priorities in order to launch and effectively promote post-conflict stabilization, development and reconstruction projects in order to consolidate the progress made in the implementation of the PAPR-CAR and to avoid a relapse into the conflict situation.

III. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE PSC

3. In order to improve interactions between stakeholders and sustain the process of the forthcoming local elections scheduled for October 2024, whose political objective is to consolidate sovereignty, governance, and local development in the CAR, the country's stakeholders need to engage in dialogue and create a conducive climate for effective participation. Council could turn its attention to the lack of internal political dialogue in the CAR, as well as the challenges related to the management of the forthcoming local elections, particularly including the mobilization of resources, the lack of which could compromise compliance with the already tight election timetable, and despite the various efforts made by the Government with technical and financial partners.

4. A major component of the peace and reconciliation process in the CAR is the disbandment of armed groups and the coupling of the Luanda Roadmap with the PAPR-CAR. The guarantors of the PAPR-CAR, facilitators and the international community reaffirmed their support for its implementation and their willingness to help the Government. Thus, Council could reiterate its call for the active armed groups to re-join the peace and reconciliation process by fully supporting the DDRR process as a matter of priority. In this regard, the challenge that remains is to convince the Coalition of Patriots for Change, "*Coalition des patriotes pour le changement*" (CPC) to return to the peace and reconciliation process.

5. In light of the ongoing conflict in Sudan, particular attention should be paid to regional stability to due to the negative effects on the neighboring countries and the region, including the Central African Republic. Thus, it is important to strengthen the security cooperation links between all the countries of the sub-region to ensure the effective and sustainable stability of the country. In this regard, the spread of the conflict in Sudan to its neighbouring countries could heighten the risk of the proliferation of illegal weapons and illegal exploitation of mineral resources.

6. Despite the improvement in the security situation in many parts of the country, the humanitarian situation remains worrying because the persistent insecurity in some regions of the CAR compels civilian populations to move, disrupts productive activities and affects the livelihood of the people in some towns.

7. In addition, the Government of CAR will need to mobilize funds to implement its new national development plan, which is competing with other international crises. This may hinder the availability of donor funding for development activities in the country. Council could call for financial and material support for the government and people of the Central African Republic.

IV. STATUS OF THE SITUATION

a. Political Level

8. On 30 March 2024, President Faustin Archange Touadera commemorated the third year of his second five-year term. He recalled the main thrusts of his second term, which included peace and national reconciliation, restoration of the authority of the State, fight against impunity and corruption, economic recovery and access to basic social services by the people. One of the major actions of the Government was the adoption by referendum of the Constitution establishing the 7th Republic promulgated on 30 August 2023. It was aimed at carrying out a far-reaching reform of the State and consolidating the stability of institutions. The opposition maintains its position calling for the annulment of the constitutional referendum and the boycott of local elections, which were postponed to October 2024. Close collaboration between political and social stakeholders is required to overcome these obstacles and ensure fair and peaceful elections. The government has prioritized the

local elections, which are estimated to cost a total amount of USD 14,760,918. It is also pursuing efforts to mobilize resources to cover a shortfall of USD 9.6 million¹.

9. After five (5) years of implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (PAPR-CAR), the level of progress, key challenges and priorities were identified during the Strategic Review Meeting of the Political Process, which was held under the auspices of President Faustin Archange Touadera on 23 October 2023. Particular emphasis was placed on national ownership, while President Touadera reaffirmed his government's commitment to the peace process. The PAPR is facing challenges relating to the disbandment of all armed groups. As guarantors, the AU and ECCAS should use a regional approach to re-engage members of the CPC armed groups and restore the stability of the peace process.

10. In the area of the protection and promotion of human rights, it should be noted that significant progress has been made as a result of the adoption of a national human rights strategy, the sectoral policy on justice, a national strategy to combat sexual and gender-based violence and the production of periodic reports on human rights. With regard to justice and the fight against impunity, the organization of many sessions by the Criminal Courts and the Special Criminal Court (SCC), as well as the correctional hearings regularly held by the Courts and specialized tribunals, including the military court that prosecuted and punished military personnel who committed offenses in the discharge of their duties, reflect the efforts made at the judicial level. Nevertheless, some challenges remain, particularly those relating to the activism on the part of armed groups affiliated to the CPC, which are still committing abuses against civilians in some parts of CAR with limited technical capacity and resources.

11. The implementation of the Truth, Justice, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TJRR) has faced many structural problems and institutional constraints since its establishment in 2020. These challenges relate to the availability of resources to actually operate across the country. The TJRR has no field presence or operational capacity to meet with victims nationwide. Despite the Government's suspension of all commission members in May 2024, it is critical to note that political commitment remains the key to the commission's success.

12. A workshop on transitional justice was organized during a joint mission to Bangui by the *Centre for Violence and Reconciliation*, and the *Democracy, Elections and Constitutionalism Division* of the African Union Commission for about 30 civil society organizations. Participants in the workshop were able to familiarize themselves with the transitional justice process, the post-conflict situation, as well as the objectives, challenges and opportunities related to its implementation in the Central African Republic.

b. Security and Humanitarian Situation

13. Security remains fragile in remote areas of the hinterland due to the CPC's military activism, transhumance-related tensions and criminal activities, all of which have consequences for civilians and humanitarian workers. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) also threaten the freedom of movement of people and the ability of humanitarian agencies to assist the needy, particularly in the northwest region. The unstable security environment calls for stronger regional collaboration on security and crisis prevention. Sudan's proximity to the CAR and its alleged links with rebel groups are of particular concern.

¹ Since the Government has requested the contribution of all partners [EU: 2 million Euros; MINUSCA: 1.8 million USD], Council could consider the possibility of an AU contribution to these elections (about USD 300,000). For the record, the AU contributed about the same amount to the 2014 election budget.

14. The combined actions of the FACA, with the support of the Russian and Rwandan bilateral forces, have led to waves of dissent from 1,500 fighters of the Coalition of Patriots for Change. The relative improvement in the security situation throughout the country makes it even more imperative for the authorities in the CAR authorities to continue to advocate for the full and unconditional lifting of the arms embargo and to seek ways and means to provide the defence and security forces with the necessary equipment.

15. The engagements held on the sidelines of the DDR activities produced good outcomes. 140 former fighters of Joseph Koni's LRA and their families were repatriated in collaboration with the Government of Uganda and through the logistical support of MINUSCA after they had spent 15 years in the CAR. Thus, the World Bank-financed Reintegration of Ex-combatants Project has made it possible to train and reintegrate 2,819 ex-combatants into their community, to ensure the socio-economic reintegration of more than 1,000 at-risk youth and to provide 70 socio-cultural infrastructure, such as boreholes, schools, kindergartens and seed stores. Even though the security situation has improved in 80% of the country, persistent insecurity in some regions continues to disrupt productive activities and affect the livelihood of the people, to the point that 41% of the population of the Central African Republic still suffers from food insecurity due to lack of food supplies.

16. In the northern regions of the country, about 64.7 thousand Chadian and Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers have been displaced by the conflicts and security crises that have erupted in Sudan since May 2023 and the inter-communal violence in southern Chad.

17. Finally, the international community continues to closely monitor the situation in the Central African Republic and to provide financial and logistical support to mitigate the humanitarian crisis in the country. The adoption in January 2024 of a humanitarian response plan that will cover both IDPs and refugees remains a step in the right direction, in spite of the fact that the level of financial mobilization is low.

c. Social-Economic and Financial Situation

18. Since the security situation in the country has improved over the last three years, the Government is moving away from emergency and recovery operations to development. Emphasis was placed on the importance of planning and implementing development initiatives, including the formulation of a National Development Plan (NDP). With the support of its partners, the Government has already begun formulating its National Development Plan for 2024-2028 to replace the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA).

19. A number of partners, including the European Union and the World Bank, have stressed the need to ensure inclusiveness throughout the process, including the consideration of fragile areas and conflict-affected communities, incorporation of ownership mechanisms, mainstreaming of monitoring and evaluation tools into programming and alignment with regional and international frameworks. A successful NDP must align with regional and international frameworks where the Agenda 2063 Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 are concerned. The priorities of the NDP should focus on five strategic areas: strengthening of security, promotion of governance and the rule of law; equitable access to quality basic social services and human capital development; acceleration of production and value chains in productive sectors for strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; development of resilient and sustainable infrastructure; and environmental sustainability and resilience to crises and the impacts of climate change.

20. The Government of the Central African Republic will mobilize financial and technical assistance as soon as the NDP is adopted. The main challenge will be the resource mobilization for its effective implementation. This is because other international crises are expected to limit donor funding.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

21. Given the above background, the PSC may wish to:

- i. Mobilise assistance to the authorities, civil society organizations, women's and youth associations, parliamentarians and political parties to play their respective roles in achieving peace and holding local elections;
- ii. Use good offices, mediation and conflict prevention to achieve peace and the effective implementation of the peace agreement;
- iii. Remain committed to fulfil new pledges of support for the electoral process;
- iv. Call for stronger regional cooperation in the Central African sub-region in the area of security and enhanced cooperation in conflict and crisis prevention; and
- v. Call on partners to deepen solidarity, coordination and synergistic action to support ongoing national development efforts.

2024-07-11

Communiqué of the 1221st Meeting of the Peace and Security Council to be held on 11 July 2024 on the Situation in the Central African Republic.

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