

Forum:*Security Council*

Issue: *The Situation in the Central African Republic*
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Position: *President and Chair of the Security Council*

1. **Introduction**

Since March 2013, the Central African Republic (CAR) has been experiencing violent sectarian conflict. The conflict initially began between two well-defined rival religious groups, Muslims and Christians, that became increasingly fragmented, with competing agendas and interests. Further, the current transitional government lacks the capacity and political will to enforce any real political reforms. Being situated in a region full of conflict, the ongoing problems CAR are often overlooked by the international community. The almost 60 years of history of the independent CAR are full of violent conflicts, forced changes of governments and repeated international interventions. The government only controls parts of its territory, leaving large parts of the population fleeing their homes as they try to escape the conflict. In August 2017, Stephen O’Brien, the Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator in the United Nations spoke of “the early warning signs of a genocide” being present in CAR. The Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA, the United Nations peacekeeping mission, has not yet been able to provide relief to the country as it continues to be shaken by waves of religious and intercommunal violence. However, the cause of the crisis lies deeper than the superficial conflict between the religions.

1. **Definition of Key Terms**

**Coup d’état:**

An unexpected, illegal, and usually violent takeover of power from a government.

A Coup took place initiating the rebel group rivalries in 2012/2013 in the CAR.

**Seleka:**

Seleka meaning Coalition is an alliance of rebel militia groups, it is one of the groups spreading violence in the CAR. After its dissolution in 2013, the remaining Muslim militia groups became known as Ex-Seleka.

**Anti-Balaka:**

The Anti-Balaka meaning Anti-Machete is an alliance of militia groups based in the CAR primarily composed of Christians.

**Cease-Fire:**

A cease-fire is a temporary suspension of fighting, also known as a Truce. Cease-Fires were made between the rebel groups suspending active hostilities.

**Civil War**

A war between opposing groups of citizens of the same country. In this case the opposing groups of citizens are the militia groups the Anti-Balaka and the Seleka

**Rebel forces**

A person who resists or rises in arms against the government or the ruler of their country.

In this case the rebel forces consist of the rebel groups as they had a Coup against the government.

**Displaced persons**

People who are forced to leave their homes due to war or violence. In the CAR there are many internally and externally displaced persons.

1. **General Overview – Background information**

Ever since the Central African Republic gained independence it has been struggling to maintain peace and control over its people.

In 2001 a failed coup d’état ignited violent unrest in the capital. In 2003, the government was overthrown by a military coup despite the international intervention, allowing Francois Bozize to declare himself president. However, between 2004 and 2007, a civil war, known as the Central African Bush War devastated the country, and involved multiple rebel groups taking control of several towns in the northern part of the CAR.

However, after the war, the political landscape in CAR was marked by the presence of multiple rebel groups, as well as three main armed opposition groups: the Popular Army for the Restoration of the Republic and Democracy (APRD), the Central African People’s Democratic Front (FDPC), and the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), who caused further violence in the region.

In 2008, the UFDR and the APRD signed a peace agreement with the government, which entailed demobilization and disarmament of non-government fighters. However, the agreement did not ensure an end to the conflict, as other regional rebel groups began to pose a serious threat to the peace process, the Chadian Popular Front for Recovery (FPR) and the Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).

Following the peace agreement, the rebels became integrated into the army, as the aim of the agreement was to end instability and violence in the CAR, which led to elections in 2011. However, peace didn’t last long in the region, as in 2012 some of those rebels deserted from the army and took up arms again.

Violence mainly erupted in 2012, when a coalition of rebel groups known as the Seleka accused the government of failing to follow peace agreements made in 2008. This led to the ousting of the President Francois Bozize by the mainly Muslim Seleka who then forcibly seized power where he ended up on trial in the International Criminal Court. With that a transitional government was established and entrusted with reinforcing peace and order, which they failed to do. Later on in December 2012, the rebel group entered into negotiations with the government, where they agreed to a cease-fire and a power-sharing deal, which complied to some demands made by the Seleka like the release of certain prisoners, the withdrawal of forgein troops in the nation and the inclusion of some Seleka members in a new unity government. With this came the approval for Bozize to complete his term and the appointment of Nicolas Tiangaye a supporter of both parties as prime minister. Not much later the Seleka was disbanded, and despite that a new rebel group arose known as the ex-Seleka continued the violent acts which the Seleka committed prior to their abolishment. They carried out acts such as rape, kidnapping, and murder on civilians across the country.

In retaliation the primarily Christian civilian population formed their own groups to counteract the Ex-Seleka and named themselves the Anti-balaka. This was done in order to protect themselves against the mainly Muslim rebels, but ended in a cycle of violence between Christians, Muslims, and even civilians leaving hundreds dead and many more displaced.

It has been recognized that the pattern in the attacks for each militia group is that the Seleka (mainly Muslim rebel group) uses Machetes to attack their enemies by giving them multiple major injuries that can be lethal and considering the conditions in the CAR begin infection, therefor a lot of suffering is involved. As for the Anti-Balaka it has been seen that they shoot their victims in the neck and stomach. In 2014, a report by the International Commission of Inquiry on the CAR confirmed that a pattern of ethnic cleansing is committed by the anti-balaka (majorly Christian rebel group) in the Muslim populated areas. This finding was unleashed by the fighters who began to kill Muslims based on their religious identity, whether they support the rival group or not.

Between 2014 and 2015 many cease-fires were signed by the Seleka and Anti-Balaka, however unrest continues to this day with the government struggling to control the situation, after the 2016 election.

**MINUSCA**

The United Nations Multidimensional integrated stabilization mission in the Central African Republic is a peacekeeping operation authorized by the UN Security Council in 2014, after the concern with the security, human rights, humanitarian and political crisis along with its regional implications. The main priority that this initiative dedicates its efforts to the protection of civilians. With that, some of its other initial missions is the support for the transition process with a provisional government, facilitating humanitarian assistance, promotion and protection of human rights, support for justice and the rule of law, in addition to disarmament, and repatriation processes. This mission’s headquarters is located in the heart of the conflict in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic.

As of March 2019, the United Nations peacekeeping shows that Rwanda, Pakistan and Bangladesh are the top three nations troop contributing countries to the mission. As for the police contributions Rwanda also dominates the top three rankings, alongside Cameroon and Senegal. As for its funding, the method of financing of the MINUSCA is funded through an individual account annually approved by the general assembly; the budget approved upon by the Council is around one billion dollars (accurately $930,211,900).

**Factors influenced by the conflict →**

Water:

Barely any of the population of Central Africans have access to running water. This is because the water access points (well, pumps, etc.) have been destroyed by the violence, and if not they’ve been contaminated by dead bodies.

Health care:

The health care system in the CAR is barely functioning, due to the attacks against medical facilities, patients and ambulances. Many of the patients are victims of violent attacks with stab and gunshot wounds, burns, and rape injuries. Not only that but there is a significant amount of mental health patients as a result of traumatizing violence.

Nutrition:

Central African Republic currently ranks worst on the Global Hunger index; Half the population don't have access to food. The ongoing civil war has forced farmers to abandon their farming lands, and markets have been deserted after violent attacks targeted at their locations, and Ex-Seleka rebels have taken control of surrounding areas of fields and markets as a base.

The recent attacks in 2018, have disrupted projects run by the World Food Programme aimed at establishing long term food security in the CAR. As an example, a town which once grew and stored its own peanuts and beans, is now relying on food shipments for survival.

Violence:

In 2018, armed groups became in control of more than two-thirds of the country, and once stable regions are now under the threat of violence by the rebel groups.

The situation is exceedingly getting worse, as the displacement rates of civilians have now reach the same rates as the Syrian refugee crisis whether internally or externally.

Child soldiers:

Thousands of children have been recruited by armed forces on both sides of the conflict. Some children have been kidnapped and therefore forcibly joined the rebel groups, whereas others voluntarily join to seek protection or to avenge the loss of a loved one.

Sexual Violence

The idea of sexual slavery and rape is being used as both a byproduct and tactic of war on both ends the Ex-Seleka and Anti-Balaka rebels.

Education:

One third of all children in the CAR are currently out of school according to the UNICEF. This is because many schools were forced to close as a result of the instability, whereas others have been closed to provide shelter for displaced Central Africans.

1. **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

**United States of America**

Following its independence from France, the Central African Republic and the United States established diplomatic relations in 1960. However, as a result of insecurity and violence in CAR, in the past 20 years, the US suspended embassy operations there three times, most recently in December 2012 due to insecurity and the eventual overthrow of the CAR government by the Seleka armed group, however resumed normal operations in September of 2014. The US has provided over $300 million of humanitarian, development, and security assistance in support of the CAR people’s efforts to find long-term stability and peace over the past two years. The United States has provided assistance to strengthen the UN mission and humanitarian aid to address the continuing humanitarian crisis in CAR.

**France**

After rejecting a plea from CAR President Francois Bozizé for international assistance in 2012, France has become more involved in the conflict. after civil war erupted in CAR as the Selaka removed Boizize from power and installed Michel Djotodia as President in 2013, and the Anti-balaka rebelled against the government, France returned to CAR to stop the bloodshed by deploying 1,000 troops and armored vehicles into the country to maintain peace known as Operation Sangaris.France contributed €170 million Euros in aid to CAR In 2014  to pay for military expenditure, civilian assistance, humanitarian assistance, support of the electoral process and the end of the crisis, as well as democratic governance in the country. France also announced at a conference in Brussels that €85 million will be given in aid over three years to CAR, including €15 million for the "Bêkou" fund.

**Seleka**

Seleka is a coalition of multiple rebel militia factions of CAR, who initially intended to overthrow the government, formed of mostly Muslim members, and succeeded as they overthrew President Francois Bozizé and replaced him with their leader, Michel Djotodia, claiming power as the unrecognized interim- president from 24th March 2013 until 10th January 2014. Originally emerging on under the name CPSK-CPJP, Seleka have grown in size and power since forming in September of 2012. In September 2013, Djotodia announced the dissolution of Seleka, however most refused to disband. In 2014, Seleka forces were accused of the mass murder of CAR’s Christian community, as well as throwing grenades and shooting at the Church of Fatima in Bangui.

**Anti-Balaka**

Anti-Balaka is the militias of Christians that have formed in CAR in 2013 as an alliance of self-defense fighters, primarily after the leader of Seleka Michel Djotodia was named president, making him the first Muslim president of CAR. Since the dissolution of the Seleka was announced in 2014, Anti-Balaka and Seleka forces began to clashed. In 2014, the massacres on the Muslim community caused by Anti-Balaka has been compared to, and even described as worse than the acts performed by Seleka, as Amnesty International reports several massacres targeted the Muslim civilians of CAR.

**MINUSCA**

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, known as MINUSCA, is the UN peacekeeping mission that aims to protect CAR civilians, which began to operate in April of 2014. It transformed MISCA, the African Union-led peacekeeping force into a UN peacekeeping mission.The mission has more than 10,000 troops on the ground as of 2016, and its role is to facilitate humanitarian assistance in CAR, promote and protect human rights, support justice and the rule of law, disarm, demobilize and reintegrate the region, as well as repatriation processes.

1. **Timeline of Events**

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| **Date** | **Description of event** |
| November 2012March 2013   August 2013September 2013 October 2013 December 2013 January 2014April 2014 May 2014 July 2014 August 2014 September 2014 January 2015 February 2015May 2015November 2015 December 2015February 2016June 2016 April 2017May 2017  July 2017 September 2017November 2017  January 2018  June 2018  July 2018    | New rebel coalition known as Seleka swiftly overruns the north and centre of the CAR The Seleka rebel group seized power as they overran the capital; they suspend the constitution and dissolve the parliament in an internationally condemned coup. The president (Bozize) flees. The coup leader is sworn in as president. The UN Security council worn of the Risk CAR poses on regional stability The Coup leader dissolves the Seleka coalition and is criticised for failing to control the fighters.  Un security council deploys a UN peacekeeping force to support African union troops and French troops on the ground and controlling the airport. Rival Muslim and Christian groups in thier rivalry, kill hundreds of people, and France steps up and deploys troops to disarm the militiasThe interim president (Coup leader) resigns over criticism of his failure to suspend sectarian violence. UN Security Council authorises a peacekeeping force of thousands of troops. French and Estonian troops aid in security measures at the airport under a European Union mandate Muslim Seleka rebels and the Christian anti-balaka forces agree to a tentative ceasefire at talks in BrazzavilleA Muslim politician is tasked with leading a transitional governementThe UN formally takes over and amplifies African Union peacekeeping mission. Whereas the European Union’s French mission remains in place. The government of the CAR rejects a ceasefire deal made in Kenya between the two militia groups, claiming it was not involved in talks regarding agreement. The UN Accuses the Anti-Balaka of ethnic cleansing An EU-commissioned research reveals that Seleka fighters were illegally supplied with weapons made in Iran and China. The UN says that surging violence in the CAR has forced the displacement of many trying to escape the violence Prosecutors in France open an investigation into alleged child abuse by French soldiers.the Pope visits, and calls for peace between Muslims and ChritiansA New constitution approved in a referendum, where parliamentary and presidential elections pass off peacefully. Faustin-Archange Touadera wins presidential election in the run-offInternational Criminal Court sentences an ex rebel for his militia’s abuses in CARUganda withdraws its forces from the CAR where it has been fighting for 5 yearsAn apparent upsurge in violence is blamed on the withdrawal of foreign forces. Several UN peacekeepers are killed in rebel attacks Many aid agencies withdraw due to violence, claiming they are leaving tens of thousands without supportStatistics show that there is an upsurge in the rates of displacement due to violence, and more than a million people are left homelessUN security council increases peacekeeping force numbers and extends mandate The International Committee of the Red Cross reports that the situation is escalating , with half of the population in need of humanitarian aid.The international Criminal Court overturns the conviction of the ex-rebel for war crimes committed in CAR Three Russian Journalists are killed, while working on a documentary about a Kremlin-linked mercenary company apparently active in CAR |

1. **UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events**

Due to the increasing violence and displacement of civilians, in December 2013, the United Nations Security Council, with its Resolution 2127, authorized the African Union to deploy the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) in addition to allowing the deployment of French Operation Sangaris to Bangui to reinstall peace and order. However, MISCA and the resolution of the Séléka alliance did not manage to ease the situation in CAR in 2014. By April, more than 760,000 people were displaced as well as an additional 300,000 who fled to the neighboring countries, like Congo, Cameroon and Chad. The conflict between the Anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka continued. Even the resignation of Michel Djotobia as President in January 2014 due international pressure could not bring relief to the situation at hand as under the new President Catherine Samba-Panza, little was done to decrease tensions between the opposing groups. In April 2014, the UNSC transferred MISCA into a UN peacekeeping mission, known as MINUSCA, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, which operated in September 2014 along with an initial strength of 11,800 uniformed personnel.

On the 24th of January 2019, Peace talks had started in Khartoum, Sudan, lasting 10 days under the auspices of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR, led by the African Union (AU) with UN support. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres commended the stakeholders for the successful conclusion of the talks, stressing on the “leadership role” of the AU and encouraged “all stakeholders to live up to their commitments in the implementation period”. He reiterated the United Nations’ commitment to assist the Central African Republic "at this critical stage”, and called “on neighboring countries, regional organizations and all international partners to support the courageous steps that Central Africans have made to bring lasting peace and stability in their country”.

Furthermore, political coordinator of Anti-Balaka, Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona, was transferred to the International Criminal Court two weeks ago to face accusations of war crimes as well as crimes against humanity.

* Central African Republic: MISCA, 5 December 2013 **(S/RES/2127)**

A unanimously adopted resolution that calls for the authorization of the deployment of MISCA, and for the French troops already stationed in the nation to support the Mission in discharging its mandate by all necessary measures.

* Central African Republic: MINUSCA, 10 April 2014 **(S/RES/2149)**

A unanimously adopted resolution that calls for the establishment of the new peacekeeping mission, MINUSCA, for an initial period of one year, authorizing an initial deployment of up to 10,000 military and 1,800 police personnel.

1. **Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

Many efforts have been made by international bodies, organizations, and unions, and the UN security council as previously mentioned has authorized many peacekeeping missions and provided much aid. The African Union and the regional powers (Chad, Angola, Republic of Congo, ECCAS, the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)) all which involved themselves, bringing a range of initiatives together to launch an African Union (AU) mediation effort, which was presented to the UN Security Council in March 2017.  Various non-state actors joined the mediation party.

A Catholic organization in Rome that had become involved in 2015 during the political transition organized a new round of meetings in the capital of Italy in 2017. The discussions were initially held in private with a representative of each armed group, these discussions were widened out, ending in the signature of a political peace agreement in June.

Despite the many efforts by UN organizations, the Red Cross, and foreign states, these international mediation initiatives have had no impact on the local security dynamics. Even though they have uncovered the existence of differences in agenda, institutional rivalries and variations in mediation cultures. This competition between the various diplomatic interventions do not generate progress on the core issues at hand and there have been no long lasting results. Enlightened on the situation, the European Union (EU) organized a round table of mediators in Brussels on the 21 of June 2017, in an attempt to relaunch a clear and credible international mediation initiative. The following months should show whether reinforced coordination between international actors is in fact feasible and whether this could lead to a resolution for the crisis.

1. **Possible Solutions**

There are multiple factors that need to be resolved in order to tackle the multiple issues plaguing the Central African Republic. One of the biggest issues facing the CAR is the violations of human rights being committed throughout the country on a daily basis, as well as with mass acts of horrific murder by both Seleka and Anti-Balaka forces.

A possible solution could be integration. Evidence from other contexts shows that integrating armed groups into the state security system can be an effective long-term strategy to reduce violence and increase stability in the region. Although any attempt to integrate may seem dangerous, considering the involvement and role of the Anti-balaka in the violence in CAR, making it very unlikely to succeed, however the idea proposed is not to completely dismantle the Anti-balaka structures, rather to integrate the existing Anti-balaka structures into the security apparatus, due to the fact that they have been legitimized by the population. Being integrated in the state security system, training for the Anti-balaka members could be provided, not only in security topics, but also on human rights and international law, as it is highly possible they do not know the meaning of these concepts. Furthermore, one of the main issues regarding the group is that they do not have a centralized leader, leading to the lack of control, and soon further violence. Therefore, through integration they could be controlled, which would allow the state to sanction deviant behaviours, as well as keep them from joining illegal groups or take part in illegal activities.

Another important solution is tackling the issue of economy in the region, as CAR ranks 171 out of 196 countries in the ranking of GDP. Also, it is important not to forget that the lack of economic opportunities for the youth is one of the main root causes of past and current conflicts in CAR. The financial aid that could be given to the CAR could be used to properly educate the region’s youth to keep them from going down the path of violence and gangs, to ensure a long-term solution that could benefit the future of the country as they are taught about human rights, international law, and how to provide for themselves without the help of illegal activity. it could also help educate the population on how to properly vote for the right person when it comes to elections, so they can be certain they know they person they are voting for. Helping the economy could not only save the country of future of violence and gang threats, but could also help provide the population with the basic necessities and proper security needed to keep them from going against the government.

1. **Guiding Questions**
2. How can MINUSCA’s ability to fulfil its mandate be improved?
3. How has the history of the Central African Republic impacted the situation today?
4. Would foreign intervention aid in reforming the region, or cause further problems?
5. Have there been any long-term solutions to the issue?
6. To what extent are the economic issues limiting the ability to solve the issue?
7. What can be done to regain the trust of the government and MINUSCA?
8. What are ways in which the African Union’s involvement in the CAR be increased?
9. How can political stability be established throughout the country?
10. Should the UNSC act under Chapter VII of the Charter? *(Appendix III)*
11. **Appendices and useful links**
12. <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/much-work-needed-stabilize-central-african-republic-situation-top>
13. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/chronology/central-african-republic.php>
14. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/>
15. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Central-African-Republic/The-21st-century#ref1174710>
16. <https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/disaster-relief/central-african-republic-conflict-fast-facts>
17. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/253-avoiding-worst-central-african-republic>
18. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/central-african-republic>
19. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13150044>
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