



Security Council

Distr.: General
14 February 2020

Original: English

Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution [2499 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2020 and requested me to report on its implementation every four months. The present report provides an update on major developments in the Central African Republic since my report of 15 October 2019 ([S/2019/822](#)).

II. Political situation

2. Activities related to the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic continued to be the focus of attention by national and international stakeholders. The political environment is increasingly dominated by political dynamics ahead of the elections to be held in 2020 and 2021, marked by the return of the former Presidents, François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia, and the former President of the National Assembly, Abdou Karim Meckassoua.

Peace process

3. One year after the signing of the Agreement, violence has decreased overall, although intermittent but serious incidents of violence and human rights violations continued. Progress was made on such priorities as the implementation mechanisms, key legislation, efforts to combat impunity, local-level reconciliation mechanisms and preparations for elections. Notwithstanding these advances, the persistent lack of good faith among the signatories, in particular the three main ex-Séléka armed groups, the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation group and anti-balaka groups, and a nominal commitment by parts of the Government, especially the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, as well as sensitive matters such as transitional security and justice mechanisms, contributed to delays.

4. The national authorities' deadline of the end of January 2020 to conclude disarmament and demobilization was not met. Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation operations, however, resumed in the west, although



some armed groups continued to conduct illegal activities. The 253 former combatants who were disarmed, demobilized and vetted for the special mixed security units for the north-west defence zone completed their training in Bouar on 16 December, together with 266 members of the defence and internal security forces. The unit is not yet operational. The national authorities, with the support of MINUSCA, the European Union, the African Union, the Peacebuilding Fund and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), are working to address obstacles to the deployment of the units, including deployment locations and sites, per diem payments and logistics.

5. The National Assembly held its ordinary session from 1 October to 27 December 2019. Several laws referred to in the Agreement, namely those on the status of former Heads of State, decentralization and local governance, the status of political parties and the opposition and the return of internally displaced persons, have yet to be adopted.

6. My Special Representative and Head of MINUSCA, Mankeur Ndiaye, the guarantors of the Agreement (the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)) and the Government continued efforts to strengthen commitment to the Agreement. For example, after MINUSCA conducted military operations against Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation, a delegation comprising representatives of MINUSCA, the African Union and ECCAS met the group's leader in Bouar on 24 October to encourage engagement in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process. The group's leader agreed that the group would disarm and demobilize only if it could join the joint security units. However, it suspended its participation in the implementation mechanisms of the Agreement after 124 of its combatants were declared ineligible for the units. On 7, 12 and 14 November, high-level delegations met leaders of the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) and the Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (MLCJ) in Birao and Ndélé to prevent further violence.

7. In November, the secretariat of the Executive Monitoring Committee of the Agreement developed recommendations to improve effectiveness. Key recommendations yet to be implemented include increasing armed group representation from 5 to all 14 signatories, establishing a vice-presidential position for the commission overseeing prefectural committees and increasing the number of secretariat personnel.

8. On 3 December, the commission held its sixth session in Bangui to discuss, inter alia, the implementation of article 35 of the Agreement with punitive or coercive measures, including political, economic, judicial and international sanctions and the use of force. Exceptionally, all signatory armed groups participated, except the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain. The representative of the political opposition and leader of the Union pour le Renouveau Centrafricain party, Anicet-Georges Dologuélé, participated for the first time.

9. On 16 December, FPRC, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) requested a meeting under article 34 of the Agreement in a letter to my Special Representative and the guarantors. They rejected allegations that armed groups were the only violators of the Agreement. They pointed to the participation of such groups in the Agreement's monitoring mechanisms, the dismantling of illegal barriers and the submission of eligibility lists for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, while lamenting delays by the Government, in particular in making the joint security units operational. MINUSCA, the African Union and ECCAS, in consultation with the Government, agreed to meet. On 13 January, the three groups issued another communiqué in which they criticized the slow implementation of the Agreement and called for the meeting,

insisting that it be held outside the country, which the Government and guarantors have opposed.

10. On 6 February, the first anniversary of the signing of the Agreement was commemorated at the presidential palace, with the participation of 13 of the 14 signatory armed groups, political parties, civil society and the international community. The United Nations, the African Union and ECCAS issued a joint communiqué to mark the occasion and call for the full implementation of the Agreement.

11. The prefectural committees, supported by the Peacebuilding Fund, continued to address security issues and the root causes of the conflict, although their effectiveness required improvement. The participation of women remained limited, at around 20 per cent, with 44 women in 15 committees. Only the three women prefects of Bangassou, Mobaye and Mambéré-Kadéï are members of technical security committees. Victims' associations participate, representing all victims of the conflict, not only conflict-related sexual violence. In Ouham Prefecture, the establishment of the prefectural committee enabled Muslim leaders and some ex-Séléka members to return for the first time since 2013.

12. On 29 November, the National Assembly adopted the national budget for 2020, which amounted to \$481 million. It contained allocations to implement the Agreement, including \$400,700 for monitoring mechanisms.

Political developments

13. The political situation was marked by continued strengthening of the political opposition and persistent controversies within the presidential majority. The return of Mr. Bozizé on 15 December and Mr. Djotodia on 10 January added to the complexity. Mr. Djotodia was received by the President, Faustin Archange Touadéra, the day that he arrived; he left on 12 January with a stated intention to return. On 21 January, facilitated by the African Union and ECCAS, the President met Mr. Bozizé to discuss the conditions for his presence in the country. On 25 January, the African Union, ECCAS and the United Nations issued a joint communiqué in which they welcomed Mr. Touadéra's meetings with four former Heads of State as part of the peace process and called for the speedy implementation of pending commitments in the Agreement. On 27 January, Mr. Bozizé, during his first public press conference, expressed support for the holding of elections and announced that it was for his party to designate its candidate for the presidential election.

14. The Kwa Na Kwa (KNK) party and the Rassemblement démocratique centrafricain (RDC) joined the opposition coalition, led by Mr. Dologuélé. Several members of RDC remained in the presidential majority. The former President of the National Assembly and parliamentarian representing the third district of Bangui, Mr. Meckassoua, issued press statements in which he confirmed his affiliation with the E Zingo Biani movement and the creation of a united democratic opposition. On 13 January, KNK issued a communiqué in which it deplored the violent events that occurred in Alindao on 9 January as a violation of the Agreement and demanded, inter alia, the unconditional resignation of the Prime Minister and his Government and the arrest and dismissal of Ali Darassa.

15. The presidential majority and the Mouvement des coeurs unis (MCU) have been establishing field offices for the elections. On 29 October, some 100 supporters of MCU organized a peaceful march in the first district of Bangui to request the arrest and prosecution of Mr. Meckassoua, alleging that he had instigated the recent fighting in Birao.

16. The National Assembly held several question-and-answer sessions with the Prime Minister that were focused on political, security and socioeconomic developments. Mr. Meckassoua appeared in the Assembly for the first time since his impeachment as its President in October 2018 to participate as an Assembly member.

Electoral preparations

17. The National Electoral Authority continued preparations for the elections, with support from the Government, MINUSCA and international partners. On 21 November, it launched the mapping for voter registration and polling sites in Bangui and the west. Electoral preparations have been delayed owing to a lack of available funds in the \$41.8 million basket fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The procurement of voter registration equipment has been delayed by some three months, until March 2020. UNDP mobilized \$1.5 million for voter registration equipment. The European Union pledged 15 million euros. The Government committed approximately \$2.7 million in the 2020 budget, bringing its overall allocation to \$4.8 million. Some political and civil society actors have called for another political transition, claiming that the elections would not occur within the timeline set out in the Constitution.

18. The Government initiated discussions to enable the participation of refugees in the elections, for which there is still no legal framework. Efforts are being made to increase the participation of women and ensure that the 35 per cent mandated quota of women candidates is met. In October 2019, the Government withdrew from the National Assembly its bill on the status of the National Electoral Authority, fearing amendments that might compromise its independence.

19. On 6 December and 22 January, the Prime Minister chaired meetings of the strategic committee for elections, comprising heads of national institutions, relevant government ministers, key strategic partners, MINUSCA and UNDP, to monitor electoral preparations. MINUSCA and international partners advocated the relaunch of the consultation framework to foster dialogue with political stakeholders and civil society, as well as the participation of refugees in the elections. MINUSCA and UNDP called for contributions for the holding of the elections, in particular to the UNDP basket fund. My Special Representative continued to meet political party leaders across the spectrum to encourage constructive dialogue, good governance and respect for the Constitution. The Mission is working with the Government, the National Electoral Authority and the national security forces to finalize the integrated security plan for the elections.

Local dialogue and reconciliation

20. The authorities of the Central African Republic, with the support of MINUSCA, continued dialogue and reconciliation efforts at the local level. On 28 November, representatives of the third district of Bangui signed an agreement on good-neighbourliness with adjacent neighbourhoods, helping to normalize intercommunal relations, which had been gravely affected by the attack by criminal gangs on the Fatima Roman Catholic church in May 2018. The initiative continues despite conflict in the district.

21. In Birao, local dialogue, supported by the joint visit of the Government, the African Union, ECCAS, MINUSCA and the Sudan in October, helped to decrease tension. On 12 and 13 November, MINUSCA and the World Bank visited the town to urge local leaders to create conditions conducive for development. A local mechanism to curb the circulation of small arms was established.

22. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, IOM, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

and MINUSCA developed a joint approach to reduce transhumance-related violence in the main hotspots through local dialogue and mediation with communities, including in Chad. Committees for the prevention and management of transhumance-related conflicts were established in Ouham and Nana-Grébizi Prefectures, bringing together community leaders and representatives of herder and farmer communities.

III. Security situation

23. Overall, violence decreased, although the number and type of violations of the Agreement during the reporting period were approximately the same as in the prior period, with 575 violations from 16 October to 1 February, of which 297 were against civilians, compared with 304 in the prior period. The number of illegal movements of armed group personnel, however, increased owing to the start of transhumance and profitable commercial activities, as well as the expansion of territory by some armed groups. As at 1 February, FPRC had the most reported violations (210), followed by MPC (122), anti-balaka groups (90), UPC (83), Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (35) and MLCJ (21). The armed forces and the internal security forces also violated the Agreement; the former violated it nine times, although the cases were less significant in volume and intensity, mostly resulting from undisciplined behaviour.

24. From 24 to 26 December, significant clashes occurred between merchants and criminal gangs in the PK5 district of Bangui. At least 52 persons were killed and over 70 were injured, and several shops and houses were burned. On 30 and 31 December, the Government and MINUSCA facilitated a short-term stabilization strategy to, inter alia, maintain PK5 as a weapons-free zone. Subsequently, criminal gangs declared that they had dismantled all 13 of their bases and committed themselves to participating in an ongoing community violence reduction programme. MINUSCA established a temporary operating base near the market and intensified patrols, including with the internal security forces. On 21 January, the police station was officially handed over to the internal security forces. The judicial authorities, with the support of MINUSCA, launched an investigation, which led to the arrest of 20 suspects on 17 January.

25. FPRC and MLCJ continued hostilities to control Vakaga Prefecture, exacerbating ethnic tensions, including at sites for displaced persons. The alleged involvement of mercenaries from Chad and the Sudan in both groups fuelled the fighting. Following the loss of control of Birao and Am Dafok to MLCJ in September and October, FPRC reinforced its presence in Ndélé and, on 16 December, retook control of Am Dafok. The following day, FPRC and MLCJ clashed on the route between Birao and Am Dafok, resulting in a high number of casualties on both sides. On 12 December, a delegation of the Government, the African Union, ECCAS and MINUSCA met local stakeholders, leading to an agreement for a protocol for peace that included an immediate ceasefire. On 27 December, a high-level delegation from the Sudan, supported by MINUSCA, brokered the ceasefire until 15 January, which held with no breaches recorded.

26. On 17 and 20 January, clashes between MLCJ and FPRC resumed in Takamala and Bougaye (north-west of Birao). Both armed groups reportedly continued to recruit combatants, taking advantage of the ceasefire to strategically reposition themselves. On 23 January, following a meeting with the Mission leadership in Birao, the Sultan and the Kara tribal chief issued a communiqué in which they requested the Government, guarantors and facilitators to conduct rapid mediation for Vakaga. MINUSCA continues to protect civilians through facilitation, dialogue and robust patrols.

27. On 25 and 26 January, Kara and Runga factions of FPRC clashed over an attempted rape in Bria, causing 50 unconfirmed casualties and the displacement of 11,000 persons. MINUSCA intervened to prevent the looting of civilian houses and secure the hospital and sites for displaced persons. The Mission's mediation secured a cessation of hostilities on 26 January.

28. Many armed groups continued to challenge State authority, including by attacking its representatives, in particular the armed forces. In Ouaka Prefecture, UPC exchanged fire with the armed forces on several occasions, including on 27 November in Bambari and on 15 December in Ippy. In Basse-Kotto, persistent tension between UPC and the armed forces in Alindao culminated in a clash on 9 January; two soldiers were reportedly killed, about 20 civilians were injured and hundreds of displaced persons' dwellings were burned. MINUSCA engaged with leaders at the local and national levels to reduce tensions. In November, FPRC opposed the deployment of 54 additional soldiers in Bria and, in Kaga Bandoro, exchanged fire with the armed forces on 30 November.

29. With the start of the dry season and profitable transhumance and illegal mining activities, UPC and Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation expanded their areas of influence. In mid-October, UPC established itself in Bambouti, along the border with South Sudan, gaining control of a strategic entry point for financial flows. Tensions between UPC and MPC increased owing to competition over the illegal taxation of transhumance and attempts by UPC to expand westwards. In late 2019, 75 UPC elements moved from Nana-Grébizi Prefecture towards Batangafo. On 27 December, alleged UPC combatants ambushed six peacekeepers on a patrol from Bossangoa to Batangafo; one peacekeeper was wounded, five weapons were stolen and one vehicle was damaged. On 31 January, MINUSCA, supported by the armed forces, launched an operation aimed at dismantling illegal UPC barriers in Alindao. The group announced that it would withdraw from Bambouti by 5 February.

30. The lucrative transhumance season led to isolated attacks involving herders, villagers and armed groups. Most incidents occurred in the west, where 23 of the 29 incidents threatened civilians. Tensions increased between herders, farmers and armed groups between Paoua and Bocaranga, with civilians killed, houses burned, cattle rustled and crops destroyed. Clashes between farmers and herders were also observed in Ouham Prefecture. MINUSCA is implementing nine comprehensive plans in 12 prefectures to mitigate violence related to transhumance.

31. Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation reinforced its positions north-west of Berberati in mid-October, seeking to control a newly discovered gold mine along the border with Cameroon. On 2 November, its leader and former FPRC and MPC commanders signed an agreement to integrate most combatants to take control of FPRC and MPC bases in north-west Paoua. On 20 December, FPRC and MPC temporarily detained 17 peacekeepers, having mistaken their intentions.

32. Tensions over the control of lucrative illegal checkpoints linked to mining activities increased in Bria. On 25 and 26 November, anti-balaka groups and FPRC clashed over the Ira-Banda road south of Bria, sparking a cycle of violent reprisals and human rights abuses.

33. FPRC and MPC and anti-balaka groups attacked humanitarian workers in the Batangafo area of Ouham Prefecture on 19 and 21 October and 24 November. Anti-balaka groups conducted eight attacks against humanitarian personnel between 16 October and 3 December in Haute-Kotto and Mbomou Prefectures. The local authorities were also targeted, for example in Bria on 23 November, when the Prefect of Haute-Kotto was forcibly moved into the PK3 camp for displaced persons by a group of young people associated with anti-balaka groups following a MINUSCA operation to dismantle two anti-balaka bases.

IV. Regional engagement

34. The Government continued to enhance its relations with the region. On 15 October, the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, travelled to Bangui to attend the meeting of the joint commission between his country and the Central African Republic. The President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, travelled to Bangui to attend the Central African Republic Independence Day festivities on 1 December.

35. The Minister of Defence travelled to Khartoum in early November to discuss, inter alia, enhancing joint measures to improve security along the common border. The holding of a meeting of the joint commission with the Sudan was agreed upon in principle. A meeting of the joint commission with Chad was held on 20 and 21 December after a 14-year hiatus; it addressed the improvement of security conditions required to reopen the common border. The Minister of Justice travelled to N'Djamena on 23 November following the alleged arrest of Abdoulaye Miskine, the former leader of FDPC, in Chad. The government follow-up committee to coordinate and steer the implementation of the joint commissions' recommendations is yet to be established.

V. Humanitarian situation

36. During the reporting period, the humanitarian situation deteriorated in several areas, including Bangui, owing to conflict and natural disasters. The number of internally displaced persons increased to 669,000, and over 593,000 registered refugees from the Central African Republic were recorded in the region as at the end of January 2020. There were just over 3,100 spontaneous returns to Bamingui-Bangoran, Mambéré-Kadéï, Nana-Mambéré, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé Prefectures in the final quarter of 2019. During the same period, over 29,000 internally displaced persons returned to their prefectures of origin, in particular Bangui, Ombella-Mpoko and Vakaga. Insecurity and protection concerns prevented large-scale sustainable returns.

37. Attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure continued. Over the reporting period, an average of 602 protection-related incidents were recorded per month.

38. In Birao, the conflict that broke out in September 2019 displaced over 12,000 people. There were threats against displaced persons and acts of sabotage to cut water supplies to the two camps for them, and their movements were hindered. Recent clashes in Alindao led to the displacement of 2,500 people and the burning of two camps for displaced persons.

39. Heavy floods at the end of October 2019 created new needs in Bangui and along the Ubangi River up to the Bangassou area, affecting some 97,000 people and causing the total or partial destruction of more than 10,000 houses, the overflowing of more than 1,000 wells and 1,500 latrines and the flooding of fields in rural areas, which had an impact on protection and food security. United Nations entities and partners delivered assistance to an estimated 40,000 people in the areas that were hardest to reach. Some of the displaced persons spontaneously returned to their homes once the rains had subsided.

40. Security incidents affecting humanitarian workers continued, with approximately one incident per day in 2019: 5 workers were killed and 42 injured, representing a doubling of figures compared with 2018. In November 2019, in Batangafo, three humanitarian organizations suspended activities owing to violent incidents against

their personnel. Thus far in 2020, humanitarian activities have been suspended in Pombolo and Gambo on account of tensions between anti-balaka groups and UPC in Mbomou Prefecture.

41. The 2019 humanitarian response plan of \$430.7 for 1.7 million extremely vulnerable people was 70 per cent funded at the end of 2019, a marked improvement on previous years. On 21 January, the plan for 2020, in the amount of \$400.3 million, was launched.

VI. Protection of civilians

42. MINUSCA enhanced its threat analysis, community engagement, conflict prevention and early warning systems, in particular in the context of the transhumance season. It continued to deploy surge teams to Alindao, Batangafo and Bocaranga to reduce the risk of large-scale violence in those areas, and expanded training of uniformed personnel on the protection of civilians, shifting emphasis towards prevention and coordination. In November 2019, a training-of-trainers course benefited 33 personnel, including 15 women.

VII. Extension of State authority and rule of law

Extension of State authority

43. As at 1 February 2020, all 16 prefects and 67 of the 76 sub-prefects were at their posts. During the reporting period, 108 civil servants (9 per cent of whom were women) of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture were redeployed to remote areas. MINUSCA conducted leadership training for 74 civil servants (12 per cent of whom were women), including prefects, sub-prefects and village and district chiefs. The Government continued to face challenges in redeployment, such as the lack of infrastructure, financial resources and insecurity.

Security sector reform

44. On 20 December, the President chaired the sixth meeting of the strategic committee on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, security sector reform and national reconciliation. The committee decided to gradually integrate 655 auxiliary police personnel, including 177 women, subject to funding availability. With the support of MINUSCA, the Government drafted a decree establishing a mixed commission on rank harmonization, which has yet to be issued. No progress was made on the integration of former armed group elements into the security forces.

National armed and internal security forces

45. As at 8 December 2019, 1,417 soldiers were deployed in 20 locations, an increase from 1,346 in the previous reporting period, out of a total of 8,244, including 619 women. Logistical and financial challenges continued to compromise effectiveness. Poor command and control in the armed forces resulted in a marked increase in misconduct and criminal acts. The same challenges affect their transformation into a garrison army. In November 2019, the initial training of 1,020 new recruits, including 102 women, in Bangui and Bouar ended. Owing to a lack of funding, the 2019 recruitment campaign for the armed forces was not launched until January 2020. A total of 3,270 soldiers and 745 internal security forces received post-graduation tactical training by trainers from the Russian Federation, while a total

of 6,000 soldiers received training from the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic.

46. The Mine Action Service provided two specialized weapons and ammunition storage kits for the armed forces in the east. The Service, with financial support from the European Union, finished the construction of three armouries in Bouar and installed four temporary specialized storage kits in the west.

47. The number of police officers and gendarmes deployed outside Bangui reached 1,086, including 58 women, as at 1 February, compared with 1,075 on 15 October. The gendarmes and police officers recruited in 2018 began to be deployed in Birao, Bossangoa, Bozoum and Obo. The second recruitment exercise, lasting from 1 July to 12 December 2019, resulted in 1,000 candidates, including 258 women, being selected following vetting, with the support of MINUSCA.

48. The European Union established an advisory mission on 9 December to support the reform of the internal security forces, in coordination with MINUSCA.

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

49. During the reporting period, 738 combatants, including 51 women, from nine armed groups were disarmed and demobilized; 398 weapons of war, 757 explosives and 47,421 rounds of ammunition were collected. To address weaknesses in the collection of suitable weapons in the west, the strategic committee on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, security sector reform and national reconciliation decided on 20 December that the ratio of 10 per cent ammunition and ordnance to 90 per cent weapons per armed group would be strictly enforced.

50. The Mission continued to implement community violence reduction projects with the United Nations Office for Project Services and IOM. As at 1 February, 3,193 new beneficiaries, including 1,099 women, were registered for projects in six locations, during which 47 weapons of war, 1,591 artisanal weapons, four items of unexploded ordnance and 912 munitions were collected. In Bambari, IOM is implementing a project with support from the Peacebuilding Fund and MINUSCA for an additional 700 beneficiaries, 375 of whom are women.

Justice and rule of law

51. The number of operational first-instance and appellate courts and deployed judicial personnel remained at 16 and 129 (including 27 women), respectively. The Bangui Court of Appeal, supported by MINUSCA and UNDP, heard 16 criminal cases during its October session, adjudicating in 13 of the cases, including 3 pertaining to armed groups and 3 involving sexual and gender-based violence. A total of 18 individuals, including 1 woman, were convicted. On 7 January, the Court sentenced an individual to 15 years of forced labour for the murder of a United Nations police officer in June 2016. On 7 February, the Court sentenced 28 anti-balaka associates accused of killing civilians and 10 peacekeepers in the Bangassou area in May 2017, their sentences ranging from 10 years to life imprisonment and forced labour.

52. The Special Criminal Court continued to investigate 10 cases. Services for victims and witness protection, legal aid and court management were established with MINUSCA and UNDP support. On 26 November, following a three-year consultative process supported by MINUSCA and UNDP, a law on legal aid was adopted, providing a legal framework for legal aid to vulnerable populations and equal access to justice.

53. The presidential decree of 31 December on the remission of sentences resulted in the release of approximately 400 prisoners, including 13 women. Nonetheless, the overcrowding in Ngaragba prison continued to pose security and health risks. The

second round of recruitment of 151 civilian prison officers, including 25 women, occurred with the support of MINUSCA and UNDP; 1,885 candidates, including 400 women, participated. MINUSCA oversaw the refurbishment of the prison in Bambari and the training of prison officers to be deployed there. Prison security in the prefectures remains a concern owing to the lack of corrections personnel.

54. MINUSCA, under its urgent temporary measures mandate, arrested 32 men suspected of committing crimes.

VIII. Human rights and efforts to combat impunity

55. The general improvement in the human rights situation after the signing of the Agreement continued. However, renewed fighting between rival armed groups remained a threat to civilians. Between 15 October and 1 February, MINUSCA documented 256 incidents of human rights abuses and possible violations of international humanitarian law affecting at least 455 victims (309 men, 67 women, 23 boys, 24 girls, 11 unidentified persons and 21 groups of collective victims), compared with 304 incidents and 494 victims in the previous reporting period. Signatory armed groups continued to be responsible for the majority, with 201 incidents affecting 366 victims. These included FPRC (64 incidents; 108 victims), UPC (45 incidents; 105 victims), MPC (13 incidents; 27 victims), anti-balaka groups (67 incidents; 97 victims) and Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (12 incidents; 29 victims). The violations committed by State agents, mainly the armed forces, included death threats, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, and rape (26 violations; 37 victims).

Transitional justice

56. The steering committee finalized, with the support of MINUSCA, the bill to establish the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation. The inclusive commission collected data across the country on human rights violations to establish facts and propose recommendations to the future Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation. MINUSCA provided documentation on human rights violations and possible breaches of international humanitarian law by parties to the conflict. The inclusive commission's final report, along with the steering committee's bill, were formally handed to the President on 22 January.

Conflict-related sexual violence

57. MINUSCA documented 35 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 48 victims (31 women and 17 girls), namely rape or attempted rape, with 1 case resulting in death. Civilians in some areas were significantly more affected on account of transhumance, including in Nana-Grébizi Prefecture. MINUSCA organized 26 awareness-raising sessions with local authorities, women's associations and youth and community leaders to combat impunity and stigma associated with sexual violence. Additional sessions concerned rape prevention and referral pathways for survivors. MINUSCA and the United Nations protection cluster held three such sessions at sites for displaced persons in Birao.

Children and armed conflict

58. Despite commitments by all signatories, 166 grave child rights violations were verified during the reporting period. Denial of humanitarian access and sexual violence were the most common. On 21 November, my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict sent letters to three listed parties, urging FPRC and UPC to implement their action plans and MPC to strengthen efforts to identify children within its ranks for release. During the reporting period, 153 children, including

36 girls, were separated from armed groups to enter reintegration programmes led by the United Nations Children's Fund. An additional 13 self-demobilized boys are awaiting admission to the programmes.

IX. Socioeconomic situation

59. In August, the Bank of Central African States published a revised growth rate of 4.8 per cent for real gross domestic product in 2019 (compared with 3.7 per cent in 2018) owing to the expected gradual recovery of security and restoration of public services, increased public and private investment and the implementation of economic and financial reforms. According to the new finance law adopted on 29 November by the National Assembly, the overall fiscal deficit is projected to be 2.3 per cent of gross domestic product in 2020, compared with 2.4 per cent in 2019.

60. During the reporting period, the secretariat of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, with United Nations and partner support, assessed the delivery of peace dividends to the population, indicating some progress in access to social services and economic recovery since 2016. As at 1 February, \$1.99 billion of the \$3.45 billion pledged for the Plan had been disbursed, bringing the financial delivery rate to 57.6 per cent.

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

Military component

61. As at 1 February, the strength of the MINUSCA military component stood at 11,297 (4.5 per cent women), out of an authorized strength of 11,650 personnel, with 307 staff officers and 152 military observers. It comprised 11 infantry battalions; 1 high-readiness battalion; 1 battle group; 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 and 1 level-I plus forward surgery module. There were also two helicopter units as at January 2020. The MINUSCA force had a gap of 300 soldiers after July 2019 owing to the downsizing of a contingent, the gap having increased by 100 with the repatriation of an attack helicopter unit in January 2020. The departure of the helicopter unit also resulted in the loss of close air support capability, with only casualty evacuation and intelligence surveillance reconnaissance available.

Police component

62. As at 1 February, the strength of the MINUSCA police component stood at 2,033 personnel (12 per cent of whom were women), out of an authorized strength of 2,080, including 357 individual police officers and 1,676 personnel in 11 formed police units and 1 police support unit. The police support unit and six formed police units are in Bangui under the joint task force. Five formed police units are deployed in Bambari, Berberati, Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro, with part of the Kaga Bandoro unit in Batangafo.

Civilian personnel

63. As at 1 February, 1,425 civilian personnel (26 per cent of whom were women), including 209 United Nations Volunteers and 99 government-provided corrections personnel, were serving in MINUSCA. This represents 91 per cent of the 1,559 authorized positions.

Status-of-forces agreement

64. During the reporting period, the Government and MINUSCA continued to meet to resolve issues related to the status-of-forces agreement. For example, a request by the Government on 28 November for MINUSCA contractors to pay a vignette tax contrary to article 14 of the agreement was resolved on 10 December.

Safety and security of United Nations personnel

65. Between 15 October and 1 February, 105 security incidents involving United Nations personnel were recorded, including 4 personnel killed (1 in a hostile attack and 3 in road traffic accidents) and 20 injured (1 in a hostile attack and 19 in road traffic accidents). A total of 18 uniformed personnel were abducted and released the same day by an armed group. United Nations system personnel were targeted eight times, while 21 armed attacks targeted members of non-governmental organizations. Movements were restricted in some locations, including Bangui, owing to security risks.

Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

66. Between 1 September and 31 December, 23 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported. During 2019, 41 such allegations were reported. A total of 14 are alleged to have occurred in 2019, 26 in previous years and 1 at an unknown date. The majority related to events that occurred in 2018 or earlier. There was also a decrease in the number of recorded allegations of other types of misconduct, including the lowest number recorded since MINUSCA was established for the more serious types, thanks to the strengthened implementation of a risk management framework to prevent all forms of misconduct.

67. The Mission focused on strengthening risk mitigation and monitoring systems, as well as stronger coordination between relevant Mission components. It conducted a comprehensive training programme on conduct and discipline, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Training sessions on the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse contributed to greater awareness among Mission personnel. The prevention strategy incorporated regular risk assessment exercises within Mission premises countrywide. Close monitoring and management of identified risks during weekly prevention meetings by the force mitigated the risk of serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, by military personnel.

68. The Field Victims' Rights Advocate continued to coordinate victims' assistance and support with relevant actors of the United Nations system to ensure that victims' rights were upheld through appropriate and timely assistance.

Support considerations

69. MINUSCA continued to reduce its environmental footprint, including the wastewater risk, by installing 4 wastewater treatment plants, in addition to the 44 that were already operational. A pilot atmospheric water generator prototype plant in Obo is producing up to 100 litres per day, saving some 3,000 plastic bottles per month. For solid waste, the remediation of the Kolongo landfill site in Bangui to increase its potential lifespan is ongoing, as are composting and incineration to reduce reliance on dumping sites. A remote power consumption monitoring system was installed at the MINUSCA logistics base. Generators have been synchronized in nine sites, saving 120,000 litres of diesel fuel per month.

Action for peacekeeping and performance optimization

70. The Mission continued to make progress in enhancing performance and impact in line with my Action for Peacekeeping. Significant efforts were undertaken to protect civilians and foster commitment to the Agreement in partnership with the African Union, ECCAS, the European Union and others. During the reporting period, 1 person was convicted of killing a peacekeeper and 32 others were on trial for killing 10 peacekeepers.

71. MINUSCA continued to scale up the implementation of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System, marking the first year of its implementation in December. It developed a Mission-wide results framework and found greater use of technological tools to monitor its own impact and improve data collection.

72. Nine Force Commander evaluations were submitted; eight were satisfactory overall, while one was assessed as below satisfactory with shortfalls in training and sustainment. MINUSCA is addressing issues identified in relation to weaknesses in the organization and collection of intelligence, in communication with the local population owing to language barriers and in the protection of temporary operational bases. The serviceability of the contingent-owned equipment of one battalion requires improvement. MINUSCA, with support from the Secretariat, evaluated two infantry units in situ based on performance and military skills identified during previous evaluations and predeployment training to target remedial measures. The Mission strengthened its control over the availability of equipment and improved maintenance.

73. Since June 2019, the police component has re-evaluated all 12 formed police units for their capacity to implement mandated tasks on a quarterly basis. Performance improvement plans were drawn up for seven units to address identified shortfalls, resulting in improved operational capability, including in relation to their footprint and readiness.

74. Infrastructure remains a serious impediment to troop mobility. MINUSCA constantly maintains and repairs bridges and roads so that the force can be mobile when the dry season begins.

XI. Financial considerations

75. The General Assembly, by its resolution [73/312](#) and its decision 73/555, appropriated the amount of \$910.1 million for the maintenance of the Mission from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. As at 29 January 2020, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for MINUSCA amounted to \$537.0 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$3,404.8 million. Reimbursement of the costs of troop and formed police personnel, as well as of contingent-owned equipment, have been made for the period up to 30 September 2019, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XII. Observations

76. One year has passed since the signing of the Agreement. The people of the Central African Republic can look back with pride at what they have achieved but also with awareness of what remains to be done. I welcome the slow but steady progress, in particular the decreasing trend in violence and human rights violations. I remain seriously concerned about obstacles delaying implementation, especially continued hostilities and violence against civilians, humanitarian actors,

peacekeepers and State representatives, as well as the increased intercommunal tensions and sexual and gender-based violence. This frays the thin fabric holding the population of the Central African Republic together as one people.

77. Any action that could put the fragile path to peace at risk is unacceptable. I strongly condemn all attacks against civilians and renewed fighting between armed groups, in particular to strengthen and expand their hold on territory and resources. This must cease immediately and perpetrators must be held accountable.

78. I urge all signatories to increase their efforts to implement the Agreement in good faith. I also call upon non-signatories to refrain from any action that could obstruct the Agreement, which remains the only framework for sustainable peace. MINUSCA will continue to use all means necessary to implement its mandate, including in support of the Agreement and to protect civilians.

79. I welcome advances in political reform, which are never easy, in particular in an electoral context in which sustainable peace has yet to be reached. I urge the national authorities to expedite the passage of legislation on the status of former Heads of State and of political parties and the opposition, as well as on decentralization and on the financing of local government.

80. The upcoming presidential, legislative and local elections are an integral part of the political process, including to address legitimate grievances. A peaceful election within the constitutional timeline is essential for the stability of the country. The adoption of laws that change the political framework would be a welcome measure to ensure greater inclusion and an effective voice for the opposition, which is essential in any vibrant democracy. I call upon all national stakeholders to pursue their political ambitions in a constructive manner that advances meaningful dialogue within the framework of the Constitution. The Central African Republic cannot afford another crisis. I encourage the Government to establish a forum for all political parties and civil society organizations to discuss and resolve political differences in an inclusive and coordinated manner. An electoral code of conduct must be swiftly adopted.

81. It is equally essential that all segments of society be able to participate meaningfully in the elections. I urge the national authorities to remove any hindrances to the participation of refugees. I welcome the law on the safe return of internally displaced persons and urge the Government and national institutions to protect their franchise.

82. I commend the National Electoral Authority for its progress in preparing for the elections. I am concerned about persistent delays caused by the lack of available funds. The support of all partners, including countries of the region, is essential so that the national authorities can meet their obligations to ensure timely and credible elections. I am grateful to the European Union for its generous pledge and appeal to partners to urgently and generously provide the resources needed for the UNDP basket fund to ensure that the elections can be held within the constitutional time frame.

83. I welcome the timely adoption by the National Assembly of the national budget for 2020 and its allocations for elections and the monitoring mechanisms under the Agreement. I am concerned about the lack of sustainable funding for, inter alia, civilian governance, rule of law and defence and security. The budget is extremely limited and is still dependent on direct budget support from generous partners. There is an urgent need to put in place the ways and means for the legitimate authorities to capture a larger share of the revenue being generated in the country.

84. I welcome the work of the implementation committees under the Agreement at all levels. The expansion of the Executive Monitoring Committee to include all 14 signatory armed groups would be an important improvement. Transparency and representation are essential for accountability. All signatories should become

permanent members so that they can directly and frequently engage at a strategic level, including to face the consequences of illegal actions and allegations of violations and to be part of the search for solutions. I regret that the national implementation committee has yet to begin its activities in earnest, compromising national oversight. I am happy to note the strong participation of women, including representatives of victims of the conflict, in local-level committees.

85. I should like to recall that the Agreement provides for sanctions and that, under international and national criminal law, accountability is required for the many violent crimes that continue to be perpetrated. I welcome the adoption of a framework of punitive measures in accordance with article 35 of the Agreement, as called for by increasing segments of the population. Accountability, including that of non-signatories, is essential to ensuring the long-term viability of the peace process. Punitive and coercive measures, as well as incentives, must be applied in a scalable and equitable manner in relation to all signatories.

86. Justice forms a crucial element to enhance law and order and address serious international crimes as part of a comprehensive approach to transitional justice. I welcome the commitment of the national authorities in this regard, including the fact that national courts and the Special Criminal Court are yielding results, such as by holding accountable those who have killed civilians and peacekeepers. Recent verdicts by the Bangui Court of Appeal mark a crucial development in that regard, in line with my Action for Peacekeeping agenda.

87. Work to combat impunity requires continued effort through incremental steps to ensure that perpetrators do not escape justice. Accountability requires the strengthening of the criminal justice system by deploying judicial personnel, supporting investigations and trials and ensuring the safe, secure and humane detention of perpetrators. I encourage Member States to nominate additional international magistrates to serve on the Special Criminal Court. The official transmission of the report on national consultations for the bill on the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparations and Reconciliation to the President in front of the opposition, victims' associations, national institutions and international partners gives hope for the victims' voices and the country's healing, which is essential to the viability of the peace process. It is evidence of the invaluable impact of the technical and financial support provided by MINUSCA for the completion of this critical process, which is instrumental for lasting national reconciliation.

88. Preventing conflict before it arises remains my priority. I continue to underscore the importance of local-level dialogue and reconciliation to prevent and manage conflict. Such mechanisms make a tangible difference in the lives of many who live together in a community, irrespective of ethnicity or religion. I welcome the establishment of committees for the prevention and management of transhumance-related conflicts in affected prefectures.

89. To that end, I welcome efforts to reduce crime and establish State security and basic services throughout the country, including in Bangui. The MINUSCA stabilization strategy, including a decisive posture combined with the strong political will displayed by the Government in close cooperation with community leaders, has borne fruit. For the first time since the conflict, the Prime Minister could walk through the streets of the PK5 district, where the police station was reopened and a weapons-free zone was established, while criminal gangs joined the MINUSCA community violence reduction programme. Considering the protracted insecurity within and around the district, as well as its underlying causes, I encourage the Government to quickly build upon the will of communities in Bangui to implement a lasting stabilization strategy to enable the redeployment of the State's security and

administrative services and increase peace dividends to all communities, in full cooperation with MINUSCA and international partners.

90. In accordance with the Agreement, the joint security units are expected to play a role in the transitional security of the State, including with respect to transhumance. This requires the establishment of such units throughout the country, with the means to support their operations in a sustainable manner so that they themselves do not become a factor of instability. I am concerned about delays in their establishment that have resulted in frustration and tensions between armed groups and national security forces, while contributing de facto to the lack of commitment of some to disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation. I urge all parties to continue to make the joint security units operational and undertake disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation in good faith and to honour their respective commitments. I call upon the international community to pursue its unified and coordinated support in a mutually reinforcing manner.

91. The continued deployment of national defence and internal security forces is a welcome contribution to increase security, in particular in the context of the elections. I am concerned that they may be deployed beyond the scope of accountability while lacking sustainable logistical support. This could have a negative impact on their effectiveness and encourage predation on communities. It also increases the risk of confrontation with armed groups and possible consequences for MINUSCA support. I strongly urge the Government to strengthen its command and control of deployed defence and internal security forces and enhance logistical support, including to allocate appropriate funding in its national budget.

92. In parallel with these immediate operational deployments, I call upon the Government, with the support of partners, to accelerate the garrisoning of its armed forces in line with its national defence plan. I welcome the continued efforts towards recruitment in the defence and internal security forces, which must be carried out on an equitable, inclusive, merit-based and transparent basis. I urge the Government to make progress on the integration and rank harmonization of former combatants. I welcome the establishment of the European Union advisory mission to support the reform of the internal security forces in coordination with MINUSCA and within the framework of broader security sector reform.

93. Sustainable improvement of the humanitarian situation can be achieved only if communities are accessible. When assistance is not delivered, maternal mortality levels, malnutrition and food insecurity rise. I applaud the work of the humanitarian community, which continues to do its utmost on a daily basis to help the population in the face of insecurity and the loss of lives and assets. I should like to thank donors for their generous contributions to the humanitarian response plan in 2019. I encourage them to provide full funding for the 2020 humanitarian response plan, as more than half of the population needs humanitarian assistance and protection. Humanitarian assistance remains the primary, if not the sole, social safety net for the population.

94. Humanitarian assistance should address only urgent needs as the country develops its ability to support the population on its own with the assistance of development partners. I welcome the steps that have been taken to improve development coordination. I remain concerned that investment remains heavily skewed towards the west of the country, even if funding flows are beginning to diversify, and that historically marginalized regions continue to receive a disproportionately smaller share of development support. I am also concerned about the delays in advancing the regional development plans provided for in the Agreement.

95. I am encouraged by the improved relations between the Central African Republic and neighbouring countries, as demonstrated by the visits of the Presidents of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Bangui. The stability of the Central African Republic and that of the region are inextricably intertwined and must be ensured in a spirit of good-neighbourliness. I therefore welcome the convening of the Central African Republic and Chad joint commission and preparations for a joint commission between the Central African Republic and the Sudan. I encourage the authorities of the Central African Republic to continue efforts to build partnerships with other neighbouring countries, in particular to manage common borders, and to ensure the implementation of recommendations made by joint commissions.

96. I applaud the proactive engagement of the guarantors and facilitators of the Agreement, which, together with MINUSCA and other partners, continue to engage concretely with signatories to encourage their commitment. The Central African Republic requires the strong and sustained support of all partners to make steady progress on its path to peace. All partners have a role to play, without replacing the ultimate responsibility of the population of the Central African Republic for their future. The United Nations will continue to nurture strong strategic partnerships in pursuit of common objectives, in particular with the African Union and ECCAS, including as guarantors of the Agreement, facilitators and other multilateral and bilateral partners such as the European Union.

97. MINUSCA will maintain its careful balance of good offices with a robust posture to enhance its political impact. It will continue its efforts to improve performance, while deepening relationships with key partners. The Mission's excellent cooperation with actors on the ground continues to illustrate the benefits of a coherent United Nations approach aimed at bringing urgently needed peace dividends to the population of the Central African Republic while laying the groundwork for sustainable peace.

98. Considerable investment in the country's peace and stability has already been made by the population of the Central African Republic, with the support of partners. The period ahead will indeed be challenging, but I am confident that we can and must continue to have a positive impact. The risks of not doing so are too great. Peace and stability in the Central African Republic remain fragile. They should not be jeopardized. The risk of fuelling yet another cycle of conflict is too high and the implications too great for the people, the country and the region. The population has already borne the brunt of the conflict and the implications of a delayed peace. Time is of the essence. Sustaining and building upon the progress already made will continue to require our common effort, including to ensure that the Agreement does not falter and that credible elections are held.

99. In conclusion, I wish to express my deep appreciation to my Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Mankeur Ndiaye, for his dedicated leadership. I commend the United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their commitment to peace and stability in the Central African Republic. I also extend my sincere gratitude to all troop- and police-contributing countries, donor countries, regional and multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable support. I pay particular tribute to the continued essential efforts of the African Union and ECCAS, as well as the region, in helping to bring sustainable peace to the Central African Republic.

Annex I

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization
Mission in the Central African Republic: military and police
strength as at 1 February 2020**

Country	Military component			Police component		
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Formed police units	Civilian police
Argentina	–	2	–	2	–	–
Bangladesh	11	16	1 000	1 027	–	–
Benin	3	5	–	8	–	20
Bhutan	2	2	–	4	–	–
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	2	–	5	–	–
Brazil	3	5	–	8	–	1
Burkina Faso	–	1	–	1	–	34
Burundi	5	7	745	757	–	–
Cambodia	5	6	200	211	–	–
Cameroon	3	6	747	756	279	18
China	–	2	–	2	–	–
Colombia	1	–	–	1	–	–
Congo	5	10	–	15	140	2
Côte d'Ivoire	–	3	–	3	–	25
Czechia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Djibouti	–	–	–	–	–	3
Egypt	8	20	985	1 013	140	8
France	–	9	–	9	–	5
Gabon	–	2	450	452	–	–
Gambia	4	4	–	8	–	6
Ghana	3	10	–	13	–	7
Guatemala	2	2	–	4	–	–
Guinea	–	–	–	–	–	17
Indonesia	6	8	200	214	140	6
Jordan	3	5	–	8	–	23
Kenya	7	7	–	14	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	–	–	1
Mali	–	–	–	–	–	17
Mauritania	8	7	450	465	277	–
Mexico	1	1	–	2	–	–
Morocco	2	16	749	767	–	–
Nepal	4	13	720	737	–	–
Niger	2	4	–	6	–	34
Nigeria	–	2	–	2	–	–
Pakistan	12	26	1 213	1 251	–	–
Paraguay	2	1	–	3	–	–
Peru	5	7	205	217	–	–

<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	1	–	3	–	–
Portugal	–	8	180	188	–	14
Republic of Moldova	2	1	–	3	–	–
Romania	–	–	–	–	–	7
Russian Federation	3	10	–	13	–	–
Rwanda	8	19	1 359	1 386	420	18
Senegal	–	11	96	107	280	37
Serbia	2	3	71	76	–	–
Sierra Leone	4	1	–	5	–	–
Spain	–	–	–	–	–	4
Sri Lanka	2	2	109	113	–	–
Sweden	–	–	–	–	–	5
Togo	4	5	–	9	–	22
Tunisia	2	–	–	2	–	23
United Republic of Tanzania	–	6	450	456	–	–
United States of America	–	8	–	8	–	–
Uruguay	–	1	–	1	–	–
Viet Nam	1	5	–	6	–	–
Zambia	7	15	909	931	–	–
Zimbabwe	2	–	–	2	–	–
Total	152	307	10 838	11 297	1 676	357

Annex II

Map

