



Security Council

Distr.: General
14 December 2020

Original: English

Letter dated 14 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefing provided by Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, Tunisia (on behalf of the three African countries that are members of the Security Council — the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam (on behalf of Indonesia and Viet Nam) in connection with the video-teleconference on the Central African region convened on Wednesday, 9 December 2020.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jerry Matthews **Matjila**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall**

[Original: English and French]

It is a pleasure to brief the Security Council today on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) remotely for the second time this year due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic seems generally under control in the subregion, with only 13,470 active cases as of 7 December among a total of 88,422 cases and 1,614 deaths officially reported since the beginning of the pandemic. However, the number of infections in some countries has been increasing again in recent days, thereby delaying the lifting of some of the restrictions imposed to counter the evolution of the pandemic.

The trends across Central Africa clearly indicate that the early measures enforced by the Governments of the subregion to contain and reduce the spread of the pandemic have proved effective. However, that effectiveness comes at a high socioeconomic cost, as the economic slowdown triggered by the pandemic and the different restrictive measures have further depleted the already limited capacity of States to provide basic social services to their populations. I would like to encourage bilateral and multilateral partners to provide their support to all countries in the subregion to help them continue to fight the pandemic and address its economic, sociopolitical and security impacts. I also appeal to international financial institutions to continue to facilitate the release of emergency assistance for all COVID-19-affected countries in Central Africa.

Notwithstanding this particular context, which impacted the smooth implementation of UNOCA's mandate, I was able to engage with key United Nations, national and international partners in the subregion on various issues, including during my recent visits to Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo. On 1 December, I convened a meeting of the Heads of United Nations presences in Central Africa, during which we agreed, among other things, to strengthen coordination in supporting regional efforts to address the impact of climate change, prevent election-related violence and fight against hate speech.

I am pleased to report that the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has reached a key milestone in its institutional reform process, with the swearing-in of its new Commission on 1 September, including its President, Ambassador Gilberto da Piedade Veríssimo, its Vice-President and five Commissioners. The convening of two ordinary summits of Heads of State and Government is further evidence that regional leaders are determined to enhance regional integration and address peace and security issues in Central Africa. I was therefore pleased to witness such commitment at the eighteenth ordinary summit of ECCAS, held in Libreville on 27 November, which adopted the ECCAS Indicative Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 and the Priority Action Plan for 2021 and decided to appoint a mediator and deploy an election observation mission for the upcoming presidential and legislative elections in the Central African Republic. Ahead of the summit, UNOCA has been engaging with the new Commission to identify joint priorities for the years ahead, notably on conflict prevention and regional integration, and enhance coordination among international partners for the implementation of the 2021-2025 Indicative Strategic Plan.

While the reformed ECCAS institutions are gradually becoming operational, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC) remains a relevant forum, where the countries of Central Africa discuss and make recommendations aimed at addressing regional peace and security challenges. The fiftieth UNSAC Ministerial Meeting took place virtually on 4 December. The Committee reviewed the regional peace and security situation, discussed the situation in the Central African Republic and held a debate on the impact of the coronavirus disease on peace and security and on peaceful electoral processes in Central Africa. The Committee adopted declarations on the two latter issues, stressing the need to reinforce regional cooperation in addressing them.

Several countries of the subregion have been preparing for the holding of elections, including Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe. On 6 December, Cameroon successfully held its first-ever regional elections aimed at finalizing the decentralization process in the country, including the implementation of a special status for the North-West and South-West regions. In the Republic of the Congo, political consultations to discuss preparations for the 2021 presidential election took place on 25 and 26 November, with the participation of opposition parties. In Chad, following the recommendations of the second national inclusive forum, convened by the authorities from 29 October to 1 November, on 3 December amendments to the Constitution were voted on. The amendments included the creation of the position of Vice-President, the re-establishment of a Senate and a court of auditors as well as the reduction of the minimum age from 45 to 40 years to stand as a candidate in a presidential election.

As election preparations continue in the months ahead, I would like to encourage the national authorities and all political stakeholders to promote continued dialogue and consensus on the conditions governing the elections, using political dialogue frameworks where they are in place, as is the case, for instance, in Chad and the Republic of the Congo, or through ad hoc arrangements. To be effective, such dialogue initiatives should be inclusive in terms of both participation and the issues discussed. I will continue to offer the good offices of the Secretary-General, wherever required, to encourage inclusive and meaningful political dialogue in the countries preparing for elections.

Insecurity throughout Central Africa has continued to be a source of concern, including where it has a cross-border dimension, particularly in the Lake Chad basin and the Gulf of Guinea, and with regard to the internal situation in some countries.

During my last visit to Cameroon in November, I noted with great concern the continuing violence in the Far-North, North-West and South-West regions. I deplore the fact that the violence in the North-West and South-West regions is now targeting civilians, including pupils and teachers, as well as religious leaders. During my visit, I reiterated the Secretary-General's call on all parties concerned to renounce violence, silence the weapons and stop attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, such as schools. In that regard, I would like to call on all actors to remain committed to constructive dialogue to end the crisis in both regions and build sustainable peace and development. I note the commitment of the national authorities to taking forward the implementation of the presidential plan for the reconstruction and development of the two regions, which will be further consolidated through such dialogue and the cessation of hostilities.

I am particularly concerned that Boko Haram continues to be a serious threat in the Lake Chad basin with the increase in attacks and kidnappings, inter alia. Terrorist groups have continued to intensify their attacks in Cameroon and Chad and to refine their modus operandi, as demonstrated by a recent attack on the night of 24-25 November, in which four Chadian soldiers were killed and about 16 others injured after their boat

reportedly struck an improvised explosive device in the Ngouboua area on Lake Chad. The need to address the crisis in the Lake Chad basin in a comprehensive manner, including through the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region, cannot be overemphasized. Despite the difficulties caused by COVID-19, the Strategy's regional action plan has been finalized and the eight most affected territories are now in the process of developing their territorial action plans. I would once again like to appeal to the generosity of the members of the Security Council and other partners to provide the resources necessary for the rapid implementation of the regional Strategy so that the populations of the Lake Chad basin can benefit from the peace dividend, which in turn will strengthen their resilience to radicalization and violent extremism.

The proximity and similarities between the situations in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel justify our joint monitoring and analysis and our coordinated response to the challenges there. More concretely, we need to establish links between the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the regional Strategy for the Lake Chad basin in order to avoid duplication, rationalize the use of resources and ensure that the two strategies are mutually reinforcing.

In the Gulf of Guinea, maritime organized crime continued to increase, particularly drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. While welcoming the individual measures and bilateral cooperation initiatives taken by several States in the region to address maritime insecurity, I would like to stress that responses to threats to the security of both States and individuals in the Gulf of Guinea will be effective only if they are coordinated between Central and West Africa through existing mechanisms, such as the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa. My colleague, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mohamed Ibn Chambas of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, and I agreed to intensify our commitment to interregional cooperation and coordination on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, which is one of the main common priorities of our two offices. At its fiftieth Ministerial Meeting, UNSAC recommended the holding of a regional conference on maritime security in Central Africa.

Transhumance and conflicts between farmers and herders have continued in Central Africa, as evidenced by recent security incidents in the subregion. On 27 November, the Government of Chad reported that 22 people had been killed and 34 injured in clashes between farmers and herders on the night of 23-24 November in the province of Mayo-Kebbi East. According to the Government, 66 people were arrested following that incident, while the authorities also imposed a curfew in the area. I reiterate the Secretary-General's appeal to Governments and local communities in Central Africa to continue to work together to address the common challenges of transhumance. I also reaffirm UNOCA's commitment to continuing to support ECCAS and its member States for the adoption of a subregional regulatory framework on pastoralism and transhumance.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that these threats to peace and security in Central Africa also affect other regions, especially West Africa and the Great Lakes. That is the case of the instability in the Lake Chad basin that I mentioned. Similarly, the Lord's Resistance Army is currently present in both Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, two regions to which several countries under UNOCA's purview belong. Addressing these threats requires coordination among all affected regions and among the relevant United Nations regional offices. On 23 November,

Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas and I agreed on a set of joint activities that our offices would undertake with regard to the situations in the Lake Chad region and the Gulf of Guinea, as well as support to the implementation of the Lomé declaration adopted at the 2018 joint summit of ECCAS and the Economic Community of West African States on peace, security, stability and the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

I will also continue to hold regular consultations with my colleagues from the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, the United Nations Office to the African Union, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as United Nations Resident Coordinators and regional offices, to address interregional challenges. All these coordination efforts are intended to improve our understanding of challenges in our areas of responsibilities and to better support the affected countries in addressing them.

Annex II**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations**

[Original: French]

I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fall for his presentation and the latest report (S/2020/1154). They both clearly demonstrate that the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in Central Africa remains very relevant. I would also like to take this opportunity to raise three points.

Belgium remains concerned about the situation in Cameroon. While we welcome some progress towards dialogue and decentralization in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, the boycott of the local elections held on 6 December is a cause for concern. We call on all stakeholders to show restraint in the follow-up to the regional elections. The implementation of the recommendations resulting from the dialogue and the continuation of this dialogue with all parties remain essential to the construction of sustainable peace and development.

Furthermore, Belgium calls on all parties to support the call by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the African Union for a comprehensive ceasefire. In that regard, we remain particularly concerned about the negative impact of the conflict on women and children, forced displacement and human rights violations. In view of the number of cases of recruitment and use, killings and attacks on physical integrity, abductions, attacks on schools and hospitals and the denial of humanitarian access in Cameroon, we welcome the Secretary-General's addition of Cameroon to the list of countries in which the situation is of concern in his forthcoming report on children and armed conflict.

International humanitarian law and international human rights must be fully respected. In that regard, we are particularly concerned about the continued escalation of attacks and kidnappings of humanitarian workers and clergy. The protection of United Nations personnel, as well as all other relevant humanitarian actors, must be guaranteed.

The added value of UNOCA lies especially in its early-warning system and its coverage of regional issues, including climate change and terrorism. In this context, we would like to expressly welcome the integration by UNOCA of the climate security perspective into its conflict analysis. The adoption of a subregional regulation on pastoralism and transhumance will therefore be of the utmost importance in preventing and reducing farmer-herder conflicts.

We also welcome the numerous reports on terrorism by UNOCA — both in the context of Boko Haram and in other contexts in Central Africa. It is therefore crucial that the lessons learned and good practices of UNOCA can also be useful in other contexts on the African continent where terrorism is simmering, such as in Mozambique.

Lastly, we want to focus briefly on the situation in Burundi. The elections have turned a page. We are now ready to start writing a new chapter. In its presidential statement last week (S/PRST/2020/12), the Council took note of the improved security situation in Burundi and the six principal priorities presented by President Ndayishimiye in his inauguration speech on 18 June 2020. Progress has been made, but challenges remain. They include, but are not limited to, the return of refugees, a problem already identified by the most recent UNOCA report. However, they also include continued work on the President's sixth priority in terms of human

rights, sustainable peace and reconciliation. Belgium remains ready to work on this important issue with the people and the Government of Burundi.

Annex III**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Dai Bing**

[Original: Chinese]

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, Mr. Fall, for his briefing, based on which, together with the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/1154), I would like to make the following comments.

First, we must continue to support the efforts by countries in the region to prioritize the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, countries in Central Africa have adopted strict measures and implemented the COVID-19 regional response strategy, coordinated by Central Africa, of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which has alleviated the pandemic. Nonetheless, the pandemic continues to spread throughout the world, and the momentum of regional cooperation must be maintained.

The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) should support regional countries in strengthening joint prevention and control, and promote cooperation in information-sharing, testing methods and clinical treatment. China has provided countries in the region with multiple shipments of anti-pandemic supplies and has dispatched medical experts to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congo, Sao Tome and Principe and Angola. We remain committed to providing further assistance in that regard.

Secondly, we must continue to support the economic recovery and development of countries in the region, which have been severely affected by the pandemic and are facing an increasing risk of an economic downturn. The international community has the responsibility to help countries in the region maintain macroeconomic stability, expand employment opportunities and ensure a secure and smooth industrial and supply chain.

China has actively implemented the Debt Service Suspension Initiative of the Group of 20 (G-20) and is the country that has fulfilled the largest amount in that regard among G-20 members. Through concrete efforts, we have helped Cameroon, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and other countries in the region overcome difficulties. It is China's hope that UNOCA will urge developed countries and multilateral financial institutions to accelerate their actions and honour their commitments as soon as possible to genuinely reduce the debt burden of the region.

Thirdly, we must continue to support countries in the region in maintaining peace independently. The situation in Central Africa is generally stable, thanks to the concerted efforts of the countries of the region. However, Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army are still active in the region, and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is rampant. The international community must take action to support regional countries in combating terrorism and organized crime. In doing so, it is imperative to always respect the sovereignty and national ownership of countries in the region.

With many elections to be held this year and next year, UNOCA may provide, upon the request of the countries concerned, technical and material assistance for their elections. The issue of South-West and North-West Cameroon is part of the country's internal affairs by the nature of the issue. We believe that the Government of Cameroon is able to handle it properly and maintain national stability.

The Government of the Central African Republic is faced with the arduous task of security capacity-building. China continues to call on the Security Council to lift the arms embargo on the Central African Republic at an early date.

Fourthly, we must continue to support the regional integration process in Central Africa. ECCAS has actively promoted institutional reform, established the ECCAS Commission and launched the regional peace and security architecture, thereby taking solid steps towards regional integration.

UNOCA should facilitate good-neighbourly relations and deepen economic integration in the region, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be integrated into regional and national development strategies. We hope that UNOCA will strengthen communication and coordination with other relevant United Nations agencies, subregional organizations in Africa and the African Union, leverage respective advantages and form synergies with a view to promoting regional stability and prosperity.

Annex IV**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We thank Special Representative Fall for his detailed briefing.

We welcome the progress made by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), under the chairpersonship of Gabon, with its institutional reform agenda and the installation of the new regional peace and security architecture. We understand that this new architecture will help that body contribute more effectively to the joint objective of achieving stability in Central Africa.

We welcome the measures taken by the countries of the subregion to strengthen their response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and we welcome the approval of the COVID-19 regional response strategy for Central Africa by the Heads of State and Government of ECCAS. However, we are concerned about the impact that may have on the organization and financing of the electoral processes.

Nevertheless, there has been progress, such as the presentation of the electoral calendar by Chad's National Independent Electoral Commission, according to which the elections are scheduled for 2021. In this respect, it is essential that attention be paid to the participation of women and young people in political processes, especially in the current electoral processes.

Efforts to improve relations among the countries of the subregion must continue. We welcome concrete progress, such as the commitment reached among the Presidents of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda in the eradication of armed groups, the strengthening of existing mechanisms to eliminate their sources of financing and the joint fight against related criminal networks. We also recognize the efforts of Burundi and Rwanda to normalize their bilateral relations. We hope that those diplomatic initiatives will continue and that they will serve to advance pending issues.

We regret that there are still cases of violence in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, where civilians are paying a high price. The reported attacks on humanitarian workers are a source of deep concern for the Dominican Republic. We reiterate our call to the Government of Cameroon to redouble its efforts to reach a political solution to the crisis in those regions, and we also urge the Special Envoy and regional organizations to continue to intensify their efforts to mediate and engage in dialogue with the parties in order to establish the trust and the political will necessary to build sustainable peace throughout the country.

We must voice our concern about the volatile security situation in some parts of the subregion due to the activities of armed groups. Particularly disturbing are the deadly attacks in Cameroon and Chad by Boko Haram factions and by the Lord's Resistance Army, with devastating consequences for women and girls, who are disproportionately exposed to violent attacks, including conflict-related sexual violence. It is more important than ever that armed groups heed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire.

The adverse effects of climate change continue to negatively impact human security and livelihoods. Some parts of the subregion once again experienced severe flooding caused by excessive rainfall, destroying the livelihoods of many communities. The resulting humanitarian situation in several parts of Central Africa remains precarious and has undoubtedly been exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19.

Finally, we welcome the good offices of UNOCA, ECCAS and Mr. Fall in promoting peaceful solutions based on dialogue, confidence-building and reconciliation efforts, which should be supported by all relevant actors at all levels.

Annex V**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Gert Auväärt**

I would like to start by thanking Special Representative Fall for today's informative briefing, as well as to express my appreciation for the work that the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) is undertaking across the Central African region.

Countries across Central Africa continue to face serious political, economic and security challenges, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. However, it has been encouraging to witness strong regional cooperation in meeting those challenges. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) regional response strategy adopted by a newly reinforced Economic Community of Central African States is a welcome development, as are the numerous initiatives undertaken to enhance cross-border cooperation — for example, by Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Neighbourly cooperation is essential for mitigating the effects of the pandemic while also protecting human rights, enabling an inclusive economic recovery and maintaining regional peace and security. Continued armed attacks by Boko Haram are alarming. Regional security efforts that involve the sharing of intelligence, civil-military cooperation and human rights compliance are essential for combating Boko Haram insurgency.

Cameroon continues to witness mounting levels of violence and continued human rights violations and abuses. Particularly tragic have been the attacks against schools and schoolchildren. Correspondingly, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has surpassed 6 million. Estonia condemns attacks against civilians in the strongest terms, including against humanitarian workers. Furthermore, accountability for violations and abuses must be established in order to avoid the establishment of a culture of impunity, which would only breed more violence. We call for all parties to show restraint and engage in dialogue in order to find a peaceful and lasting resolution to the crisis. The role of UNOCA in enabling mediation and supporting the political momentum towards reconciliation in Cameroon is most welcome.

Turning to the situation in the Central African Republic, I would like to recognize the efforts made to ensure timely and safe elections. Elections-related violence perpetrated by several armed groups is in direct breach of their commitments under the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, the full implementation of which is the only path towards lasting peace in the Central African Republic.

I would like to conclude by noting that the complex and fragile situation in Central Africa continues to be adversely impacted by the destructive effects of climate change. There is no denying that climate change is affecting, and will continue to have effects on, international peace and security. This threat will continue to grow without focused action to tackle it. We commend UNOCA for addressing this issue in the report (S/2020/1154).

Annex VI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I thank the Special Representative, Mr. François Fall, for his briefing. His efforts demonstrate the added value of a regional approach in understanding the dynamics of Central Africa and strengthening the preventive approach of the United Nations in that region. I would like briefly to address three points.

First, on the progress made in regional cooperation, I welcome the implementation of the institutional reform of the Economic Community of Central African States, which entered into force in August. The establishment of the new Commission demonstrates the deepening cooperation within the region. It complements the many recent cooperation initiatives in Central Africa in the field of security and cross-border cooperation. That dynamic must continue in the service of peace and development.

Secondly, I draw the Council's attention to the region's fragilities, to which we must be attentive. Several political, security, humanitarian and human rights challenges remain. I am thinking in particular of the ongoing terrorist activities carried out by Boko Haram in Cameroon and Chad, which continue to claim many military and civilian victims. Despite some improvements, we must also remain vigilant against the activities of armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, and maintain our commitment to fighting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

On the humanitarian front, needs remain high and food insecurity is worsening. It is essential that international humanitarian law and human rights be fully respected. The critical fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic does not justify their violation. We condemn attacks against humanitarian and medical personnel. These acts must not go unpunished.

The support of international partners is essential to help the countries of Central Africa overcome the humanitarian and health crisis. France has pledged €1.2 billion to support Africa in the fight against COVID-19. It has launched an initiative within the framework of the Group of 20 and the Paris Club for a moratorium on debt servicing for countries affected by the pandemic. In Central Africa, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cameroon are benefiting from that measure.

Thirdly and finally, I would like to stress the importance of inclusive electoral processes. With electoral deadlines approaching in several countries of the region — in the Central African Republic, where elections will be held before the end of the month, and in Chad and the Republic of Congo thereafter — it is essential that those elections take place in the best possible conditions and in a context that allows all stakeholders to take part. The full participation of women as voters and candidates is critical, as is that of youth, displaced persons and refugees.

United Nations regional offices, such as the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), are essential to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations, particularly with regard to conflict prevention. In the spirit of strengthened partnership with African regional and subregional organizations, France will therefore continue to support UNOCA.

Annex VII**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna M. Evstigneeva**

[Original: Russian]

We are grateful to Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his detailed briefing. Russia has always supported the activity of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) as an important instrument of preventive diplomacy. We see that the good offices of the Special Representative are in demand in that subregion.

It is clear that the challenges facing the Central African countries are complex. This year, the coronavirus pandemic was added to that list. It is important that timely measures be taken to contain the spread of infection.

We are convinced that regional organizations have a key role to play in crisis prevention and conflict resolution. We welcome the success of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) with regard to institutional reform, which will strengthen the capacity of the organization. We anticipate that UNOCA will continue to work closely with ECCAS.

The Central African region is extremely important for combating the spread of terrorism throughout the continent. We are concerned that the destructive potential of Boko Haram has not diminished. Chad and Cameroon are suffering from terrorist attacks. We attach particular importance to regional efforts to develop coordinated approaches to deal with that threat. We believe that it is important to provide predictable financing for the activities of the Multinational Joint Task Force.

For our part, we intend to continue to work in various formats to eliminate terrorism on the African continent. We are closely following developments in the Central African Republic. We support the efforts of President Touadera to stabilize the situation in the country. This is especially important in the context of the forthcoming elections. The 6 February 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic is working and provides the basis for a long-term settlement of the situation. Russia will continue to closely accompany the national reconciliation process by coordinating efforts with those seeking to normalize the situation.

Other factors of instability in the region include piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Unfortunately, the robbery of foreign maritime vessels continues, including the taking of hostages, including Russian citizens. Our country has considerable experience in international efforts to counter that threat, including within the framework of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. We hope that it will be useful in resolving similar problems in the Gulf of Guinea.

We note the general decline in the activity of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We trust that the African Union's initiative for regional cooperation to dismantle the LRA will bear fruit.

We are also following developments in Cameroon. The problem of the Anglophone provinces there has its roots in the colonial period. Unfortunately, this is not the first time we see decisions made previously in the interests of former colonial Powers affect the situation in today's independent States, which have to overcome such legacies. The solution to the compounded problems can therefore be found only at the negotiating table. All Cameroonian parties must show restraint and renounce all forms of violence. The holding of regional elections on 6 December

was an important step in the implementation of the recommendations of the national dialogue. We hope that it will provide positive momentum for calming the situation.

In conclusion, I reiterate that the challenges facing Central Africa are closely interlinked and the States of the region are interdependent. Unrest and instability in one country can undermine the security of its neighbours. It is therefore crucial to understand the situation and not to cross the line between prevention and interference in the internal affairs of States.

Annex VIII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, Tarek Ladeb**

I have the pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1). We would like to thank and commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in the Central Africa region (S/2020/1154) and United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) for its work.

We join our colleagues in welcoming Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA, and express to him our appreciation for his important and insightful briefing on the evolving situation in the Central African region.

We note with interest that 8 of the 11 Central African countries are moving forward with preparations for elections, which constitute an opportunity for their populations to consolidate democratic processes in their countries and an important factor of political stability and sustainable peace. In the same vein, the A3+1 is encouraged by the efforts undertaken by countries of the region to strengthen their response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), mitigate its impacts and enhance their bilateral relations.

With regard to the diplomatic dynamics in the region, we note with satisfaction the holding, on 7 October, of a virtual mini-summit on the Great Lakes region, which brought together the heads of State of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. We also salute the willingness of Burundi and Rwanda to normalize their bilateral relations. We are looking forward to similar high-level meetings and diplomatic activities that could further strengthen bilateral ties and pave the way for increased security, stability and prosperity in the region as a whole.

Security remains our primary concern, for without security there is no peace. While we commend the Government of Cameroon for advancing dialogue and decentralization in the North-West and South-West regions, we remain concerned by the outbreak of violence in that part of the country, and call on all parties to put an end to fighting and engage in peace negotiations and dialogue as the sole means for finding solutions to all pending issues. The A3+1 also encourages all parties to accelerate the implementation of the outcomes from the major national dialogue.

We are also worried about the volatile security situation in some parts of the region, exacerbated by the violent activities of armed groups such as Boko Haram factions and the Lord's Resistance Army. Acts of piracy and other maritime criminal activities in the Gulf of Guinea are concerning, despite the decrease in maritime criminality during the period under review. Human trafficking is another major concern that needs to be diligently addressed. In that respect, we value the Organization's efforts to protect vulnerable migrants and strengthen the fight against human trafficking.

That insecurity, combined with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, has increased the need for humanitarian assistance. The region has witnessed large movements of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as forced displacements, thus exacerbating malnutrition, food insecurity and epidemics. An increase in human rights violations and abuses against civilians, as well as threats against students and teachers, coupled with high rates of sexual and gender-based violence, further illustrate the bleak overall humanitarian situation in the region.

In that respect, we commend the ongoing efforts of humanitarian actors to provide aid to the people in need. However, we stress that humanitarian actors must

be allowed access to places where they are now denied. We wish to applaud the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for its efforts in the region, which have helped facilitate the return and repatriation of refugees, in close coordination with affected countries of the region.

In that regard, we are pleased about the voluntary return of several Burundian refugees from neighbouring countries. That development serves to confirm the Council's assertion that the situation in Burundi no longer constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Last but not least, we are concerned about the severe effects of climate change and environmental degradation on livelihoods, social and communal tensions and development efforts in the Central Africa region.

The A3+1 takes note of the Secretary-General's report on the human rights and socioeconomic trends in the region. These have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the activities of non-State armed actors. While we recognize the drastic limitations that entails, we encourage the countries of the region to increase efforts to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and curb the activities of negative forces. We value the contribution of regional financial institutions and groups to alleviating the dire socioeconomic situations in certain countries of the Central Africa region.

We seize this opportunity to express our appreciation for the valuable work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCA, and that of his able team. We appreciate their unwavering commitment to the region and fully support their efforts to promote peace and security in the Central Africa region through good offices, preventive diplomacy and mediation.

We underline the importance of continued cooperation between UNOCA and the Governments of the region, as well as between UNOCA and regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and other relevant actors.

The continued engagement between UNOCA and ECCAS towards the effective implementation of the Lomé Declaration on Peace, Security, Stability and the Fight Against Terrorism and Violent Extremism is crucial to regional stability. So too are their coordinated efforts on transhumance-related activities to address farmer-herder conflicts. We also reaffirm the importance of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region and the African Union's Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army.

We encourage further international support of those initiatives. We also commend the fruitful cooperation and coordination between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, which increase synergies across their respective mandated activities in the region and contribute to further enhanced coherence and coordination across the region.

In conclusion, the A3+1 shares the Secretary-General's observation that the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the political, security, economic and social stability of the subregion. Such a challenging context urgently requires further concerted efforts of all affected countries through regional solidarity, as well as support from the international community and all partners on the ground.

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Barbara Woodward**

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I want to express our thanks to Mr. Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his continued efforts to support and promote peace, stability and security in Central Africa, especially in the light of the difficult circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

We welcome the recent progress in the region, particularly the establishment of the new Economic Community of Central African States Commission. However, as Special Representative Fall has set out, Central Africa continues to face serious political, economic and security challenges, which have been exacerbated by the impacts of COVID-19. As ever, it remains important that the countries of the region work together, with the support of the United Nations, to strengthen regional peace and security, protect civilians in conflict and promote human rights and resilience, as well as economic recovery.

In that regard, I commend the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) for its ongoing conflict prevention and mediation efforts across Central Africa. I encourage greater coordination between UNOCA and United Nations country teams in the subregion, with a particular focus on strengthening early warning.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by the ongoing crisis in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, as described by Special Representative Fall. The impact on civilians continues to be profound. The conflict in that region has driven around 770,000 people from their homes and has forced 60,000 people to seek refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. Only 30 per cent of schools are currently open.

This conflict, compounded by the effects of COVID-19, has exacerbated humanitarian needs across the country. In September, the United Kingdom announced a further \$6 million to fund humanitarian actors in Cameroon. That funding will provide vital assistance, including food, medical supplies and sanitation provisions to tens of thousands of vulnerable people, and brings our total humanitarian support to Cameroon in 2020 to \$18 million.

We remain deeply concerned by reports of human rights violations and abuses committed by both security forces and separatists in the North-West and South-West regions. Among the many reported acts of violence against civilians, the killing of seven children by unidentified gunmen in Kumba in October was particularly shocking. We continue to support the Secretary-General's call on all actors not to attack civilians, and we call for an end to violence and for unhindered humanitarian access.

The United Kingdom urges respect by all parties for human rights, including freedom of expression, association and assembly. We continue to urge full cooperation by the Government of Cameroon with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

I commend the steps taken by the Government of Cameroon to address the crisis and respond to the recommendations throughout the dialogue in October 2019, including the holding of regional elections on 6 December. These elections were an important step towards decentralization. Inclusive dialogue remains, as does

achieving a just, peaceful, and durable resolution to the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions that meets the reasonable demands of the moderate majority. All parties should remain engaged in good faith in dialogue and peacebuilding efforts, including the Swiss-led efforts to facilitate talks between the Government of Cameroon and separatist groups. I hope that Cameroon's international and regional friends and partners will also continue to support efforts to restore peace and security in the North-West and South-West regions.

The United Kingdom also strongly condemns the terrorist attacks on civilians in Cameroon's far north and across the wider Lake Chad basin area. We express our condolences to the innocent lives lost, including the 70 civilians killed in Nigeria's Borno state on 28 November. We welcome the efforts of the Multinational Joint Task Force to tackle Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province in the region. We urge the Governments of the Lake Chad basin countries, with the support of international partners, to redouble their efforts to tackle the root causes of conflict, which should include efforts to demobilize and reintegrate former combatants, improve governance and mitigate the impacts of climate change on regional security.

I would like to end with a few words about the Central African Republic. The upcoming presidential and legislative elections on 27 December will be an important milestone in the Central African Republic's journey towards lasting peace. We urge the Central African Republic Government and all political actors in the country to ensure that the elections are inclusive, peaceful, free and fair. The United Kingdom has committed \$640,000 to efforts to fund the elections through the United Nations and support the participation of women, youth and marginalized groups. But elections are, of course, only one element of democratic governance. We hope to see continuing efforts by all stakeholders in the Central African Republic aimed at strengthening political inclusivity, protecting and promoting human rights and meeting the needs of the population, including with respect to basic security and humanitarian needs.

Annex X**Statement by the Political Coordinator of the United States of America to the United Nations, Rodney Hunter**

I thank Special Representative Fall for his informative and insightful briefing on the current situation in Central Africa. We appreciate the report of the Secretary-General on recent events in the region (S/2020/1154) and commend his efforts and those of his team to promote long-term peace and stability.

Of all the countries under Special Representative Fall's purview, as was noted earlier, the one that presents perhaps the greatest concerns is Cameroon, where more than 6.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance — 2.3 million people more than at the beginning of the year. Cameroon is facing multiple crises, including terrorist attacks in the far north, ongoing violence in the Anglophone regions, and the impact of significant refugee flows from its neighbours, all of which are compounded by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

We are deeply troubled by the recent increase in attacks by separatist armed groups on civilians, including arson and kidnappings, and, as was noted by my United Kingdom colleague, the murder of school children in Kumba on 24 October is particularly abhorrent.

Recent events in Cameroon are a clear indication that to end the violence a political solution is needed. We urge the leaders of separatist groups and the Cameroonian Government to take bold steps to build confidence and move toward a meaningful dialogue. The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) can support them in this effort.

We are also closely following Burundi, as the Office of the Special Envoy there prepares to close. We urge the Burundian Government to continue to work with Special Representative Fall, as well as with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region and others to develop a reasonable timeline for the closure of that Office.

In the Central African Republic, the United States appreciates the regional role that the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) plays to support the peace agreement by engaging the Central African Republic's neighbours. We strongly support ECCAS's continued work with the countries of the region to support the Central African Republic's stability, especially as that country prepares for national elections on 27 December.

The United States commends all Central African countries for their efforts aimed at mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a profound impact on the region, as Special Representative Fall noted today. As countries continue to battle this unprecedented crisis, regional solidarity is crucial. We commend ECCAS's adoption of the COVID-19 regional response strategy for Central Africa and laud the efforts undertaken to preserve macroeconomic stability in the region by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Bank of Central African States, the Development Bank of Central African States and the Paris Club.

Finally, we encourage UNOCA and the States of the region to work with the United Nations, the African Union and other relevant partners to develop viable strategies to strengthen their capacity for conflict prevention. This includes adding a gender perspective and building on partnerships with civil society. To that end, we applaud the renewed commitment by the ECCAS Heads of State and Government to operationalize the Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Peace and Conflict

Prevention in Central Africa in pursuit of the United Nations women and peace and security agenda.

The United States will continue to do all it can to help the people of the Central African region create a future for themselves that is strong, peaceful and prosperous. We look forward to working with our partners in the Security Council and with those in the region to make that future a reality.

Annex XI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dinh Quy Dang**

It is my great honour to deliver this statement today on behalf of Indonesia and Viet Nam, the two countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) that are members of the Security Council.

At the outset, we would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, Mr. François Louncény Fall, for his informative briefing.

Indonesia and Viet Nam fully acknowledge the enormous challenges that Central African countries are facing during this period marked by the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This pandemic is ruthlessly sparing no one and putting a strain on all efforts aimed at achieving sustainable peace, stability and development in the region. While the electoral cycles are under way in 8 of the 11 countries in the region, resources must be mobilized not just to respond to the impacts of the pandemic but also to settle the persistent insecurity and humanitarian issues.

Our two countries express grave concern over the unabated violence perpetrated by armed groups and terrorists in certain parts of the region, especially in the Far North, North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, the Boko Haram affected-area and the Lake Chad basin. We condemn in the strongest terms all attacks against innocent civilians and civilian objects. We urge all parties to heed the ceasefire call of the Secretary-General so as to pave the way for dialogue and address humanitarian needs.

Instability and COVID-19 are indeed deepening the humanitarian crisis in many parts of Central Africa. It is extremely distressful to see, inter alia, the sharp increase in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Cameroon, the exacerbation of malnutrition, food insecurity and diseases in Chad and the adverse impacts of extreme weather events on people in the Congo.

At today's meeting, Indonesia and Viet Nam wish to highlight the following points.

First, we fully believe that the only viable way to achieve sustainable peace is through addressing the root causes of instability in the region. A comprehensive set of measures should include supporting ongoing diplomatic and political efforts, enhancing reconciliation efforts at national and regional levels, addressing threats posed by armed groups and terrorists, strengthening the governance of natural resources, providing development opportunities for countries and ensuring equitable and sustainable development for all.

Secondly, as two countries from ASEAN, Indonesia and Viet Nam highly value the importance of strengthening regional and subregional friendship and cooperation. It is our firm belief that regional cooperation is the key to realizing the shared aspiration for stability and development. Our delegations are therefore very pleased to see the continued commitments of Central African countries to enhancing their mutual cooperation. Notably, at the regional level, we welcome and fully support the institutional reform initiatives of member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The entry into force of the new ECCAS treaty and the establishment of the new regional peace and security architecture will solidify the foundation for further substantial progress. We also salute the swift action of countries of the region in response to COVID-19 by adopting the regional response strategy as well as their endeavours to enhance bilateral relations.

Thirdly, the efforts of Central African countries should be coupled with international support in order to achieve better results. Our delegations call for sustained technical and financial assistance from international partners and United Nations entities in order to assist ECCAS and its member States. Special focus should be given to preventing conflicts, ensuring stability and lasting peace, and promoting development in the region. Tackling the impacts of COVID-19 and addressing emergency humanitarian needs are also urgently needed at this critical moment.

In closing, we commend and fully support the work of the Special Representative and his Office in assisting countries in the Central African region, especially during this challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic. We would also like to pay tribute to the efforts aimed at maintaining peace and security in the region undertaken by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and all United Nations personnel in various United Nations missions, including the more than 1,600 uniformed personnel from ASEAN countries. Indonesia and Viet Nam will continue their strong advocacy for peace, stability, prosperity and development for the people of Central Africa.

As this is the last joint statement of the two ASEAN members in the Council this year, I thank Indonesia for its excellent cooperation in working with Viet Nam to showcase the ASEAN spirit together.
