



Security Council

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Letter dated 16 June 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 the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, 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 Friday, 12 June 2020.

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

(Signed) **Nicolas de Rivière**
President of the Security Council



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

[Original: English and French]

I would like to thank the Council for this opportunity to brief it by video-teleconference on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

This meeting is being held against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has disrupted the lives of citizens as well as the functioning of States and regional institutions in Central Africa. The subregion recorded its first case of COVID-19 on 6 March. To date, all 11 countries members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) have been affected. As of 11 June, a total of 21,929 laboratory-confirmed cases and 462 deaths had been reported, according to the World Health Organization.

A major consequence of the pandemic is the economic crisis. According to projections made by ECCAS experts, a 2.3 per cent contraction in growth is to be expected in Central Africa owing to the pandemic. This situation disproportionately affects the subregion of Central Africa, where many countries are oil producers. The slowdown in economic activities due to COVID-19 deprives States of the resources that they need to address the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic, with the risk of creating social unrest. As Governments are forced to choose between urgent public-health expenditures and other priorities, they risk lacking the resources needed for the smooth functioning of national institutions and the financing of crucial reforms.

I am pleased to note, however, that Central Africa's Governments and regional institutions have been able to adapt to the new crisis context. They ensure the continuity of certain crucial activities. Thus, following the adoption in December 2019 of an ambitious reform aimed at strengthening its effectiveness and modernizing its structures, ECCAS is currently setting up its new structures. The extraordinary ministerial meeting held on 3 and 4 June provided an opportunity to discuss the progress made in the implementation of the institutional reform as well as the situation in the Central African Republic and regional efforts to counter COVID-19.

The meeting adopted the four axes of a regional response strategy to combat COVID-19 and its implications in Central Africa. The four axes include, first, preventing the spread of the virus; secondly, limiting the death rate and managing positive cases; thirdly, addressing the socioeconomic and security impact of COVID-19; and, fourthly, responding to the cross-border security issues created by the pandemic. An extraordinary summit of Heads of State and Government is expected to be held in July via video-teleconference.

UNOCA remains operational despite the pandemic and continues to mobilize the relevant United Nations entities to support the subregional organization during this crucial period of its evolution. To that end, a UNOCA-ECCAS working group has been set up. I also held two successive virtual meetings with the United Nations Resident Coordinators in the subregion recently to ensure the proper coordination of their efforts at the country level with regional initiatives, notably those taken by ECCAS. In addition, UNOCA has maintained regular contact with United Nations missions and regional offices, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the

Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi to promote coherence in United Nations efforts to promote peace and security in Central Africa.

The persistence of armed conflicts in some parts of Central Africa undermines our efforts to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19. A number of conflicts in the subregion continue despite the call launched by the Secretary-General on 23 March for a global ceasefire.

As far as human rights are concerned, I commend States for their efforts to limit the impact of the pandemic on economic and social rights, including by adopting financial measures to preserve employment and providing assistance to businesses and the most vulnerable segments of their populations. I also welcome the measures taken by some States in favour of prisoners, thus responding to the appeal by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the decongestion of prisons in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in detention centres. In some instances, restrictive measures have been adopted by Governments to prevent the spread of the virus that were perceived as affecting the exercise of certain fundamental freedoms. While acknowledging the need for such measures, it is also important for Governments to ensure that law-enforcement agents apply them carefully and proportionately and continue to abide by human rights principles and standards.

Unfortunately, in these trying times for the Governments and the peoples of Central Africa, terrorist and armed groups have continued to destabilize the subregion. I strongly condemn deliberate attacks on civilians and the destruction of private property and public infrastructure, including hospitals. I welcome the mobilization of the armies of Cameroon and Chad, including within the framework of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), to fight terrorism in the Lake Chad basin. Operation Wrath of Boma, launched by the Chadian army between late March and early April, seems to have considerably weakened Boko Haram. However, experience has shown that the countries of the region will be able to eradicate the group only through a well-coordinated strategy combining both military and non-military approaches, through the strengthening of the MNJTF and through initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of the crisis, respectively. I would therefore like to call for greater international support for the implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), although weakened, continues to kill and loot and to abduct civilians and children. During the reporting period, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was particularly affected. The fight against the LRA must be pursued to ensure that the gains made are not undermined. I therefore call on regional actors, including the African Union and ECCAS, as well as international partners, to strengthen their cooperation and mobilize the resources necessary to defeat the LRA, within the framework of the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the Lord's Resistance Army.

The pressing question of the impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa remains a major priority in our efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace in this subregion. UNOCA has taken steps to better understand that impact in order to systematically improve its analysis and conflict prevention activities and to develop partnerships in that regard.

The mounting threat of maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, where an increasing number of acts of piracy has been recorded in recent months, is also a top priority on our agenda. The fourth annual meeting of the senior officials of

the Economic Community of West African States, ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, in charge of the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, originally scheduled for 27 March, had to be postponed due to coronavirus-related restrictions. The meeting will provide an opportunity for strengthening regional coordination and cooperation, including through the Centre, which should be provided with the necessary capacity and means for its functioning and the implementation of its programmes.

In addition to attending to the above-mentioned regional challenges, the Central African States have also made efforts to improve good governance and respond to challenging internal situations that threaten their stability. In several countries, legal proceedings have been filed against prominent personalities over allegations of embezzlement of public resources. I would like to reaffirm UNOCA's support for the fight against corruption in Central Africa and urge States to ensure a fair trial for the accused.

In Cameroon, following the release of the Government's investigations into the Ngarbuh attack, the army announced yesterday that three military officers were charged with murder and remanded in custody at the Yaoundé military prison. This new development demonstrates the Government's commitment to bringing to justice those responsible for the killing of civilians in Ngarbuh in February.

In another development, on 8 June the Cameroon Network of Human Rights Organizations recommended that the Government set up an independent commission of inquiry into the death of journalist Samuel Ajiekah Abuwe, also known as Samuel Wazizi, calling for one similar to "the one that brilliantly operated following the tragic events of Ngarbuh in the North-West region". Several other national and international non-governmental organizations have made similar calls.

Additional steps taken in the implementation of the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue, held from 30 September to 4 October 2019, are included in the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2020/463), now before the Council. The launch on 3 April of a presidential programme for the reconstruction and development of the North-West and South-West regions is another significant step forward that should be consolidated through ongoing dialogue and the cessation of hostilities. I encourage the Committee to Follow up the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Major National Dialogue to continue to promote dialogue, including among the parties to the conflict, in order to ensure the protection of civilians and human rights and to create conditions for the reconstruction and development of the two regions.

I had the opportunity to discuss these issues with President Paul Biya during the audience he granted me in Yaoundé on 13 May. I am concerned about the ongoing obstacles to humanitarian access in the two regions and urge the Government and the humanitarian community to improve their coordination and cooperation in order to facilitate the delivery of much-needed assistance to the populations affected by the crisis.

In the Congo, I urge the authorities to take the necessary measures to build confidence in the dialogue platforms provided for by the Constitution, including the Conseil National du Dialogue, and invite other stakeholders to also participate in that platform in good faith.

I also welcome the efforts of Sao Tome and Principe to achieve consensual judicial reform aimed at ensuring the independence of the judiciary, fighting corruption and protecting the country from institutional instability. The United Nations supports the Government in that process, and I do maintain close contact with relevant stakeholders.

As is evident, Central Africa continues to face many challenges. We cannot yet accurately assess to what extent COVID-19 will exacerbate those challenges. However, the individual and collective measures taken by the countries of the subregion to contain the pandemic and meet the other challenges they face are encouraging and deserve the support of the international community.

Annex II

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations

I would like to thank Special Representative Fall for his insightful briefing.

We would like to start by adding our voice to the condolences expressed to the people of Burundi on the passing of President Nkurunziza.

The fight against the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is indeed a global challenge and we welcome the measures taken by the countries of Central Africa to mitigate its effects. Those countries must continue to strengthen regional cooperation.

In that regard, we welcome the various initiatives undertaken in the subregion. The efforts made by the Presidents of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to strengthen relations between the countries of the Great Lakes region is commendable. We hope that those diplomatic initiatives continue and that they serve to make progress on pending national and regional issues.

It is also a positive step that Cameroon has taken measures to implement the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue. We also applaud the adoption of the law on the promoting bilingualism, thereby affirming equal status to French and English, which will help protect the rights of citizens to access Government services in both languages.

Despite those positive developments, we remain concerned about the security situation in the Far North, North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, which are characterized by ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. We particularly regret the death of Cameroonian journalist Samuel Ajiekah Abuwe, also known as Samuel Wazizi, and hope that the facts related to his death are clarified and that those responsible are brought to justice. It is essential for the Cameroonian authorities to ensure that national and international human rights organizations and the media can work in the country unhindered.

In a wider context, we regret that the security situation in some parts of the subregion remains volatile due to the activities of armed groups. Extremist groups have ignored the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and instead escalated attacks while security forces were deployed as part of the response to COVID-19.

The attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army are particularly concerning. The consequences of such attacks are devastating for civilians, especially women and girls, who are disproportionately exposed to violent attacks and conflict-related sexual violence.

The region continues to suffer the adverse effects of climate change, which is threatening human security and livelihoods. Severe floods have led to displacement and have compounded the challenge of responding to the pandemic. We are pleased to hear that mitigating those adverse effects remains a priority for the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

The humanitarian situation in various parts of Central Africa continues to be troubling, especially in Cameroon, where the escalation of violence and insecurity negatively impacts the lives of civilians and humanitarian workers.

In conclusion, we welcome the good offices of UNOCA in promoting peaceful solutions in the subregion through dialogue, confidence-building and reconciliation among the countries. We would like to commend, in particular, Special Representative Fall, UNOCA and the Economic Community of Central African States for their efforts to promote peaceful solutions to the crises in the region.

Annex III

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson

I would like to thank Special Representative Fall for today's briefing to the Council on the invaluable work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in the Central African region.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2020/463) highlights a number of concerns for the Central African region and a number of threats to regional peace and security. The arrival of the pandemic has only made matters worse.

A pattern of terrorism and violent extremism persists in the area, with Boko Haram increasing its attacks in Chad and northern Cameroon. Targeting civilians and taking advantage of the pandemic by intensifying attacks is especially deplorable. Furthermore, I would like to condemn the attacks against humanitarian and medical services workers — people who are trying to alleviate the growing humanitarian crisis and save lives by curbing the spread of diseases, including measles, cholera and now, also the coronavirus disease. I would like to express my condolences to the people of Cameroon and Chad for those attacks.

Speaking of Cameroon, it is good to hear of the steps taken by the Government to implement the recommendations from the Major National Dialogue. However, it remains very worrying to hear of the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation, in particular the human rights violations and abuses committed against women and children. In the light of that and the pandemic, it is more important than ever to remove impediments to humanitarian access and to ensure that human rights organizations can work in the country without hindrance. Furthermore, there must be accountability for violations and abuses if we are to avoid the establishment of a culture of impunity, which would only breed more violence.

Estonia continues to support UNOCA's efforts in Cameroon to build political momentum towards reconciliation and peace. We hope that improvements in Cameroon's political situation will quickly pave the way for enhanced security and human rights in the country.

The complex and fragile situation in Central Africa is exacerbated by the effects of climate change, as is evident in the record floods that have affected hundreds of thousands of people in the region. There is no denying that climate change will continue to undermine international peace and security and that this threat will only increase without targeted action. We commend UNOCA for addressing this issue in the report.

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

[Original: English and French]

Central Africa has made some progress, but remains a fragile region with many political, security, humanitarian and human rights challenges. The very volatile situation in the Central African Republic is a case in point. The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic is being challenged by armed groups, and the pre-election period is fuelling political tensions. The Lake Chad basin faces the persistent threat of Boko Haram and despite commendable initiatives by countries in the region, the Gulf of Guinea remains the global epicentre of piracy.

The situation is all the more precarious since the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has not spared the region and is likely to have a significant socioeconomic impact. As several countries prepare to go to the polls, we must be fully aware of the risk of both political and security destabilization. The support of international partners is critical if we are to help Central African countries to contain those threats.

Following up on the call to action for Africa, launched on 15 April by President Macron and several African and European leaders, France has pledged €1.2 billion to support Africa in the fight against COVID-19. It has also launched an initiative within 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 and Cameroon have benefited from that measure.

France has also committed to a humanitarian air bridge between the European Union and several African countries in order to support the continuity of operations of humanitarian organizations and their participation in the response to COVID-19 at a time when border closures have caused major logistical difficulties. The first flight, on 8 May, was to the Central African Republic. The second flight, on 15 May, was to Sao Tome and Principe. On 8 and 9 June, the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, his Belgian counterpart and the European Commissioner for Crisis Management visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the occasion of the first flight of the air bridge, which is expected to carry nearly 40 tons of cargo and more than 100 humanitarian workers. In addition to that bilateral support, France is also supporting the United Nations humanitarian agencies present in the region. In that context, France is expected to contribute €4.5 million to the fight against COVID-19 in Africa. It is necessary to pursue concerted and cohesive action under the auspices of the United Nations. We must do more.

France also reiterates its full support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and safe and unhindered humanitarian access. There is no alternative to effectively combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annex V**Statement by the First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy**

We thank Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his assessment of the situation in the Central African region.

The Russian Federation consistently supports the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) as an important tool of preventive diplomacy. We believe that the good offices of Special Representative Fall are in high demand in the subregion. I would also like to express our condolences to our Burundian friends with regard to the death of President Pierre Nkurunziza. We are all deeply saddened by that loss.

Central African countries face complex challenges. In recent months, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has been added to the list. In that regard, we note with satisfaction the information, contained in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2020/463), that timely measures have been taken to stop the spread of COVID-19. It is clear that much remains to be done, but we see movement in the right direction.

We also consider it extremely important that the countries and organizations of the region play a key role when it comes to crisis prevention and conflict resolution.

We welcome commitment of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to finalizing its institutional reform, which is aimed at strengthening the organization's potential.

We are closely following the developments in the Central African Republic. We support the efforts of the country's leadership, primarily President Touadera, aimed at stabilizing the situation, which is of particular importance in the context of the upcoming elections. The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic of 6 February 2019 has already played a positive role and remains the basis for further steps towards resolving the situation in the country. Russia will continue to closely support the process of national reconciliation and coordinate efforts with those who are involved in searching for ways to normalize the situation.

We are closely following the developments in Cameroon. The issue of the Anglophone provinces did not arise yesterday. It has deep historical roots. A solution to the accumulated problems can be found only at the negotiating table and through upholding human rights and ensuring the rule of law. We urge all Cameroonian parties to exercise maximum restraint and abandon all use of violence. We hope that the agreed initiatives will be implemented in full soon.

In conclusion, we would recall that the challenges and threats that Central Africa is encountering are closely interconnected and that the States of the subregion are interdependent. Destabilization of the situation in one country may reduce the security in the States neighbouring that country. It is therefore extremely important the line between prevention and interference in internal affairs not be crossed.

Annex VI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, Kais Kabtani**

I have the pleasure of delivering this statement on behalf of the three African States members of the Security Council, namely, the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

Let me first express our appreciation to Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) for his comprehensive and informative briefing on the situation in Central Africa and on the activities of the Office. We commend the work carried out by UNOCA in promoting peace in the region through its good offices, mediation and preventive diplomacy, as well as its efforts in supporting election processes in several countries and capacity-building activities in several fields.

The situation in Central Africa has witnessed significant positive progress. However, the situation remains volatile and the region continues to face a number of political, economic, social, humanitarian and security challenges, which unfortunately have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the countries of the region aimed at mitigating the impact of the pandemic, especially on the most vulnerable populations, and we share their concerns with respect to the need for a more coordinated, solidarity-based response in addressing the economic and social impacts of the pandemic, both at the regional and international levels.

We took note with satisfaction of the positive response of one armed group in Cameroon to the appeal of both the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for an immediate global ceasefire in the wake of COVID-19, and we look forward to seeing similar steps taken that will further enhance peace and security in the region and reflect the shared aspiration of the African continent to achieving the noble objective of silencing the guns.

We welcome the positive dynamics in Central Africa and the continued progress towards improving relations among its States, especially Angola, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We specifically commend the efforts of the Republic of Angola in fighting corruption and in implementing institutional reforms.

The A3+1 also praises the Government of Cameroon for taking its first steps towards implementing the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue, in particular by granting special status to the North-West and South-West regions of the country. However, we express our concern at the continuation of violence in the Far North, North-West and South-West regions, and we call on all parties to refrain from acts of violence and to, instead, turn to dialogue as the sole means of resolving their disputes.

We take note of the holding of legislative and municipal elections in Cameroon, but we deplore the incidents of violence that marked those elections and appeal to the authorities of Cameroon to further work towards maintaining peace and security. In this respect, we call on all armed actors to refrain from attacks against civilians and to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law.

While we share the Secretary-General's concern about the tense situation in Chad, especially with regard to intercommunal violence, we are nevertheless looking forward to the holding of the legislative and presidential elections in this country. We are also looking forward to the next presidential elections in Republic of the Congo, which are scheduled for March 2021.

With regard to the situation in the Pool region, we welcome the easing of tensions thanks to the efforts led by the Peacebuilding Fund, and we take this opportunity to encourage all stakeholders to implement the comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme as a prerequisite for a long-lasting peace in the region.

We encourage the steps being taken by the Government of Equatorial Guinea towards political rapprochement, which have led, inter alia, to the release of a number of detainees from opposition parties, and we welcome the recent dynamics that characterized the bilateral relations between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon in efforts aimed at resolving their border dispute through the International Court of Justice.

We also salute the confidence-building measures taken by Sao Tome and Principe in the framework of its ongoing efforts toward strengthening dialogue among all political stakeholders.

While we acknowledge the positive dynamics in the political situation across Central Africa, we remain concerned with the security situation prevailing in the region, in particular the continued attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram, the high number of civilian fatalities resulting from these attacks and the high risk of conflict-related sexual violence. We are even more concerned at the unresponsiveness of extremist groups to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, and we strongly deplore the terrorist activities of the Lord's Resistance Army, which has undertaken several attacks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Maritime security is another source of concern. The Gulf of Guinea has become the centre of worldwide piracy and armed robbery by terrorist groups. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by the commitment of the leaders of the region to the importance of sustained bilateral cooperation in dealing with this issue.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the effects of climate change and natural disasters on security and stability in the region. Climate-change effects have triggered displacements hampering the ongoing efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, we support the efforts of the relevant bodies of the United Nations aimed at systematically integrating climate-change and natural-resource management aspects into conflict prevention, mediation, peacebuilding and development processes in the region.

The subregion continues to face humanitarian, socioeconomic and human rights challenges that have exacerbated the humanitarian and human rights crises and triggered displacements and large waves of refugees. We appreciate Cameroon's efforts aimed at hosting thousands of refugees and asylum seekers from the region. However, we express our concern at the ongoing crisis in the Lake Chad basin that has led to the displacement of thousands of people in Chad, the Niger and Nigeria.

We emphasize the importance of cooperation between the Governments of the region and such regional, subregional and international organizations as the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and other relevant actors. We stress the importance of the ongoing coordination between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and welcome the political coordination meetings between these two United Nations bureaux aimed at supporting synergies across mandated activities, particularly in the field of maritime security and the fight against terrorism and organized crime.

In conclusion, the A3+1 reiterate their continued support for the efforts and activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General and his able team in the fulfilment of the Office's mandate as they aim to further enhance peace, security and sustainable development in the Central African region.

Annex VII

Statement by the Political Coordinator of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, David Clay

First of all, we wish to express our condolences to the Government and the people of Burundi upon the recent death of President Nkurunziza.

We would like to express our appreciation for the work the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) is undertaking across Central Africa to support and promote peace, stability and security in the region. Although there has been progress in a number of areas, countries across Central Africa continue to face serious political and security challenges that could be exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has set out for us this morning. It remains vital that all countries continue to work together to mitigate the spread of the virus in ways that will strengthen rather than undermine peace and security and that will guarantee the protection of civilians. We should ensure that our response is built upon the protection and promotion of human rights, inclusive and resilient economic recovery, and the maintenance of international peace and security.

The United Kingdom particularly welcomes the ongoing efforts of UNOCA in conflict prevention and mediation efforts across the subregion. We encourage the Office to continue to enhance its work on early-warning analysis and greater coordination with United Nations country teams in the subregion.

The United Kingdom shares UNOCA's continuing concerns over the situation in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon. High levels of violence are having tragic yet preventable consequences for civilians. We welcome the Secretary-General's call on armed actors to refrain from attacks against civilians in Cameroon and Special Representative Fall's visit to the country, which focused on the crisis in the country's North-West and South-West regions and on elections. The United Kingdom continues to call for restraint, an end to the violence and unhindered humanitarian access to affected populations. We urge United Nations agencies to scale up their rapid-response mechanisms, with increasing focus on the issue of gender-based violence.

We welcome steps taken by the Government of Cameroon to implement recommendations of the Major National Dialogue that took place in October 2019, including passing legislation granting special status to the North-West and South-West regions. Further inclusive dialogue remains vital to progress towards a just, peaceful and durable resolution of the crisis that meets the reasonable demands of the moderate majority. The United Kingdom continues to urge all parties to remain engaged in peacebuilding efforts. Human rights violations and abuses in the North-West and South-West regions must stop.

The Government of Cameroon's joint investigation with the United Nations into the appalling attacks in Ngarbuh in February and the publication of the findings, which attributed responsibility to Cameroonian soldiers, were welcome steps. We urge the Government of Cameroon to maintain this momentum and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice. It is critical that human rights, including freedom of speech, association and assembly, are respected and that all reports of human rights violations and abuses are investigated and prosecuted.

The right to engage in political debate and commentary must be protected as it is the cornerstone of any democracy. We encourage all of Cameroon's international partners, including UNOCA, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human

Rights, and the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Commonwealth, to continue to support efforts aimed at restoring peace in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon.

The situation in the Lake Chad basin also remains of concern. The spread of COVID-19 and the drawdown of humanitarian actors will compound the worsening humanitarian situation there. The civilian population in areas controlled by non-State armed groups are at particular risk, and humanitarian actors must be able to gain access to these populations in order to prevent further deaths from malnutrition and treatable diseases.

The United Kingdom continues to recognize the importance of regional cooperation in supporting stability in the Lake Chad basin, including through the Multinational Joint Task Force. We express our condolences for the innocent lives lost in attacks by terrorists and violent extremist groups, including the dozens of civilians reportedly killed in Nigeria's Borno state on 9 June. We hope that all relevant international partners will continue to support efforts aimed at tackling terrorism and stabilizing the region.

Turning to the situation in Burundi, the United Kingdom welcomes the broadly peaceful conduct of elections on 20 May, although we have concerns about the fairness of the electoral process. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of all actors working to preserve a peaceful climate during this period of transition. We look forward to working with the President-elect and hope to see Burundi forge a path towards stability, democracy and prosperity.

Finally, we remain concerned about the security and humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic and the efforts of armed groups to undermine the peace agreement and progress towards stability. The United Kingdom calls on all armed groups to adhere to the peace agreement and to abide by the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire in the fight against COVID-19 ahead of milestone elections in December.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Cherith Norman-Chalet

I thank Special Representative Fall for his continued efforts aimed at bringing lasting peace and stability to the Central African region. We very much appreciate his consistent and frank communication with the Security Council.

Before I continue with my statement today, however, I would also like to extend the condolences of the United States to the people of Burundi on the untimely passing of President Pierre Nkurunziza. The disturbing news of his death comes as he was poised to step down at the age of 55 to allow the peaceful transition of presidential power in his country. During the seven-day mourning period, we hope the people of Burundi know that they are in our thoughts and prayers.

The United States is encouraged to hear of improving and deepening coordination among Central African States on such issues as the response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, combatting cross-border armed groups, and reform of the Economic Community of Central African States. At the same time, we are especially concerned about the impact of COVID-19 in Central Africa. The effects of the crisis on the economies of the region — most notably, those dependent upon oil revenues to support growth — underscores the region's vulnerability to global shocks.

The United States is committed to supporting COVID-19 response efforts in the subregion, and we share the concern regarding the ability of national health systems to prevent the spread, especially in countries already experiencing humanitarian crises. Therefore, we have committed more than \$1 billion for emergency health, humanitarian, economic and development assistance specifically aimed at helping Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations fight the pandemic. Included in that amount is approximately \$100 million exclusively for Central African countries.

Today, the United States would also like to direct the Council's attention to the situation in Cameroon, where the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports there are nearly 680,000 people displaced in the North-West and South-West regions of the country owing to the conflict there. We are encouraged to learn that some armed groups in Cameroon have responded to the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic will only worsen the country's deeply concerning humanitarian crisis, and we urge full humanitarian access be provided to public health responders.

We are also deeply concerned about the death of journalist Samuel Wazizi, who was held for over 300 days in military detention. It is important that there be an independent investigation into his death and that the results be made public.

Looking forward, we welcome the reporting of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fall on the electoral developments that will play out during the remainder of 2020 and into 2021. As we all know, elections can have an outsized impact on security, so we appreciate his efforts to relay those developments in a timely and comprehensive manner.

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

It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Indonesia and Viet Nam.

At the outset, we would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall, for his briefing.

This meeting has been convened at a very critical moment, while most countries in the region are in the middle of their electoral cycles. The years 2020 and 2021 are pivotal for the upcoming period in the Central African region. We welcome the steps taken by countries of the region to preserve peace and security, promote national dialogue among different political actors, settle border disputes, as well as improve relations among countries.

However, it is still worrisome to see that the region remains shrouded in persistent insecurity and instability. The activities of cross-border armed groups, the illicit exploitation of and trade in natural resources, the spread of deadly diseases, internal displacement, the adverse effects of climate change, among others, undermine the above-mentioned positive efforts. We strongly condemn the continued attacks carried out by Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army in the region and would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest sympathy to the affected population.

At present, with the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the situation has become even more precarious and demands special attention. We support the call for an immediate ceasefire by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in order to facilitate the fight against COVID-19, as well as to further consolidate peacemaking efforts.

Against that backdrop, Indonesia and Viet Nam would like to emphasize the following points.

First, we would like to highlight the critical importance of addressing the root causes of instability in the region. To that end, there should be a comprehensive and collective set of sustainable measures, which could include supporting ongoing diplomatic and political efforts, enhancing the reconciliation process at the national and regional levels, addressing threats caused by armed groups, strengthening the governance of natural resources, providing development opportunities for countries and ensuring equitable and sustainable development for all.

As electoral processes are under way, we share the view of the Secretary-General about the need for stronger partnership between Governments and various political and social actors in order to ensure successful elections. Trust and confidence are indispensable and could go a long way in consolidating a strong foundation for sustained stability and development for the people of Central Africa.

Secondly, as two South-East Asian nations, Indonesia and Viet Nam fully understand the importance of regional and subregional cooperation. Achieving the motto of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — “One Vision, One Identity, One Community” — is the result of sustained efforts of all countries in our region over several decades. With shared goals and responsibility to our peoples, we can and will achieve a lot together, including ensuring regional peace, security, stability and prosperity.

We strongly believe in the potential of Central Africa and its peoples. We see the leading and integral role played by the African Union and the Economic Community

of Central African States (ECCAS). We welcome the adoption by ECCAS of an institutional reform package in December 2019 that enhances the capacity of Central African countries to better address their peace and security challenges. We also welcome the efforts to improve relations and cooperation among Member States, especially those of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ease tension between Rwanda and Uganda and the swift action by Member States to control the spread of COVID-19. The strong political will of Central African countries should be coupled with greater coordination within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture and with support from United Nations entities and other international partners.

Thirdly, we call on all international partners to strengthen their technical and financial support to countries in the region through bilateral and multilateral frameworks. We would also like to stress the obligation of the Security Council to continue providing support to countries in the region in accordance with its mandate.

To conclude, we highly commend the sustained efforts to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security in the region made by the Special Representative and by all United Nations personnel across the various missions, including over 1,600 uniformed personnel from ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam. We all aspire to peace, stability, prosperity and development for the people of Central Africa.
