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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution [2448 \(2018\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2019 and requested me to report on its implementation on a quarterly basis. The present report provides an update on major developments in the Central African Republic since my report of 15 February ([S/2019/147](#)).

II. Political situation

2. The early stages of implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed in Bangui on 6 February between the Government of the Central African Republic and the 14 main armed groups dominated the reporting period. While there the security situation improved in some areas, the humanitarian situation remained dire and there were isolated incidents of egregious violence. Segments of society publicly criticized the Political Agreement, pointing to concessions to signatory armed groups that continued to perpetrate violence and other exactions against civilians.

Peace process

3. While some progress was made in the implementation of the Political Agreement, a lack of adherence to its security provisions presented challenges. On 25 February, the President, Faustin Archange Touadera, appointed his former Chief of Staff, Firmin Ngrebada, as Prime Minister. On 3 March, the President and Prime Minister formed a 36-member Government, which included 8 ministerial posts for representatives of armed groups and 3 for opposition political parties. Many armed groups alleged that the Government lacked inclusivity and called upon the guarantors and facilitators of the Agreement to intervene pursuant to its article 34. The African Union invited the Government and armed group representatives for consultations in Addis Ababa from 18 to 20 March under the auspices of its Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Smail Chergui, with the support of my Special Representative and Head of MINUSCA, Mankeur Ndiaye, which resulted in a consensus on the allocation of ministerial and other government posts.



4. On 22 March, President Touadera issued a decree forming a 39-member Government, including 35 ministers and 4 deputy ministers. A total of 25 posts were allocated to persons aligned with the presidential majority, 13 to members of nine armed groups and 1 to the political opposition. Seven women received ministerial positions, as did 12 Muslims.

5. Armed group leaders were also appointed to key advisory posts in the Presidency, the Prime Minister's Cabinet and in prefectures and subprefectures. On 24 March, President Touadera issued a decree appointing, among others, Ali Darassa of the *Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique*, Bi Sidi Souleymane (also known as Sidiki) of *Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation* and Mahamat Alkatim of the *Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique* as advisers to the Prime Minister on the temporary mixed security units foreseen under the Political Agreement.

6. Throughout March, the national youth council protested against the inclusion of armed groups in the Government while many university graduates remain unemployed. On 26 March, the Ministry of Youth suspended all youth council activities after its members had assaulted the Minister. On 2 April, a civil society group demanded that the decrees appointing Mr. Darassa, Mr. Alkatim and Sidiki be revoked given that they were either subject to international sanctions or were foreign mercenaries. The group's spokesperson was arrested on 18 April for instigating hate and disturbing public order, a move highly criticized by the media and civil society. He was released on 21 April.

7. On 18 February, President Touadera established by decree the national and prefectural level monitoring and implementation mechanisms of the Political Agreement. To date, with MINUSCA support, 11 of 17 prefectural implementation committees are functioning, comprising local authorities, women's associations, civil society and armed group representatives to serve as dispute resolution, conflict prevention and de-escalation mechanisms and to evaluate the implementation of the Agreement. Ten technical security committees are functioning, with two prefectures having an additional or subordinate committee to assist in monitoring.

8. On 29 March, President Touadera issued decrees establishing the legal framework of the *Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité*. These units will bring together members of the national defence and security forces with eligible armed group members who have disarmed and demobilized. They are intended to contribute to security for transhumance corridors and mining sites. The operational concept foresees the first phase of training and deployment beginning in June in Bouar and Bambari before scaling up and moving to other prefectures in the centre and east of the country. Effective deployment, however, will likely face significant logistic challenges. In order to prepare for their rapid deployment, MINUSCA continues to support the deployment of the defence and security forces to new areas. The African Union, as a guarantor of the Political Agreement, is planning to deploy military observers, with the assistance of the European Union, to monitor the units.

9. The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission Central African Republic configuration visited Bangui from 13 to 15 February, with my Assistant Secretaries-General for Africa and for Peacebuilding Support, and members of the Commission to mobilize support for implementing the Political Agreement, following which the Peacebuilding Fund approved \$14.8 million in support.

10. From 14 to 17 April, the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, my Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and the European Union Managing Director for Africa conducted a joint visit to the Central African Republic to galvanize international support for the Political Agreement. The delegation met representatives of the Government and civil society in Bangui and travelled with the Prime Minister and diplomatic community to Bambari for the launch of the local

implementation and technical security committees for Ouaka prefecture and to Bangassou for the launch of a peace caravan promoting the free movement of people and goods between Bangassou and Bangui. They stressed the importance of having all parties respect the cessation of hostilities and expedite the establishment of the *Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité* as a confidence-building tool in the context of the Agreement, and the need for tangible socioeconomic and other peace dividends for the population, who should be engaged as stakeholders in the peace process.

11. On 17 April, the Government convened the International Support Group on the Central African Republic in Bangui to mobilize international support for the implementation of the Political Agreement, during which it presented 11 priorities, including the cessation of hostilities, the operationalization of the monitoring and implementation mechanisms, the establishment of the *Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité* and the disarmament and demobilization of armed groups. President Touadera reaffirmed his commitment to the Agreement and urged armed groups to adhere to their commitments. The International Support Group demanded an immediate end to armed group violence against civilians. It called upon them to participate constructively in implementing the Agreement, including by nominating representatives for the implementation mechanisms and submitting lists of combatants for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration and for the mixed security units. It also called upon the Government to create the conditions for the voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced persons and to improve the participation of civil society, in particular women, in the implementation of the Agreement. To facilitate coordinated international support, the Government was encouraged to develop an implementation road map with a clear timetable.

12. The executive follow-up committee responsible for providing strategic direction and oversight of the implementation of the Political Agreement held its first meeting in Bangui, on 15 May, co-chaired by the Prime Minister and the Special Envoy of the African Union for the Central African Republic and included the participation of the President and my Special Representative, in addition to representatives of civil society and international partners. Two of the five armed groups in the committee participated, specifically Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation and the Ngaissona wing of the anti-balaka. Discussions focused on the status of implementing the Agreement and ceasefire violations. It was agreed that a coordinated countrywide awareness-raising campaign about the Agreement would be undertaken, with the involvement of political parties, civil society, religious actors and armed groups. The second meeting of the committee, joined by all armed group representatives, was held on 29 May, during which members discussed continuing violations to the security provisions of the Agreement and the need to advance the operationalization of the provisions on transitional justice.

Political developments

13. On 29 April, the Prime Minister presented a government programme to the National Assembly, which focused on peace, security and justice, economic recovery, politics and good governance, social cohesion and humanitarian action. He also highlighted measures taken by the government to implement the Political Agreement.

14. The National Assembly opened its first ordinary session on 1 March, focusing on legislation related to the implementation of the Political Agreement, including proposed bills on decentralization and a revised electoral code. On 7 March, the Assembly elected its 14-member executive bureau, which will serve for one year. Members of President Touadera's governing coalition were elected to most core and leadership positions. Only three women were elected, which does not conform with the law on parity mandating a minimum 35 per cent representation of women in State and private institutions for a transitional period of 10 years.

15. On 23 April, the National Assembly unanimously adopted the electoral code, which is significant, in that it establishes the legal framework for the presidential, legislative, regional and municipal elections to be held in 2020 and 2021. Some members of the Government and civil society criticized the bill for failing to ensure the adequate representation of women in accordance with the law on parity. On 5 June, the Constitutional Court decided that the gender parity law was applicable to the electoral code and returned it to the National Assembly, stipulating that the code could not be promulgated until it complied with the Court's decisions.

16. The Government and the national elections authority endorsed the initial budget estimate and timeline for the elections, with MINUSCA and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support. On 5 April, the Prime Minister launched resource mobilization efforts. Of the estimated \$49 million required to fund the elections, excluding operational and logistical support, the European Union pledged \$17 million, in addition to \$3.5 million to promote women's participation. The Government earmarked \$856,000 in 2019 for electoral preparations. During the period, UNDP launched the process of establishing a basket fund for the elections. The Government and international partners expressed concern about the limited scope of the electoral support mandate of MINUSCA.

Local dialogue and reconciliation

17. During the reporting period, the Government established peace and reconciliation committees in Bangassou, Bossangoa, Bouar, Kaga Bandoro, Bria, Bambari and Paoua, with MINUSCA support. There are a total of 26 committees, which advance local peace processes and will support the national reconciliation campaign foreseen under the Political Agreement.

18. On 20 March, the Gambo and Pombolo communities in the Mbomou prefecture signed a local reconciliation agreement following five months of dialogue facilitated by MINUSCA. The signing ceremony marked the first meeting between the communities since recurrent reprisal killings between the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique and anti-balaka associated militias in 2017. The signatories committed themselves to promoting peaceful dialogue and free movement and to report any violations to the Mbomou prefectural implementation committee.

19. On 23 March, representatives of Christian and Muslim communities of the Castor and Yakite neighbourhoods in Bangui's third district signed a reconciliation agreement, committing themselves to ceasing all hostilities, forbidding the carrying of firearms by civilians and supporting the voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced persons. The agreement followed several months of reconciliation efforts led by women and youth leaders, with MINUSCA support, in response to cyclical violence persisting since 2014. The process facilitated freedom of movement, a gradual return of displaced persons and prevented security incidents from escalating. The Bearex, Bibale and Fatima communities in the third district subsequently launched similar processes.

20. On 2 March, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique and anti-balaka in Alindao reached a local reconciliation agreement, with MINUSCA support. The Mission facilitated the deployment of 60 Central African armed forces to the area to bolster security and enhanced its own military and civilian presence.

21. The national committee on the prevention of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and discrimination organized peace forums in Bangui, Bambari, Bangassou, Bossangoa, Berberati and Mobaye in March, supported by the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. The forums were aimed at raising the awareness of local stakeholders against hate speech or incitement to violence.

III. Security situation

22. While the military confrontations that characterized the peak of the transhumance period in late 2018 subsided during the reporting period, armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement continued activities that violated its provisions, specifically, violence against civilians, illegal taxation and obstruction of the deployment of State institutions and security forces. Some armed groups attempted to obtain further concessions in the peace process through violent means. Anti-balaka factions, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation, the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique and the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique perpetrated the most egregious violations. Armed criminals continued to pose a threat, while State security forces were involved in illegal taxation in several prefectures.

23. In the west, the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain blocked the principal trade route from Bangui to Douala, Cameroon, on 3 March, in protest against the composition of the new Government. Although the Front had lifted the blockade on 26 March, it refused to return 11 government-owned vehicles that it had confiscated. Following extensive negotiations, on 5 April, MINUSCA conducted an operation to retrieve the vehicles, during which it came under fire from the Front. MINUSCA returned fire, killing five Front fighters and recovering the vehicles. Since the operation, the Front has continued to attack joint MINUSCA and Central African armed forces patrols, civilian trucks and humanitarian convoys along this road, although MINUSCA was able to ensure the continued flow of commercial and civilian traffic.

24. Elsewhere in the west, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation violently targeted State institutions, in addition to protesting against the composition of the Government and attacking police checkpoints and stations in the Ouham-Pendé and Nana-Mambéré prefectures. On 19 March, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation assassinated the mayor of Koundé, triggering the displacement of civilians.

25. On 21 May, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation fighters killed 42 persons, mostly civilians, in several villages near Paoua, purportedly in reprisal for the killing of 1 Fulani and cattle theft on 15 May. The Government and the international community strongly condemned the attacks and demanded that Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation leader Sidiki hand over the perpetrators. Following political engagement by the guarantors and facilitators of the Political Agreement, as well as military pressure from MINUSCA, on 24 May, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation issued a communiqué in which it confirmed the involvement of its combatants, three of whom were handed over to the Government on 23 May for judicial action. Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation publicly condemned the attack, reiterated its commitment to peace and reconciliation and expressed its condolences to the bereaved. It also withdrew from its bases in Bohong, Bokaya and Letele; some combatants remained in civilian clothes.

26. The security situation in Ouaka and Basse Kotto prefectures remained unstable owing to the reinforcements, movements and violent action by the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique and non-signatory anti-balaka factions, although improvements were noted in Alindao and Bambari. The Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique continued to reinforce positions and occupy schools around Bakala in Ouaka prefecture that had begun in mid-December 2018, contributing to tensions over control of the local mining site. Non-signatory local anti-balaka combatants maintained their presence west of Bakala and frequently perpetrated criminal acts, including attacks on

commercial trucks. MINUSCA deployed to Bakala, resulting in improved local security.

27. In Haute-Kotto, Vakaga and Bamingui-Bangoran prefectures, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique continued to illegally detain civilians. In Birao, the Front closed the gendarmerie station on 3 March, which recently reopened. On 18 May, following initial resistance by the Front, 108 Central African armed forces were deployed from Dékoa to Kaga Bandoro. (State security forces were last present in Kaga Bandoro five years ago.) The deployment generated resistance among some factions of the Front, revealing fractures within the group.

28. In Bria, the situation remained tense owing to violent acts against civilians, the illegal taxation of humanitarian aid, Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique opposition to State authority and the arrival of some 150 anti-balaka in April. In February and March, the Front detained 46 people at checkpoints between Bria and Ippy, and in Bria at least 7 were reportedly executed. On 9 March, the Front kidnapped four international staff of a MINUSCA contractor in Bria; they were released on 9 March following MINUSCA intervention. On 9 May, residents of a camp for internally displaced persons attacked and injured two peacekeepers during a MINUSCA operation on 9 May to remove anti-balaka from the camp.

29. In the northwest, in Batangafo, criminality increased between Bouca and Lady, and Markounda and Boguila. On 2 April, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique murdered a civilian on the Batangafo to Bouca road, following which anti-balaka fighters forcefully closed the market in Batangafo. Since February, unidentified individuals have carried out several armed assaults and robberies on the road linking Boguila and Bodjomo, impeding the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

30. In the southwest, the Government of South Sudan closed its border with the Central African Republic on 20 February after killings on the Obo-Bambouti road, negatively affecting cross-border trade and humanitarian access. The prefect of Haut-Mbomou engaged his counterpart in South Sudan, with support from MINUSCA, and the border reopened on 18 April.

31. Bangui remained relatively stable, notwithstanding demonstrations protesting against the composition of the Government and by civil servants over payment arrears. On 1 June, criminal gang leader Animeri Matar, alias “Force”, who was at the helm of criminal activity in the PK5 neighbourhood, died in Bangui from natural causes. Overall security in PK5 has improved since February, given the lack of significant intercommunal violence due to successful reconciliation efforts.

IV. Regional engagement

32. Efforts were made to strengthen support from countries of the subregion and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) as guarantors of the Political Agreement and to strengthen bilateral relations between the Central African Republic and its neighbours. From 2 to 5 April, the Secretary-General of ECCAS and my Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa conducted a joint mission to the Central African Republic to galvanize regional support for the Agreement, including the re-establishment of bilateral mixed commissions.

33. After an initial meeting held in Gore, Chad, on 4 March, Chadian and Central African authorities met in Paoua on 6 April to discuss joint border and transhumance management. They agreed to partially reopen the border in Bembere, closed since 2015, and to create mechanisms to improve security collaboration and reduce

transhumance-related violence, including by accelerating the deployment of Central African armed and internal security forces and judicial system officials to the border.

34. The twelfth session of the Cameroon-Central African Republic mixed commission on cooperation was held in Bangui on 6 and 7 May. The last such meeting had been held in 2010. Discussions focused on cross-border security and cooperation in areas such as trade, cultural exchanges and technology.

V. Humanitarian situation

35. The dire humanitarian situation did not improve during the reporting period. Humanitarian access continued to be impeded by several factors, including poor infrastructure, insecurity and obstruction by parties. Some 2.9 million people, of whom half are children, were in need of humanitarian assistance and protection, while 2.1 million people faced food insecurity. One child in three suffered from severe malnutrition and half the population lacked access to safe drinking water.

36. One quarter of the Central African population is displaced. As at 30 April, there were nearly 612,000 internally displaced persons and close to 593,000 refugees registered in neighbouring countries. Conditions for sustainable returns, even when facilitated by the Government or the international community, remained precarious owing to security and protection challenges, including disputes over land and property and lack of access to basic services and legal support. Even in relatively stable areas, protection concerns represent a major obstacle to durable solutions. Many returnees find their homes looted, destroyed or occupied. In this context, forced displacement will continue as long as its root causes are not addressed and if the resilience of affected communities is not strengthened.

37. Insecurity, armed group fragmentation, a weak State presence and poor infrastructure posed severe access challenges for civilians and humanitarian workers. Areas of acute need were inaccessible, in particular in the south-east. Custom clearance delays, the closure of the border with South Sudan and the blockage of supply routes by armed groups hampered the timely supply of life-saving items.

38. Three humanitarian workers were killed in 2019. A total of 90 incidents affecting humanitarian workers, premises and assets have been recorded to date in 2019. The Central African Republic is ranked as one of the most dangerous countries for humanitarian workers.

39. Protection of civilians and accountability to the affected populations are at the core of the 2019 humanitarian response plan, which requires \$430.7 million to provide critical assistance to 1.7 million extremely vulnerable people. As at 1 June, it was 28.6 per cent funded, far short of requirements, given that humanitarian assistance is the primary social safety net for the population.

VI. Protection of civilians

40. MINUSCA continued efforts to advance the protection of civilians, in line with Security Council resolution [2448 \(2018\)](#), my Action for Peacekeeping agenda, the Mission's political strategy and the recommendations of Brigadier General (Retired) Amoussou. Through its protection working group, MINUSCA coordinated information-sharing, analysis and response to protection threats.

41. The Political Agreement provided an additional political tool to advance the MINUSCA protection mandate and strengthen preventive efforts. The follow-up and monitoring mechanisms provide platforms for local dialogue, conflict resolution and

prevention. These complement the integrated approach of MINUSCA to protect civilians, combining physical protection with prevention, dialogue and local peace processes. MINUSCA military operations reduced threats posed by armed groups to civilians in several areas, including in the Basse Kotto, Nana-Mambéré and Ouaka prefectures.

42. MINUSCA continued to deploy, on a rotational basis, civilian surge teams to Alindao and Batangafo, where the Mission does not have a permanent civilian presence, to improve outreach and early warning and to facilitate community-based prevention strategies. MINUSCA deployed joint protection teams to assess protection threats in areas near Bangassou, Bria, Ndélé and Paoua.

43. MINUSCA has 78 community liaison assistants deployed in all 16 prefectures across 38 military bases, who collaborate with the Mission force and Central African armed and internal security forces to facilitate rapid responses to threats to civilians. The Mission's community alert network, which is an early warning and prevention mechanism, facilitated information collection on potential protection threats through a network of 2,267 civilian focal points.

44. Two training-of-trainer exercises were conducted for MINUSCA personnel to improve efforts to protect civilians, promote understanding of the Mission's protection mandate and raise awareness of the obligations of uniformed personnel. The Mission also established a community outreach project through its field offices to raise public awareness of the protection mandate.

VII. Extension of State authority and the rule of law

Extension of State authority

45. The Government continued to face challenges in extending its authority beyond the capital owing to a lack of infrastructure, financial challenges and insecurity. Armed groups continued to obstruct the deployment of State institutions and personnel, in violation of the Political Agreement.

46. In February, a national mapping of civil servants led by the Office of the Prime Minister, with MINUSCA and UNDP support, revealed that 3,418 civil servants had been active outside Bangui between September 2018 and January 2019, of whom 72 per cent worked for the Ministries of Health and Education. The government target is to deploy 6,500 State agents by 2021. MINUSCA and UNDP continued to support the Government in developing and implementing deployment plans for civil servants, including by strengthening an electronic platform to facilitate the tracking of civil servants and conducting inspection missions. The Government continued to settle civil servant salary backlogs dating back to 2002.

47. While there continued to be inadequate investment in essential State services, projects to rehabilitate State infrastructure in the context of the national recovery and peacebuilding plan accelerated with the completion of 6 prefectural offices, 23 subprefectural offices and 4 mayoral offices. MINUSCA is implementing 31 quick impact projects that are, among other things, rehabilitating gendarmeries in Baoro and Damara, the mayor's office in Besson and the third district commissariat and the Boeing district police posts in Bangui.

Security sector reform

48. The Government, with MINUSCA support, is conducting a nationwide awareness-raising campaign on the military justice code and advocacy action to increase adherence among uniformed personnel to legal norms and human rights

standards. MINUSCA, with the African Security Sector Network, trained civil society organizations on security sector reform to increase civil society awareness and oversight.

National armed and internal security forces

49. There was no significant change in the deployment of Central African armed forces during the reporting period. As at 1 June, 1,438 of 7,087 had been deployed in 16 locations outside Bangui. A total 1,071 forces trained by the European Union Military Training Mission and Russian military experts and deployed in seven locations work alongside MINUSCA. As at 1 June, 1,024 of 3,686 internal security forces had been deployed outside Bangui: 735 gendarmes, including 25 women, and 316 police officers, including 13 women.

50. Some Central African armed forces units outside Bangui have experienced logistical challenges. In Obo, Haut-Mbomou prefecture, delays in rotation of more than nine months resulted in, among other things, demonstrations, strikes and illegal taxation. Joint operations with MINUSCA in Nana-Mambéré, Ouham-Pendé and Mbomou prefectures offset in part operational challenges. MINUSCA provided logistical support, including in casualty evacuation and fuel supply, as well as initial support to establish weapons and ammunition storage kits in Bambari and Bangassou.

51. The Government, with MINUSCA support, continued to monitor, investigate and sanction misconduct within the Central African armed and internal security forces, resulting in disciplinary action against several Central African security personnel due to misconduct in Bangassou and Obo.

52. The selection of 1,023 new Central African armed forces recruits, following the launch of a nationwide recruitment campaign in November 2018, was completed on 27 May with MINUSCA assistance. The training of the new recruits began on 6 June. Preparations for the 2019 recruitment process of 1,000 police and gendarmerie officers are ongoing, with MINUSCA support.

53. On 16 April, the European Union Military Training Mission completed the training of the fifth battalion of Central African armed forces, bringing the total number of trained troops to 3,900, including those who received operational, educational and specialized training. On 3 May, a number of Central African armed forces, part of a special forces unit, graduated from specialist training given by Russian trainers.

54. During the reporting period, the Mine Action Service supported the rehabilitation of nine weapons and ammunition storage facilities for the gendarmerie on the road linking Bangui and Douala and provided specialized training to 138 personnel on weapons and ammunition storage management.

Disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration

55. Modest progress was made during the reporting period in implementing the national disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration programme. As at 1 June, the signatory armed groups had, in accordance with the Political Agreement, submitted lists of eligible members, but those lists were incomplete. The national executive unit of the programme supported by MINUSCA resumed its disarmament and demobilization operations in Paoua on 28 May.

56. The Government appointed anti-balaka leader Maxime Mokom to the new position of minister in charge of the national disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration programme. Meetings of the consultative follow-up committee of the programme were held in April and May.

57. MINUSCA, with the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Office for Project Services, continued to implement community violence reduction programmes in eight locations. A total of 7,509 beneficiaries, including 1,853 women, participated, and 226 weapons of war, 5,622 artisanal weapons, 167 unexploded ordnance and 14,124 rounds of small arms ammunition were collected. In April, the Government endorsed the national community violence reduction strategy.

Justice and the rule of law

58. National justice and rule of law capacity remained limited. A total of 18 of 27 first instance and appellate courts were operating during the reporting period, including 16 outside Bangui.

59. The Special Criminal Court, with support from MINUSCA and UNDP, initiated its first investigations, evaluated and strengthened its Registry and enhanced its capacity to protect victims and witnesses. The Court also conducted a nationwide campaign to raise the awareness of the population about its mandate and progress since its establishment.

60. From 1 February to 1 June, MINUSCA arrested 65 individuals suspected of committing crimes, including murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, torture, looting and illegal detention, using its urgent temporary measures.

61. On 15 March, 150 new civilian prison officers began training in Bangui, which will bring the total to 250 officers. As part of the demilitarization of the prison service, responsibility for prisoner health services was transferred from the defence to justice ministry. The population at the Ngaragba prison in Bangui reached 1,069, more than quadruple its 260-person capacity, posing serious security, health and other risks. Detention facilities rehabilitated by MINUSCA in Bangassou and Paoua reopened in March.

VIII. Human rights and the fight against impunity

62. Human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law decreased further during the first three months of the reporting period owing to the lack of major armed confrontations since the end of the transhumance period and the beginning of the rainy season, coupled with the signing of the Political Agreement. From 6 February to 1 June, MINUSCA recorded 315 violations of international human rights law and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting at least 566 victims. Those figures represent a 26.9 per cent decrease in the number of incidents and a 35 per cent decrease in the number of victims compared with the previous reporting period. Signatory armed groups, namely, Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique and anti-balaka, continued to commit grave human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law, including violence against civilians and civilian infrastructure, restrictions on the freedom of movement and illegal detention. Transhumance movements continued to represent a major source of conflict-related violations of human rights.

Transitional justice

63. On 22 March, the Government, with MINUSCA support, organized a workshop for 100 representatives of civil society organizations, State institutions, victims' associations and political parties to facilitate popular consultations on the legislative framework of the truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission. Pursuant

to the Political Agreement, the inclusive commission, comprising representatives of signatory armed groups and national authorities, responsible for proposing recommendations to the truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission, was established pursuant to a presidential decree on 8 February and held its inaugural meeting on 28 May.

64. The National Human Rights Commission, with MINUSCA support, developed its standard operating procedures, communication strategy and resource mobilization plan amounting to \$7,306,000.

Conflict-related sexual violence

65. Conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by armed groups continued to be reported, with most violations attributed to ex-Séléka groups in the Ouham Pendé and Nana Grébizi prefectures. Widespread rape was reported in the Kaga Bandoro subprefecture and along transhumance corridors, areas often inaccessible to investigation teams.

66. From 1 February to 1 June, MINUSCA recorded 68 cases of conflict-related sexual violence. A victims' association in Bangui referred 14 of those cases, of which 11 dated back to 2013. During the reporting period, MINUSCA recorded judicial investigations of 62 cases of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 153 victims. Women's organizations with small scale-projects supported by MINUSCA partnered with the Mission in monitoring sexual- and gender-based violence and raising the awareness of communities in reporting violations. MINUSCA organized eight awareness-raising events for 1,221 persons, including 559 women, in Bangassou, Birao, Bossangoa, Bouar, Grevai, Kaga-Bandoro, Markounda, Obo, Ouanda and Paoua.

67. The Mission selected two partner organizations in Bangui to provide temporary physical protection for victims. On 26 March, MINUSCA trained Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique, Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and anti-balaka combatants in Batangafo, Ouham prefecture, on respect for international human rights law and the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence.

Children and armed conflict

68. In accordance with the Political Agreement, signatory ex-Séléka groups in Kaga Bandoro presented lists of identified associated children to the national task force on monitoring and reporting. In March, 101 children (45 boys and 56 girls) were separated from the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (34), the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (35) and Séléka rénové pour la paix et la justice (32) and handed to partners of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In addition, 72 self-demobilized children from anti-balaka associated militias (38 boys and 34 girls) in Kémo prefecture were placed in reintegration programmes.

IX. Economic situation

69. The macroeconomic situation continued to be negatively affected by insecurity, limited infrastructure and rising oil prices. That notwithstanding, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that economic growth was 4 per cent in 2018 and was projected to increase to 4.5 per cent in 2019. An IMF delegation in May urged the Government to eliminate taxes and fees with no economic justification in order to

facilitate private sector development and to undertake measures aimed at improving public expenditure management to promote transparency and good governance.

70. Economic performance in the first quarter of 2019 was affected by the forced closure of the primary supply route linking Bangui and Douala. Inflation increased from 1.9 per cent in February to 2.1 per cent in March; food prices were also affected. There was a decrease of some 50 per cent in public revenue in March, estimated at \$8.52 million of the \$17 million figure recorded in March 2018.

71. The implementation of the national recovery and peacebuilding plan accelerated with the disbursement of \$1.58 billion as at 1 June, bringing the financial delivery rate to 60.8 per cent, an increase of 7 per cent since 31 December 2018. Efforts were made to strengthen strategic coordination between the plan and the implementation of the Political Agreement.

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

Military component

72. As at 1 June, the strength of the MINUSCA military component stood at 11,595 of an authorized strength of 11,650 personnel. It comprises 11 infantry battalions, 2 high-readiness battalions, 1 special forces company, 1 quick reaction force company and enabling units, specifically 1 military police company, 5 engineering companies, 1 heavy transport company, 3 level II hospitals, 1 level I plus forward surgery module and 3 helicopter units, including 1 attack helicopter unit. There are 309 staff officers and 172 military observers. Women represent 3.4 per cent of the military component.

73. The attack helicopter unit, which became operational again at the end of February, conducted numerous missions, such as supporting robust operations, facilitating flexible and mobile posture and providing air support and intelligence reconnaissance. Recent operations confirmed the requirement for mechanized companies for improved force protection.

Police component

74. As at 1 June, the strength of the MINUSCA police component stood at 2,045 of a total authorized strength of 2,080, including 368 individual police officers and 1,677 personnel deployed within 10 formed police units and 2 police support units. Two police support units and six formed police units are operating in Bangui under the joint task force. Formed police units are deployed to Bambari, Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro. Women represent 9.28 per cent of the police component.

Civilian component

75. As at 1 June, 1,367 civilian personnel, including 195 United Nations Volunteers, were serving with MINUSCA, representing 90 per cent of 1,524 authorized positions. A total of 26 per cent of civilian personnel are women.

Status-of-forces agreement

76. During the reporting period, there were no notable violations of the status-of-forces agreement, owing to closer cooperation and exchanges between the Government and MINUSCA.

Safety and security of United Nations personnel

77. From 1 February to 1 June, 86 incidents involving the United Nations were recorded, including 23 attacks by armed groups and criminal gangs targeting personnel, premises, equipment and convoys. Seven incidents of death threats and harassment of United Nations civilian personnel attributed to armed and criminal groups were reported, in addition to three incidents in which United Nations personnel were detained by internal security forces. A total of 33 civilian and military personnel were injured, 8 in hostile attacks by armed groups and 25 in traffic accidents. Two military personnel were struck and killed by lightning and two military personnel and one civilian perished owing to illness. In addition, the United Nations system was targeted in 14 other cases, but the consequences were of minor impact.

Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

78. From 1 February to 1 June, 9 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving MINUSCA personnel were reported, bringing to 10 the total allegations recorded in 2019. Four of the allegations relate to incidents that allegedly occurred in 2019 and six from previous years. Eight of the new allegations involving personnel from military contingents have been referred to the troop-contributing countries concerned for investigation, while one allegation involving a member of the police is being investigated by the United Nations. Six paternity and child support claims are associated with the new allegations.

79. MINUSCA continued efforts to implement my zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse by strengthening its prevention strategy, including comprehensive training and awareness-raising campaigns. The Mission strengthened early warning and reporting mechanisms at the community level with the expansion and capacity-building of community-based complaints mechanisms and through various outreach efforts. MINUSCA finalized the implementation of its comprehensive sexual exploitation and abuse risk management framework. The Mission and the United Nations country team coordinated efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse through quarterly task force meetings and the use of the incident reporting form designed by the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse to ensure consistency in information collection and reporting by United Nations entities.

80. MINUSCA, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund and partners continued to refer identified victims of sexual exploitation and abuse for assistance and to monitor their situation and needs. The International Rescue Committee is implementing a project funded by the trust fund in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, established in 2016 and aimed at providing medical and psychosocial assistance, as well as awareness-raising, within communities.

Support considerations

81. MINUSCA improved its environmental performance and reduced its environmental footprint by acquiring incinerators for solid waste management. The Mission supported Bangui municipality in addressing subsurface oxidation at the Kolongo landfill. MINUSCA continued to increase its use of renewable energy by installing photovoltaic systems and conducting awareness-raising campaigns to reduce emissions. It also continued to improve its water consumption and wastewater management by using recycled water and installing 39 of 41 planned wastewater treatment facilities.

Performance optimization

82. MINUSCA continued to implement various pilot initiatives to improve its performance and enhance its effectiveness, in line with my Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the recommendations of Brigadier General (Retired) Amoussou on the protection of civilians and of Lieutenant General (Retired) dos Santos Cruz to reduce peacekeeper fatalities and other reviews. For example, following investigations into violence against civilians in Alindao in November 2018, measures are under way with the troop-contributing country concerned to improve performance and enhance the protection capacity of MINUSCA in the area. Some of these troops are being reduced to generate another helicopter unit and quick reaction force. In addition, the Mission closed two temporary operating bases in the east and centre of the country, while two were opened in the west. More frequent patrols were undertaken in areas where temporary operating bases were closed. The average joint monthly patrols with the Central African armed forces increased by more than 60 per cent during the reporting period.

83. MINUSCA completed 20 per cent of the first pilot phase of the comprehensive performance assessment system and trained 160 staff. MINUSCA conducted a Mission-wide stress test in March to build on previous tabletop exercises to enhance effectiveness for medical and casualty evacuation and crisis management. It continues to pilot the “UNITE Aware” platform to support decision-making, operational coordination and crisis management.

Financial aspects

84. The General Assembly, by its resolution [72/290](#), appropriated the amount of \$930.2 million for the maintenance of MINUSCA for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. As at 31 May 2019, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account to MINUSCA amounted to \$123.5 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$1,539.7 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 31 January 2019, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 December 2018, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XI. Observations

85. With the signing of the Political Agreement between the Government and 14 armed groups, the Central African Republic has a historic opportunity, which I call upon Central Africans to collectively seize, in a spirit of national ownership and national pride. For far too long, the country has been crippled by persistent and pervasive violence, undermining the growth of its institutions, devastating and dividing communities and inhibiting the legitimate aspirations of generations of its citizens. The road towards overcoming this history will be long and often beset by setbacks. Nevertheless, only by fully committing themselves to implementing the Agreement may the people of the Central African Republic stay on a path towards durable peace.

86. I therefore welcome the tentative but important progress made in the initial four months since the Political Agreement was signed. I remain, however, deeply concerned by persistent violence committed by armed groups. In signing the Agreement, they committed themselves to immediately renouncing violence as a means of making any political, social or economic claim. I strongly condemn attacks against civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, some of which may constitute war crimes. There is no justification for such attacks, holding the economy

of the country hostage, obstructing the deployment of State officials, illegally taxing civilians or destroying or occupying civilian infrastructure. I am deeply saddened by the massacre of dozens of unarmed civilians in villages near Paoua in May. I welcome efforts by the authorities, with MINUSCA support, to swiftly investigate those attacks and prosecute alleged perpetrators.

87. Such acts cannot be tolerated by the international community, especially in the aftermath of the Political Agreement and the establishment of an inclusive Government. I appeal to other guarantors and facilitators of the Agreement, including neighbouring countries, to use their influence to enhance adherence by armed groups to their commitments. Continued political dialogue, proactive, timely engagement of the African Union as a guarantor and robust measures to protect civilians and sanction and bring to justice those responsible for such grave violations are necessary. The United Nations, including MINUSCA, will spare no effort to support the national authorities in protecting civilians and implementing the Agreement.

88. President Touadera has demonstrated commendable leadership through his steadfast commitment to dialogue and his political will to seek compromise in pursuit of peace, while an impatient public grows more vocal in its criticism of authorities for making concessions to armed groups without clear reciprocity and in the face of continued abuses against the population. I welcome the proactive and timely action of the Government to adhere to its commitments under the Political Agreement, including establishing various follow-up and monitoring mechanisms at the national and prefectural levels. They provide essential platforms inclusive of civil society to prevent conflict, de-escalate tension and build trust among former enemies, thereby enabling a more protective environment for the population, State officials and humanitarian workers. I encourage the Government to continue to demonstrate that it can serve the people by working together constructively, with a view to ending violence, neglect, marginalization and isolation affecting too many communities, especially outside Bangui.

89. I commend the signatory armed groups for nominating representatives to the national follow-up mechanisms and several of the prefectural bodies. I call upon them to participate fully in these mechanisms, especially at the prefectural level, where the need to reduce violence is most urgent. I also call upon the signatory armed groups to submit, in accordance with the Political Agreement, the remaining lists of their combatants eligible for the national disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration programme, which should include members who will integrate into the mixed security units. Progress in deploying these units and in the programme is most urgent to reduce violence and increase confidence among communities and among the national security forces and armed groups. The contribution of partners, including guarantors and facilitators of the Agreement, are essential for the Agreement's follow-up and security mechanisms to fulfil their envisaged roles. I urge all partners to consider enhancing their generous support.

90. I welcome efforts being made to expedite the implementation of the *Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité* to send a strong signal about the positive impact of the Political Agreement, including for security along transhumance corridors and at mining sites. I note the Government's approach that all elements in those units should be subject to disarmament and demobilization and human rights vetting. I welcome the important support already committed by partners to accelerate their formation, deployment and subsequent scale-up and adjustment, as appropriate. It will be important to continue efforts to move forward with the national disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration programme, which provides armed group members with socioeconomic benefits or opportunities to integrate into the national defence and security forces.

91. The people of the Central African Republic are not bystanders to the peace process and should be engaged as full stakeholders in its implementation. The credibility of the Political Agreement rests on its full national ownership. Every effort must be made to enhance popular understanding of the Agreement and to seek feedback on its implementation from all segments of society. I welcome the priority placed by the Government and its partners on conducting a nationwide awareness-raising campaign, involving civil society and armed groups, notwithstanding practical challenges in a vast country with weak communications and road infrastructure.

92. I also welcome plans to reinforce local peace and reconciliation committees as part of broader nationwide reconciliation efforts. Progress in local peace processes provides essential foundations for the success of the Political Agreement by helping to overcome intercommunal tensions. The Gambo and Pombolo communities in Mbomou prefecture and the Yakite and Castor communities in Bangui are to be congratulated for choosing to take destiny in their own hands, working together to turn the page from cyclical conflict that has endured for far too long. I also welcome the role of women as essential agents of peace. Other communities should benefit from these positive examples by initiating their own reconciliation efforts, which the United Nations will support. I am hopeful that such local peace processes can also help to contain the activities of non-signatory armed groups and militias.

93. Sustaining peace in the country will require rapid and significant investment to rectify socioeconomic deprivation and the physical isolation of inaccessible communities. The absence of road networks and other critical infrastructure has a serious impact on the ability of the State to deliver basic social services, of humanitarian actors to deliver critical assistance and of MINUSCA to protect civilians. There is a need for a transformation of the relationship between State and society, which can be achieved only by building public trust that the State and its institutions exist in service of the citizenry. Tangible peace dividends must therefore be realized as soon as possible. It is my strong view that mending the frayed social fabric must begin with efforts to end the historic marginalization of large segments of society, including by expediting infrastructure and other development projects, prioritizing the most remote and conflict-affected areas. The Political Agreement puts significant emphasis on recovery and development programmes, alongside political reforms and security measures. I therefore welcome ongoing efforts to strategically align the implementation of the Agreement with the national recovery and peacebuilding plan, which must be accelerated. I urge partners to continue their active engagement and support.

94. I remain alarmed by the humanitarian situation. The persistence of acute needs is a human tragedy. It hinders the prospects for sustainable peace, given that people whose most basic needs are unmet are often limited in their capacity to build peace in their communities and are more easily exploited or manipulated. I am also deeply concerned by the high number of displaced Central Africans and by the limited progress made in improving the conditions for their return in safety and dignity. I appeal to partners to urgently contribute to the humanitarian response plan.

95. The people of the Central African Republic have long recognized that peace cannot exist in the absence of justice and reconciliation. I am therefore encouraged by the launch of popular consultations on the future truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission, as called for at the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, which will ensure that its work is aligned with the aspirations and needs of the victims of armed conflict. I also welcome the launch of the inclusive commission. At the same time, Central Africans demand and deserve an end to impunity, not only for the atrocities of the past, but also for the daily crimes that continue to affect their lives, livelihoods and communities, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and fear. Continued efforts are required to bolster the work of the national

justice sector and the Special Criminal Court, which are central to restoring the rule of law, an essential foundation for the societal and institutional trust required for sustainable peace.

96. I welcome the recruitment under way for establishing a defence and security sector that is fully national in character and well suited to provide security and uphold the rule of law. I call for a similar approach for improving the representativeness of the civil service, as called for under the Political Agreement. I commend the Government for its efforts to deploy national defence and security forces outside Bangui and into conflict-affected areas. National forces, including those working alongside MINUSCA, have demonstrated their effectiveness and professionalism in many operations. I also commend the Government for taking disciplinary action against units that fail in their core obligation to protect the human rights of all Central Africans. I also appreciate the coordinated and sustained support provided by all partners, whose continued engagement is essential for helping the national defence and security forces to develop the capacity needed to deploy and sustain operations throughout the country.

97. I would encourage the National Assembly to expedite the political reforms envisaged under the Political Agreement, including laws on decentralization, on the status of former Heads of State and on political parties. The new legislation could help to positively transform the political dispensation of the country, notwithstanding challenges in implementation. The decentralization legislation provides an unprecedented opportunity to enhance the provision of basic services and development. Given that the State will need to develop new forms of localized governance and representation for the first time in its history, the process will require constant dialogue and considerable support from partners. The legislation is nevertheless essential for achieving the objectives of the political representation and self-determination of communities and for conducting regional and local elections.

98. Voter registration for the presidential and legislative elections to be conducted in late 2020 and early 2021 will begin in six months. Those elections will mark a major milestone. I commend the national authorities for initiating their preparations. I encourage all stakeholders to engage in the political process in a transparent manner, with a focus on dialogue. I would stress the importance of an inclusive electoral process as an essential part of the political process, a driver of the extension of State authority and the effective operationalization of security arrangements of the Political Agreement, all of which are inherent requirements of free, fair and peaceful elections. Conducting the elections will represent a major challenge, requiring considerable support. I welcome the commitments already made by partners and appeal for additional assistance, including in the context of the forthcoming UNDP basket fund. Taking into account the concerns of the national authorities and many partners, I intend to provide recommendations on the scope of the MINUSCA electoral mandate in my next report.

99. I welcome the holding of the first joint commission between the Central African Republic and Cameroon since 2010 and encourage the Central African Republic and other neighbouring countries to do the same.

100. In conclusion, I would like to welcome my new Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Mankeur Ndiaye, who assumed his responsibilities in March, and express my sincere appreciation to Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, who served admirably as my Special Representative for nearly four years. I am profoundly grateful to all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their commitment to peace and stability in the Central African Republic. My appreciation also goes to the troop- and police-contributing countries, donor countries, regional and multilateral organizations, and non-governmental

organizations, and to my Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall. I wish to pay special tribute to the essential role played by the African Union and ECCAS as guarantors of the Political Agreement, as well as the continuous support of the facilitators, which has brought an invaluable opportunity for improving the lives of the people of the Central African Republic.

Annex I

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission
in the Central African Republic: military and police strength as at
1 June 2019**

Country	Military component				Police component	
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Formed police units	Civilian police
Bangladesh	11	18	998	1027	–	–
Benin	3	5	–	8	–	26
Bhutan	2	2	–	4	–	–
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	2	–	5	–	–
Brazil	4	6	–	10	–	–
Burkina Faso	1	2	–	3	–	26
Burundi	9	12	740	761	–	–
Cambodia	6	6	200	212	–	–
Cameroon	3	6	740	749	279	26
Colombia	2	–	–	2	–	–
Congo	5	11	–	16	138	3
Côte d'Ivoire	–	3	–	3	–	46
Czechia	3	3	–	6	–	–
Djibouti	–	–	–	–	–	5
Egypt	9	19	988	1 016	139	7
France	–	9	–	9	–	7
Gabon	–	3	450	453	–	–
Gambia	3	3	–	6	–	7
Ghana	5	11	–	16	–	–
Guatemala	2	2	–	4	–	–
Guinea	–	–	–	–	–	16
Hungary	1	1	–	2	–	–
Indonesia	6	8	200	214	17	6
Jordan	3	7	–	10	127	17
Kenya	8	7	–	15	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	–	–	1
Mali	–	–	–	–	–	31
Mauritania	10	8	739	757	280	–
Mexico	–	1	–	1	–	–
Morocco	2	12	750	764	–	–
Nepal	4	12	720	736	–	–
Niger	3	6	–	9	–	24
Nigeria	–	2	–	2	–	–
Oman	–	–	–	–	–	–
Pakistan	12	27	1 213	1 252	–	–
Paraguay	2	1	–	3	–	–
Peru	8	7	205	220	–	–

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military component</i>				<i>Police component</i>	
	<i>Military observers</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Formed police units</i>	<i>Civilian police</i>
Philippines	2	–	–	2	–	–
Portugal	–	6	178	184	–	2
Republic of Moldova	3	2	–	5	–	–
Romania	–	–	–	–	–	4
Rwanda	11	19	1 359	1 389	418	26
Senegal	–	12	100	112	279	23
Serbia	2	3	72	77	–	–
Sierra Leone	2	1	–	3	–	–
Spain	–	–	–	–	–	5
Sri Lanka	6	2	110	118	–	–
Sweden	–	–	–	–	–	6
Togo	4	7	–	11	–	8
Tunisia	1	–	–	1	–	46
United Republic of Tanzania	–	7	443	450	–	–
United States of America	–	7	–	7	–	–
Uruguay	–	3	–	3	–	–
Viet Nam	1	4	–	5	–	–
Zambia	8	14	909	931	–	–
Zimbabwe	2	–	–	2	–	–
Total	172	309	11 114	11 595	1 677	368

