



Security Council

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Letter dated 22 December 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution [2149 \(2014\)](#) establishing the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and resolution [2552 \(2020\)](#) extending its mandate until 15 November 2021, as well as Council resolution [1996 \(2011\)](#) establishing the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and resolution [2514 \(2020\)](#) extending its mandate until 15 March 2021.

As you are aware, tensions have been rising in the Central African Republic ahead of presidential and legislative elections, the first rounds of which are scheduled for 27 December 2020. A series of attacks has been carried out in the western part of the country since the Constitutional Court announced its decision, on 3 December 2020, aimed at invalidating five prospective presidential candidates for failing to meet the “good character” criteria provided for in the electoral code of the country. Among those candidates ruled as ineligible to contest the presidential election was François Bozizé, former President of the Central African Republic, who has been travelling in the country since 1 December 2020.

The decision of the Constitutional Court has been used by some actors as a pretext to push for a political transition, which they could not achieve through legal or political means. Although his Kwa Na Kwa (KNK) party has denounced the decision of the Constitutional Court, alleging political manipulation, Mr. Bozizé has since publicly acknowledged the prerogatives of the Court, called on his supporters to remain peaceful and endorsed the candidature of Anicet Georges Dologuélé, as he did during the second round of the election in 2016. However, the opposition political coalition, which includes the parties of Messrs. Bozizé and Dologuélé, subsequently announced on 20 December 2020 the suspension of its campaigns, citing the impact of insecurity on campaign activities, among other concerns, and calling for the postponement of the elections until after the convening of political consultations with all relevant national stakeholders.

Amid the increasingly tense political environment, security incidents have risen significantly this month, with armed groups perpetrating violent and sometimes coordinated attacks against the national defence and security forces, humanitarian actors and MINUSCA. They further attempted to disrupt the electoral campaign through physical attacks and intimidation of candidates. Major armed groups signatory to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic of February 2019, both anti-balaka and ex-Séléka armed groups, announced on 15 December 2020 the formation of a coalition aligned with Mr. Bozizé, which they called on other armed groups to join. Three days later, on



18 December 2020, simultaneous attacks were perpetrated against national armed forces positions in Bossembele and Yaloké in Ombella-Mpoko Prefecture, and in Bozoum, Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, triggering civilian displacement and fuelling speculation about an imminent coup attempt. Subsequently, armed group movements and attacks have continued to multiply in locations of strategic significance.

In all instances, and in support of ongoing political facilitation by my Special Representative for the Central African Republic, Mankeur Ndiaye, MINUSCA responded robustly in accordance with its mandate and the integrated electoral security plan, deploying quick-reaction forces, as well as reinforcing its presence along strategic routes and in Bangui, while also providing essential support for the electoral process. While MINUSCA has in place detailed, appropriate and well-exercised electoral security and contingency plans, the present scenario of a military alliance in support of Mr. Bozizé, between anti-balaka and the same ex-Séléka groups that ended his presidency in 2013, poses significant additional challenges. Moreover, MINUSCA reinforcement has been necessary in those areas where the envisaged deployment of national security and defence forces did not occur in accordance with the integrated security plan due to financial or other challenges, or where national personnel abandoned their posts.

Considering the current situation, and to mitigate the risk of overstretch, it would be prudent to temporarily augment the capabilities of MINUSCA, including in the context of inter-mission cooperation. Specifically, I recommend the temporary redeployment, for a two-month period, of two infantry companies and two military utility helicopters from UNMISS, with immediate effect upon the approval of the Security Council, to enable MINUSCA to increase its capacity to reinforce security in critical areas while maintaining the security of Bangui. The utility helicopters will be essential for harmonizing the layout of the aviation assets of MINUSCA, ensuring national coverage and quick intervention to provide security and protect civilians. Such an augmentation would also provide important reassurance to the people of the Central African Republic, who continue to suffer the most from the violent intransigence of a few, and who deserve to have the confidence to exercise their franchise in a peaceful and secure environment.

The Secretariat is undertaking discussions with the troop-contributing and host countries, as required by Security Council resolution [1609 \(2005\)](#) on inter-mission cooperation. In order to ensure the immediate redeployment of personnel and assets from UNMISS to MINUSCA, I would appreciate if the Security Council could grant advance approval for these proposed arrangements.

I would be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council at the earliest opportunity.

(Signed) António **Guterres**
