



## Security Council

Distr.: General  
11 February 2021

Original: English

---

### **Letter dated 4 February 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 23 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council ([S/2020/1291](#)), by which the Council approved the temporary redeployment, for a two-month period, of two infantry companies and two military utility helicopters from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

The reinforcement of MINUSCA proved timely and essential, owing to the persisting attacks perpetrated primarily by a coalition of armed groups aligned with former President François Bozizé. Since mid-December 2020, that coalition has sought to undermine democratic order by disrupting elections on 27 December 2020, destabilizing national institutions and discrediting the outcome of the presidential election, in which the Constitutional Court determined President Faustin Archange Touadéra had won in the first round. Some of the political opposition parties have also rejected the electoral outcome, citing instability that prevented voters from casting their ballots in parts of the west and centre of the country and other irregularities.

The election-related violence has had a significant impact on civilians, contributing to more than 200,000 Central African citizens being forcibly displaced internally or to neighbouring countries, fleeing attacks, threats or fears of exactions. The armed groups coalition has sought to interrupt the provision of essential goods to Bangui by preventing movement along the main supply route connecting it to Cameroon. As a result, the cost of essential commodities such as food and fuel has risen considerably, having a further impact on the lives and livelihoods of civilians. The violence has also impeded humanitarian access to the most vulnerable in some areas of the country and the import of critical humanitarian and medical materials in the context of the ongoing global pandemic.

As a consequence of the ongoing violence, a number of national defence and internal security forces deserted or defected from their posts, in some cases with their weapons, compounding the risks to civilians, humanitarian actors and peacekeepers and emboldening armed groups. Since December 2020, seven MINUSCA peacekeepers have been killed in hostile acts. There are indications that the coalition will seek to expand its control over main supply routes, in order to maintain access to arms, ammunitions, equipment and reinforcements.

MINUSCA has responded robustly in accordance with its mandate, repelling attacks in main localities, including the capital city, and reinforcing its presence along



strategic routes and in Bangui. The Mission also continued to provide essential multifaceted support for the electoral process. However, the risk of overstretch remains. MINUSCA requires sufficient force reserves to fulfil its priority mandated tasks of protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian aid, ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel and premises, and supporting the electoral process, while underpinning the political strategy of the Mission.

The reinforcements from UNMISS have helped MINUSCA to adjust its configuration with a view to enhancing its capacity to project force and improving mobility during the electoral period. Given the situation in the Central African Republic ahead of the second round of legislative elections scheduled for March 2021, it would be important to mitigate the risk of overstretch and ensure that the hard-won gains in the political process are not reversed. I would therefore appreciate the Security Council granting approval for a two-month extension of the temporary redeployment of the two infantry companies and the two military utility helicopters from UNMISS to MINUSCA, subject to the extension of the mandate of UNMISS beyond 15 March 2021.

The forces temporarily redeployed shall continue to be counted against the authorized ceiling on military and civilian personnel of UNMISS and shall not count against the ceiling of MINUSCA. In this regard, I am conscious of the importance of ensuring the adequate resourcing and staffing of UNMISS for the implementation of the peace accords of South Sudan, and I wish to assure the Security Council that this is a temporary request brought about by emergency circumstances in the Central African Republic and that more durable arrangements for MINUSCA will be proposed in my forthcoming report on the Central African Republic.

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**

---