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Letter dated 18 May 2023 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2648 (2022) addressed to the President of the Security Council

The members of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2648 (2022) have the honour to transmit herewith, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 2648 (2022), the final report on their work.

The attached report was provided to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic on 17 April 2023 and was considered by the Committee on 26 April 2023.

The Panel of Experts would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

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Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2648 (2022)

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Summary

Armed groups lost further terrain against the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (FACA) and Russian instructors. Pushed back to border positions, armed groups conducted well-targeted attacks and counterattacks, resulting in battle-related deaths on all sides. An attack by the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC) on the main border crossing with Cameroon, Beloko, on 21 January 2023, and counterattacks in Sikikédé on 14 February 2023, were unprecedented.

The mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in the protection of civilians and its visibility on human rights violations in areas of combat such as Sikikédé was significantly impaired. FACA command advised against patrols by MINUSCA and suspended its drone surveillance in the area. The pretext was an alleged drone attack on the Russian instructors' base in Ndélé on 21 January 2023, which could not be verified by the Panel and MINUSCA or by the national defence and security forces.

Regional States placed pressure on armed group members linked to the Central African Republic on their national territory. The Rapid Support Forces of the Sudan arrested some elements in Darfur and momentarily closed the border with the Central African Republic to control armed groups' cross-border movements. Angola and Chad agreed to remove François Bozizé, who heads CPC, from N'Djamena, following discussions with the Government of the Central African Republic. Allowances to armed group leaders exiled in N'Djamena as part of the joint road map for peace in the Central African Republic (Luanda road map) of 16 September 2021 were suspended in March 2023. It is not known who ordered the suspension.

Despite verbal assurances, the Ministry of Defence and Army Reconstruction did not provide clarity on transfers of weapons and aircraft that the Panel found to have violated the arms embargo. In early 2021, an Ilyushin IL-76 military transport aircraft, previously owned by the Russian company Pilgrim LLC, was transferred with the assistance of Valery Zakharov, the former national security adviser to the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadera. In 2023, another Ilyushin IL-76 was acquired without notification to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic. Military vehicles notified by the Russian Federation in March 2021 are almost certainly used currently at the Ndassima gold mining concession, contrary to what was stated in the notification. The Government continued to fast-track the integration of certain armed group elements in uniformed personnel without transparent recruitment procedures and proper vetting.

Armed groups resorted to hostage-taking of FACA, United Nations staff and civilians. In the cases described by the Panel, the motivation for hostage-taking was to negotiate the release of armed group prisoners. Economic motives also played a role in the case of Parti pour le rassemblement de la nation centrafricaine (PRNC) hostage-taking of two United Nations staff and one member of technical staff from the Ministry of Public Works and Road Maintenance.

Attacks by unidentified assailants on mine workers and FACA positions near gold mine sites have been violent, costing the lives of nine Chinese workers in Chimbolo (Ouaka Prefecture) and three FACA soldiers in Kadjama (Ouham Prefecture). The value of gold exports surpassed that of diamonds. The Kimberley Process suspension on rough diamonds has not been eased further.

I. Background

Mandate and travel

1. On 29 July 2022, the Security Council adopted resolution [2648 \(2022\)](#), by which it extended the arms embargo, travel ban and asset freeze, with exemptions, in the Central African Republic. The Council also mandated the Panel of Experts to continue to assist the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic. The Panel was tasked, inter alia, with collecting information on the implementation of sanctions measures (arms embargo, asset freeze and travel ban), as well as on individuals and entities that may meet the designation criteria in paragraphs 20 to 22 of Council resolution [2399 \(2018\)](#) and extended by paragraph 5 of resolution [2648 \(2022\)](#).

2. The Panel was requested to provide to the Council, after discussion with the Committee, a final report by 30 May 2023. The present report covers the period from 28 December 2022¹ to 14 April 2023, the drafting completion date, but also includes cases and incidents prior to that period.

Cooperation

3. During the reporting period, the Panel travelled twice to the Central African Republic, visiting the capital Bangui as well as Birao and Am Dafok (Vakaga Prefecture), Ndélé (Bamingui-Bangoran Prefecture), Paoua (Ouham-Pendé Prefecture) and Bangassou (Mbomou Prefecture). The Panel also visited Chad. A proposed visit to the Sudan could not be facilitated. The Panel further exchanged information with other United Nations panels or groups of experts, in particular the panels of experts on Libya, the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Panel thanks the Governments of the Central African Republic and Chad for facilitating its visits and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for its continued logistical support and substantive collaboration.

Methodology

4. The Panel endeavours to ensure compliance with the standards recommended by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues of Sanctions in its report of 22 December 2006 (see [S/2006/997](#), annex). While it aims to be as transparent as possible, in situations where identifying sources would expose those or others to unacceptable safety risks, the Panel withholds identifying information. The Panel corroborated findings by triangulating information with independent and reliable sources.

5. The Panel is equally committed to the highest degree of fairness and strove to make available to parties, where appropriate and possible, any information in the report in relation to which those parties may be cited, for their review, comment and response, within a specified deadline.

II. Coalition des patriotes pour le changement

6. In its midterm report of 10 February 2023 ([S/2023/87](#)), the Panel observed that armed groups associated with the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC) had lost significant terrain against the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic

¹ The submission date of the Panel's midterm report to the Committee.

(FACA) and bilateral and multilateral partners (S/2023/87, paras. 17 and 22). While CPC forces were increasingly pushed towards border areas and the Ouadda, Sam Ouandja and Ouanda-Djallé triangle, these forces were able at the beginning of 2023 to conduct brazen attacks on places of strategic and economic interest, hitting national security and defence forces and Russian instructors.

A. Sikikédé situation

7. The town of Sikikédé (Vakaga Prefecture) has, in the past 12 months, been the centre of clashes between CPC forces and FACA and Russian instructors. It is the town where Nourredine Adam, the sanctioned Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) leader (CFi.002), trained local youth to set up a parallel administration (S/2017/1023, para. 155). The town is located along a frequently used CPC arms trafficking route linking Tissi and Ndélé, avoiding government-controlled Birao (S/2021/569, para. 31). In addition, the town is adjacent to the booming artisanal gold mining sites of Mandjan, located approximately 20 km south-west, near Gordil (S/2023/87, paras. 61 and 70). Gordil is the birthplace of Michel Djotodia and a stronghold of the pro-Government, Goula-dominated Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique (RPRC)² of the Minister for Transport and Civil Aviation, Djono Ahaba.

8. In March 2022, FACA and Russian instructors carried out military operations in Gordil, Sikikédé and Mandjan, and are reported to have killed with two RPRC members and one FPRC commander.³ More than 30 civilians were reported killed in the fighting as well.⁴ After the operations, Government of the Central African Republic and allied forces retreated to Birao and then Ndélé, and armed groups moved back in.

9. In mid-2022, several armed group coordination meetings took place in Sikikédé, more commonly known as Ndah, and in the adjacent village of Aïfa to the north and Gordil to the south. FPRC, RPRC and Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) representatives attended the meetings. They were envisaged to address Goula-Runga divisions stemming from intense fighting in Vakaga Prefecture in 2019 and 2020 (S/2019/930, paras. 46–76, and S/2020/662, paras. 29–33). One outcome of the meetings was a command structure for the adjacent Bamingui-Bangoran Prefecture signed on 20 July 2022 by the sanctioned UPC leader Ali Darassa (Cfi.015) in his function as CPC Chief of Staff.⁵ The command structure clearly traverses ethnic divides as it includes Fulani (Ousman Mahamat Haraka), Goula (Anour Adam), Runga (Mahamat Salleh) and Kara (Mahamat Deya) representatives.

10. Mahamat Deya's Birao-based and ethnic Kara-dominated Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (MLCJ) remained loyal to the Government,⁶ causing Deya to shift allegiances to the Parti pour le rassemblement de la nation centrafricaine (PRNC) of Nour Gregaza (S/2019/608, annex 2.7), an offshoot of RPRC.⁷ The Goula-dominated PRNC is formally not part of CPC, although one of its

² Officially dissolved on 4 December 2022 (S/2023/87, para. 13).

³ S/2022/491, para. 29; and meeting with a confidential source, 23 February 2023.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See annex 1.

⁶ Under the leadership of his relative, Toumou Deya, the Minister delegate in charge of relations with armed groups. Like RPRC, MLCJ was officially dissolved on 4 December 2022 (S/2023/87, para. 13).

⁷ Confidential report, 15 August 2022. PRNC had arisen from RPRC elements not feeling represented by Djono Ahaba during negotiations in Khartoum in March 2019.

leaders, Abdelrahman Tourkach, played a key role in coordination meetings in Sikikédé.⁸

11. During November and December 2022, Nourredine Adam was able to send vehicles, motorcycles and military equipment from the Sudan into the Central African Republic at Tissi, north of Birao, in the tri-border area of Chad, the Central African Republic and the Sudan.⁹ FPRC troop size in Tissi reached about 1,000 men. At the same time there were reports of an influx of UPC troops from the south into Vakaga Prefecture. Deployment of Russian instructors in Birao on 7 December 2022 averted an intended attack on the town (S/2023/87, para. 22, and annex 19), troops and material moving to Sikikédé instead.¹⁰ Two of these vehicles were handed to Goula armed group leaders, Tom Adam, alias “Ben Laden” (S/2021/87, para. 26), Mohamed Ali, alias “B13”, and Abdelrahman Tourkach as a reward for their CPC association.¹¹

12. Amassing forces in Sikikédé and increasingly associating dissident elements from the pro-Government PRNC, RPRC and MLCJ, Russian instructors and FACA launched another operation from 25 to 27 January 2023 to dislodge CPC and associated actors from the town, as well as from Gordil and Gounda (Bamingui-Bangoran Prefecture) further south and controlled by UPC and FPRC.

13. According to eyewitnesses, in the early morning of 25 January, Russian instructor helicopters landed at Ndiffa airstrip, near Gordil, and another in Mossabio, between Sikikédé and the Chad border.¹² The helicopter in Mossabio carried some 20 Russian instructors, and no FACA elements. This unit was positioned to intercept fighters and control civilians fleeing to the Chadian border. The unit dropped in Gordil advanced to Sikikédé with ground forces. In the early morning of 26 January, CPC forces engaged the Russian instructors at Mossabio, allegedly killing two instructors.¹³

14. The Panel is aware of two more Russian casualties, who were transferred from one helicopter to another at Ndélé airport on the evening of 25 January.¹⁴ The transfer caused panic because Russian instructors fired an illuminating flare during take-off that, when it landed, set grass on fire close to a MINUSCA fuel station. The Panel was informed of 16 wounded CPC soldiers who went to Haraze Manguaigne in Chad for medical care. In addition, at least two officers went to Abéché for care, including the UPC “General” Walchai.¹⁵ At least 10 fatalities were reported between the different forces during the fighting on 25 and 26 January.¹⁶

FACA hostage-taking

15. On 27 January, Russian instructors retreated to Ndélé, while 300 FACA elements in Ndélé were deployed to Sikikédé, Gordil, Aïfa and Ndiffa.¹⁷ Some 80 FACA troops were stationed in Sikikédé and Aïfa combined. On 14 February, CPC forces that had remained near Sikikédé attacked and overpowered the FACA troops. Sixteen soldiers

⁸ Member State information, 4 July 2022; confidential source, 21 July 2022.

⁹ Confidential reports, 7 November 2022 and 30 December 2022; and meeting with a confidential military source, 6 February 2023.

¹⁰ Meeting with confidential international security presence, 6 February 2023; and correspondence with CPC representative, 12 March 2023.

¹¹ Correspondence with CPC sources, 15–17 March 2023; and meeting with a confidential source in Birao, March 2023.

¹² Telephone interviews with local sources, 1 and 7 February 2023.

¹³ Correspondence with CPC representatives in the vicinity of Sikikédé, 7–9 February 2023.

¹⁴ Meetings with confidential sources in Ndélé, 7–9 February 2023.

¹⁵ Meetings with CPC representatives and diplomatic sources in N’Djamena, 12–21 March 2023.

¹⁶ Confidential report, 3 February 2023.

¹⁷ Some also remained in Akrousoulbak, which is on the way to Sikikédé from Ndélé, and Ngarba, located on another route to the Chadian border.

were reported killed, 25 wounded and 20 taken hostage.¹⁸ CPC did not remain in Sikikédé and retreated the same day with the hostages along the Aoukalé River, which constitutes the border with Chad. FACA and Russian instructors re-established a presence immediately thereafter.¹⁹

16. The day after the hostage-taking, photographs and videos started circulating, showing the hostages in different locations and in the presence of several CPC leaders and other militiamen. In a video released on 15 February, the hostages identified themselves.²⁰ The majority were recent recruits from 2022. Several sources recognized the voice of the sanctioned leader, Haroun Gaye (CFi.007), as that of the person posing the questions in that video. In a video released on 18 February, hostages were addressed by Tom Adam in Sango, with Mahamat Deya also present in the video.²¹

17. A video from 19 February shows the hostages being addressed by several combatants in what appears to be Sudanese Arabic.²² In their remarks they referred to situations in the Sudan, denouncing the collaboration by the Government of the Sudan with the Russian Federation, and communicated a message to General Mohamed “Hamidti” Dagalo, the Vice-President of the Sovereignty Council and Commander of the Rapid Support Forces, that “this is the end of his project and his men”.

18. The men in the video include disgruntled former Rapid Support Forces elements and elements associated with Hamidti’s tribal rival Musa Hilal (SDi.002).²³ Hilal’s men allegedly joined CPC in the 14 February attack.²⁴ Musa Hilal is a former Janjaweed militia commander and leader from Darfur. He was previously cited by the Panel as a principal supplier of weapons to ex-Séléka groups (S/2021/87, para. 35, and S/2018/1119, para. 70). A member of the Border Guard Forces, Hilal was arrested, together with several hundred elements, in 2017 by his Rizeigat tribal rival Hamidti in the latter’s capacity as Rapid Support Forces commander. The arrest was regarded as politically motivated, to reduce the power of Hilal and the other tribal militias that presented a threat to former President Omar al-Bashir.²⁵ Hilal was pardoned and freed on 10 March 2021.

19. The 19 February video again features Mahamat Deya, who is referred to as the unit commander, and who said, “we want to protect Islam in the Central African Republic”, something that resonated with the presumed Sudanese militia elements. According to a CPC representative, Mahamat Deya was probably told what to say in Arabic, a language he does not understand well.²⁶ The video also features Issa “Policier”, a former Central African Police commissioner, who addressed the prisoners in Sango on a practical matter.

20. Issa “Policier” oversaw the movement of hostages, with several UPC elements under the command of General Abdoulaye Machai (S/2023/87, para. 58).²⁷ Videos

¹⁸ Confidential report, 16 February 2023.

¹⁹ See Radio Ndeke Luka, “Centrafrique: Sikikédé repasse sous le contrôle de l’armée nationale”, 24 February 2023; and correspondence with local civil society sources, 23 March 2023.

²⁰ On file with the Secretariat.

²¹ See screenshots in annex 2.

²² From the video itself and additional sources consulted, the Panel was able to identify them as: (1) Ali Hassb el Rasoul; (2) “General” Moussa Bela Bengir; (3) “Operational commander” Issa el Missihi; (4) “General” Habib; and (5) “Operational general” Abu Ghazzam (see pictures in annex 3).

²³ Correspondence with CPC representatives, 26 March 2023.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See Redress, “Q&A: Sudan’s pardon of militia leader Musa Hilal, and future accountability?”, 19 March 2021.

²⁶ Correspondence on 19 March 2023.

²⁷ Communication with CPC representative, 17 March 2023; and communication with Fulani community representative, 1 March 2023.

received by the Panel later in February show the movements of hostages with elements that the Panel identified as UPC.²⁸ Machai himself was not with the hostages but moved between Sam Ouandja and Ouadda (Haute-Kotto Prefecture) in mid-February and to Nzako (Haut-Mbomou Prefecture) in March 2023.²⁹

21. On 15 March, CPC issued a set of demands for the release of the hostages, notably the departure of “Russian Wagner mercenaries” from the Central African Republic and the release of 96 specified CPC-associated individuals currently in prison.³⁰ According to CPC representatives, the list of demands was leaked by one of Nourredine Adam’s advisers in Khartoum before being finalized. Indeed, the list is not signed and was refuted by some CPC representatives.

22. On 4 April, CPC communicated that it would release the FACA hostages³¹ before any of its demands had been met. In its communiqué, CPC alleges indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Ndiffa, Sikikédé and Mélé, near Gordil, and a total lack of room for negotiation with the Government of the Central African Republic. Several media outlets have referred to the use of the L39 jet trainer, notified to the Committee on 12 August 2022, in the Sikikédé area.³² However, there is no evidence to suggest that the aircraft fired any missiles. On 6 April, the hostages were released, with Ali Ousta³³ making the handover to the International Committee of the Red Cross.³⁴

Central African Republic authorities’ obstruction of Mission patrols

23. During and after the operations in Sikikédé, no MINUSCA patrols took place in the area. The regional FACA commander and the Prefect of Bamingui-Bangoran Prefecture explicitly advised against patrols in the area from Ndélé to avoid confusion while operations were ongoing. The Panel witnessed this directly during its mission to Ndélé from 7 to 9 February, well after the confrontations. FACA also banned MINUSCA unmanned aerial vehicles from flying over Sikikédé in January following an alleged drone attack in Ndélé (see paras. 107–112).

24. On 17 February, a MINUSCA patrol from Birao, headed for Sikikédé for a two-week mission, stopped near Boromata, some 48 km north of Sikikédé, and returned to Birao; it was reported that this was because the Government of the Central African Republic did not accept that it was going to Sikikédé.³⁵

Economic interests in and around Sikikédé

25. The Government’s determination to control Sikikédé and surrounding towns may be related to future mining investments. According to industry sources, the Mining Industries company obtained a 313 km² concession in Vakaga Province, which, according to information from a Member State, also covers mine sites near Gordil. The Panel reached out to Mining Industries in connection with its mining

²⁸ See screenshots in annex 4.

²⁹ Ibid. See also confidential reports, 13 and 14 March 2023.

³⁰ See list in annex 5.

³¹ See communiqué in annex 6.

³² See Ndjoni Sango, “RCA: les mercenaires de la CPC délogés de Sikikédé par les FACA”, 20 February 2023; and ICI IFO, “Centrafrique: spectaculaire placage au sol à Sikikede, les instructeurs russes accusés de dépouillement de la ville”, 3 June 2022.

³³ Ali Ousta is the leading “General” of the FPRC-Goula faction. The Panel previously reported that, in 2021, Michel Djotodia called Ali Ousta and ordered FPRC-Goula to cease cooperation with CPC groups (see [S/2021/569](#), annex 2.6). Apparently, he has now shifted to being part of the CPC.

³⁴ See screenshots in annex 7.

³⁵ Confidential source, Birao, 17 February 2023.

activities and the prior use or ownership of two Antonov AN-28 aircraft (S/2023/87, para. 45),³⁶ but the company representative was not available for a meeting.

26. To date, access to Mandjan has been somewhat disputed between competing armed groups. The pro-Government armed group RPRC and the pro-Government faction of FPRC under Abdoulaye Hissène used to control and profit from the flow of gold that was largely directed to Bangui in the early stages of its discovery at the beginning of 2021.³⁷ With the growing influence of the FPRC of Nourredine Adam and his associated Sudanese militia in the area, Sudanese traders have gained influence, directing trade to the Sudan.³⁸

B. Spree of attacks on the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and Russian instructors in western Central African Republic

27. In the early hours of 21 January 2023, armed elements attacked the main customs post of Beloko, on the Cameroonian border. Two FACA soldiers and one Russian instructor were reported killed.³⁹ Representatives of the armed group Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R) informed the Panel that the group was responsible for the attack, which had been carried out principally with rocket-propelled grenades.⁴⁰ The attack caused significant material damage, as barrels of fuel caught fire and exploded on trucks parked in the customs compound.⁴¹ In total, 23 trucks and 7 other vehicles were destroyed in the attack. 3R representatives claimed that the attack had been targeted at the Russian presence at the customs office and that the assailants had not aimed to fire at the fuel trucks.

28. On 30 January, the Panel received video footage of three Central African combatants, one carrying an assault rifle, being questioned by Cameroonian soldiers somewhere north of Beloko, along the border.⁴² Two of the combatants had sustained injuries, spoke of a Gendarmerie post having come under attack and pretended to be bystanders. 3R representatives claimed that it had not been their combatants who had attacked Beloko, but anti-balaka combatants who had been carrying out an operation in Besson, 42 km north-east of Beloko, near the Cameroonian border.⁴³ According to a confidential report, armed elements had indeed attacked internal security forces positions in Besson on 24 January, setting the gendarmerie post ablaze.⁴⁴ In one of

³⁶ Kratol Aviation had claimed that Mining Industries had taken over the aircraft before they were transferred to the Ministry of Defence of the Central African Republic in violation of the arms embargo (S/2023/87, para. 45). On 26 January 2023, the Government of the United States sanctioned Kratol Aviation for providing aircraft to move personnel and equipment of the Wagner Group, which is sanctioned by the United States, between the Central African Republic, Libya and Mali. See United States of America, Department of the Treasury, “Treasury sanctions Russian proxy Wagner Group as a transnational criminal organization”, press release, 26 January 2023.

³⁷ Correspondence with confidential sources, 6 April 2023.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Confidential report, 27 January 2023; and correspondence with military source in Bouar, 25 January 2023.

⁴⁰ Correspondence with 3R representatives, 16 March 2023. In its midterm report (S/2023/87, annex 9) the Panel had shown evidence of a significant 3R arms cache, mostly rocket-propelled grenades, in the vicinity of Sarki Farm, west of Kouï.

⁴¹ Faced with fuel shortages due in part to the Government’s price freezes, the Ministry of Energy issued special authorizations in October 2022 for the import of fuel by the barrel. In early January 2023, however, the Government reversed its policy and decided to increase the fuel price at the pump and cancel the special import authorizations. By the end of December 2022, it had prohibited the transport of fuel in barrels, after a series of fires in Bangui, and also in Beloko.

⁴² See screenshots in annex 8.

⁴³ Correspondence with 3R representatives, 16 March 2023.

⁴⁴ Confidential report, 27 January 2023.

the videos, the leader of the group is identified as a “Corporal” Ngemangou. One of the wounded identified himself as Amadou Ousman Njo.

29. Based on the video, sources from the area identified the scene as being somewhere on the road between Koundé and Besson, which runs alongside the international border for several kilometres. The Panel has written to the Government of Cameroon to obtain more details regarding the location, date and results of the interrogation, but has yet to receive a response.

30. During the night of 22 March, armed elements attacked the FACA checkpoint in the village of Bokoyo in Kadjama groupement (24 km east of Markounda in Ouham Prefecture), seizing the FACA soldiers’ weapons and killing three soldiers and two civilians, with one Russian instructor reported injured, having seized the FACA soldiers’ weapons.⁴⁵ The attack followed a FACA operation in a nearby gold mining site during which weapons had been recovered.⁴⁶ 3R denied responsibility for the attack, blaming Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) elements.⁴⁷ MPC did not respond to the Panel’s enquiry in relation to the incident.

31. Another gold mining-related incident occurred at the Thien Pao plant in Ndiba (Nana-Mambéré Prefecture), where three Chinese workers were taken hostage on 13 March and released on 2 April, following payment of ransom.⁴⁸ This was a second incident, following an earlier attack by the Ndalé brothers anti-balaka elements on 22 October 2022, as cited by the Panel (S/2023/87, annex 21). This attack had also been entirely economically motivated. It is likely that the latest attack was carried out by the same elements.

32. Besides the attack at Beloko, 3R also claimed responsibility for an attack on 4 April on the Russian instructors at Bossemptélé (Ouham-Pendé Prefecture), in which seven instructors and four FACA soldiers were reported injured.⁴⁹ The assailants had come from and retreated to the Bozoum area. The Bossemptélé attack followed an attack on the joint FACA and Russian instructors base in Niem on 30 March.

C. UPC proliferation in south-eastern Central African Republic giving rise to a new Zandé ethnic militia

33. The south-east region border of the Central African Republic has in recent months also witnessed increasing activism by UPC, occasionally spilling over the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (see annex 9), and giving rise to a new Zandé-based ethnic militia supported from South Sudan (see annex 10).

III. Regional responses

A. Chad

Pressure on armed group representatives in Chad

34. After the CPC insurrection in early 2021, a series of four meetings took place from February to August 2021 with various armed group representatives in Moundou

⁴⁵ Confidential report, 27 March 2023.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Correspondence with 3R representative, 5 April 2023.

⁴⁸ Confidential report, 23 March 2023; and correspondence from community representative, 2 April 2023.

⁴⁹ Confidential report, 5 April; and correspondence with 3R representative, 5 April 2023.

and Sarh in southern Chad.⁵⁰ These were conducted by the Government of Chad, and occasionally with the presence of representatives from Angola, as part of mediation efforts by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

35. These talks led to a non-public agreement that was part of the joint road map for peace in the Central African Republic (Luanda road map).⁵¹ By the agreement, four of the six groups constituting CPC rejoined the peace process and exiled its leadership to N'Djamena. These included 3R, MPC and two anti-balaka branches, one led by Maxime Mokom and one by Édouard Ngaïssona.⁵²

36. The exiled leaders were Sembé Bobbo (3R) Mahamat al-Khatim (MPC), Igor Lamaka (anti-balaka Ngaïssona wing) and Maxime Mokom, François Bozizé, Bernard Bonda (Bozizé's director of cabinet, anti-balaka Mokom wing), as well as CPC spokesperson Abakar Saboune and Ousmanou Mohamadou (of UPC, even though the group had not committed to the Luanda road map).⁵³ Saboune recently reconstituted his Siriri coalition, which was not formally part of CPC.

37. The exile of some of the initiators of the CPC coalition – Bozizé, Mokom and Al-Khatim in particular – was meant to offer room for re-engagement with less controversial armed group representatives in the Central African Republic. However, UPC and FPRC never signed up to the shadow Luanda Agreement, and the peace process failed to move forward altogether.

38. Consequently, Chadian authorities have now started to question these leaders' exile in N'Djamena.⁵⁴ Moreover, the Government of the Central African Republic has in recent months increased its pressure on Chad to take a tougher position, pointing to armed groups' breaches of the unilateral ceasefire declaration by the Government of the Central African Republic of 15 December 2021 as recommended in the Luanda road map.⁵⁵

39. To demonstrate goodwill vis-à-vis the Government of the Central African Republic, Chadian authorities arrested armed group leader Maxime Mokom on 27 February 2022, near the town of Sido on the Central African border, where he had acquired property, to the dismay of Chadian authorities.⁵⁶ On 14 March 2022, he was transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague for war crimes and crimes against humanity.⁵⁷

40. Following a meeting of President Touadera with the President of Angola, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, and the Transitional President of Chad, Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, in Luanda on 9 February, it was decided to move the CPC general coordinator and sanctioned individual François Bozizé (CFi.001) from Chad, with Guinea-Bissau agreeing to take him in.⁵⁸ No exemption request for this move, which

⁵⁰ Confidential report, 24 August 2021; and correspondence with CPC armed group representatives, 12–22 March 2023.

⁵¹ The Luanda road map was adopted by regional States on 16 September 2021 at the impetus of the President of Angola, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, and with the support of Rwanda.

⁵² See also, Africa Intelligence, “Bangui's high-stakes gamble with rebel groups”, 17 November 2021.

⁵³ Correspondence with CPC representatives, 13–16 March 2023.

⁵⁴ Meeting with Chadian security services, 21 March 2023.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Correspondence with CPC representatives, 13 March 2023. See also, Africa Intelligence, “Angola out on a limb as dialogue with CAR armed groups flounders”, 18 March 2022.

⁵⁷ See International Criminal Court, “Situation in Central African Republic II: Maxime Jeoffroy Eli Mokom Gawaka surrendered to the ICC for crimes against humanity and war crimes”, press release, 14 March 2022.

⁵⁸ Meeting with Chadian security services, 21 March 2023. See also, Africa News, “Central African Republic: ex-president François Bozizé leaves Chad for Guinea-Bissau”, 6 March 2023.

it is reported took place on 3 March, and that Guinea-Bissau has claimed to be on humanitarian grounds,⁵⁹ was transmitted to the Committee.

41. The arrest and transfer by Chad of CPC representatives has to date been targeted at anti-balaka representatives. Armed group representatives from Fulani-dominated groups (3R and UPC) therefore did not perceive that their position in Chad was under pressure.⁶⁰ A likely reason for this is that relationships with Fulani armed groups in the Central African Republic are crucial to facilitate transhumance (movement of cattle herds, some of which are allegedly owned by Chadian officials), from Chad into the Central African Republic.⁶¹

42. Although it is unclear which government or entity is responsible, CPC representatives informed the Panel that their monthly allowances had been suspended as of March 2023.⁶² In the case of Bozizé, such allowances are in violation of his asset freeze. The Panel has written to the bank in question to trace the origin of any funds transferred to him.

Border confrontations in 2021 put to rest

43. In line with the efforts of Chad to ease strained relations with the Central African Republic by putting pressure of various types on armed group leaders in exile, Chad also put to rest the border confrontations with FACA and Russian instructors in 2021.

44. In 2021, there had been several confrontations along the Chad-Central African Republic border involving Chadian soldiers and FACA elements, accompanied, according to several sources, by Russian instructors who engaged in combat operations.⁶³ The Panel followed up on a major incident that occurred on 30 May 2021 at the Chadian border post of Sourou but was informed also of several other cases that year.

45. Regarding the 30 May 2021 incident at Sourou, both Governments communicated in a joint statement on 1 June 2021 that fighting had left six Chadian soldiers dead and five injured. However, in separate communiqués and communications with the Panel, the Central African Republic authorities referred to casualties on both sides and asserted that the incident had occurred when FACA returned fire after being attacked by CPC rebels who then fled into Chad, and then met return fire from Chadian soldiers.⁶⁴

46. The Chadian authorities separately asserted that one Chadian soldier had been killed in the firefight, while five had been abducted and executed in Bang on the Central African side of the border, referring to the incident as a war crime.⁶⁵ In a letter of 29 June 2021 to the Panel, the Chadian authorities further asserted that the Sourou outpost was subject to a deliberate attack carried out, according to Chadian authorities, by Russian combatants, but possibly also Syrian fighters, rather than Russian instructors, operating in the first line of attack, followed by FACA. In a statement to the Security Council on 23 June 2021, the Permanent Representative of Chad referred to the attackers as “foreign mercenaries”.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ According to Afrique Media, “Why François Bozizé removed from Chad to Guinea-Bissau instead of being brought to justice?”, 10 March 2023.

⁶⁰ Correspondence with the Panel, March 2023.

⁶¹ Correspondence with international researchers and experts on the matter, March 2023.

⁶² Correspondence with armed group representatives, 12–22 March 2023.

⁶³ Confidential reports, 30–31 May, 1 June; and Member State information, 29 June 2021.

⁶⁴ Confidential report, 24 August 2021; see also communiqué dated 31 May in annex 11.

⁶⁵ See communiqué dated 30 May in annex 12.

⁶⁶ See S/PV.8802, p. 29.

47. Immediately after the incident, both countries committed to establishing an independent commission of inquiry comprising representatives of regional and international organizations. To this end, the Government of the Central African Republic claimed to have reached out to relevant international and regional organizations – namely, the United Nations, the African Union and ECCAS.⁶⁷ To date, however, no such commission has been established. Representatives of these organizations told the Panel they were not aware of any such request. The Chadian authorities have not since pursued further international investigations into the matter.

48. In addition to the incident at Sourou, the Panel was informed about a border incident on 10 December 2021 at Maya, a village straddling the Central African Republic-Chad border west of Sido in Mandoul region, and further inside Chad in the village of Djormère. According to multiple sources, Russian instructors had pursued armed rebels or criminal elements inside Chad, prompting the Chadian armed forces to intervene and leading to exchange of fire.⁶⁸ Non-governmental sources informed the Panel of two victims on the Chadian side, one killed and one injured, but Chadian authorities did not confirm this.⁶⁹ No public response by either Government followed the incident, but the Chadian authorities told the Panel that they had appealed to the Central African authorities to strongly condemn the trespassing.

49. According to Fulani community representatives, there have been two other incursions into Chad, one by FACA and one by Russian instructors, in mid-2021 near the town of Sido.⁷⁰ The Chadian authorities could not confirm these incidents, which it was reported had been targeted at associates of Jean-François Bozizé (the oldest son of François Bozizé), who, like Maxime Mokom (see para. 39), resides in a house near Sido, together with his brothers Papy and Rodrigue.⁷¹

50. Border security, the reopening of borders⁷² and the strengthening of bilateral relations were the focus of discussions during a meeting in Bangui between President Touadera and the Minister of Defence of Chad on 28 December 2021. The Panel has recorded no significant border incidents in 2022 and 2023. Chadian security services told the Panel that, since there had been no serious incidents recently, they had not pursued further action regarding incidents that occurred in 2021, so as not to damage bilateral relations with the Central African Republic.⁷³

Chadian concern with southern opposition spilling over into the Central African Republic

51. Another reason for Chadian authorities to be lenient towards Central African demands with regard to armed groups on Chadian territory is N'Djamena's concern over a new southern Chadian opposition group that had set up in the Central African Republic at the end of October 2022. The group has been located near the villages of Benerme, Bebenguere and Bénamkor, some 50 km north of Paoua (Lim-Pendé

⁶⁷ Letter of 29 July 2021 sent in response to a request by the Panel for information.

⁶⁸ See Tchad Actu, "Tchad: affrontements entre mercenaires russes et armée Tchadienne au Tchad", 13 December 2021; meeting with Fulani community representative in N'Djamena, 17 March 2023; and meeting with Chadian security services, N'Djamena, 20 March 2023.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Meetings in N'Djamena from 13 to 17 March 2023.

⁷¹ Correspondence with CPC representatives, 17 March 2023. Jean-François Bozizé is reported to have fallen ill and been hospitalized in N'Djamena after his father was exiled to Guinea-Bissau on 3 March 2023.

⁷² Reopening of the border that has been closed since 2013 was also on the table during the fourteenth session of the joint cross-border commission between Chad and the Central African Republic on 20 December 2019.

⁷³ Meeting with Chadian security services, N'Djamena, 20 March 2023.

Prefecture). The Panel obtained an internal mission order⁷⁴ signed by a “General” Dillah and a video in which the group is dubbed “Force armée dynamique des révolutionnaires du sud du Tchad”.⁷⁵

52. It was reported that the armed group grew from approximately 1,200 men in January 2023 to some 3,000 in February.⁷⁶ Among them there are an estimated 600 ex-combatants, including those previously belonging to “Central African” armed groups that had included many southern Chadians in their ranks, namely Armel Sayo’s Révolution et justice (S/2016/1032, paras. 202–204) and the Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie (APRD) of Jean-Jacques Démafouth (S/2015/936, para. 140).

53. Reference is also made to members present from the Chadian opposition Mouvement pour la paix, la reconstruction et le développement (MPRD) of Djedouboum Sadoum.⁷⁷ MPRD is a politico-military group that refused to sign the Doha Agreement for Peace and the Participation of the Political-Military Movements in the Inclusive National and Sovereign Dialogue of August 2022.⁷⁸ However, it did participate in new discussions facilitated by the Community of Sant’ Egidio in Rome in March 2023.⁷⁹ Locally MPRD is represented by a “General” Walkader.

54. Lacking weapons and training, the group seems to pose little threat to the Government of Chad. However, the Chadian National Armed Forces have significantly reinforced their positions in and around Sido, Chad, since October 2022, to prevent people from joining the group in the Central African Republic. According to CPC representatives, willing recruits from southern Chad now move to the Central African Republic via Cameroon to join the group. The group may have doubled in size by the time of writing of the present report, but it is unclear whether its members should be categorized as combatants or refugees.⁸⁰

B. Sudan

55. In response to the presence of armed groups in the tri-border area, the Sudanese Armed Forces intensified their operations at the border at the end of December 2022. On 28 December, 66 Sudanese Armed Forces elements arrived in Birao by road from Am Dafok to attend security meetings with FACA to discuss joint security responses in the tri-border area. The FACA delegation arrived on a flight from Bangui and was led by General Freddy Sakama, Deputy Chief of Operations at the FACA General Staff.

56. The sub-prefect of Vakaga, Zakaria Ramadan, presided over the meetings, which were centred on the need for improved border control, including the strengthening of the tripartite force.⁸¹ MINUSCA was not invited to the meetings,⁸² and, as far as the Panel could establish, no Chadian representative was present.⁸³

⁷⁴ See annex 13.

⁷⁵ See also, Blaise Dariustone, “Le pouvoir tchadien de nouveau menacé depuis le sud du pays”, Deutsche Welle, 24 January 2023.

⁷⁶ Confidential report, 5 January 2023; and meeting with local authorities in Paoua, 9–13 February 2023.

⁷⁷ Meetings with community leaders and confidential sources in Paoua, 7–10 February 2023.

⁷⁸ See Tchadinfos, “Tchad: voici les mouvements qui n’ont pas signé l’accord de paix de Doha”, 8 August 2022.

⁷⁹ See VOA Afrique, “Dialogue politique au Tchad: nouvelle rencontre à Rome, sans Wakit Tama”, 15 March 2023.

⁸⁰ Confidential reports, 3 April 2023; and correspondence with confidential source, 12 April 2023.

⁸¹ Meeting with local authorities in Birao, 12 February 2023.

⁸² Confidential source, March 2023.

⁸³ While remaining in Tissi, in Chad, Chadian armed forces there are under the operational command of the joint border force of Chad and the Sudan, whose command is based in Abéché.

57. By February 2023, during the Panel's visit to Birao, there had yet to be an official declaration or communication about the outcome of or decisions taken during these security meetings. On 12 February 2023, the sub-prefect informed the Panel that he expected an official communiqué on the conclusions of the meetings very soon. Sudanese representatives at the consulate in Birao and the Embassy of the Sudan in Bangui declined invitations to meet with the Panel on the matter.

58. Another Government source close to the process informed the Panel that the tripartite agreement⁸⁴ would constitute the legal framework for an updated agreement to bolster the strength of a joint Sudanese-Central African border force.⁸⁵ The source further indicated that the three priority locations for the joint force's deployment would be Tissi, Am Dafok and Birao. The FACA regional commander in Ndélé, who was present in the meetings, also cited a possible future base in Boromata, near Sikikédé.⁸⁶ In Birao, the joint force base would be at the northern exit of the town, at the FACA base opposite the MINUSCA checkpoint. The Am Dafok base would remain at the current location of Umm Rawq, on the Sudanese side. The Tissi base would presumably be on the Central African side.⁸⁷

59. By paragraph 1 (c) of resolution 2648 (2022), the tripartite force enjoys a standing exemption to the arms embargo.⁸⁸ Without clarification about the outcome of the Birao meeting and the applicable legal framework, it remains unclear whether this exemption applies to any supplies brought into the Central African Republic by Sudanese forces under an updated bilateral agreement.

Mission of the Minister for Livestock and Animal Health, Hassan Bouba, to Birao and Am Dafok

60. Besides the military delegation, a separate civilian delegation also travelled to Birao on 28 December 2022.⁸⁹ The Minister for Livestock and Animal Health of the Central African Republic, Hassan Bouba, headed the delegation. The official programme was supposedly a continuity of his earlier regional visits to sensitize the population on peaceful transhumance.⁹⁰ However, during his trip to Am Dafok on 29 December, the Minister also spoke about deployments of the security and defence forces.⁹¹ According to a delegation member, some 45–50 well-equipped Rapid Support Forces vehicles were in Am Dafok on that day.

61. Following some infrastructural damage to a dam on the Sudanese side of Am Dafok during the 2022 rainy season, which exacerbated seasonal flooding on the Central African Republic side, the Panel took note of the local speculation that the Sudanese would not repair the dam and that, instead, the Rapid Support Forces were planning to convert the area into an airport.⁹²

⁸⁴ The Panel is aware of the initial tripartite agreement dated 2005 and an amended protocol from 2011. The 2011 amended protocol establishing the tripartite force envisages 1,500 elements, 500 per country.

⁸⁵ Meeting in Birao, 12 February 2023.

⁸⁶ Apart from Birao, the 2005 tripartite agreement mentions a second base in Sikikédé, but not in Boromata.

⁸⁷ Tissi is currently the location of the CPC General Staff.

⁸⁸ Resolution 2648 (2022), para. 1 (c).

⁸⁹ Antonov AN-28 aircraft registered by the Ministry of Defence (S/2023/87, para. 45) were used: one to transport the military and one to transport the civilian delegation.

⁹⁰ See [Le Potentiel Centrafricain.com](https://www.lepotentielcentrafricain.com), "Centrafrique: le Ministère de l'élevage et de la santé animale amorce une mission pour le relèvement de l'économie centrafricaine", 10 October 2022.

⁹¹ Meeting with confidential source, 11 February 2023.

⁹² Meetings with civil society, Birao, February 2023.

Rapid Support Forces border closure and arrests

62. On 2 January 2023, at a tribal reconciliation meeting in South Darfur, the Vice-President of the Sovereignty Council of the Sudan and Commander of the Rapid Support Forces, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hamidti), announced that the Sudan had closed its border with the Central African Republic to prevent sedition and maintain good neighbourliness.⁹³ Hamidti claimed to have uncovered and thwarted a plot by Central African armed groups to overthrow the government of President Touadera.⁹⁴

63. On 30 December 2022, the Rapid Support Forces arrested Abdoul Shakour⁹⁵ and several other members of the reinvigorated Siriri coalition of Abakar and Mustapha Saboune (see S/2019/930, annex 2.10).⁹⁶ It is unclear whether the arrest occurred on Central African Republic or Sudanese territory.

64. Siriri portrays itself as a Central African armed group but is essentially composed of disgruntled former Sudanese security and defence forces.⁹⁷ Exiled in N'Djamena and under a national arrest warrant, Abakar Saboune revived the group after his attempt to mend his relations with the Government of the Central African Republic and return to Bangui had failed. From photographs of the group, CPC representatives recognized one former FPRC element who had fallen out with Nourredine Adam and one MLCJ element.

65. Earlier in December 2022, Ahmed Abdel-Rahim Shukort Allah had been arrested for providing logistical support to the Siriri coalition.⁹⁸ Shukort Allah is reported to be a former intelligence officer involved in the establishment of the Border Guard Forces commanded by Musa Hilal, Hamidti's tribal rival, with whom it is reported Shukort Allah maintains close relations.⁹⁹

66. While intended to target Central African armed groups, the Rapid Support Forces arrests have instead been targeted at domestic competitors. FPRC representatives mainly living in Nyala were left alone,¹⁰⁰ and a Rapid Support Forces representative travelled to Tulus to guarantee UPC representatives there that the Rapid Support Forces actions were not aimed at them.

67. On 6 January 2023, the media outlet Sudan Tribune cited a Sudan News Agency (SUNA) report saying that Absher Balail, Rapid Support Forces Brigadier General, had received a directive from the Sudanese presidency to combat illicit firearms trade, ammunition, drugs and smuggling and border security violations between the two countries.¹⁰¹

68. Following the closure of the border, the Panel learned from community representatives that Rapid Support Forces elements were standing at the border checkpoint with lists of ex-Séléka members to be arrested, but the veracity of this information could not be ascertained. During the Panel's visit in February 2023, the border at Am Dafok remained closed. Community members reported that trucks were

⁹³ See <https://alintibaha.net/online/143623/> (in Arabic).

⁹⁴ Sudan Tribune, "Sudan thwarts an attempt to overthrow CAR Government: Hemetti", 3 January 2023.

⁹⁵ See photograph in annex 14.

⁹⁶ "Damm Siri" is the approximate pronunciation for "RSF" (Rapid Support Forces) locally, hence a risk of confusion with the Siriri coalition in community discussions.

⁹⁷ Correspondence with CPC representatives in the Sudan, 6 January 2023; and confidential report, no date.

⁹⁸ Correspondence with CPC representatives in the Sudan, 6 January 2023.

⁹⁹ See Sudan Tribune, "Conflicting reports about the missing Sudanese general", 17 December 2022.

¹⁰⁰ Correspondence with FPRC representatives, 8 January 2023.

¹⁰¹ See Sudan Tribune, "Sudan deployed troops on CAR border, military official says", 5 January 2023.

piling up on the Sudanese side of the border and that large-scale traders and truck drivers were complaining about the border closure.

69. On 5 March 2023, after a two-month closure, the border was declared partially opened again following a decision by the South Darfur security committee. The Rapid Support Forces were seen withdrawing from the border crossing points of Um Dukhun, Um Dafuq and Abu Jaradil.¹⁰² However, some of the border security surveillance is reported to have been outsourced to Misseriya and Ta'isha militia around Um Dafuq.¹⁰³

70. Given that it was unable to visit the Sudan, the Panel was unable to ascertain whether the security measures undertaken at the border were the result of a request from the Central African Republic or whether they were the response of the Sudan to the growing insecurity in the tri-border area.

71. By early April 2023, there was no visible deployment of a joint Central African Republic-Sudan force in Birao. There were reports of increased Chadian armed forces presence in Tissi, Chad. Meanwhile, as discussions on tripartite arrangements in the border area are ongoing, the political transition of the Sudan remains deadlocked in negotiations between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, which turned into open confrontations on 15 April.

CPC meeting Sudanese and Chadian armed forces in Tissi, Central African Republic

72. By November 2022, CPC had increased its presence at Tissi, a small border town in the Central African Republic located exactly on the tri-border point between Chad, the Sudan and the Central African Republic (85 km north of Birao). The Chadian town across the border is also called Tissi. The CPC general base is in Sarajevo,¹⁰⁴ a village two km south of Tissi, Central African Republic.

73. The sanctioned UPC leader, Ali Darassa, often travels between Tissi, Central African Republic, and Tulus, South Darfur, 190 km east (see also para. 88 on travel ban violations), where he maintains close relations with the local tribal leader, the Nazir.¹⁰⁵ The community of Tulus, including the Nazir himself, is Fulani (known as Fallata in Darfur), and there is a strong tribal connection with the Fulani in the Central African Republic and Darfur. Ali Darassa and his Fulani-dominated UPC and civilian Fulani fleeing fighting in the Central African Republic are known to have sought and found protection in Tulus, most recently in January and February 2023.¹⁰⁶

74. From March 2023, Chadian armed forces are reported to have resumed more frequent patrols to Tissi. According to a source within CPC, they were reported to be more visibly present in the tri-border area.

75. On or about 14 March 2023, representatives from the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Chadian armed forces met with CPC in Tissi. Ali Darassa was allegedly absent and had delegated to “General” Mahamat Salleh to represent CPC in the meeting. The Panel learned that Chadian and Sudanese armed forces had recommended dismantling CPC, which had become an “empty shell”.

¹⁰² Sudan Tribune, “Sudan partially reopens border with CAR”, 5 March 2023.

¹⁰³ Correspondence with CPC representatives in the Sudan, 4 February 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Confidential CPC source, 1 April 2023.

¹⁰⁵ Confidential source, Darfur, 13 March 2023.

¹⁰⁶ The most recent significant influx of Central African Republic refugees to the Sudan dates back to January and February 2022, when armed elements and civilians arrived in Radum and Tulus. The refugees were malnourished and in bad shape; many had been internally displaced within the Central African Republic for many months, fleeing advancing FACA forces from south and central Central African Republic, such as Alindao, Basse-Kotto, and Bria, Haute-Kotto.

76. According to some CPC sources, planning is indeed under way to create a new armed group alliance to replace CPC. Some want to return to the original “Séléka” (which means “coalition” or “alliance” in Sango). With Bozizé exiled to Guinea-Bissau (see para. 40), Nourredine Adam under an international arrest warrant (see para. 87), and Ali Darassa since 21 December 2021 also under United Nations sanctions, like Bozizé and Adam, the CPC leadership is looking for new profiles to represent the alliance who can take up future political and military posts.

77. Taking the above into consideration, Mahamat Salleh is the leading contender to assume military leadership of CPC. According to CPC sources, he is a “trusted fighter” who is “not wanted by the justice system”. These sources did not know that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had sanctioned Mahamat Salleh on 8 March 2023.¹⁰⁷ Ali Darassa seems ready to devolve more responsibility to Mahamat Salleh. At the end of March 2023, Mahamat Salleh, originally FPRC, was observed with UPC north of Sikikédé.¹⁰⁸ This could mean that Ali Darassa is drawing Salleh closer to the leadership of the current CPC and any reorganized new alliance.

IV. National political and social developments

A. Peace process

78. A strategic review hosted by the Government on 4 June 2022 (S/2022/527, para. 18) concluded that the Luanda road map and the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic would be “pooled into one joint peace process”. Despite this initiative, there remains a lack of clarity among civil society actors regarding the relationship between the two peace processes.¹⁰⁹

79. In June 2022, the Government proposed a timetable of priority activities aimed at accelerating implementation (S/2023/87, para. 12). The Government and MINUSCA seek to draw the prefectural implementation committees (comités de mise en œuvre préfectoraux) back in by localizing the peace process.¹¹⁰ The timetable, and a dashboard to facilitate monitoring, were developed through a series of technical meetings organized by the Prime Minister’s office, supported by MINUSCA, across government ministries. The dashboard is updated through coordination meetings. A recent dashboard update was issued on 7 February.¹¹¹

80. To decentralize this joint process, which civil society took to be Bangui-centred, a videoconference was held on 24 March between the Government and the prefects in their capacity as presidents of the prefectural implementation committees of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, with the participation of committee members in prefectures, as well as Government members directly involved in the implementation of the joint political process, chaired by the Prime Minister.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ See United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation, “Financial sanctions notice: Central African Republic”, 8 March 2023.

¹⁰⁸ Confidential report, 23 March 2023.

¹⁰⁹ Meetings with civil society leaders in Bangui, February 2023.

¹¹⁰ 1 March 2023, “Note d’information: La représentante spéciale prône la localisation du processus de paix mutualisé de l’APPR et de la Feuille de route de Luanda au niveau des préfectorats”, press release, on file with the Secretariat.

¹¹¹ Meeting with confidential source, April 2023.

¹¹² Ibid.

B. Hate speech and incitement to violence

81. Incitement to violence through hate speech and disinformation in the Central African Republic is complex and involves various actors, including both Muslim and Christian armed groups, among others.¹¹³ Given the location of the Central African Republic and its links to neighbouring countries, disinformation campaigns have regional ramifications. This was confirmed by meetings that the Panel held in February and March with civil society leaders in Chad and the Central African Republic. Participants highlighted multiple instances in which false information about events in the Central African Republic had led to misunderstandings and increased distrust between different communities in neighbouring countries.

82. The Panel of Experts has consistently drawn attention in its reports to incidents of incitement to violence by political actors in the Central African Republic.¹¹⁴ In its resolution 2399 (2018), the Security Council condemned “all acts of incitement to violence ... that undermine the peace, stability or security of the Central African Republic and decides that individuals ... who commit such acts ... could meet the designation criteria specified in paragraph 20”. This resolution was followed by resolution 2499 (2019) on the mandate of MINUSCA, in which it authorized MINUSCA to support the Panel of Experts in collecting information about acts of incitement to violence, in particular on an ethnic or religious basis, that undermine the peace, stability or security of the Central African Republic. Furthermore, the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic commits the Government of the Central African Republic to combat “all incitement to violence” through the implementation of the National Plan for the Prevention of Incitement to Hatred and Violence.¹¹⁵

83. The High Council for Communication (Haut Conseil de la Communication) is intended to regulate media in the Central African Republic and to ensure that journalists and media outlets comply with professional and ethical standards. The High Council was established following a conference organized by MINUSCA in 2015 to combat regional disinformation. The Central African Republic was the only State to subsequently adopt a national action plan.

84. The Panel met with Isabel Vakhet, Director of the High Council for Communication in Bangui on 21 February 2023 to discuss recent decisions concerning incidents of incitement to violence broadcast by the Galaxie nationale platform and on Radio Lengo Songo. Didacien Kossimatchi (S/2021/569, para. 149, and S/2023/87, paras. 9 and 10), leader of Galaxie nationale has continued to disseminate hate speech and make false or defamatory statements.¹¹⁶ Radio Lengo Songo has repeatedly called for violence, according to the High Council.¹¹⁷

85. The Panel recognizes the importance of the work of the High Council for Communication and the Government of the Central African Republic in trying to combat hate speech. However, the High Council’s effectiveness in regulating the media is limited because of the challenges it has encountered in enforcing its decisions.

¹¹³ See Brianna Ferebee and Rachel Sullivan, “Beyond fake news: the Central African Republic’s hate speech problem”, United States Institute of Peace, 16 August 2021.

¹¹⁴ S/2014/452, paras. 42–43; S/2016/1032, paras. 103–107; S/2017/1023, paras. 71–73; S/2018/729, paras. 57–60; S/2018/1119, paras. 160–163; S/2021/569, paras. 148–150; and S/2023/87, paras. 8–11.

¹¹⁵ See article 4 (r) of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed in Bangui on 6 February 2019 (see S/2019/145, annex).

¹¹⁶ See its posts on <https://m.facebook.com/people/Galaxie-Nationale-Beafrika/100070906621613/>.

¹¹⁷ See decision of the High Council for Communication in annex 15.

V. Sanctions measures, arms embargo and national defence and security forces

A. Travel ban and asset freeze violations

Travel ban

86. With the advance of armed groups towards the northern borders and the negotiated exile of certain leaders, violations of the travel ban by several sanctioned individuals have been most regularly reported in terms of their movements between the Central African Republic, Chad and the Sudan. These come in addition to the movement of François Bozizé (see para. 40).

87. As mentioned above, on 28 July 2022, the International Criminal Court unsealed the arrest warrant for Nourredine Adam (CFi.002). Adam, who had been based in Omdurman, the Sudan, had departed the Sudan earlier that month and had, according to multiple sources, entered the Central African Republic on about 8 July 2022, passing through Birao.¹¹⁸ Sometime during the first half of 2022 he had also been identified and questioned by security forces in Chad, but was released because the Chadian authorities noted that they had no grounds to arrest him.¹¹⁹ During the second half of 2022, Adam allegedly travelled overland from the tri-border area between the Central African Republic, Chad and the Sudan to South Sudan and Uganda.¹²⁰

88. Ali Darassa (CFi.015) was reported to have been in Tulus, South Darfur, the Sudan, during September and October 2022 but has also been observed several times in Chad during 2022.¹²¹ At the end of January 2023, Darassa was presumed to be back in the Central African Republic, judging from a convoy of vehicles travelling somewhere in the Ouadda, Sam Ouandja and Ouanda-Djallé triangle, thought to be his advance escort.¹²²

89. Haroun Gaye (CFi.007) is reported to have crossed from the Sudan into Chad overland in July 2022 and was questioned by security forces in the Mangueigne sub-prefecture in Chad. As with the case of Adam, Chad authorities noted there had been no grounds to arrest Gaye, and he presumably crossed the border to join CPC forces in Sikikédé.

90. Arrested in N'Djamena in October 2019, Martin Koumtamadj (CFi.013), alias Abdoulaye Miskine, and three associates remain in custody in Klessoum maximum security military prison. The Chadian authorities deny allegations received by the Panel that Koumtamadj had been released and left the country.¹²³ Koumtamadj himself told the Panel he was still imprisoned and awaiting his verdict.¹²⁴

Asset freeze

91. On 31 March 2023, Abdoulaye Hissène (CFi.012) participated in a meeting of the Government of the Central African Republic technical committee for the integration of ex-combatants in his capacity as Minister Counsellor. The Panel has

¹¹⁸ Correspondence with international forces presence in the Central African Republic, 6 February 2022; and confidential report, 7 September 2022.

¹¹⁹ Meeting with a national security agency in N'Djamena, 21 March 2022.

¹²⁰ Correspondence with Central African security officer, 17 November 2022.

¹²¹ Meeting with a national security agency in N'Djamena, 21 March 2022.

¹²² Correspondence with CPC representatives in Chad, 12–22 March 2022.

¹²³ Meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights in N'Djamena, 21 March 2023.

¹²⁴ Phone call on 24 October 2022.

addressed a letter to the Government to enquire about possible salary or per diem payments made to Hissène in violation of the asset freeze.

92. In its November 2022 progress update to the Committee, the Panel reported on a 4x4 vehicle belonging to sanctioned individual Nourredine Adam (CFi.002) being kept at the MINUSCA Birao field office since January 2021.

93. The vehicle, an unregistered black, armoured Land Cruiser V8,¹²⁵ had been the subject of a dispute between pro-Adam elements of MLCJ willing to take the vehicle to the Sudan, and local MLCJ elements wanting to take custody of the car as collateral for a debt owed by Adam. The vehicle had been seized by FACA elements at Élevage Checkpoint (5 km outside Birao, on the Am Dafok-Birao route) for violation of curfew hours. On the instruction of the Vakaga Prefect, the vehicle was taken to the Birao Gendarmerie, and shortly afterwards transferred to the MINUSCA Birao field office.¹²⁶

94. At the time, the Consul General of the Sudan had argued that the vehicle was the property of the Government of the Sudan. This was probably because it had been given to Adam under the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation Agreement negotiations in 2019. The Minister for Justice and Human Rights, a former Minister of Transport, Arnaud Djoubaye Abazène, had reported that the vehicle initially belonged to Nourredine Adam, residing in Khartoum.¹²⁷

95. On 2 January 2023, the Prefect of Vakaga Prefecture, accompanied by Russian instructors, went to the MINUSCA office in Birao to request Adam's vehicle.¹²⁸ The Prefect had handwritten an authorization for recovery,¹²⁹ stating that he was acting on the instructions of the Minister for Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Local Development, Bruno Yapande. The keys to the vehicle were handed over to the Prefect.

96. Although the vehicle had not been seized by MINUSCA under the asset freeze (having been deposited for safekeeping), by serving as collateral for a debt payment, it could, regardless of its disputed ownership, be considered as an economic resource to be frozen according to the definition in paragraph 16 of Security Council resolution 2399 (2018), as renewed by Council resolution 2648 (2022).

B. Violations and non-compliance regarding the arms embargo

Non-exempted aircraft

97. In its midterm report (S/2023/87, paras. 42–47), the Panel referred to two non-exempted Ilyushin aircraft flying since early 2021 with Central African military registration numbers and used for the rotation of Russian instructors and their equipment. One aircraft, an Ilyushin Il-18 passenger aircraft (manufacturer's serial number: 186009403), was destroyed by fire at Al-Khadim Air Base in Libya on 27 January 2023.¹³⁰ The Panel could not identify the former owners of the aircraft, who were responsible for the transfer. In March, the Minister of Defence of the Central African Republic, Jean-Claude Rameaux Bireau, told the Panel that the Ministry had prepared details regarding the registration and previous ownership

¹²⁵ See photographs in annex 16.

¹²⁶ Confidential report, 24 December 2022.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Confidential report, 3 January 2023.

¹²⁹ See annex 17.

¹³⁰ Communication from confidential United Nations source, 2 February 2023. See also, Aviation Safety Network, "Ilyushin Il-18: 27 January 2023", ASN Safety database, available at <https://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=20230127-1>, including imagery.

details of several aircraft in response to a written request by the Panel for information. However, this information had not been conveyed to the Panel by the time it submitted the present report to the Committee on 17 April 2023.

98. The second aircraft, an Ilyushin IL-76 military cargo aircraft (manufacturer's serial number: 83485561), prior to being transferred to the Ministry of Defence and Army Reconstruction of Central Africa, had been operated by TransAVIAexport Airlines in Belarus but was owned by the Russian company Pilgrim LLC, in Voronezh, Russian Federation, according to its Belarusian registration certificate.¹³¹ The Panel could not locate the latter company and enquired with TransAVIAexport Airlines and the Russian Federation about the aircraft, notably previous ownership details. The Russian Federation informed the Panel that it had deregistered the aircraft on 15 February 2018. TransAVIAexport did not respond.

99. While the aircraft's previous ownership remains unclear, the Panel received written and verbal information affirming that Valery Zakharov, the former national security adviser to President Touadera (see [S/2021/569](#), annex 3.7), played a role in transferring the aircraft to the Central African Republic.¹³² At the end of 2020, he suggested that the aircraft be registered as a civilian aircraft with the Central African civil aviation authority, providing previous registration certificates, but this was rejected because the aircraft was more than 30 years old ([S/2023/87](#), para. 47). It was subsequently registered with the Ministry of Defence. However, as mentioned above, the Ministry did not share the registration certificate. The Panel wrote to Zakharov on the matter but has not received a response.

100. While both aircraft were registered by the Ministry of Defence, the Central African airline company Lapara Aviation was billed by the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL) for the aircrafts' flyover of European airspace in the first half of 2021.¹³³ For the Il-76, tail number TL-ART was communicated to EUROCONTROL, and for the Il-18, TL-ARN, explaining why the aircraft featured as such in the AeroTransport Data Bank ([S/2023/87](#), para. 47), instead of their tail number appearing on the aircraft, TL-KMZ and TL-KBR respectively, the letter K denoting Central African air force. Lapara never registered either aircraft, and left the country at the end of 2021. From the above, it is the view of the Panel that the Ministry of Defence of the Central African Republic knowingly misled European air traffic controllers by making it appear that when flying abroad, both aircraft were civilian.

101. On 7 February, the Panel observed a second Ilyushin IL-76 at Bangui M'Poko International Airport with tail number TL-LIZ.¹³⁴ As with the previous two Ilyushin military aircraft, the Central African authorities conveyed no notification or exemption request to the Committee in connection with the delivery of this military transport aircraft.

102. On 12 March, the Panel also received a photograph of a Cessna 182T at Bangui M'Poko International Airport.¹³⁵ According to airport personnel, the Central African air force operates this aircraft.¹³⁶ With no other Cessna 182T flying in the Central African Republic, it was highly likely to have been spotted in Ndélé, Boda and

¹³¹ See annex 18.

¹³² Correspondence with a diplomatic source, 3 January 2023; and meeting with Central African Republic Government official in Bangui, 3 December 2022. Written confirmation archived with the United Nations.

¹³³ Correspondence with a diplomatic source, 3 January 2023.

¹³⁴ See photograph in annex 19.

¹³⁵ See photograph in annex 20.

¹³⁶ Interviews with confidential airport personnel, 5 February 2023.

Awakaba airports.¹³⁷ Again, no notification or exemption request was submitted for the transfer of this aircraft to the Ministry of Defence.

Noncompliant notifications of military vehicles

103. The Panel reviewed recent imagery of the main Ndassima processing compound, which is operated by the Midas Ressources company (S/2021/87, paras. 61–64). On the compound, the Panel observed a “Chekan”¹³⁸ mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicle that, according to Russian media, is built on a Ural-432007 truck chassis, with the armoured body added by the Evro Polis LLC company in Krasnogorsk, Russian Federation.¹³⁹ On 10 March 2021, the Ministry of Defence of the Central African Republic notified the Committee of a transfer of lethal and non-lethal equipment, including five Ural-432007 trucks from “the Russian Federation military training centre” in the Sudan¹⁴⁰ to the Ministry of Defence of the Central African Republic. On 30 March 2021, a convoy of Ural trucks and other notified vehicles, including Chekan-type trucks, passed through Birao.¹⁴¹ The convoy was destined for Ndassima,¹⁴² making it highly likely that the vehicles observed in the processing compound derived from this notified transfer.

104. However, it was specified in the 10 March 2021 notification that the equipment was to be temporarily transferred to specialized battalions of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic to secure the ongoing electoral process.¹⁴³ The continued use of such vehicles at a private concession is not in accordance with what was stated in the notification. The Panel wrote to the Russian Federation to enquire about the whereabouts of the transferred equipment, but by the time of drafting of the present report, had not yet received a response.

105. The Panel notes that there is a possibility that the Chekan vehicle observed within the Ndassima processing compound had entered the Central African Republic earlier, as this type of vehicle has been observed in the Central African Republic since early January 2021 before the notified delivery.¹⁴⁴ This would imply that it was not notified at all, as the Panel is unaware of any notification to the Committee of Ural-type vehicles before March 2021.

106. The Panel also received drone footage in possession of CPC forces in Vakaga showing a Chekan-type vehicle inside a compound that the Panel could identify as the former home of Mahamat al-Khatim in Moyenne-Sido.¹⁴⁵ The drone in question was a DJI MAVIC, the same type that the Panel observed flying over MINUSCA

¹³⁷ Meetings with confidential sources in Ndélé and Bangui, 5–9 February 2023. Satellite imagery of Awakaba Airport on 9 February 2023 (archived with the United Nations), west of Ndélé, shows a small aircraft that is likely to be the Cessna 182T in question. Located in the Awakaba Presidential Park Reserve, the airport was constructed during the reign of the former President and self-proclaimed emperor, Jean-Bédél Bokassa (1966–1979). A similar size to Bangui M’Poko International Airport, Awakaba Airport principally served Bokassa’s private hunting trips. Until recently the airport was completely abandoned. Since early 2022 two new human-built structures are visible on satellite imagery.

¹³⁸ See imagery in annex 21.

¹³⁹ See <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2020/07/11/86234-vragu-ne-sdaetsya-nash-gordyy-ural> (in Russian).

¹⁴⁰ In February 2018 the Russian Federation and the Sudan concluded a cooperation agreement to develop the Sudanese Armed Forces. See Jakob Hedenskog, “Russia is stepping up its military cooperation in Africa”, December 2018.

¹⁴¹ See photographs in annex 22.

¹⁴² Meeting with confidential source in Bangui, 30 January 2023.

¹⁴³ The second round of legislative elections took place on 14 March 2021

¹⁴⁴ See <https://twitter.com/FranMatiasBueno/status/1345388715535982594/photo/1>.

¹⁴⁵ See photograph in annex 23.

bases in September 2022 and taken by CPC from the battlefield in Nzako in May that year (S/2023/87, para. 37).

C. Other arms and related material observed

Unmanned aerial vehicle in Ndélé

107. On 21 January 2023, Russian instructors claimed that their base in Ndélé, Bamingui-Bangoran Prefecture, had been attacked in the early hours of the morning by an unmanned aerial vehicle.¹⁴⁶ Five 65 mm bombs were supposedly detonated inside their camp, destroying a parked Mi-8 helicopter, while two more bombs were dropped close to the MINUSCA base in Ndélé. Pictures of the damaged helicopter and the unmanned aerial vehicle supposedly recovered near Ndélé circulated on social media from 1 February.¹⁴⁷

108. The Panel also inspected detailed pictures of the home-made unmanned aerial vehicle provided by the coordinator of the Russian instructors in Bangui. The Panel, which was scheduled to visit Ndélé the following day, offered its assistance in investigating the incident on site by inspecting the recovered unmanned aerial vehicle, bomb fragments and impact areas. In Ndélé, the proposed Panel visit to the Russian instructors' camp could not be arranged.

109. In Ndélé, the Panel met with United Nations peacekeepers and national security and defence forces.¹⁴⁸ None could confirm having heard any explosions during the night of 21 January. Local populations near the base had heard only gunfire that night.¹⁴⁹ The Panel was shown a photograph of the damaged helicopter, but it had been taken from too far away to ascertain whether it was damaged and of the same type as the helicopter on social media. UPC claims to have hit a Russian helicopter with a rocket-propelled grenade during the clashes around Sikikédé on 25 and 26 January.¹⁵⁰

110. Following the alleged air attack in Ndélé, FACA contacted MINUSCA to request an immediate end to its unmanned aerial vehicle flights, claiming that the explosives had been dropped "accidentally" by a MINUSCA unmanned aircraft system over the Russian instructors' camp in Ndélé.¹⁵¹ MINUSCA denied the allegation, communicating to FACA that the MINUSCA unmanned aerial vehicle flights had not yet taken off that day.¹⁵²

111. Nevertheless, the Central African Republic authorities refused MINUSCA permission to fly its unmanned aerial vehicles to conduct air reconnaissance during the clashes in Sikikédé at the end of January 2023, having a negative impact on the ability of MINUSCA to retain situational awareness in support of peacekeeper safety and security and civilian protection.¹⁵³

112. On 3 February, the Ministry of Defence of the Central African Republic issued a circular note formally suspending the use of drones on all Central African Republic territory until further notice, with an exemption for national security and defence

¹⁴⁶ Confidential report 21 January 2023; and meeting with the coordinator of the Russian instructors in Bangui, 6 February 2023.

¹⁴⁷ See photographs in annex 24.

¹⁴⁸ Meetings in Ndélé from 7–9 February 2023.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Correspondence on 17 March 2023.

¹⁵¹ Meeting with a confidential source, 4 February 2023.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Meeting with confidential source in Bangui, 4 February 2023.

forces.¹⁵⁴ In the note, it mentions the possibility of pre-authorized drone use, but this seems more restrictive than what is mentioned in the MINUSCA status-of-forces agreement with the Government of the Central African Republic, which refers to notified use of aircraft and vehicles. The Panel is aware of two MINUSCA unmanned aerial vehicle flyovers since 3 February, following two major security incidents since, but notes that these did not concern operations by FACA and Russian instructors.

Explosive ordnance use in western Central African Republic

113. See update annexed to the present report.¹⁵⁵

Bossangoa airdropped bombs

114. See update annexed to the present report.¹⁵⁶

D. Armed group elements fast-track integration and use as proxies

115. In its final report in 2021 ([S/2021/569](#), annex 3.7) the Panel drew attention to the integration of selected anti-balaka elements and other recruits from Bangui into the seventh territorial infantry battalion (BIT-7) without an appropriate vetting procedure in coordination with MINUSCA. A key example was Thierry Lébéné, alias “Colonel 12 Puissances”, who entered the Presidential Guard with some of his elements after their integration, adding to the some 150 elements integrated into this unit in 2020 ([S/2020/662](#), paras. 72–74). The 2017 national defence plan did not provide for a presidential guard, nor was its role coordinated as part of the security sector reform process (see also [S/2019/930](#), para. 146).

116. The BIT-7 was the last battalion to be trained by the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, which suspended its training in December 2021. Likewise, vetting in coordination with MINUSCA ended in 2021.

117. After BIT-7, eight additional battalions were trained by Russian instructors at Berengo training centre (Lobaye Prefecture), increasing the size of FACA personnel to somewhere between 14,000 and 15,000.¹⁵⁷ The 2017 national defence plan envisaged a maximum of nine territorial infantry battalions and an overall army of 9,800 personnel.¹⁵⁸ Recently formed battalions – each numbering approximately 600 elements comprising a total of approximately 5,000 elements – were formed without a transparent recruitment or integration process, including lack of human rights vetting.¹⁵⁹ For each BIT, approximately 20 loyalist armed group members from the different provinces were transferred to Berengo to be integrated.¹⁶⁰

118. The fast-track integration of selected armed group elements usually concerns proxy forces assisting the FACA and Russian instructors during their operations.¹⁶¹ For example, in June 2022, elements from the Vakaga militia described in the Panel’s

¹⁵⁴ See annex 25.

¹⁵⁵ See annex 26.

¹⁵⁶ See annex 27.

¹⁵⁷ Meeting with armed groups’ disarmament, demobilization and reintegration focal points in Bangui in October 2022 and February 2023. See also, Enrica Picco, “Central African Republic: averting further fragmentation of the armed forces”, International Crisis Group, 10 May 2022.

¹⁵⁸ National defence plan, on file with the Secretariat.

¹⁵⁹ Confidential international security presence report, 1 November 2022.

¹⁶⁰ Meeting with armed groups’ disarmament, demobilization and reintegration focal points in Bangui in October 2022 and February 2023; and meetings with international forces presences in Bangui, in June 2022 and February 2023.

¹⁶¹ Meetings with armed groups’ disarmament, demobilization and reintegration focal points in Bangui in October 2022 and February 2023. In its midterm report, the Panel referred to these as trackers ([S/2023/87](#), para. 30).

final report (S/2021/569, annex 4.4) were transferred to Berengo for training and integration.¹⁶²

119. The Ministry of Defence recognized the integration of certain armed group elements in the FACA but rejected the use of proxies.¹⁶³ However, national security and defence forces in the provinces confirmed the use of proxies to the Panel. FACA and gendarmerie officers in Bria claimed that 52 elements demobilized in Sam-Ouandja in June and July 2022 currently serve as FACA proxies.¹⁶⁴ A gendarmerie officer in Bambari referred to two demobilized elements used as proxies who were wounded in an accidental grenade explosion at the Russian instructors' camp in Ippy on 28 November 2022.¹⁶⁵

120. The Panel interviewed witnesses in connection with a FACA retaliatory attack that was carried out by anti-balaka proxies operating in conjunction with FACA, killing eight civilians in Bokolobo on the morning of 9 May 2022.¹⁶⁶ The attack followed a surprise attack that night by UPC on the FACA position in the village, killing two soldiers, six anti-balaka combatants and five civilians from the Christian community.¹⁶⁷

121. The most problematic caseload of ex-combatants, many of whom are reported to have been used as proxies in recent months, is the group disarmed in Bambari in June 2022 with the involvement of the Minister for Livestock, Mr. Bouba.¹⁶⁸ The group numbers more than 300 individuals, mostly former UPC and some anti-balaka.¹⁶⁹ Their weapons – needed to determine eligibility for either socioeconomic integration or integration into the national defence and security forces – had been handed over to FACA, not to MINUSCA or the Government's Executive Unit for the National Disarmament, Demobilization And Reintegration Programme.¹⁷⁰

122. In the first week of April, the Executive Unit was in Bambari with the objective of processing 150 of the 300-odd ex-combatants disarmed in Bambari in June 2022.¹⁷¹ However, only 66 weapons were collected by FACA and handed over to the Executive Unit, including 6 weapons used by more than one combatant, allowing the Executive Unit to process 80 ex-combatants. The whereabouts of the remaining combatants is not known.

123. The mechanism envisaged in the Agreement (arts. 16 and 17) for armed group integration was the establishment of temporary joint security units – Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité – composed of members of both national defence and security forces and armed groups. In Bouar and Paoua only, units were operationalized in

¹⁶² Meeting with armed groups' disarmament, demobilization and reintegration focal points in Bangui in October 2022 and February 2023; meetings with international forces presences in Bangui, June 2022 and February 2023.

¹⁶³ Letter from the Minister of Defence and Army Reconstruction of the Central African Republic to the Panel of Experts dated 6 January 2023 (see S/2023/87, annex 16).

¹⁶⁴ Meetings in Bria, 28–30 November 2022.

¹⁶⁵ Meeting in Bambari on 29 November 2022. On 15 December 2022, the Panel enquired with the Russian Federation to clarify its operational use of demobilized combatants in Ippy and elsewhere but did not receive a response.

¹⁶⁶ Correspondence with victims, 3–5 February 2023. This case is in fact one of many reported by the Secretary-General in 2022 (S/2022/491, paras. 25 and 57; and S/2022/762, paras. 30, 31 and 47)

¹⁶⁷ See also, S/2022/491, para. 30. The reprisal killings, carried out mostly by machete, were ordered by the detachment commander, whom the Panel has not been able to identify.

¹⁶⁸ Meetings with confidential government and civil society sources in Bambari, 28–30 November 2022.

¹⁶⁹ Confidential reports, 7 and 23 June 2022.

¹⁷⁰ Correspondence with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration practitioner, 14 April 2023; and confidential report, 10 April 2023.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

November 2020, but they received only food rations and no salary and were never integrated. This led to protests and defections.¹⁷² During the month of March 2023, the training of 235 former 3R and anti-balaka elements from Bouar and Paoua resumed at Camp Kassai in Bangui. After completing their training, elements should have the option of being integrated into the national defence and security forces.¹⁷³

124. While still small in numbers, armed group representatives, both pro- and anti-Government, consider the resumption of temporary joint security units training as a positive development in view of years of untransparent fast-track integration of selected armed group elements.

VI. Natural resources

A. Gold and diamonds

125. The export of gold continued to show an upward trend, as previously cited in the Panel's midterm report (S/2023/87, para. 59). During the first month of 2023, 231 kilos of gold, worth over \$6 million, was exported according to statistics from the Ministry of Mines and Geology.¹⁷⁴ At this rate, exports in 2023 could more than double as compared with 2022, when more than 1 tonne of gold was exported.

126. On 21 February 2023, the Central African police in Bangui confiscated 58 ingots of gold of different shapes, some 300 million CFA francs in cash and the vehicle in which the items were hidden.¹⁷⁵ The items were confiscated from two individuals described as Fulani and Arab. According to Fulani community representatives, the gold belonged to Djibrine Amine, a Central African gold collector. Amine, who was displaced in 2013 from western Central African Republic to the Cameroonian border town of Garoua Boulai and identified by the Panel in 2014 (S/2014/762, para. 137).¹⁷⁶

127. Gold mining sites continued to be a target of attacks (see paras. 30 and 31) with regard to western Central African Republic. The most lethal and disturbing attack, however, occurred on 19 March 2023 in central Central African Republic at Chimbolo (Ouaka Prefecture), where nine Chinese workers of the Gold Coast Group company were assassinated. The Panel received information about Central Africans also killed during the attack, including one or two individuals in uniform, but has been unable to confirm this.¹⁷⁷

128. Central African Republic rough diamond exports in 2022 increased slightly as compared with 2021, from 103,647 to 115,522 carats, worth some \$14 million.¹⁷⁸ With production areas in the east and part of the west still under Kimberley Process suspension, exported volumes reach about a third of estimated national production of 330,000 carats.¹⁷⁹ The exclusion of the east, which has a comparatively higher occurrence of high-value stones, is also argued to have lowered the per carat value of

¹⁷² For instance, on 17 April 2021, former anti-balaka elements integrated into the unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité blocked main supply route 1 in Bouar in protest, demanding a FACA identification number, a graduation ceremony and immediate deployment (see S/2020/662, annex 6.1)

¹⁷³ Correspondence with FACA representative, 3 April; and correspondence with armed group representative, 3 April 2023.

¹⁷⁴ Official government trade statistics, on file with the Secretariat.

¹⁷⁵ See photographs in annex 28.

¹⁷⁶ Correspondence with a confidential Government source, 26 March 2023.

¹⁷⁷ Correspondence from a Government authority present on site, 26 March 2023.

¹⁷⁸ Official government trade statistics, on file with the Secretariat.

¹⁷⁹ See Peter G. Chirico and Sarah E. Bergstresser, "Diamond mining and conflict in the Central African Republic", April 2019.

exports in recent years, which was approximately \$170 per carat prior to the suspension in 2013 and currently approximately \$120.¹⁸⁰

129. In addition to remaining sub-prefectures in the west, the Government of the Central African Republic is campaigning for the lifting of the Kimberley Process suspension in Bria sub-prefecture. As mentioned in the Panel's midterm report (S/2023/87, annex 20), the Government attempted to take a shortcut to the regular assessment process by the Kimberley Process monitoring team on the Central African Republic, by including an assessment visit to Bria in a still upcoming Kimberley Process plenary review mission.

130. In preparation for a future review visit, the Panel made enquiries about the five criteria for lifting the Kimberley Process suspension in Bria set out in the operational framework (see S/2023/87, annex 20): State presence; implementation of monitoring mechanisms; absence of the systematic presence of armed groups; freedom of movement of goods and people; and no evidence of systematic fraud or smuggling of diamonds to or from the compliant zone to non-compliant zones.

131. One concern in this regard is that, since 19 April 2022, Russian instructors occupy the premises of the Central African diamond-buying house, "Badica", in Bria without the company's consent. Badica has addressed two letters, dated 22 April and 27 July 2022,¹⁸¹ to the Prime Minister of the Central African Republic to draw attention to what it describes as an inappropriate occupation by force of its premises, requesting that an appropriate solution be found without compromising Russian forces' operations.

132. In a letter of reply dated 13 September 2022, the Minister of Defence of the Central African Republic assured the company that action was being taken to relocate the "Russian military partners".¹⁸² No such relocation has taken place to date. In the Panel's view, the occupation of Badica's premises inhibits freedom of movement and the re-establishment of formal trade to counter the smuggling of rough diamonds.

133. On 11 April 2023, the Panel enquired with the Russian Federation as to whether and when Russian instructors were planning to move out of Badica's premises, and what had been the contribution of Russian instructors to meeting the five criteria for lifting the KP suspension in Bria sub-prefecture. Any answer received will be included as an additional annex prior to publication of the present report by 30 May 2023.

B. Transhumance

134. Transhumance is a predominantly ethnic Fulani activity with herders moving cattle, sheep and goats across long distances to find suitable grazing areas. These movements are often synchronized with the seasons and rainfall patterns, but conflicts between herders and traders have made this a key dimension of the conflict in the Central African Republic (S/2018/1119, paras. 105–140). During a Panel visit to Kaga Bandoro in June 2022, one of the main cattle markets in central Central African Republic, on a transhumance route that crosses into Chad, revealed an emerging contest for control (and the consequent ability to tax the transhumance trade) not only between armed groups but also between armed groups and State forces.

135. Before 2021, when FACA regained control of Kaga Bandoro, the MPC and FPRC armed groups took the larger share of taxes, amounting to 20,000 CFA francs

¹⁸⁰ Meeting with diamond-buying offices in Bangui, 26 November 2022.

¹⁸¹ On file with the Secretariat.

¹⁸² See letter in annex 29.

(\$31) per head of cattle sold on the market, with a small tax going to the municipality. Now, under FACA control, the tax is lower (estimated to be approximately 7,000 CFA francs (\$11) per head, with the majority going to the Ministry of Livestock and Animal Health and FACA and the remainder to the municipality).¹⁸³

136. In addition, herders, who often have no type of formal identification, must pay 10,000 CFA francs (\$16) for their National Federation of Livestock Breeders (Fédération nationale des éleveurs centrafricains) card to avoid arrest when checked by FACA.¹⁸⁴ The Federation is a service attached to the Ministry of Livestock. A per-head tax of 9,500 CFA francs (\$15) is also levied,¹⁸⁵ which is redistributed among various State services but also includes a security fee that goes to the national security and defence forces. This compares with a per-head tax of 5,000 CFA francs (\$8) that used to be levied by UPC in Bambari, for example.

137. Often heavy-handed and discriminatory treatment of herders by FACA, assuming them to be, or to be allied with, armed groups, has led the herders to avoid official markets such as Kaga Bandoro and other government-controlled passing points.¹⁸⁶ For example, herders avoid the markets of Mbrès and Kaga Bandoro and sell illegally to cattle traders who drive their vehicles into pockets under armed group control, such as Linguiri (Nana-Gribizi Prefecture), north of Mbrès.

138. Throughout 2022, the Minister for Livestock, Mr. Bouba, undertook several missions across the country to promote peaceful transhumance. Conducted with heavy security presence and in conjunction with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities, these missions were partly an effort to pressure herders to transport cattle to official markets and pay taxes due to the State. At the end of June 2022, the Minister was in Moyenne-Sido on the Chadian border and contacted the Ministry of Livestock of Chad to allow him to cross the border and engage with livestock owners on the Chadian side, including one of his family members.¹⁸⁷ Chadian authorities refused the visit, claiming that the reason was due to the border being formally closed.¹⁸⁸

VII. Humanitarian affairs

A. Humanitarian and armed group situation in Am Dafok and its wider consequences for Vakaga Prefecture

139. In its midterm report, the Panel described the proliferation of Misseriya militia in the tri-border area between Chad, the Sudan and the Central African Republic, including a group of about 50 elements led by Mohamed Adam, alias Abou Kass/Aboukasi, operating illegal taxation checkpoints, carrying out robberies and inflicting violence with impunity on the civilian population (S/2023/87, paras. 81–84).

140. The Panel visited Am Dafok from 8 to 9 February 2023 and heard from traders in Birao that, since the Sudan had closed the border with the Central African Republic on 2 January 2023, the influx of trucks and goods from the Sudan over the main border

¹⁸³ Meeting with members of the prefectural cattle market committee, Kaga Bandoro, 19 July 2022.

¹⁸⁴ Radio Ndeke Luka, “Centrafrique: une carte d’identification des éleveurs pour favoriser une transhumance apaisée”, 28 January 2022.

¹⁸⁵ See also, Gaël Grilhot, “En Centrafrique, l’État veut reprendre en main le marché du bétail”, *Le Monde*, 3 May 2019.

¹⁸⁶ Meeting with confidential sources, Kaga Bandoro, 16–19 July 2022.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; and interview with the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Livestock in N’Djamena, 16 March 2023.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Livestock in N’Djamena, 16 March 2023.

crossing at Am Dafok had been markedly reduced. No heavy trucks had come into Birao from the Sudan since mid-January.¹⁸⁹ The Panel noted that Birao and the Vakaga Prefecture depended largely on fuel and food supplies such as flour, sugar, salt and vegetable oil imported from the Sudan.¹⁹⁰

141. In Am Dafok, community members and small-scale traders said that the Rapid Support Forces controlling the border check point between the Sudanese and the Central African Republic side of Am Dafok prohibited anyone from taking large quantities of food to sell in the Central African Republic, and allowed only small quantities for household consumption.¹⁹¹ During January and February, prices on all imported foodstuffs from the Sudan had at least doubled. This was also confirmed by the Panel when stopping at two villages on their way back from Am Dafok to Birao on 9 February. Men crossing the border, in either direction, were body searched by the Rapid Support Forces, who were looking for weapons. However, the body searching was not systematic.

142. During the 65 km five-hour drive from Birao to Am Dafok, the Panel saw no trucks or vehicles and fewer than 10 motorcycles and donkey carts, mostly loaded with goods from Am Dafok heading for Birao.

143. Apart from a modest FACA deployment to the understaffed and operationally limited tripartite force¹⁹² for joint tri-border patrols (S/2023/87, para. 82, and S/2021/87, para. 44), there is a complete absence of State authority on the Central African side of Am Dafok. Central African armed groups and Arab militia groups operate unhindered and with impunity.

144. Am Dafok has been controlled by various armed groups and used as a base for illegal taxation of traders, trafficking and competing for control over the Vakaga. The Panel has previously reported on armed group clashes in Am Dafok (for the chronology, see S/2019/930, annex 3.1).

145. In community meetings on 8 and 9 February 2023, and in bilateral meetings with men and women civil society representatives,¹⁹³ the Panel heard testimonies that illustrated a precarious security and humanitarian situation for the civilian population. The group meetings were led by the only authority in Am Dafok, the civilian traditional Chef de groupe, Celestin Tamia. The findings that follow are from two community meetings.

146. Women representatives expressed a deep and daily fear of living at the mercy of armed groups and bandits. Others, including the village chiefs, expressed anger with the Government for allowing the Sudanese to use Central African Republic territory as their own. Others despaired at having been, as they put it, “abandoned by MINUSCA and humanitarian organizations”. There were no humanitarian actors in Am Dafok, as there was a high risk of being carjacked or robbed on the Birao-Am Dafok route.¹⁹⁴ In December 2020, armed Arab Misseriya elements from the group led by Abou Kass had abducted three International Medical Corps staff, one man and two women, while they were on a mission in Am Dafok. The Corps staff were released physically unharmed after three days, but the group stole the Corps car. Since then, due

¹⁸⁹ Meeting with traders at the Birao market, 11 and 12 February 2023.

¹⁹⁰ Imports from Chad through Tissi are of less significance and include shoes, other leather goods and clothes, etc.

¹⁹¹ Am Dafok community meeting, 8 February 2023.

¹⁹² The tripartite force is based at Umm Rawq, 20 km into the Sudan, on the road to Nyala.

¹⁹³ Participants included villagers, men and women and children, as well as the president of the Central African Women’s Organization (OFCA), the president of the parent-teacher association, the Director and other staff at the Am Dafok College, teachers from Am Dafok primary school, the president of the Youth Association, village chiefs and the Chef de quartier.

¹⁹⁴ Meeting with two international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Birao, 12 February 2023.

to prevalent insecurity, the Corps, the only international medical non-governmental organization (NGO) in the region, has not returned to Am Dafok, and has supplied medicines and materials to the Am Dafok health centre from the Corps base in Birao through traders or others who travel between Birao and Am Dafok.

147. The Panel met with a 44-year-old male civilian who had been abducted on the outskirts of Am Dafok on 20 October 2022 by armed Arab Misseriya elements under the leadership of Abou Kass (see S/2023/87, annex 24), and who had been held hostage with 10 other men for four days.¹⁹⁵

148. The Panel also took a statement from a community member who recounted the killing of a kiosk owner on 12 June 2022 by three Arab Misseriya who appeared intoxicated, over an argument about not paying for some cigarettes.

149. The community also recalled a series of violent clashes in Am Dafok between armed groups, such as on 14 October 2019, and recalled how the “Janjaweed” (Sudanese Arab militia, here referring to Misseriya and Ta’isha groups) burned and pillaged the town. For example, the youth centre, a MINUSCA-sponsored construction project, which in October 2019 was almost ready to be inaugurated, was destroyed by the militia and the tin roofing stolen.

150. At the end of the meeting, the Chef de groupe led the Panel on foot to see the damaged youth centre. Less than 100 metres from the youth centre is the construction site for what was planned to be the mayor’s office,¹⁹⁶ a project managed by MINUSCA, the construction of which had been discontinued owing to poor accessibility in the rainy season.

151. On 9 February, in the concluding meeting with the Chef de groupe, he appealed to the MINUSCA platoon chief, “Since you arrived yesterday, we have slept well for the first time in a long time. It was encouraging for the population. Please come back on patrol 1–2 times per month and stay 2–3 days, as this will reassure the population and will help keep the armed groups at a distance”.

B. Detention of journalists by Mahamat Salleh in Sikikédé

152. On 14 January, two French journalists on assignment for *Paris Match* travelled by road from Haraze, southern Chad to the Central African Republic border, where they met a group of FPRC/CPC elements who took them to Sikikédé on motorcycles. The journalists informed the Panel that their initial objective had been to spend a few days in the area to report on the impact of the conflict and operations by the private military company Wagner. In addition to their article,¹⁹⁷ the journalists shared some additional information¹⁹⁸ and photographs.¹⁹⁹

153. The journalists reported seeing a number of CPC groups and commanders in Sikikédé and surrounding villages in mid-January 2023 and were themselves lodged by a group led by General Mahamat Salleh. Salleh said he was no longer with FPRC and now belonged to CPC, taking orders directly from the sanctioned UPC/CPC leader, Ali Darassa (CFi.015). Salleh and his forces disapproved of the CPC general

¹⁹⁵ See annex 31.

¹⁹⁶ In December 2020, as part of administrative reforms, a new law was passed, whereby the number of prefectures in Central African Republic increased from 16 to 20, and 12 new sub-prefectures were created, with the total increasing from 72 to 84. In Vakaga Prefecture, in addition to Birao and Ouanda Djalle, two new sub-prefectures were created: Ouandja and Am Dafok).

¹⁹⁷ See *Paris Match*, “Centrafrique: avec les pirates de la brousse contre Wagner”, 2021.

¹⁹⁸ Findings are based on two meetings with one of the journalists, on 5 February and 30 March 2023.

¹⁹⁹ See photographs in annex 32.

coordinator, sanctioned individual François Bozizé (CFi.001), and did not consider him as their leader.

154. Mahamat Salleh told the journalists that “after the killings in Nzako” in March 2022, Ali Darassa had called upon Salleh to come from Nzako to Sikikédé to help secure mining areas there. Salleh claimed that he had arrived in Sikikédé with some 200 men in about April 2022, before the start of the rainy season. A CPC source told the Panel that Salleh and his group had not arrived in Sikikédé until December 2022.²⁰⁰

155. Salleh spoke frequently on the telephone. The journalists were told by other CPC elements that among those whom Salleh regularly talked to was a FACA commander based in Bangui. Salleh claimed to be in direct contact with the sanctioned leader, Joseph Kony (CFi.009), of the sanctioned entity the Lord’s Resistance Army (CFe.002). Salleh and several other CPC elements declared to the journalists that they hated Wagner so much that they would even fight alongside the Lord’s Resistance Army, whose fighters were willing to help the Central African Republic “get rid of Wagner”.

156. The journalists gained the impression that the other group members both disliked and feared Salleh. Many of the CPC forces in Sikikédé were local recruits and had been in the area since before the arrival of Mahamat Salleh. The civilian population, including women and children, seemed relaxed and friendly with the forces.

157. On 15 January, the journalists were able to move around and work. They visited mining sites and interviewed witnesses and survivors of various attacks, including the killing of civilians, in Dombolo, Sikikédé and Mandjam, dating back to March 2022 and allegedly carried out by “the Wagner group”.²⁰¹

158. From 16 January 2023, however, the situation changed. Mahamat Salleh became increasingly hostile towards the journalists. He stole their money and said they were a problem for him because “people in Bangui” knew about their presence in Sikikédé, and “Wagner” was looking for them. Thereafter, the journalists were no longer able to move freely. From 16 to 19 January, Salleh kept them detained in a hut on the compound, “the prison”, only occasionally allowing them to come out to work.²⁰²

159. Salleh kept saying that they had to wait for a man called Yahya Idriss,²⁰³ “a very important person, a big boss”, who had recently been released from prison in Bangui. Salleh insisted that they must interview Idriss. However, Idriss never arrived,²⁰⁴ and the journalists assumed that this was just a tactic by Salleh to keep them in detention, and to find a way to extort more money from them.

²⁰⁰ Confidential source, 1 April 2023. Mahamat Salleh spoke of himself in the third person, and his French was poor. When the journalists did not understand him, Salleh became aggressive, so out of fear they pretended to understand, meaning that there may have been some misunderstandings in the exchanges between Salleh and the journalists.

²⁰¹ See S/2022/527, para. 27, regarding the alleged destruction of a weapons market in Sikikédé in March 2022. In his report on the Central African Republic of 16 June 2022, the Secretary-General mentions that, on 14 March 2022, national defence forces and other security personnel clashed with FPRC and Misseriya groups at the Sikikédé mining site, “reportedly resulting in the killing of about 20 civilians” (S/2022/491, para. 29).

²⁰² A CPC element was detained in the same hut, for having lost his weapon. His hands were tied to his feet, and he lay contorted and breathing heavily. The journalists feared that he was going to die, and asked the CPC guards to untie the prisoner, which they then did.

²⁰³ Yahya Idriss was described by a confidential CPC source as “Mahamat Salleh’s right hand”, in correspondence on 5 April 2023.

²⁰⁴ Yahya Idiss is reported to have gone to Sikikédé on 22 January, as confirmed by one CPC element in the vicinity of Sikikédé on 10 February 2023.

160. As far as the journalists could tell, during their time in detention there was no direct contact between Mahamat Salleh and Ali Darassa.

161. Following steps taken by *Paris Match*, the two journalists were released on 19 January and transported back to the Chadian border by CPC.

162. The Panel recalls previous reporting on Mahamat Salleh's involvement in attacks against peacekeepers, looting and displacement and sexual and gender-based violence in Mbomou Prefecture in 2021 ([S/2021/569](#), paras. 40–42).²⁰⁵

C. Wider humanitarian concerns in Sikikédé

163. From the end of January 2023, violent attacks and counterattacks in Sikikédé, between CPC and FACA and Russian instructors (see paras. 13–15), triggered civilians to flee from the town.²⁰⁶ By April, there had been limited humanitarian access to assist and protect displaced and conflict-affected populations in and around Sikikédé.

164. On 19 February, local authorities in Sikikédé shared by telephone with MINUSCA staff in Birao that an estimated half of the population had fled to Chad.²⁰⁷ The other half were displaced in the bush in the immediate surroundings of Sikikédé, afraid to return to the town. For civilians in hiding outside of Sikikédé, with no access to clean water or food, and no health service, the humanitarian situation was precarious. Local authorities in Sikikédé reported that the town was empty, and that children were dying and women were giving birth in the bush surrounding the town.²⁰⁸

165. On 14 March, an inter-agency mission travelled by road from Birao to Sikikédé to assess the humanitarian situation there. No United Nations agency participated, and two of the participating NGOs stopped at Gordil and did not proceed to Sikikédé.²⁰⁹ Only the International Medical Corps accompanied the Birao district health authorities all the way to Sikikédé and stayed there for two days.²¹⁰ The Corps was able to operate on a female patient at the damaged health centre in Sikikédé, and the next day she was evacuated to Tiringoulou.²¹¹

166. Between the end of January and the end of February, Sikikédé town and the health centre were pillaged on at least three occasions and by all parties.²¹² CPC and associated militia were reported to have looted homes in Sikikédé, although local

²⁰⁵ Report on sexual violence related to conflicts committed by FPRC and UPC in Mbomou and Haute-Kotto Prefectures, December 2020–March 2022 (in French) at <https://www.ohchr.org/fr/documents/country-reports/rapport-sur-les-violences-sexuelles-liees-aux-conflits-commises-par-le>. Abdoulaye Machai (para. 20) was also incriminated in the report for perpetrating sexual violence alongside Mahamat Salleh.

²⁰⁶ According to national health statistics, the population of Sikikédé is 11,368 (cited by International Medical Corps Birao, 12 February 2023). By comparison, and according to the same statistics, Birao has a population of 13,869.

²⁰⁷ The population of Sikikédé is mostly from the Runga ethnic group, and there are Runga communities across the border in southern Chad, where they have been and can be accommodated.

²⁰⁸ MINUSCA sources in Birao via telephone call, 19 February 2023.

²⁰⁹ The NGOs did not proceed, following advice not to do so by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (email communication with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 5 April 2023).

²¹⁰ The three hostages held by B13 had been released on 8 March. This had been a relief to NGOs in Vakaga, and that was one reason that the International Medical Corps went to Sikikédé on 14 March.

²¹¹ International Medical Corps Birao, 11 February 2023.

²¹² Local sources in Sikikédé, via MINUSCA, 13 February 2023.

sources claimed that CPC had not damaged or pillaged the health centre, as their elements had been treated there.²¹³

167. By mid-March, the local authorities, including the mayor and several village chiefs and chefs de quartier, had returned to Sikikédé town. Together with FACA and Russian instructors the local authorities were trying to sensitize the population with a view to encouraging them to return. There had been a gradual return of the population, mainly young people and the elderly. Most adult men and women were afraid to return for fear of being associated with the armed groups. The mayor believed that the restoration of the health centre and the presence of International Medical Corps staff there would send a strong signal to the population that it was safe to return.

168. FACA and Russian instructors, in their discussions with the inter-agency mission, expressed scepticism with regard to NGOs and MINUSCA, claiming that these organizations served only to prolong the crisis. However, they did permit the Mission to conduct its assessment and noted that they would allow humanitarians to work in Sikikédé, also as a way of encouraging the civilian population to return to the town.

D. United Nations Office for Project Services hostage case

169. On 11 November 2022, while on mission in Vakaga Prefecture, two United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) staff and a member of technical staff from the Ministry of Public Works and Road Maintenance, all men, were kidnapped at Ndiffa by armed elements from the Parti pour le rassemblement de la nation centrafricaine (PRNC) (S/2023/87, paras. 70–80).²¹⁴ On 8 March, following local negotiations with PRNC Chief of Staff Mohamed Ali, alias “B13”, the hostages were released in Sam Ouandja after 117 days in captivity

170. This hostage situation was resolved after nearly four months of intense mediation efforts by government officials, local and traditional authorities and a United Nations mediator, with support from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security and the MINUSCA Field office in Birao, and without the Government of the Central African Republic giving in to the key demand of PRNC, namely the release of RPRC General Azor Kalite and three unnamed fellow armed group members. Azor had been arrested by MINUSCA in Ndélé on 19 May 2020 (S/2020/662, paras. 31 and 32, and S/2023/87, para. 73).

171. In February, while incarcerated at Camp de Roux in Bangui, Azor Kalite had sent a letter to the President of the Special Criminal Court in Bangui, stating that he was neither involved in nor supported the kidnapping carried out by PRNC. In the letter, Kalite also requested to be released as no formal charges had been brought against him.²¹⁵ Sources close to the mediation process believed that Azor Kalite’s position against the kidnapping was transmitted to B13 and was the determining factor that led B13 to release the hostages.²¹⁶

172. The kidnappers’ second demand was the payment of a sum varying between 10 million CFA francs (\$16,000) to 60 million CFA francs (\$97,000) to cover food

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Kidnapping constitutes a grave breach of international humanitarian law: under common article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the taking of hostages is and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever. See <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v2/rule96>.

²¹⁵ Confidential source, 27 March 2023.

²¹⁶ Meeting with a confidential United Nations source, 27 March 2023.

and security for the hostages (S/2023/87, para. 73). The Panel was unable to verify whether this demand was met, and if so, whether in full or in part.

173. The PRNC armed elements who carried out the kidnapping and managed the hostages were led by “B13”, the PRNC Chief of staff. The United Nations mediation team that came to Tiringoulou, some 33 km east of Ndiffo, on 13 November, spoke almost daily on the telephone with B13, as well as Abdelrahman Tourkach, who introduced himself or was referred to interchangeably as “leader of the PRNC political wing” and “PRNC military coordinator”.²¹⁷

174. PRNC issued two press releases related to the kidnapping (see S/2023/87, annexes 26 and 27). The first, dated 16 November 2022, was signed by “Chief of Staff PRNC, Mohamed Alias B13” and the second, dated 16 December 2022, also signed by B13 and in this case “by delegation from Nourd Gregaza, President of the PRNC”.²¹⁸

175. After the creation of PRNC in May 2019, the Panel made extensive investigations into the identity of Nourd Gregaza. In August and October 2019, the Panel was told by Goula representatives in Bangui and Birao that Nourd Gregaza, the son of a Goula gendarme from Birao and a woman from the Banda ethnic group, had left the Central African Republic in the mid-1990s to go and live in France (see S/2019/930, annex 3.8). While PRNC was a structured armed group on the ground, the identity of its president remained unclear. Some even questioned the very existence of Nourd Gregaza, who seemed merely to serve as a figurehead with little or no authority on the ground (ibid.).

176. From 11 November 2022 to mid-December 2022, it appeared that Nourd Gregaza was the leader deciding the fate of the three hostages. In daily telephone calls with the United Nations mediator team, B13 referred to Gregaza as his “boss in France”. B13 gave the impression that he consulted with Gregaza before making decisions related to the hostages.

177. On 28 November 2022, the Panel spoke to a confidential source, who said that, on 11 November 2022, after having apprehended and questioned the two UNOPS staff members and the Ministry employee at Ndiffo, B13 intended to release them but subsequently made a telephone call to Nourd Gregaza. This call seems to have been a turning point, after which B13 took the three men further into the bush, and the situation changed from questioning the men to kidnapping them (S/2023/87, para. 73).

178. B13 had shared a French mobile number with the mediator team that he claimed belonged to Nourd Gregaza. The mediators spoke twice to a man on this number, in November and December, assuming that they were speaking with Nourd Gregaza.

179. However, upon enquiry, the mediators received information through the United Nations from the Foreign Ministry of France that Nourd Gregaza was imprisoned in France and did not have access to a telephone.²¹⁹ From late December 2022, B13 stopped referring to Nourd Gregaza, and personally took the lead in the hostage negotiations with the mediation team.²²⁰

²¹⁷ On only a few occasions, the mediators also spoke to B13’s deputy, Noubakive Assane Alias Monde (see annex 33).

²¹⁸ See S/2019/608, annex 2.7, regarding the creation of PRNC in May 2019, announcing Nourd Gregaza, “largely unknown on the Central African political scene”, as the president of this group.

²¹⁹ On 25 September 2019, representatives of the French authorities confirmed to the Panel that an individual named Nourd Gregaza was currently detained for murder.

²²⁰ From 6 January, and weekly thereafter, the Panel called the French mobile number. All calls were transferred directly to an automated voicemail system.

VIII. Recommendations

180. The Panel makes the following recommendations:

To the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic

(a) Consider designating those individuals who have been involved in acts that meet the sanctions criteria defined in paragraphs 20 to 22 of Security Council resolution 2399 (2018) and extended under Council resolution 2648 (2022), based on previous statements of case prepared by the Panel based on involvement in sexual and gender-based violence, arms trafficking, and incitement to violence.

(b) Encourage either the Central African Republic, as the receiving State, or the Sudan and the Russian Federation as supplier States, to submit new or amended post-facto notifications or exemption requests, as applicable, with regards to all previous supplies of weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, and provision of related assistance, to the Central African Republic security forces that were in violation of the arms embargo (see paras. 98–103 and S/2023/87, paras. 41–49) or in non-compliance (see paras. 104–107) with the notification and exemption procedures.

(c) Encourage the Government of the Central African Republic to allow MINUSCA to resume notified use of unmanned aerial vehicles and reinstall its high-performance camera fixed on the control tower at Bangui M’poko International Airport so as to fulfil its mandate, inter alia, in terms of protection of civilians and implementation of the arms embargo in accordance with resolution 2659 (2022).

(d) Encourage the Governments of the Central African Republic and the Sudan to make an official declaration or communication about the outcome of the bilateral security meeting in Birao on 28 December 2023, including clarification about the applicable legal framework and with reference to the 2005 Tripartite Agreement.

(e) Encourage the Governments of Chad and the Central African Republic to continue high-level discussions about the reopening of their common borders, and subsequently address the issue of cross-border transhumance in the framework of the Joint Cross-Border Commission between the two countries.

To the Security Council

(f) To consider the continuous non-observance of the exemption and notification provisions by the Central African Republic when deciding on any further modification of the arms embargo.

Annex 1: 20 July 2022 CPC Appointment notice

Coalition des Patriotes
Pour le Changement
Coordination Générale
Coordination Militaire
Etat-major Général
Secrétariat Général



République
Centrafricaine
Unité-Dignité-Travail

N°013../CPC/CG/CM/EMG/SG/022

NOTE DE NOMINATION

Portant nomination, le **Coordonnateur Militaire**, Chef d'Etat-major de la Coalition C.P.C, le **Général d'Armée Ali Darassa Mahamat**, nomme

- > Chef de Colonne, **Général Anour Adam**
- > Premier Adjoint Chef de Colonne, **Général Ousman Mahamat Haraka**
- > Deuxième Adjoint Chef de Colonne, **Général Mahamat Déya**
- > Conseiller-1, **Oumar Ousman**
- > Conseiller-2, **Salleh Mahamat**
- > Conseiller-3, **Idriss Abdoulaye**.

Poste de responsabilité: La **Première Colonne Ndélé**.

Zone de responsabilité: **Préfecture de Bamingui-Bangoran (Ndélé)**.

En foi de quoi, la présente note est délivrée pour servir et valoir ce que de droit.

NB: Art.1 : Ils sont chargés de la sécurité de la dite zone.

Art.2 : Ils sont chargés d'entretenir de très bonne relation avec les autorités locales et confessionnelles.

Art.3 : Ils sont chargés de veiller à la libre circulation des personnes, des biens et des organisations humanitaires en particulier des agriculteurs et éleveurs.

Art.4 : Ils sont ordonnés à communiquer et rendre compte directement au **Coordonnateur Militaire, Chef d'Etat-major de la Coalition C.P.C**, chaque deux (2) semaine.

Fait le, 20 Juillet 2022

Le **Coordonnateur Militaire, Chef d'Etat-major**




Général
ALI DARASSA MAHAMAT

Le **Coordonnateur Militaire, Chef d'Etat-major**

d'Armée Ali Darassa Mahamat

Tel:+23672556628 +23672567473

Annex 2: Tom Adam alias “Ben Laden” and Mahamat Deya

Tom Adam



On 15 February 2023 (video)



On 3 July 2014 (S/2014/762, annex 9)

Mahamat Deya



On 15 February 2023 (video)

Annex 3: Sudanese militia, Mahamat Deya and Issa “Policier”



Ali Abd-Al-Rahman



General Moussa Ngir



Issa el Messiya



General Habib



Abu Djazam or Ghazam



not identified



Mahamat Deya



Issa “Policier”

Annex 4: UPC addressing and moving with FACA hostages in late March 2023



Annex 5: Draft CPC demands for the release of FACA hostages**Les revendications de la CPC en vue de la libération des prisonniers Faca**

- 1-le départ des mercenaires russes de Wagner du territoire centrafricain.
- 2-la libération de tous les combattants de la CPC fait prisonniers par le gouvernement sur tout l'étendue du territoire centrafricain.
- 3-la libération de tous les civils innocents détenues arbitrairement dans les prisons a Bangui et dans les provinces pour des soit disant complicité avec la CPC.
- 4-Le gouvernement centrafricain doit laisser les ONG nationale et internationale tel que CICR et MSF soigner les blessés de guerre en toute liberté comme l'indique la convention de Genève.
- 5-le gouvernement centrafricain doit instruire les soldats Faca et les mercenaires russes de Wagner de cesser les attestations arbitraire, les pillages, Les raquettes sur les barrières pour défaut de pièces d'identités, les vols et violes des civils innocents a Bangui et en province.
- 6-le gouvernement centrafricain doit instruire a ces Faca et ces mercenaires russes de Wagner de cesser les exactions contre les civils dans les marchés et les chantiers et de laisser la population civile vaquer à leurs occupations en toute liberté, surtout en province.
- 7-la coordination militaire demande au gouvernement centrafricain de faciliter l'obtention des pièces administratives au Population civile en particulier musulmanes.
- 8-le gouvernement centrafricain doit instruire ces Faca et les mercenaires russes de Wagner de laisser les ONG nationale et internationale accéder aux personnes déplacées dans les provinces en toute liberté.
- 9-la coordination militaire demande des dommages et la prise en charge des prisonniers et blessés de guerre.
- 10-la coordination militaire exige que l'échange s'effectue dans un endroit neutre de son choix.

Ci-joint : la liste des combattants de la CPC détenues par le gouvernement centrafricain :

- 1-Mansour Mahamat
- 2-Saleh Moudjirou
- 3-Aliou bi Mamadou
- 4-Yaya Abakar
- 5-Issa Mahamat
- 6-Ibrahim Adam
- 7-Diar Tom
- 8-Hisseine Ibrahim
- 9-Chouaibou Alhadji
- 10-Oumar Moussa
- 11-Dahbo Alhadji
- 12-Moussa Mahamat
- 13-Abdoulaye Mahamat
- 14-Ismail Mahamat
- 15-Ahmat Bello
- 16-Mahamat about
- 17-Amat Mboula
- 18 Abdoulaye Garba (moudalah)
- 19-Hissen Abakar
- 20-Nassour Amine
- 21Ahmet Issa
- 22-Moussa Mberio
- 23-Ahmad Haroune
- 24-Moustapha Mahamat

25-Abdelahi Adam Saleh	51-Alkassim youniss
26-Ismaël Issa	52-Fatouma Yahya
27-Tidjani Hamid	53- Hamadou Nouhou
28-Mahamat Saleh Hassan	54- Abdoulaye Issa
29-Abdoulaye Djibrine	55- Hamadou Issa
30-Youssouf Ahmad Rakis	56- Ibrahim Daoud
31-Mahamat Youssouf	57-Djoubairou Mahamat
32-Ahmad Youssouf Basketteur	58- <i>Adamou Jibo</i>
33-Imam Ali	59- Ibrahim Most Moussa
34-Abdoulaye Adam	60- Salihou Djibrila
35-Abdoul Karim Ali	61- Oumarou Ardo
36-Adam Ali	62-Lt NAM- INGUINA
37-Abaza Ali	63-Lt ENDJIMAGOA Giscard
38-Ahmad Idriss	64-Sergent SAMY Urbain
39-Adam Youssouf	65-Sergent OROFEI Patrice
40-Ahmad Epaïss	66-OROFEI Jean Noël (CCS)
41-Hissen Deya	67 C/c KOSSI Freddy
42-Ndodé Rizigala	68-C/c DOGO Oscar
43-Djamaldine Moussa	69-WAKANAM Joseph Pino
44-Abdel Kader Dodo	70-AZOUNDANGA Maxime
45-Youssouf Ibrahim	71-Ibrahim INYHO
46-Ahmat Abakar	72-Ibrahim Arsène
47-Mahamat Laskony	73-DANIWEL Saitoua DEBANKOA
48-Mahamat Choua	74-YEBELINA BENGUEA Alpha
49-Brahim Defallah	75-BALEDJORO Grâce à Dieu
50-Ahmat Idirss Alkass	76-NGAIBONA Dieudonné

- 77-NGAIBONA Rodrigue
- 78-TOUABONA Passi
- 79-WANFIO Théophile
- 80- GANSEDE Bruno
- 81-REMADEMAM Elvis
- 82-NDO Adolphe
- 83-OUEBOZOUNNA Emmanuel
- 84-BERE Faustin
- 85-BONDO Fulbert
- 86-BROBE Jonathan
- 87-BALAWA Félix
- 88-KOSSI Théophile
- 89-OUMAR ANDALLA
- 90-ALIMANE WADALGONI
- 91-ALKHASSE
- 92-HASSIM HASSAN
- 93-ABDOULAYE ABDOUBOU
- 94-YOUSSOUF MAHAMAT
- 95-Daoud Andy
- 96-Abdoulaye Souleymane Rabo

NB : le chef d'état major général enverrai un document signé en bonne et due forme dès que les revendications sont acceptées.

Fait à Sikekedé le 15 Mars 2023

Annex 6: CPC communique announcing the release of FACA hostages

COALITION DES PATRIOTES
POUR LE CHANGEMENT

COORDINATION GENERALE

COORDINATION MILITAIRE

N° 004 / CPC/CG/CM/



REPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE
Unité – Dignité – Travail

COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE

CE jour ,mardi 04 Avril 2023, la Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement (CPC) par la voix du porte parole militaire du chef d'état major, à travers le présent communiqué, informer l'opinion nationale et internationale de sa décision volontaire et unilatérale de libérer les vingt (20) militaires des forces Armées Centrafricaines (FACA) faits prisonniers depuis le 14 Février 2023 suite aux combats acharnés dans les villages de Sikekedé et Ndah.

Tandis que la Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement (CPC) avait ouvert des négociations, pour la libération de ces militaires, avec le Comité International de la Croix Rouge (CICR) et le gouvernement de M. Touadéra voulait faire passer ces derniers par pertes et profits en refusant toutes négociations mais privilégiant en toute irresponsabilité le langage des armes. Touadéra voulait les voir morts plutôt que vivant afin d'accuser la CPC de crimes et de discréditer son combat. C'est ainsi qu'une colonne de sept (7) véhicules s'étaient rendue dans les villages précités pour une expédition punitive, pillant, rackettant et dépouillant la population de ses biens : bétails, semences, vivres et liquidités. Pire, les avions et hélicoptères des mercenaires de Wagner décollèrent de Bangui et Ndélé pour bombarder régulièrement et aveuglément les villages de Ndah, Ndiffa et Melé. La CPC avait réclamé une enquête internationale sur ces crimes de guerre commis par les mercenaires de Wagner.

Le silence assourdissant du Président Touadéra, ci-devant Chef Suprême des Armées ainsi que celui de son Ministre de la Défense montrent le peu d'intérêt sinon le mépris total que ces derniers ont pour les militaires enrôlés à la va vite pour combattre dans le but de sauver le fauteuil du Président. Une fois envoyés sur le théâtre des opérations, ces militaires FACA sont abandonnés à eux mêmes, sans moyens financiers et logistiques ni suffisamment armés pour faire face à des combattants de la CPC très aguerris. Ce n'est pas non plus le communiqué insipide et laconique du Chef d'Etat Major des Armées qui plaidera en faveur de la libération de ces militaires malgré les appels du pied fait à la Communauté Internationale pour voler au secours du gouvernement.

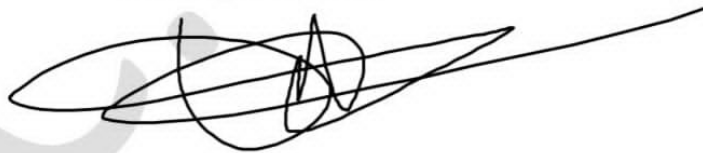
Les récents décrets pris par le Président Touadéra, nommant des officiers supérieurs et des officiers généraux de l'armée dans les départements ministériels comme chargés de mission en matière de défense, montrent sa vision étriquée de l'armée républicaine tout en galvaudant la mission de celle-ci. Où le Président Touadéra veut-il mener notre Armée Nationale ? Veut-il la transformer en une armée mexicaine ?

Compte tenu du refus du Président Touadéra, Chef Suprême des Armées, d'assumer sa fonction de chef militaire en s'impliquant personnellement dans la libération de ces militaires FACA, la CPC a décidé de libérer tout simplement ses frères militaires centrafricains dont elle a pris soin depuis le début de leur captivité en février dernier. En présence du représentant du CICR, la Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement (CPC) remet ses anciens détenus sous leurs responsabilités. La liste de ces derniers se trouve en annexe dudit communiqué.

Elle exhorte les frères FACA en activité à cesser de combattre aux côtés des mercenaires russes et de la rejoindre. Ensemble, nous bouterons du Centrafrique les fossoyeurs de la République et les ennemis de la Paix.

Fait à SIKEDI, le 04 Avril 2023

Le Porte-parole militaire

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mamadou KOURA.

Annex 7: Release of hostages showing Ali Ousta and Mahamat Deya

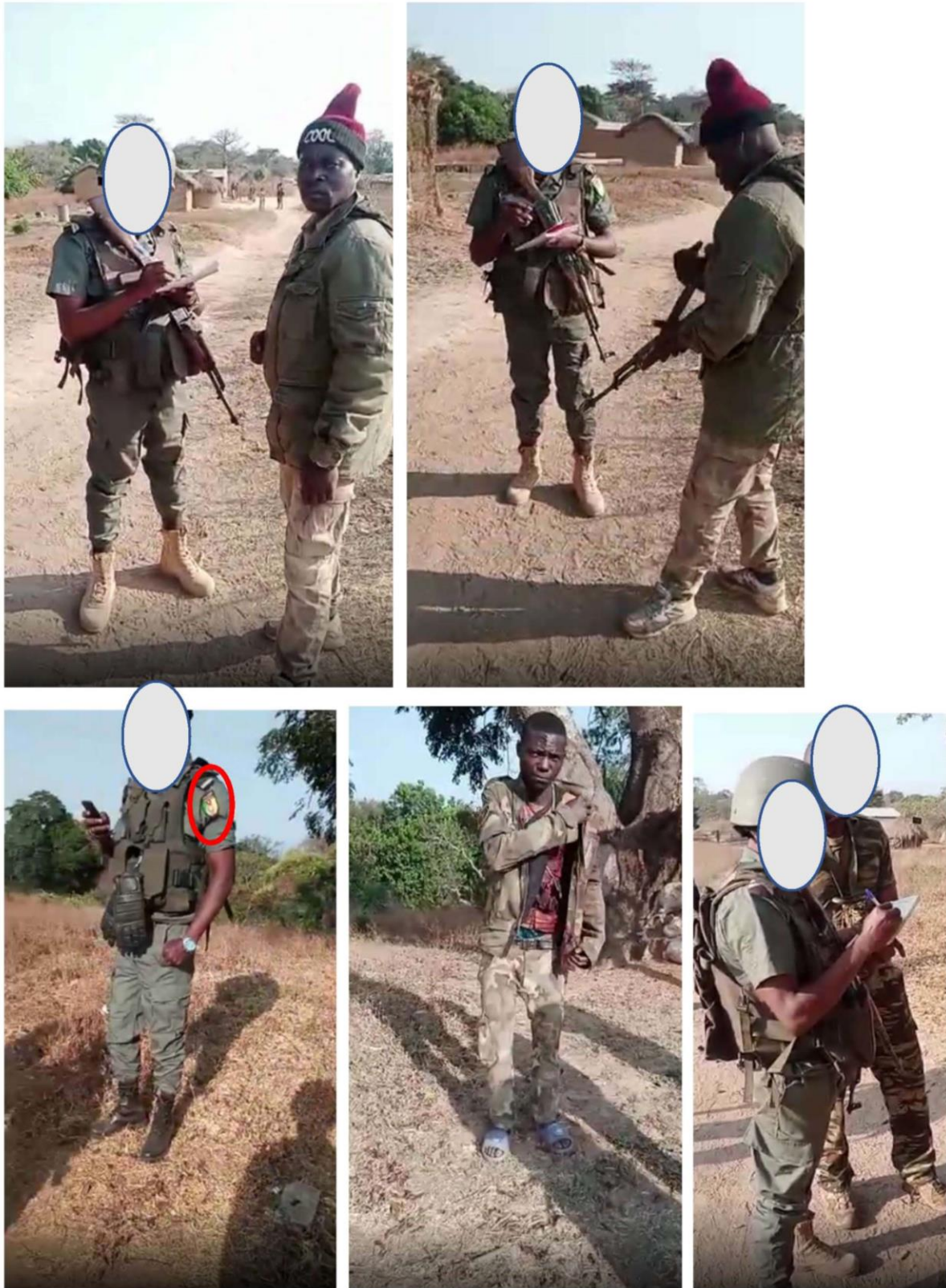


Ali Ousta



Mahamat Deya

Annex 8: Cameroonian soldiers questioning Central African militiamen near Besson



Annex 9: UPC spillover to the Democratic Republic of Congo

One incident was reported to have occurred on 3 October 2022 some 20 kilometres from Niangara (Haut-Uele Province). Fighting occurred between UPC elements accompanying transhumance and the local population following the shooting of one of their animals by a local hunter. One UPC element was reportedly killed with a 12 mm calibre hunting rifle.²²¹ Pro and anti-government factions of UPC, under “General” Hassan Guendero (S/2021/569, para. 41) and a “Colonel” Lichal respectively, blamed each other for entering the DRC and causing the incident.²²²

A year before, at the end of October 2021, there had been another incident, with one UPC Colonel losing a leg after exchanging fire with the DRC armed forces. He was admitted to a hospital in Buta.²²³



UPC colonel admitted to hospital in Buta (DRC)

²²¹ Communication from UPC representatives received on 4 October 2022; confidential civil society reports, 4 and 7 October 2022.

²²² Communication from UPC representatives received on 4 October 2022.

²²³ Ibid.

Annex 10: UPC proliferation in southeastern CAR giving rise to a new Zande ethnic militia

The period under review was strongly marked by the emergence of a self-defence group in the sub-prefectures of Bambouti and Obo, in the Haut-Mbomou prefecture: AZANDE ANI KPI GBE. It is composed primarily of elements of the Zande ethnic group, which is scattered throughout the sub-region, in Southern Sudan, Uganda, the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the southeast of the Central African Republic (Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou prefectures).

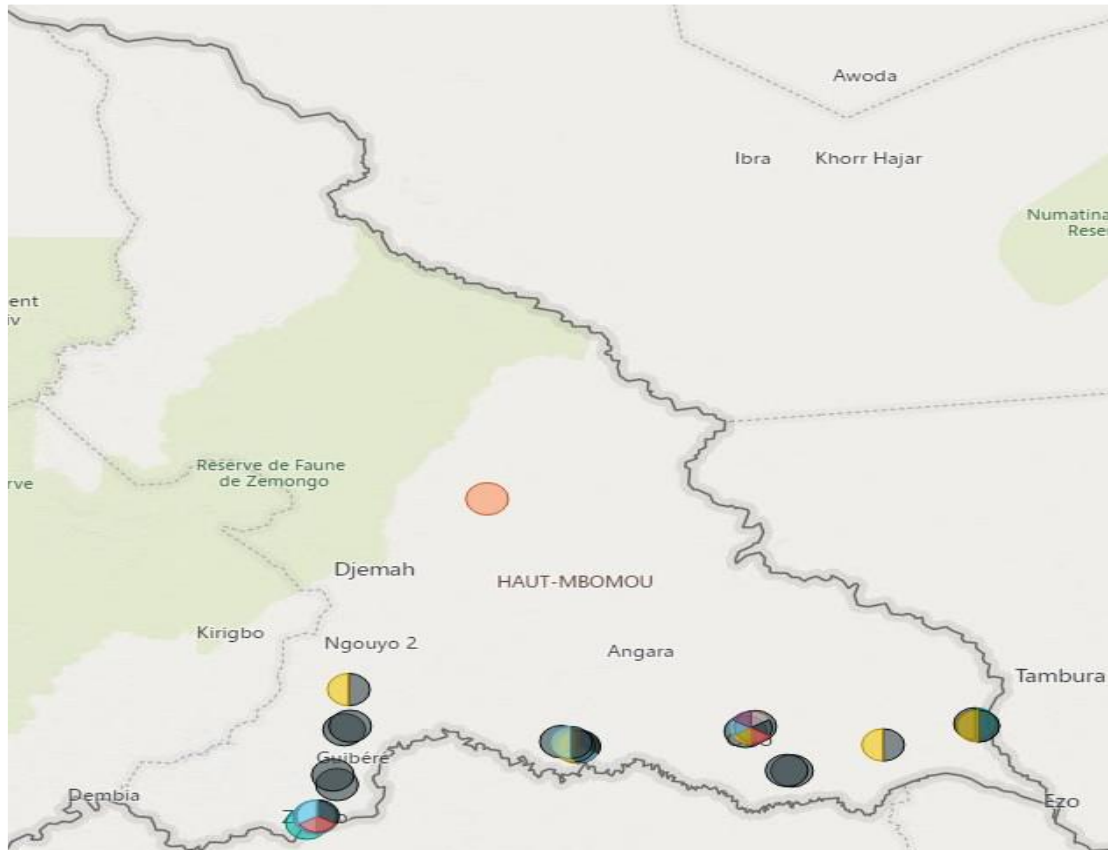


Figure 1: Security incidents in Haut-Mbomou, January-March 2023

a) Obo, chief town of the prefecture:

According to various sources, these individuals arrived in the area around 5 February. They kidnapped a team of Fulani herders (two women and four men) going from Bambouti to Mboki on 6 February. The two women were released on Sunday, 12 February while the four men remain unaccounted for. The abduction of these Fulani created tension between the Muslim Fulani community and the indigenous people in the prefecture, particularly in Bambouti and Zemio. Beginning on 3 March, the group of armed individuals carried out coordinated abductions at night in the outlying neighbourhoods of Ngouli and Niokora in the town of Obo, during which 12 youths, including six women, two of whom were minors, were abducted and forcibly recruited, and then released under circumstances that have not yet been clarified, around 7 March.

On 10 March, these armed individuals published an information note in which they indicated that they were a self-defence group called AZANDE ANI KPI GBE based in Gbazibiri, located 20 km southeast of Obo on the Obo-Bambouti axis. According to them, their objective was to dislodge the UPC fighters from Haut-Mbomou and to demand the immediate resignation of the prefect²²⁴, whom they accused of colluding with the UPC. Two days later, seven kilometres north of Obo, on the Obo-Djema road, this self-defence group attacked a group of Fulani herders and killed two of them. Their bodies were recovered on 13 March and buried in Obo. This incident provoked fear among the Muslim population, who planned to leave Obo and move to Mboki or Zemio.

On 15 March, five kilometres north of Obo on the Obo-Djema road, the AZANDE ANI KPI GBE militia attacked a Fulani herders' camp consisting of two men, three women, and ten children, including five boys and five girls. One of the men was found shot and had his throat slit on 18 March, while the other is still missing. The attackers also looted the herders' livestock. On 27 March, eight kilometres from Obo on the Obo-Mboki road, four civilians, including three boys and a 47-year-old woman, were attacked by this vigilante group before being released. Their two motorcycles were confiscated.

On 15 March in Bangui, the five deputies from Haut Mbomou (Obo 1 and 2 Bambouti, Zemio, and Djema) issued a statement denouncing what they perceived to be allegations made by the prefect of Haut Mbomou via the media, accusing them of not only fomenting the recent security incidents in Haut Mbomou but also of being behind the creation of the new self-defence group. In addition, they stated that the prefect had always been accused by the population of colluding with UPC elements for selfish, personal interests. On the same day, the acting prefect in Obo denounced the vigilante group and its agenda, which risks plunging the entire prefecture into chaos. He also pointed to the complicity of neighbourhood and village leaders, following their apparent reluctance to share information about the forced and voluntary enrolment of youth into the militia.

b) Bambouti:

On 25 January, elements of the Ali Darassa faction of the UPC, led locally by Ahmat Petit, kidnapped the sister of the Mayor of Bambouti, accusing her of having transferred funds in the amount of approximately \$USD 5,800 to South Sudan to recruit South Sudanese mercenaries to attack the UPC base in Bambouti. The victim was released on 1 February for a ransom of FCFA 500,000. On 15 March, a group of South Sudanese youths, led by Emanuel Gangura Korobong, launched a coordinated attack with the AZANDE ANI KPI GBE self-defence group against UPC fighters in Bambouti. Clashes began shortly before 5:30 a.m. and continued until 9 a.m. According to local sources fighting continued in the bush when UPC/CPC fighters retreated toward Mboki. The self-defence group controls the town of Bambouti and warns that operations will continue in Mboki in the coming weeks. These clashes are believed to have displaced people to localities on the border with South Sudan, as the lack of communications means that the outcome of these clashes remains unknown.

²²⁴ See <https://www.radiodekeluka.org/actualites/securite/40143-centrafrique-une-milice-locale-exige-la-demission-du-prefet-du-haut-mbomou.html>

c) Zemio:

Two unidentified individuals on a motorcycle armed with an AK47 rifle committed several acts of robbery and theft on the Zemio-Rafai road. On 6 February, these individuals arrested shopkeepers in the village of Bema (20 km west of Zemio) and the passengers of another truck on 10 February in the village of Tabane (25 km west of Zemio). On 23 February, one of the two armed individuals voluntarily surrendered to local authorities in Zemio, while his accomplice was apprehended by the people of Tabane-1 (20 km west of Zemio) on 12 March. He is currently in the hands of former UPC combatants.

On 18 March, local sources reported that 26 fighters from the pro-government wing of the UPC arrived and established a checkpoint at Banagui (65 km north of Zemio) on the Zemio-Djemah axis. According to the same sources, these fighters collected illegal taxes from road users, including the sum of FCFA 7,000 extorted from motorcycles rented by the Zemio hospital to transport medicines to Djemah.

d) M'boki:

On 25 January, in Mboki, (75 km west of OBO), the pro-Government wing of UPC, under the leadership of Hassane Bouba, and represented locally by Hassan Guenderou, took control of the town.²²⁵ The movement of armed elements under the leadership of Ahmat Petit from Bambouti and the bush continued until 31 January. On 9 February, the group seized two trucks belonging to the NGO AIRD, and kidnapped a UNHCR and UNDP contractor, demanding the payment of FCFA 120,000 before they were released.

On 28 March, UPC/CPC fighters of Ahmat Petit, who had left Bambouti on 23 March following their defeat against the AZANDE ANI KPI GBE militia, arrived in Mboki. They subsequently burned three huts belonging to the Mayor, her Deputy, and the Secretary General of the Mayor. This action could be considered a show of force. However, the ability of Ahmat Petit's UPC to expand its activities in M'boki is likely to remain limited given the presence of Hassan Bouba's pro-government UPC faction. Although this faction has not yet reacted to the arrival of Bambouti's UPC, the presence of two rival armed groups could lead to increased crime and tension in the short term, with devastating consequences for civilians.

²²⁵ Correspondence with confidential sources in Obo, 30 March 2023. In Bangui, Government sources confirmed this information, 31 March 2023.

Annex 11: 31 May 2021 communique from the CAR Minister of foreign affairs

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE DU
MINISTRE DES AFFAIRES
ETRANGERES ET DES
CENTRAFRICAINS DE L'ETRANGER

Le Gouvernement centrafricain voudrait informer l'opinion nationale et internationale d'un accrochage survenu le dimanche 30 Mai 2021 à la frontière centrafricano-tchadienne, très exactement à Mbang.

Les Forces Armées centrafricaines (FACAs) ont été attaquées, aux environs de 10 heures, par des rebelles armées de la Coalition Pour le Changement dans la localité de Mbang. Face à la riposte cinglante des FACAs à la limite de 400 mètres de la frontière menant en République du Tchad, les assaillants ont pris la fuite en direction de la République du Tchad entraînant une vive réaction des Forces Armées Tchadiennes.

La cacophonie orchestrée par les rebelles dont la plupart étaient armés et en tenue civile, a généré un malheureux malentendu entre les forces loyalistes Centrafricaines et Tchadiennes, entraînant des pertes humaines dans les deux camps.

Les Autorités Centrafricaines informées ont aussitôt initié des démarches de contact auprès des Autorités Tchadiennes à travers Madame le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères et des Centrafricains de l'Etranger auprès de son homologue tchadien.

Dans l'attente du contact sollicité par la partie centrafricaine, le Gouvernement centrafricain voudrait présenter au Gouvernement tchadien toute sa compassion face aux pertes humaines subies et saisir l'occasion pour réitérer sa détermination à travailler de concorde afin de briser les tentatives des ennemis de la paix visant à créer un climat de tension entre les deux Autorités et Peuples.

Le Gouvernement centrafricain appelle à la recherche d'une solution pacifique de ce tragique événement pour ne point donner raison à nos ennemis communs. A cet effet, le Gouvernement informe que les Autorités tchadiennes ont été saisies ce jour par l'intermédiaire de l'Ambassade centrafricaine à Ndjaména afin de la mise en place d'une mission d'enquête conjointe.

Face aux ennemis de la Paix, les liens de fraternité entre République Centrafricaine et la République du Tchad resteront solide et vecteur de paix.

Bangui le
Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères
et des Centrafricains de l'Etranger
Julie BAPO TEMON



Annex 12: 30 May 2021 communique from the Chadian Minister of foreign affairs

RÉPUBLIQUE DU TCHAD
*Ministère des Affaires Étrangères,
de l'Intégration Africaine et des
Tchadiens de l'Étranger*



جمهورية تشاد
وزارة لشؤون الخارجية والتكامل
الأفريقي والتشاديين بالخارج

Unité - Travail - Progrès
وحدة - عمل - تقدم

COMMUNIQUE DU MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

Le Gouvernement de la République du Tchad tient à informer l'opinion nationale et internationale que les forces armées centrafricaines (FACA), ont attaqué, ce dimanche 30 Mai 2021, à 05 heures du matin, le poste avancé de Sourou, en territoire tchadien, non loin de la localité de MBERÉ, et à proximité de la frontière centrafricaine. Ce poste était tenu par douze (12) éléments détachés de forces de défense et de sécurité tchadiennes.

Les assaillants lourdement armés ont tué un (01) soldat tchadien, en ont blessé 5, et cinq (05) autres ont été enlevés pour être ensuite exécutés à Mbang du côté centrafricain. Le Directeur Général de la Gendarmerie centrafricaine a saisi l'Ambassade du Tchad à Bangui pour que les autorités tchadiennes récupèrent auprès du chef de village de Mbang les dépouilles de cinq (05) soldats tchadiens faits prisonniers et exécutés par l'armée centrafricaine. Ce crime de guerre d'une gravité extrême et cette attaque meurtrière préméditée, planifiée et opérée à l'intérieur du Tchad, dont seul le gouvernement centrafricain en connaît les raisons, ne sauraient restés impunis.

Le Tchad tient le gouvernement centrafricain entièrement responsable des conséquences de cette agression caractérisée que rien ne justifie au moment où les deux pays cherchent à mutualiser leurs efforts pour relever les défis sécuritaires communs et à renforcer la coopération bilatérale comme l'atteste la tenue à N'Djamena, au mois de décembre 2019, de la dernière Commission mixte Tchad-RCA. Le Tchad prend à témoin la communauté internationale, notamment la MINUSCA, l'Union Africaine et la CEEAC, de cette grave agression dont il est la cible.

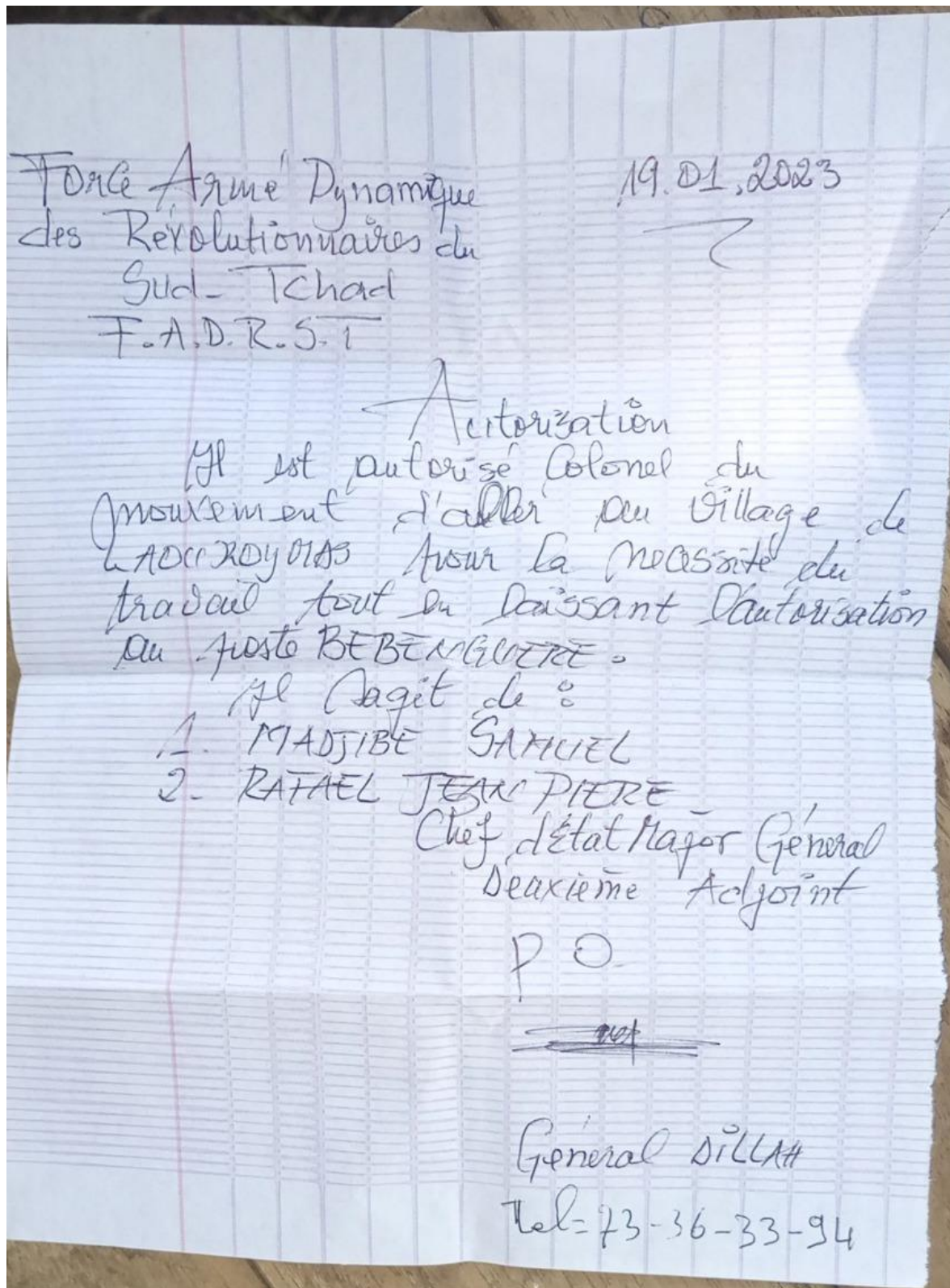
Fait à N'Djamena, le 30 Mai 2021

Le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, de l'Intégration
Africaine et des Tchadiens de l'Étranger



L'AMB. CHERIF MAHAMAT ZENE

Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, de l'Intégration Africaine, et des Tchadiens de l'Étranger

Annex 13: Mission order for FADRST elements to move to a village via its post in Bebenguere

Annex 14: Photograph of SIRIRI coalition forces, encircling Abdel Shakour



L'ASSEMBLEE PLENIERE DU HAUT CONSEIL
DE LA COMMUNICATION ENTENDUE

DECIDE

Article 1^{er} : En application des dispositions de l'article 169 de la Loi N° 20.027 du 21 décembre 2020, relative à la liberté de la communication en République centrafricaine, un avertissement est infligé à la « **Radio Lengo Songo** ».

Motif :

- Récidive dans la diffusion de messages incitant à la haine et à la violence.

Article 2 : Toute récidive dans le non-respect des règles d'éthique et de la déontologie du journalisme par la **Radio Lengo Songo**, exposera celle-ci à d'autres sanctions plus sévères prévues par les textes en vigueur.

Article 3 : La présente décision qui prend effet à compter de la date de sa signature, sera publiée au Journal Officiel.

Bangui, le 07 MARS 2022



Annex 16: Toyota Land Cruiser in the custody of MINUSCA, Birao from January 2021-2 January 2023 BIRAO

MAKE: TOYOTA LAND CRUISER
MODEL: AG V8 (ARMOURED)
COLOR: BLACK
TYPE: STATION WAGON LEFT HAND DRIVE
MODEL NO: URJ202L-GNTVKW
YEAR OF MAKE: 2016



Annex 17: 2 January 2023 discharge note by the Prefect of the Vakaga Prefecture


DECHARGE

Je soussigné L/Colonel Léonard MBELE reconnais avoir récupéré le véhicule LAND Cruiser V8 de couleur noire basé à la MINUSCA depuis plus de deux ans sur instruction du Ministre de l'Administration du Territoire Monsieur YAPANDE pour nécessité de service ce jour 02/01/2023 pour me

La présente décharge a été établie pour servir et valoir ce que de droit.

Fait à Birao le 02/01/2023

Le Prefet



L/c Léonard MBELE

MAKE: TOYOTA LANDCRUISER

MODEL: AE 18 (ARMURED)

VIN NO: JTMHX02J909115T57

COLOUR: BLACK

TYPE: STATION WAGON

MODEL NO: 212J2026-GNTVKW

YEAR OF MAKE 2016

Fait le 02/01/2023.

Le Prefet


Léonard MBELE

Annex 18: Belarussian registration certificate for the Ilyushin IL-76TD cargo aircraft (MSN: 83485561) as EW-510TH, currently registered in the CAR as TL-KMZ

		Регистрационный номер Register № 510	
РЕСПУБЛИКА БЕЛАРУСЬ REPUBLIC OF BELARUS Министерство транспорта и коммуникаций Департамент по авиации Ministry of transport and communications Department of aviation РЕГИСТРАЦИОННОЕ УДОСТОВЕРЕНИЕ CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION			
1. Национальный и регистрационный знаки Nationality and registration marks EW-510TH		2. Изготовитель и обозначение воздушного судна изготовителем Manufacturer and manufacturer's designation of aircraft ТАПО Ил-76ТД ТАРА И-76ТД	
		3. Серийный номер Serial number (6501) 0083485561 3а. Дата изготовления Manufacture date 31.05.1988	
4. Владелец Name of owner	ООО «Пилигрим» "Pilgrim" LLC	4а. Эксплуатант Operator Airlines	Авиакомпания Трансавиаэкспорт Transaviaexport Airlines
5. Адрес владельца Address of owner	Российская Федерация, г. Воронеж Voronezh, Russian	5а. Адрес эксплуатанта Address of operator	Республика Беларусь, г. Минск Republic of Belarus, Minsk
6. Настоящим удостоверяется, что вышеупомянутое воздушное судно занесено в Государственный реестр гражданских воздушных судов Республики Беларусь в соответствии с Конвенцией о международной гражданской авиации от 7 декабря 1944 г. и Воздушным кодексом Республики Беларусь. It is hereby certified that the above described aircraft has been duly entered on the State register of civil aircraft of the Republic of Belarus in accordance with the Convention on International Civil Aviation dated December 7, 1944 and with the Air code of the Republic of Belarus.			
Дата выдачи Date of issue	22.02.2018	Подпись Signature	В.Б.Костин V. Kostin Директор Director

Annex 19: Ilyushin IL-76TD cargo aircraft registered in the CAR as TL-LIZ at Bangui M'poko International Airport on 7 February 2023.



Annex 20: Cessna 182T at Bangui M'poko International Airport on 12 March 2023.



Annex 21: Chekan-type vehicles in Ndassima in the main Ndassima processing compound from satellite imagery in March 2022, (6°11'1.87"N, 20°42'36.68"E)



Annex 22: “Chekan” type vehicles passing through Birao from Sudan on their way to Ndassima on 30 March 2021



Annex 23: Drone image of the compound formerly belonging to Mahamat Al-Khatim with a “Chekan” type vehicle parked inside



Annex 24: Images of recovered home-built drone allegedly used in an attack on the Russian instructors' base in Ndele on 21 January 2023, and its alleged impact





Annex 25: 3 February 2023 CAR Minister of Defence circular notice suspending non-state drone use

MINISTÈRE DE LA DÉFENSE NATIONALE
 ET DE LA RECONSTRUCTION DE L'ARMÉE

 DIRECTION DE C A B I N E T

 SECRETARIAT PARTICULIER

 N° D10 /MDNRA/DIRCAB/SP

REPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE
 Unité - Dignité - Travail


 Bangui le, 03 FEV 2023

NOTE CIRCULAIRE

Objet : Suspension des vols de drones dans l'espace aérien centrafricain

A travers l'autorisation de survol et d'atterrissage, il s'agit avant tout de redonner à l'Etat la capacité de rétablir son autorité sur l'ensemble de l'espace aérien de notre territoire. Si depuis plusieurs années, le Ministère de la Défense Nationale et de la Reconstruction de l'Armée délivrait promptement des autorisations pour le survol et atterrissage des aéronefs et des drones, il se trouve que depuis quelques mois, le contexte sécuritaire à évoluer.

Aussi faudrait-il rappeler que les Forces négatives en violation de notre territoire, ont porté atteinte à nos installations et équipements et tout récemment à Ndélé où la position de nos unités a été visée par des drones, occasionnant d'énormes dégâts matériels.

Par conséquent les vols de drones, à l'exception de ceux des Forces de Défense et de Sécurité (FDS), sont suspendus jusqu'à nouvel ordre. Toute autre demande d'autorisation quelque soit la nature, devra revêtir l'accord préalable du Ministre de la Défense Nationale avant le traitement.

Pour ce faire, je voudrais appeler l'attention de l'Autorité Nationale de l'Aviation Civile sur la délicatesse de la situation de notre pays en cette période de guerre afin que des dispositions soient prises pour faire respecter la teneur de cette correspondance.

DESTINATAIRES :

- PR/CECSA « ATCR »
- PM/CG « INFO »
- MISP
- MAEFCE
- MTAC
- DGANAC
- ASECNA
- CEMA
- DGGN
- DGPC
- CD'AA


 Ministre de la Défense Nationale
 et de la Reconstruction de l'Armée


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Annex 26: Update on explosive ordinances in western CAR

In addition to a spree of attacks against FACA and Russian instructors bases in westerns CAR, armed groups, presumably including 3R, MPC and anti-balaka, have intensified their use of explosive devices on roads during the months of February and March to halt the progression of these forces.²²⁶ The Panel recorded the following incidents:

- On 6 February, two FACA elements and their moto taxi driver hit an explosive device and were all killed in Nzakoundou village 11 km southeast of Ngaoundaye (Ouham-Pende prefecture)
- On 6 February, some oxen were killed by an explosion near Bowara village 40 km southeast of Nzakoundou).
- On 7 February, a civilian truck ran over an explosive device and was damaged near Djojom village 37 km southwest of Paoua, on the Pougol Mbali axis.
- On 9 February, another commercial truck hit an explosive device and was damaged three km west of Pougol village 30 km West of Paoua while an unidentified number of civilians were injured²²⁷.
- On 10 February, Father Norberto Pozzi and French confrere and four central African helper hits a land mine 22 km from Bouzoum (see annex 1).²²⁸
- On 6 March near Dai village (21 km W of Bouar), three minors, walking in the bush, hit an explosive device which exploded.
- On 6 March three shepherds were injured by an explosive device near Yenga while grazing their cattle around Dai village (20km west of Bouar).
- On 7 March, three Russian instructors discovered and removed three land mines from a location close to Doko village along the Bocaranga-Bezere-Mann road.²²⁹
- On 10 April, in Bilangare ILAGARE village (61 km SW of PAOUA), a detonation of an Explosive Ordnance (EO) killed four civilians (reportedly all minors) and injured several others.²³⁰

The frequency of the presence of explosives on the main axes leading to Chad's and the Cameroonian border is increasing. Armed groups' intention is to create a high-risk zone for FACA and Russian instructors while at the same time also providing a retreat to the adjacent borders, which are relatively secure for the armed groups. Supply convoys FACA and RI are the main targets for ambushes in areas of low visibility and forest, as well as in their axes of progression.

Besides the use of conventional grenades, landmines, and other explosive devices there is persistent information that armed groups are now experimenting with the construction and planting of improvised explosive devices IEDs (See S/2023/87, Par 35).

²²⁶ Confidential report, 20 January 2023.

²²⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Central_African_Republic_Civil_War#cite_note-kow-633

²²⁸ <http://www.fides.org/en/news/73405->

[AFRICA CENTRAL AFRICA The condition of Father Norberto Pozzi injured in a mine explosion](AFRICA_CENTRAL_AFRICA_The_condition_of_Father_Norberto_Pozzi_injured_in_a_mine_explosion)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Central_African_Republic_Civil_War#cite_note-639

²²⁹ Confidential report, 3 September 2023.

²³⁰ Confidential report, 12 April 2023

Annex 27: Update on Bossangoa airdropped bomb incident

In follow-up to its initial analysis on the Bossangoa bombing incident during the night of 27 to 28 November 2022 (S/2023/87, paras 31-33), the Panel analyzed additional photos and interviewed experts present at the site after the incident. From this, the following observations are made:

- The six IEDs were dropped by a military “parachute drop” (photo 1) from an unidentified aircraft at night with few or no visible landmarks. The IEDs could not be pre-positioned and deployed from the ground due to technical constraints, therefore they were dropped by air.
- The linear axis followed, and the area of the strikes (photo 2) indicated that the Russian instructors’ camp was most likely the target of the attack. The detonation of five of the six IEDs outside the target camp (photo 3) was most likely caused by an early (short) release sequence. A delay of a few seconds in release or a few thousandths of a degree shift in the aircraft’s direction would have made the IEDs hit civilian buildings in Bossangoa, potentially causing catastrophic harm to the population.
- At least four IEDs had two triggering systems: an immediate impact triggering system and a proximity triggering system. The six impact zones are lined on a South-North axis, with the same distance between craters, implying an equally regular rate. Two types of charges were observed: two with just an explosive charge and four with an explosive charge in combination with significant fragmentation.
- The nature of the charge was most likely different for these two types: homemade or mining-type explosive for impact charges and military type-high explosive for fragmentation charges.
- Most of the fragmentation shrapnel collected (photo 4) was made of 8 mm reinforcing bar meticulously cut at 3 cm in an industrial manner, probably with a press. Metallic remains of a blue-coloured canister (photo 5) stuck to the shrapnel, point to a container (of the blue diesel oil drum type) being used to contain the shrapnel.
- Collection of release strap fragments from the impact zone and the photos of the parachute extractors indicate that the devices were braked/stabilized by parachutes designed to ensure that they exploded when they reached the ground vertically.
- The preparation of the devices was meticulous and sophisticated, requiring significant material resources and technical skills.

To date, no party has claimed the air attack, and none of the testimonies collected has made it possible to identify the aircraft and assume its origin and destination, let alone indicate possible perpetrators. Neither does the nature of the IED components, allow any inference about the possible perpetrators of the attack. However, it should be emphasized that the preparation and execution of this attack required the use of significant means and specialized know-how, comparable to those of technically advanced military or paramilitary groups. It does not appear likely that any of the armed groups currently operating in CAR possess such means and know-how.

Photo1



Photo2

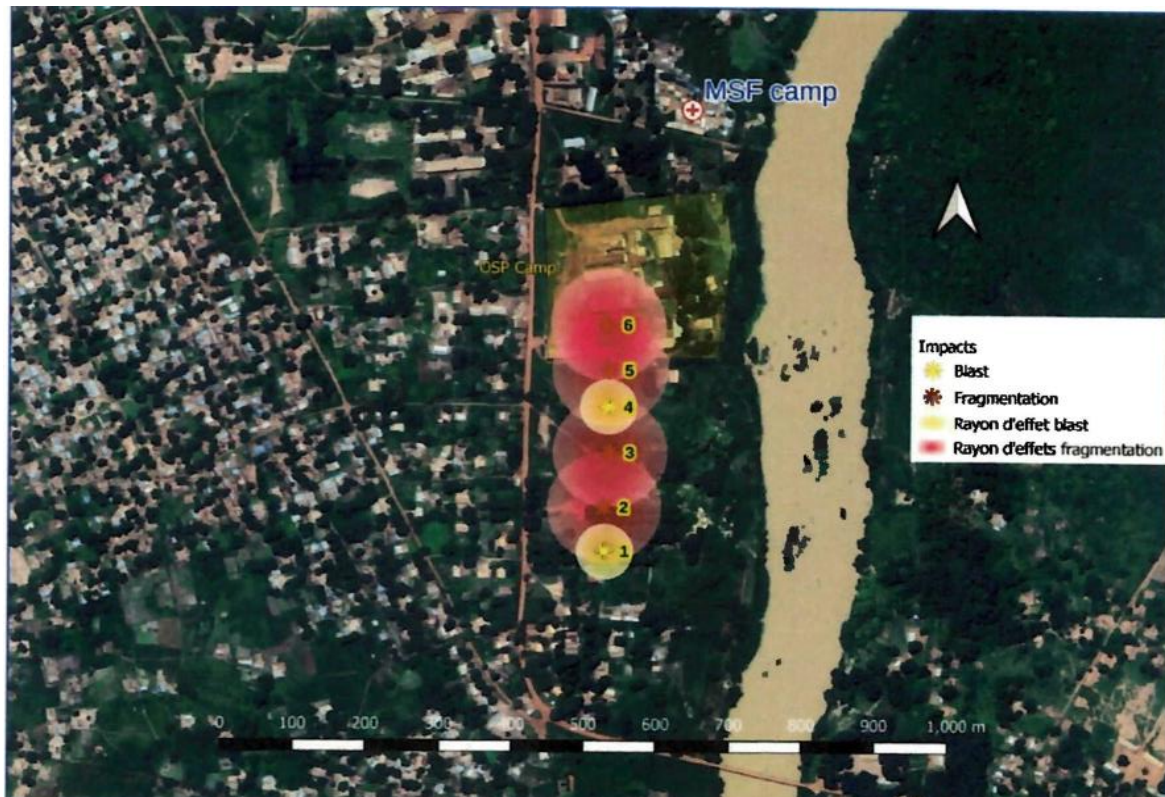


Photo3



Photo4



Photo 5



Annex 28: Police discharge note for seized gold, cash and vehicle and photographs thereof

Décharge

Nous soussigné capitaine KPARAMBETI, Gentian Bonifac, Commandant la Section de Recherches et d'investigations, officier de Police judiciaire Agissant en cette qualité, certifie avoir procédé ce jour 21 Février à une saisie incidente des objets suivants:

- Une somme de LG. 941000F (deux cents quatre vingt onze millions et neuf cents quarante un mil F3 CFA)-
- 58 lingots d'or de différents taille.
- Une voiture de marque TOYOTA STARLET couleur tricolore BA 68 AJT

NB: ces objets sont retrouvés sur les nommés - ISMAILA-ABAMOU et ABDEL-VAHAB, Mahamat; tous Sujets peulhs - Arabes.

- Deux téléphones Android de marque Samsung et infinix + deux téléphones fixes de marque Techno- et SAMSUNG.

A Bangui, le 21-02-2023.



Annex 29: 13 September 2021 letter from the Minister of Defence to Badica

MINISTÈRE DE LA DÉFENSE NATIONALE
ET DE LA RECONSTRUCTION DE L'ARMÉE

DIRECTION DE CABINET

SECRETARIAT PARTICULIER

N° 359 /MDNRA/DIRCAB/SP

REPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE
Unité - Dignité - Travail

Bangui le, 13 SEPT 2021

Au
Directeur Général du bureau d'Achat de Diamant
Centrafricain

-BANGUI-

Objet: Accusé de réception


Références : Corr. n° 681/PM/DIRCAB.21 du 19 Août 2021

Monsieur le Directeur Général,

Par la lettre sus référencée, vous aviez saisi le Gouvernement Centrafricain aux fins de trouver des solutions à l'occupation illégale de vos locaux à Bria par les partenaires militaires de la Fédération de Russie.

A cet effet, voudrais-je vous informer que des dispositions sont entrain d'être prises en vue de les reloger. Par ailleurs, vous demande d'observer une patience patriotique jusqu'au dénouement de ce processus.

Comptant sur votre bonne compréhension, je vous prie de recevoir, Monsieur le Directeur Général, l'expression de ma parfaite considération.


Rameaux-Claude BIREAU

Rameaux-Claude BIREAU

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Annex 31: Narrative of 44-year-old Sara male civilian held hostage near Am Dafok from 20-24 October 2022 by armed Arab Misseriya elements led by Abou Kass

On 20 October 2022, a group of armed Arab Misseriya took 11 male civilians from the Sara ethnic group hostage near Am-Dafok, Vagaka prefecture, on the border between CAR and Sudan (see S/2023/87, annex 24). The hostage taking, it transpired, was an act of retaliation for an incident in Matala village 12 km east of Birao, where on 16 October 2022, two armed Misseriya driving into Matala on a stolen motorbike had been ambushed by an armed village self-defence group. In an exchange of fire one Misseriya had been shot and killed, while the other had been injured by a bullet wound near the ankle. The villagers brought the injured Misseriya to Birao, where he was detained at the Gendarmerie.

Armed Misseriya elements threatened to execute the Sara hostages unless their comrade in Birao was released. Through traditional community mechanisms, the group also demanded “diya” compensation payment for the man killed (*idem*).

On 8 February, in Am Dafok, the Panel met with one of the 11 men (born 1978) held hostage. He recalled that on 20 October 2022 at around 15h, he was with his 11 children (between 2 and 20 years old) tending to a millet field at Goba, a couple of kilometres west of Am Dafok town on the Am Dafok-Dangore axis, when 7 motorcycles with approximately 15 armed men in military uniform with their faces covered in turbans drove up to him. He did not recognize any of them. They started beating him with the butts of their guns, and he fell on the ground. His children who were working at the other end of the field, saw what was happening and ran back to Am Dafok to alert family members.

Two of the armed men tied his hands behind his back, while the others stood pointing their guns at him. They men discussed between themselves in Arabic whether or not to kill him (he speaks fluent Arabic), until one insisted that as the incident [the killing of their comrade] had happened at Matala, they should not kill him.

He was walked into the bush where they joined up with another group of armed men and more hostages. He could not recall if all the other 10, or a smaller group. Night fell and they walked north for about five hours, the hostages still with their hands tied. They reached a place called Dihin, a water hole and a camp site of the armed group. He estimated that there were about 40 armed elements in the camp.

The hostages were instructed to lay down directly on the ground within earshot of where the kidnappers sat. The kidnappers kept lamenting the loss of their comrade who had been killed in Matala, and whom they referred to as “Ali”. Every now and then, one of the kidnappers would walk over to check on the hostages. They were given water to drink, but nothing to eat. When they asked, they were given permission to go with a guard to relieve themselves, a bit away from the others. It was difficult and messy, as their hands remained tied behind their back, which was very painful.

The kidnappers mostly kept their faces covered. The hostages were not blindfolded and could speak Sara amongst themselves. The hostages all understood Arabic and could follow the daily discussions, sometimes quarrels, between the kidnappers about whether or not to kill the hostages.

The kidnappers told the hostages they were waiting for the outcome of ongoing negotiations between Misseriya and Sara community leaders about the payment of diya for their killed comrade.

There were many motorcycles in the camp, and every day, some of the group members would leave the camp and others would arrive. As he understood it, they were travelling back and forth from Umm Dukhun (a locality in Central Darfur, on the tri-border area between Chad, Sudan and CAR) to meet people and to bring supplies.

On the fourth day, 24 October, the armed group leader, Abou Kass, arrived at the Dihin camp in a 4x4 single cabin white Land Criser, mounted with a machine gun. He understood that Abou Kass had come from Nyala. Abou Kass told the hostages that the diya had been agreed, and that they would be released. From now on, Abou Kass, had said, he would have no problem with them [the hostages]. The matter was settled.

Later that day, members of the Sara “crisis and mediation committee”, which for the past days had negotiated the diya payment with Misseriya representatives, arrived at Dihin to pay “sacrifice money”. Sacrifice money, he explained, was an instalment to confirm that a community (in this case the Sara community) had agreed to pay the full diya. The sacrifice money consisted of: a bullock, 1 sac of millet (100 kg), 1 sac of onions, and 20 litres of vegetable oil.

The hostages were very weak. They had hardly eaten for four days and their arms were numb and aching. Abou Kass drove them back to Am Dafok in his pick-up.

After being released, his two wives and children were relieved, but he was “not feeling good at all”. In captivity he had been beaten, and he had lost most of the sensation in hands and arms from being tied up. He was not able to work in the fields like before. His part of the total diya, was a one-off payment equivalent of 25,000 FCFA (\$USD 42). He paid his share in mid-January, by selling one and a half sac of millet (total 150 kg) at the Um Dafuq market on the Sudanese side. It was the equivalent, he estimated, of one month’s worth of staple food for his family.

Comment: The Panel was not able to establish the exact total diya amount that the Sara community were obliged to pay to the Misseriya to save the lives of their community members. Local sources had cited 20 million FCFA (\$USD 32,000) (see S/2023/87, annex 24). In households with more than one adult male, each one of them are expected to contribute to the diya. If each share was 25,000 FCFA, then it would indicate that 762 individuals contributed to the total payment.

The Chef de group in Am Dafok, Mr. Celestin Tamia, who translated for the Panel in the exchange with the released hostage, headed the Sara “crisis and mediation committee” that negotiated with the Misseriya community explained the following: instead of FCFA, the currency often used in Am Dafok is the Sudanese pound, which people still refer to as “Sudanese dinars” (the so-called second Sudanese pounds replaced Sudanese dinars in 2007). The exchange rate between FCFA and Sudanese pounds is almost one to one. Payment in kind is as common as payment in cash, and as prices for goods, crops and animals fluctuate, it can, as in this case, be difficult to establish the exact monetary value of the diya agreed between the Misseriya and the Sara. Mr. Tamia explained

that there were still some months left before all the families had paid their share to reach the total amount.

Annex 32: Photographs from Sikikédé and Mahamat Salleh and some of his group members, by Véronique de Viguerie, Paris Match, 14-19 January 2023



Mahamat Salleh in the middle (wearing a cap) with his guards, Sikikédé 19 January 2023.



Mahamat Salleh (seated, right) in his camp site, Sikikédé, 15 January, 2023.



Mahamat Salleh, Sikikédé, 14 January 2023.

Annex 33: PRNC Communiqué, 7 October 2022, with a list of individuals appointed to positions of responsibility at a PRNC general assembly held on 6 and 7 October 2022, Dangadere, Vagaka prefecture. Signed by the secretary of session and spokesperson, Namayeba Ahmed.



PRNC
Parti pour le Rassemblement de la Nation Centrafricaine

PARTI POUR LE RASSEMBLEMENT DE LA NATION CENTRAFRICAINE P. R. N. C

COMMUNIQUE

Pour une information concernant l'Opinion Nationale et Internationale du résultat final de la deuxième Assemblée Générale du PRNC qui s'est tenue du 6 au 7 Octobre 2022 à DANGADERE dans la Vakaga.

Les Officiers et sous-officiers réunis ont débattu très largement sur la situation politique nationale et la sécurité Internationale. Nous sommes centrafricains opposants politiques au gouvernement et nous voulons la paix dans notre pays la RCA. Il est clair que notre Président actuel Touadéra installe une dictature avec ses mauvais choix et continue de maintenir un désordre total dans le pays avec les russes de Wagner qui commettent des crimes impunément. Nous sommes contre un changement de notre constitution et Touadéra doit partir pour que la sécurité triomphe enfin et que la RCA puisse prospérer.


La paix nationale, régionale et celle de notre sous-région est menacée par Wagner et le Rwanda. La Russie qui s'est installée en Afrique de l'Ouest et plus particulièrement en RCA dont le respect et les valeurs traditionnelles et culturelles sont bafouées où on constate chaque jour une dégradation et la décadence de notre société.

C'est dans ce contexte que sous l'autorité de son président l'Excellence Nourd Gregaza que les personnalités ci-dessous ont été désignées à l'unanimité au poste de responsabilités il s'agit de :

El politique :
Abdourahmane Tourkach : Coordonnateur Général NAMAYEBA Ahmed Djido Atny : Chargé de Communication, porte-parole du mouvement

El Militaire :
Général de brigade Mohamed Ali alias B13 : Chef d'État-Major Général du PRNC Général de brigade Abdoulaye Ahmed Abba Thom : Sous-Chef d'État-Major général, chargé de sécurité intérieure et maintien de l'Ordre Général de brigade Hamadaye Adam Moussa : Sous-Chef d'État-Major Chargé des Opérations Colonel ATTAHIR Oumar Zindre : Sous-Chef d'État-Major Doctrinal Général de Brigade NOUBAKIVE Assane Alias Monde : Sous-Chef d'État-Major Logistique Colonel Talib Assane : Commandant des Troupes d'Assaut Colonel Bachir Guedia Alias Kagnalba : Commandant des Troupes, Chargé des Opérations spéciales Commandant Mahamat Ahamat Ibrahim : Commandant des Gardiens des Élités Capitaine Mahamat Assane : Chargé de la Logistique Adjoint

Fait à Dangadere le, 7 octobre 2022
Le secrétaire de la séance, porte-parole du Mouvement


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