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Letter dated 29 June 2022 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2588 (2021) addressed to the President of the Security Council

The members of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2588 (2021) have the honour to transmit herewith, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 2588 (2021), the final report on their work.

The attached report was provided to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic on 10 June 2022 and was considered by the Committee on 24 June 2022.

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

(Signed) Tathiana **Flores Acuna**
Coordinator

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Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2588 (2021)

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Summary

The period under review (June 2021–May 2022) was marked by the 16 September 2021 adoption of the Luanda road map by the Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region under the auspices of Angola and Rwanda. This diplomatic effort resulted in a unilateral ceasefire declaration by President Faustin Archange Touadera on 15 October 2021, which was followed by the organization of a republican dialogue from 21 to 27 March 2022 in Bangui. The dialogue excluded the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC) and was boycotted by the main leaders of the political opposition. A rise in diplomatic tensions between certain partner countries and regional and international financial institutions on one side and the Central African Government on the other side could negatively influence the prospects of a lasting resolution to the crisis.

The period was also marked by an increase in incidents of injury or death of civilians caused by improvised explosive devices and anti-personnel mines, likely to have spilled over from other conflicts in the region. Leading the CPC coalition, the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) has extended its area of operations towards the Sudanese border, probably to control natural resources (diamonds and gold) and arms trafficking routes. With regards to natural resources, a positive development has been the increasing volume of diamonds from Kimberley Process compliant zones in the western Central African Republic entering the official trade, thus reducing trafficking. Meanwhile, the prospect of the Kimberley Process readmitting diamond areas in the east remains doubtful.

Despite the ceasefire, armed hostilities continued between the national armed forces, supported by bilaterally deployed security personnel, and armed groups affiliated with the CPC coalition. Ongoing conflict continues to be accompanied by serious violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties. Civilians, and Fulani and Muslim communities in particular, have disproportionately been victims of indiscriminate killings. The multiple attacks suffered by humanitarian personnel have made the Central African Republic one of the most challenging places to work for aid workers, limiting humanitarian access amid ever-increasing needs. Moreover, the recruitment, use and abuse of children by armed groups, in addition to cases of conflict-related sexual violence, are still ubiquitous violations of international humanitarian law.

I. Background

Mandate and travel

1. On 29 July 2021, the Security Council adopted resolution [2588 \(2021\)](#), by which it extended until 31 July 2022 the arms embargo, travel ban and asset freeze in the Central African Republic. By the same resolution, the Council also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, consisting of five experts, until 31 August 2022. The Panel was mandated, inter alia, to collect information on the implementation of sanctions measures and on individuals and entities that may meet the designation criteria in paragraphs 20 to 22 of resolution [2399 \(2018\)](#) and extended in paragraph 5 of resolution [2507 \(2020\)](#). By resolution [2588 \(2021\)](#), the Council requested the Panel to provide to the Council, after discussion with the Committee, a midterm report no later than 31 January 2022, a final report no later than 30 June 2022, and progress updates, as appropriate.
2. On 18 April 2022, the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Committee, appointed three members of the Panel, covering the regional, arms and humanitarian mandates (see [S/2022/329](#)). A fourth member, covering the finance and natural resources mandate, was appointed on 1 June 2022 (see [S/2022/451](#)). Unlike preceding mandates, no fifth expert (on armed groups) was appointed.
3. As a result of the delayed appointment of its members, the Panel was unable to travel prior to drafting the present final report, but commenced its travel to the Central African Republic on 1 June 2022 and intends to travel further in the remainder of the mandate in order to be able to submit a confidential progress update to the Committee in late August 2022. As a result of limited time and the fact that no fifth expert was appointed, the Panel is not able to submit to the Committee a final report consistent with its established standards, with detailed findings on sanctions implementation and investigative case studies and in each expert's area of expertise. Instead, the Panel is submitting a streamlined report providing general developments that have a bearing on its mandate.

Cooperation

4. In the first month of its mandate, the Panel addressed two official communications to the Government of the Central African Republic and interviewed and received information and documents from several Central African authorities. The Coordinator of the Panel also had a preliminary informal exchange with the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan. The Panel also had numerous bilateral meetings with Member States during the period 9 May to 24 May 2022, and on 12 May 2022, the Panel presented its workplan to the members of the Committee. The Panel would like to thank the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for its support and collaboration.

Methodology

5. The Panel endeavours to ensure compliance with the standards recommended by the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions in its December 2006 report ([S/2006/997](#)). While it intends to be as transparent as possible, in situations in which identifying sources would expose them or others to unacceptable safety risks, the Panel intends to withhold identifying information.
6. The Panel safeguards the independence of its work against any effort to undermine its impartiality or create a perception of bias. The Panel approved the text, conclusions and recommendations in the present report on the basis of consensus prior to its transmission by the Panel's Coordinator to the President of the Security Council.

II. Regional and international dimensions

7. The period under review was strongly marked by tensions between the Central African Republic and Chad, on the one hand, and between the Central African Republic and the Central African Monetary Union (CEMAC) on the other. Despite these tensions, the countries of the subregion remain committed to revitalizing the peace and reconciliation process.

A. Suspicion of destabilization of Chad from the Central African Republic

8. On 17 February 2022, tensions were running high in the capital of Chad, N'Djamena, following a soundtrack being circulated on social media in which the Chadian rebel leader of the Union des forces républicaines (UFR), Timan Erdimi, in exile in Qatar, supposedly asked Abdoukassim Algoni Tidjani, Special Advisor to President Faustin Archange Toudera, to convince “Russians” to come to Chad to “drive out Mahamat (Déby) and France”.¹ Faced with this alleged threat to internal security, Chadian parliamentarians called on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chad, Cherif Mahamat Zene, to summon the Central African ambassador to Chad to explain this alleged collusion.

9. The spokesman of the Central African presidency, Albert Yaloké Mokpeme, rejected any involvement of Bangui, arguing that Abdoukassim Algoni Tidjani, who had joined the Government under the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of 6 February 2019, had been removed from office on 19 February 2021.² Mokpeme also reassured N'Djamena that the Central African Republic would not serve as a rear base to conduct destabilizing activities in Chad. Alexandre Ivanov, Director General of the Officers Union for International Security (S/2021/569, para. 65) and a representative of the Russian instructors in the Central African Republic, rejected allegations of his and his colleagues' direct participation in a coup d'état supposedly foreseen in the Congo, referring to similar false allegations concerning other countries.³

10. Recent tensions between the two countries represent a setback in bilateral relations following the visit of a Chadian government delegation to Bangui on 27 December 2021 to discuss the conclusions of the last bilateral joint commission meeting of December 2019 regarding the reopening of the border that has been officially closed since 2014 (see S/2020/662, para. 96).

B. Formalization of cryptocurrency

11. For almost two years, the economic and financial situation of the Central African Republic has shown little reason for optimism. The country's main economic and financial partners have suspended their budget support, estimated at nearly 60 per cent of the national budget each year. Faced with this handicap and in the hope of meeting the country's commitments, on 22 April 2022, Central African parliamentarians adopted by acclamation cryptocurrency, in particular Bitcoin, as the

¹ See Agence France-Presse, “Des paramilitaires russes au Tchad?”, Voice of America-Africa, 17 February 2022; and Radio France Internationale, “Tchad: le chef rebelle de l'UFR voudrait faire intervenir Wagner, selon un enregistrement”, 15 February 2022.

² See Radio France Internationale, “Bangui rejette tout contact avec le chef rebelle tchadien Timan Erdimi”, 17 February 2022.

³ See Centrafrique-Presse, “Affaire conversation Timan Erdimi avec Aboulkassim: mise au point d'Alexandre Ivanov”, press communiqué, 16 February 2022.

reference currency being legal tender next to the CFA franc. This was followed by its promulgation on 27 April by President Faustin Archange Touadera, who stated that “any economic agent is required to accept cryptocurrencies as a form of payment, when they are proposed, and to have automatic and instant convertibility of cryptocurrencies used throughout the entire Central African Republic”.⁴

12. The operationalization of cryptocurrency is likely to be very challenging considering the realities in the country. The Central African Republic does not have basic technological and energy infrastructure such as electricity, optical fibres, blockchain and wide Internet coverage to make bitcoin use by the population possible throughout the country.⁵ In addition, there has been a lack of awareness-raising among the population.⁶

13. In a letter dated 29 April 2022, the Governor of the Bank of Central African States, Abbas Mahamat Tolli, asked the Central African Minister of Finance and Budget, Hervé Ndoba, to cancel the cryptocurrency law. The Governor argued that the law violates the commitments of the Monetary Union of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) resulting from international and Community agreements, duly ratified by the Central African Republic and taking precedence over any national law.⁷ On 6 May, the Central African Banking Commission held a special session in Yaoundé and decided to set up a monitoring mechanism for cryptocurrency transactions in all financial institutions regulated by the Central African Banking Commission.⁸

14. The Panel considers that this new development between the Central African Republic and its financial partners is likely to have a negative impact on recovery efforts to end the crisis, as part of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. In relation to this, the Panel also notes that on his return from a mission to New York in April 2022, Minister Ndoba announced his intention to reduce the budget of the sectoral ministries in the Central African Republic from 40 to 60 per cent. Added to this are the demands of the Bretton Woods institutions and other traditional financial partners to promote greater transparency in government expenditures, the defence budget in particular.

C. Diplomatic relations with France under pressure

15. The period under review was also marked by diplomatic tensions between the Central African Republic and France. On 20 April 2022, Central African parliamentarians questioned Minister for Foreign Affairs Sylvie Baipo-Temon about the harassment of Central African officials during their stays in France and their difficulties in obtaining visas at the French consulate in Bangui.⁹

⁴ Central African Republic, Law No. 22.004 of 22 April 2022 governing cryptocurrency.

⁵ According to the World Bank 15.5 per cent of the population in the Central African Republic has access to electricity, see World Bank, “Access to electricity”, World Bank Global Electrification database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?view=map> (accessed on 7 June 2022).

⁶ See Jean-Fernand Koena, “RCA: l’adoption du bitcoin jugée précipitée par certains”, Deutsche Welle, 29 April 2022.

⁷ See Corbeau News Centrafrique, “Cryptomonnaie: lettre du gouverneur de la BEAC au ministre centrafricain des finances Hervé Ndoba”, 6 May 2022.

⁸ Central African bank regulator reminds states of cryptocurrency ban, see Reuters, “Central African bank regulator reminds states of crypto ban”, 13 May 2022.

⁹ See Carol Valade, “Centrafrique: la cheffe de la diplomatie interpellée à l’Assemblée sur les relations avec la France”, Radio France Internationale, 21 April 2022, available at <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20220421-centrafrique-la-cheffe-de-la-diplomatie-interpell%C3%A9e-%C3%A0-l-assembl%C3%A9e-sur-les-relations-avec-la-france>.

16. Moreover, on 21 February 2022, four legionnaires of the French army operating under the MINUSCA mandate were arrested at Bangui airport, after having accompanied their superior who was going on leave.¹⁰ The incident coincided with the return of President Touadera on the same flight. The Central African authorities charged the four with attempted assassination of President Touadera. Following intense negotiations, the four were released. MINUSCA and the French embassy in Bangui both condemned the arrest, the latter also condemning the disinformation on certain social networks to which the incident gave rise.¹¹ The Bangui Prosecutor's Office closed the case without further action.

17. MINUSCA has also been the target of heavy criticism from civil society and government representatives. On 10 November 2021, Blaise Didacien Kossimatchi, coordinator of the National Galaxy platform, a Central African civil society organization, organized a public demonstration during which activists called for the withdrawal of the MINUSCA and French troops based at Bangui M'Poko airport. The demonstration was in part a response to an incident that had taken place 10 days earlier, when elements of the presidential guard had opened fire on a United Nations bus that had entered the perimeter of the residence of the President of the Republic, injuring 10 unarmed Egyptian police officers. In its escape, the bus hit and killed a 14-year-old girl.¹² Also, in the context of this incident, Simplicie Mathieu Sarandji, President of the National Assembly, accused certain MINUSCA contingents of inaction.¹³

D. Revitalization of the Luanda road map

18. On 14 January 2022 the Rwandan Minister for Foreign Affairs and Angolan Secretary of State for External Relations, who are responsible for monitoring the road map for peace in the Central African Republic under the auspices of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, paid a working visit to Bangui to monitor the road map's implementation following its signature on 16 September 2021 in Luanda. The meeting resulted in recommendations on an international investigation on the use of anti-personnel mines and enhancing collaboration with international partners on the road map, expressing further the intention to reconvene on a quarterly basis (see S/2022/119, para. 9). The opening of negotiations with armed groups and the organization of republican dialogue were also on the agenda. This occurred after Bangui had denounced talks held in the town of Moundou in southern Chad¹⁴ and conducted by Chadian and occasionally Angolan officials with Coalition des patriotes

¹⁰ See Carol Valade, "En Centrafrique, l'arrestation de quatre légionnaires de l'armée française révélatrice des tensions entre Bangui et ses partenaires occidentaux", *Le Monde*, 25 February 2022.

¹¹ See United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), "Statement attributable to the spokesperson for the Secretary-General on CAR", 23 February 2022; and La France à Bangui, Twitter post at 4:21 p.m., 21 February 2022, available at <https://twitter.com/i/web/status/1495870983537926147>.

¹² For responses to this incident from MINUSCA and the Government of the Central African Republic, see MINUSCA, "La MINUSCA condamne fermement une attaque contre ses casques bleus", 2 November 2021; Central African Republic, Ministry of Communication and Media, Facebook post: communiqué du Gouvernement suite à l'incident du 1er Novembre 2021 à proximité de la résidence du Président de la République Chef de l'Etat, 3 November 2021, available at www.facebook.com/gouv.cf/posts/3066723693567369; and Maurizio Guerrero, "Unarmed peacekeepers were shot at and a girl was killed: will the truth ever be known?", *Pass Blue*, 14 December 2021.

¹³ See Carol Valade, "Centrafrique: le parti au pouvoir émet des critiques envers la MINUSCA", *Radio France Internationale*, 10 November 2021.

¹⁴ See Achille Mbog Pibasso, "Centrafrique-Tchad: la CEEAC parviendra-t-elle à désamorcer la bombe Bozizé?", *Financial Afrik*, 8 November 2021.

pour le changement (CPC) representatives in mid-2021.¹⁵ More recently, on 4 June 2022, Bangui hosted a strategic review meeting on the peace process in the Central African Republic under the aegis of Angola and Rwanda.¹⁶

III. National political dynamics

19. Despite a unilateral ceasefire announced on 15 October 2021 by President Touadera,¹⁷ armed hostilities continued between the national armed forces, supported by bilaterally deployed security personnel, and armed groups affiliated with CPC, mainly in the northwest and centre of the country.

A. Non-inclusive republican dialogue

20. In addition to the 15 October 2021 ceasefire declaration, another dividend from the Luanda road map was the organization of a republican dialogue by the Central African authorities from 21 to 27 March 2022. However, the dialogue excluded armed groups gathered within CPC and the main leaders of the democratic opposition. The total lifting of the arms embargo was among the more than 600 recommendations proposed by the 450 participants and included in the final report.¹⁸

21. During the dialogue, the participants of the ruling Mouvement des cœurs unis (MCU) party had also proposed an amendment of the Constitution which would allow President Touadera to run for a third term in 2025. This proposal drew protests from the opposition. Crépin Mboli Goumba, president of the opposition Parti africain pour une transformation radicale et l'intégration des États (PATRIE) party, stated that his members would be "intransigent" in blocking the change if this proposal were included.¹⁹

22. Government opponent Crépin Mboli-Goumba²⁰ expressed the view that the one-week meeting ended without concrete progress. The platform of democratic opposition parties Coalition de l'opposition démocratique 2020 (COD-2020) and Martin Ziguélé²¹ of the Mouvement de libération du peuple centrafricain (MLPC) in particular, justified boycotting the dialogue because, on the one hand, the Government did not take into account its demands, including the participation of CPC, and on the other hand, the length of the meeting was considered very short.

¹⁵ Confidential report, 13 August 2022.

¹⁶ Other parties to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation took part at this strategic meeting, namely: representatives of the armed groups party to the Political Agreement, civil society organizations, the African Union and Economic Community of Central African States, among others. See MINUSCA, "Le processus de paix en rca objet d'une revue stratégique", 4 June 2022.

¹⁷ See Agence France-Presse, "Centrafrique: le Président Touadéra décrète un 'cessez-le-feu unilatéral' avec les rebelles", *Le Monde*, 15 October 2021. On the reaction of the International Conference on the Great Lake Region see <https://icglr.org/index.php/en/135-laast-news/880-declaration-on-car-ceasefire-agreement>.

¹⁸ See Oubangui Médias, "Centrafrique: synthèse des recommandations issues du dialogue républicain", 20 March 2022.

¹⁹ See Judicael Yongo and Aaron Ross, "Allies of Central African Republic president propose removing term limits", Constitution Net, 1 June 2022.

²⁰ See Corbeau News Centrafrique, "RCA: le PATRIE de Monsieur Crépin Mboli-Goumba se retire du dialogue Républicain", 31 October 2021.

²¹ Esdras Ndikumana, "Martin Ziguélé (RCA): 'le dialogue sans les groupes armés, est une chose complètement vide de sens'", Radio France Internationale, 10 November 2021.

B. Appointment of a new prime minister

23. On 7 February 2022, President Touadera appointed a new Prime Minister, Félix Moloua, to replace Henri Marie Dondra, amid internal tensions in the ruling MCU party. The new Prime Minister also has the portfolio of the Minister of Economy, Planning and International Cooperation. All ministers of the former Government were renewed.²²

C. Postponement of local elections

24. During a meeting held in March 2022 by the National Electoral Authority, its President, Barthelemy Mathias Morouba, reported that local elections, scheduled for September 2022 and pending since 1988, had been postponed for financial reasons. A funding gap of \$9 million of a total budget of almost \$15 million identified in early February 2022 had not been closed.²³ According to Cyriaque Gonda, President of COD-2020, this postponement was predictable because of the country's cash flow and the absence of contributions from financial partners.

IV. Arms

25. On 12 September 2019, the Security Council adopted resolution [2488 \(2019\)](#), by which it eased the arms embargo, subjecting the provision to the Central African authorities of arms and ammunition with a calibre equal to or less than 14.5 mm to an advance notification instead of an exemption request (which requires the Committee's approval).²⁴ Three successive arms embargo resolutions adopted by the Council, namely [2507 \(2020\)](#), [2536 \(2020\)](#) and [2588 \(2021\)](#), further eased the embargo by exempting certain military vehicles, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars.²⁵ Despite the progressive easing of the arms embargo, the Government of the Central African Republic has continued to argue that the embargo unfairly affects the national armed forces, since armed groups continue to acquire weapons practically unhindered, and that it should be entirely lifted. This was highlighted again in the most recent letter dated 15 June 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council ([S/2021/573](#)) on the progress achieved on the key benchmarks and a letter dated 7 June 2022 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic addressed to the President of the Security Council.

26. In this context, it will be recalled that, in the first letter responding to the request by the Security Council that the Secretary-General provide an assessment on progress achieved on the key benchmarks ([S/2018/752](#)), the Secretary-General also recommended greater efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the arms embargo on armed groups. He further stressed the role of the Panel in tracing seized weapons and identifying their sources. In this connection, the Panel observes that acting in violation of the arms embargo has not appeared among the reasons for listing (narrative summaries) of any of the 14 individuals sanctioned to date.²⁶ In view of this observation and in follow-up to its previous mandate, the Panel intends to seek

²² See Agence France-Presse, "C. Africa appoints new PM to head same cabinet", *The East African*, 10 February 2022.

²³ The Government had allocated approximately \$2.8 million, the European Union \$2.9 million and Germany \$2 million (see [S/2022/119](#), para. 16).

²⁴ Since 12 September 2019, there have been nine notifications under the applicable paragraph 1 (g) of consecutive resolutions [2507 \(2020\)](#), [2536 \(2020\)](#) and [2588 \(2021\)](#) renewing the arms embargo.

²⁵ To know more about the record of easings of the arms embargo, see update on the progress achieved by the authorities of the Central African Republic on the key benchmarks (see [S/2021/573](#)).

²⁶ See www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/2127/sanctions-list-materials/summaries.

the necessary authorization and collaboration to inspect and trace weapons and ammunition seized by national armed forces and bilaterally deployed security personnel from CPC-affiliated armed groups (see S/2021/569, para. 69).

27. The Panel is concerned that, after the relative depletion of arms and ammunition stocks of CPC-aligned armed groups following intense fighting at the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021 (*ibid.*, para. 33 and annex 2.6), these groups will try to activate or reactive trafficking routes with neighbouring countries, particularly in the east. At the same time, military operations by the national armed forces and bilaterally deployed security personnel pose constraints to the rearmament of the armed groups. For instance, the Sikikédé-Nda weapons market on the Chadian border was allegedly destroyed during an operation in March 2022.²⁷ Also, tensions between armed groups, which had chosen to align with either the Government or CPC, are likely to continue to frustrate rearmament as previously reported by the Panel (*ibid.*, para. 31). Of note here in this context is the illness of sanctioned individual Haroun Gaye (CFi.007), a key player in CPC arms trafficking with the Sudan, which forced him to remain in Khartoum.²⁸

28. Another area of concern is the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, the use of which has sharply increased since their first appearance in Central African Republic in mid-2020. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, between January and March 2022, incidents involving improvised explosive devices caused the deaths of 7 civilians and injured 29, including 19 civilians.²⁹ In 2021, 44 such attacks³⁰ were recorded, killing 30 people, including 23 civilians, and injuring 48, including 30 civilians.³¹ This represents a marked increase compared with 2020, when there were two fatal attacks. The most affected regions are the northwest and west of the country, where 82 per cent of all attacks were recorded, although an increasing number of attacks have also been registered in the centre of the country in 2022.

29. The Panel also received reports that anti-personnel landmines continue to be discovered in the Central African Republic, as reported previously (*ibid.*, para. 82). One report from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs cites an incident in mid-March 2022 in which a truck contracted by a United Nations agency to transport building materials from Bocaranga to Bozoum hit an anti-tank mine near Ngoutéré (Ouham-Pendé Prefecture).³² Two people were killed, two injured and the truck was badly damaged. The same truck had hit another landmine in the same area in December 2021, injuring one person. The Panel received indications that anti-personnel mines used in the Central African Republic are similar to those having been used by successive rebel movements in Chad and violent extremist groups in northern Mali since 2013.

²⁷ Meeting with confidential United Nations source, Bangui, 3 June 2022.

²⁸ Interview with confidential source, 1 June 2022.

²⁹ See United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Central African Republic: the ever-growing threat of explosive devices”, 6 April 2022.

³⁰ These violent events are qualified as “attacks” by the Office for Disarmament Affairs. See www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/ieds2/.

³¹ See United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Central African Republic: situation report”, 1 June 2022.

³² United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Central African Republic: situation report”, 27 May 2022.

V. Natural resources

A. Diamond trade from Kimberley Process compliant zones in western Central African Republic

30. In 2021, official exports of rough diamonds from its nine Kimberley Process compliant sub-prefectures in the west of the Central African Republic doubled compared with 2020, reaching 103.647 carats, with a total value of \$11.4 million.³³ After exports had plummeted in 2018 owing to the closure of buying houses that proved unable to financially manage the lengthy export clearance under the Kimberley Process monitoring system, the time frame for the approval of legal exports was reduced in 2018 (see S/2018/1119, para. 141). In addition, at the Kimberley Process plenary meeting in New Delhi in 2019, the operational framework for resumption of the country's exports – adopted in 2015 following the temporary suspension of the Central African Republic in 2013 – was revised, replacing a system of monthly exports, previously reviewed by a tripartite monitoring team, with a post facto review of notified exports.³⁴

31. Besides the easing of Kimberley Process procedures, diamond exports accelerated as Compagnie Minière de l'Oubangui took over the position of Sodiam, which left the country at the end of 2017, as the leading diamond exporter. In addition, Badica, another leading diamond exporter prior to the 2013 temporary suspension, resumed its trading and exporting activities after the company was removed from the Committee's sanctions list on 5 April 2021. It can safely be said that the larger share of diamonds produced in the compliant sub-prefectures in the west of the country, representing at least half of the estimated 330,000 carats of national production,³⁵ is currently entering the legal supply chain.

32. Since the Kimberley Process monitoring team admitted three of the nine sub-prefectures proposed by the Government of the Central African Republic in 2018, no new "green" zones have been added. Both in 2020 and 2021, the Government submitted four additional sub-prefectures (Abba, Baoro, Bouar and Sosso-Nakombo) and the town of Gamboula, but these have yet to be accepted. The Panel received one report citing the movement in February 2022 of armed anti-balaka elements between Abba and Baoro 2, but these were supposedly travelling north to Ouham-Pendé Prefecture.³⁶

33. As cited in the aforementioned operational framework, the Panel stands ready to exchange relevant information with the national follow-up committee that was created by the Government of the Central African Republic to assess the security and compliance of proposed sub-prefectures in terms of the five criteria for readmission (state presence; implementation of monitoring mechanisms; absence of the systematic

³³ See Central African Republic, Ministry of Mines and Geology, "Rapport annuel 2021 République Centrafricaine", March 2022.

³⁴ See Permanent National Secretariat of the Kimberley Process, "Annex: operational framework for resumption of exports of rough diamonds from the Central African Republic" (n.d.).

³⁵ According to a study by the United States Geological Survey, the five compliant sub-prefectures in 2017 produced 160,500 carats. Three sub-prefectures were added in 2018, but these are less important in production. Therefore, total production from the nine compliant zones would not surpass 200,000 carats. See Peter G. Chirico and Sarah E. Bergstresser, "Diamond mining and conflict in the Central African Republic", April 2019.

³⁶ Confidential report, 17 February 2022.

presence of armed groups; freedom of movement; and no evidence of systematic fraud or smuggling of diamonds to or from the compliant zone to non-compliant zones).³⁷

34. The Panel also takes note of and welcomes the intention of a possible Kimberley Process review mission in 2022 to establish contact with the Government, MINUSCA, the Panel and other relevant bodies as mentioned in the final Kimberley Process communiqué, issued following its hybrid plenary meeting in Moscow from 8 to 12 November 2021.³⁸

B. Recent security issues in diamond mining areas in eastern Central African Republic

35. As the case in compliant and proposed diamond mining zones in western Central African Republic, the Government has since 2020 installed local follow-up committees in three of the four so-called priority zones in the east: Bria, Bangassou, Bakouma and Gambo (see map in annex 1). These are representations of the national committee tasked, inter alia, with assessing security and compliance and establishing and confirming the implementation of internal controls. The Government has not, however, proposed any of these zones in eastern Central African Republic for readmission.

36. The recent deterioration of the security situation in the mining area of Nzako, in the Bakouma sub-prefecture, has affected the diamond sector. On 21 May 2022, the armed group Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) led by sanctioned individual Ali Darassa (CFi.015) attacked the town, killing eight national armed forces soldiers.³⁹ On 22 May, the city mayor and four diamond collectors were reportedly taken hostage and released after ransom payments.⁴⁰

37. Currently leading what remains of the CPC coalition,⁴¹ the UPC has also extended its presence in diamond areas north of Bria in the sub-prefectures of Ouadda and Sam Ouandja in early May 2022. These areas are home to equally important diamond mining sites, but are not considered priority zones for possible Kimberley Process readmission. The UPC move northward came in the wake of the killing⁴² of Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique (RPRC) “general” of the Goula community, Zakaria Damane, who claimed to have remained close to the Central African Republic Government (see S/2021/569, para. 144). A former diamond collector himself, Damane’s RPRC derived significant revenues from various forms of trafficking, including diamonds, arms and drugs, between the Central African Republic and the Sudan through Sam Ouandja and operating in coalition with certain elements from the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) and foreign armed groups (see S/2021/87, paras. 24–27).

³⁷ This latter criterion was added in the 2019 revised operational framework. In its previous final report (S/2021/569, annex 6.2) the Panel reported witness statements alleging misrepresentation of diamonds produced around Bria in the non-compliant east of the country as originating from Carnot, one of the eight compliant zones in the west.

³⁸ See Permanent National Secretariat of the Kimberley Process, final communiqué of the 2021 plenary meeting held in Moscow, November 2021.

³⁹ See Radio France Internationale, “Centrafrique: peur et inquiétude à Nzacko après une attaque de l’UPC contre les FACA”, 25 May 2022.

⁴⁰ Confidential report, 24 May 2022.

⁴¹ In November 2021, UPC leader Ali Darassa took over from Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) “general” Mahamat Al Khatim as chief of staff of the CPC, this after having pretended to distance himself from the CPC in September that year (see S/2021/867, para. 10).

⁴² The precise circumstances of his death and at least two of his elements and or family members has yet to be established. No bodies have been recovered.

C. Recent security issues in gold mining areas

38. A recent boom in gold mining and trafficking in the vicinity of Gordil,⁴³ near the Chadian border in the Vakaga prefecture, is also driving the influx of foreign fighters, mostly Sudanese Misseriya militia.⁴⁴ The Panel had previously reported Misseriya elements, taken in by FPRC leader Nourredine Adam, targeting Goula communities along the Tiringoulou-Ndiffa-Gordil axis (see [S/2020/662](#), annex 3.5). Rather than pillaging the sites, gold miners and traders are forced to sell at very low prices to the militia. The Panel received photographs of gold extraction, weighing and related pay slips stamped by a jeweller shop in Chad (see annex 2).

39. With regard to the west of the country, the Panel received information concerning the deteriorating security situation in mining sites north of Kouki (Ouham prefecture) along the road to Markounda on the Chadian border,⁴⁵ where gold-mining activities started at the end of 2019 (see [S/2020/662](#), paras. 86–89). On 5 February former Séléka elements⁴⁶ reportedly raided one of the sites.⁴⁷ At the end of April 2022, an operation by national armed forces and bilaterally deployed security personnel was undertaken in the mining sites in question, during which several individuals were arrested. Gold mining in Kouki attracts many foreign nationals, mostly Sudanese and Chadian, and the gold is reportedly transported to Chad and Bangui.

VI. Humanitarian situation, human rights, international humanitarian law and justice

A. Targeting of civilians, ethnic- or religious-based attacks, attacks on civilian objects

40. Despite the unilateral ceasefire declared by the President on 15 October 2021, the country's ongoing conflicts continue to cause serious violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties. Civilians are direct victims of abuses by armed actors. According to confidential reports, schools and hospitals continued to be attacked, destroyed and looted, and education and health personnel threatened and injured.⁴⁸ The military use of schools and hospitals has been mostly attributed to national armed forces and bilaterally deployed security personnel.⁴⁹

41. For instance, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Deputy Head of MINUSCA, Lizbeth Cullity, stated that a targeted attack in the village of Boyo against Muslims in December 2021 resulted in the death of 20 civilians, the

⁴³ Close to Gordil airstrip, which is closer to Ndiffa than Gordil.

⁴⁴ Interview with Goula community representative from Gordil, 6 June 2022.

⁴⁵ Interview with regional gold trade specialist, June 2022.

⁴⁶ Several armed groups have been active in the area, namely MPC, FPRC, Révolution et justice and, to a lesser extent, the anti-balaka groups, as previously reported by the Panel ([S/2020/662](#), para. 87).

⁴⁷ Confidential report, 11 February 2022.

⁴⁸ Confidential report, 6 May 2022.

⁴⁹ Confidential report.

rape of at least five women and the destruction and burning of 547 houses.⁵⁰ The attackers, comprising former combatants of the anti-balaka militia and young elements recruited by the national armed forces and other security personnel, also held 700 civilians in the village mosque for three days.⁵¹

42. On targeting specific communities, in his October 2021 report on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic (S/2021/882), the Secretary-General stated that during counter-offensive operations, Muslim and Fulani civilians, including children, were targeted and subjected to grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.⁵² For her part, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, expressed serious concern regarding the Government's response to armed groups, which increasingly involves the arbitrary arrests of members of already vulnerable communities, such as Muslims and Fulani, who are alleged to be associated with armed groups.⁵³ In the view of the Panel, this pattern of violations affecting minority communities is deeply alarming and risks igniting new cycles of violence along communal, religious and ethnic lines.

43. According to information received by the Panel, on 9 May 2022, members of UPC attacked a military post in Bokolobo (Kouango Prefecture). The clashes led to several acts of retaliation causing the deaths of at least 17 civilians. An initial assessment made by humanitarian actors estimated that at least 5,000 persons fled and sought protection in the nearby cities of Digui and Poudijo, or in the bush.⁵⁴

44. International humanitarian law regulates the methods and means of armed conflict. A key principle is that all parties to a conflict must distinguish between combatants and civilians, between military targets and civilian buildings such as churches, schools and hospitals, to respect the civilian character of these facilities and to put in place effective measures to prevent their attack or destruction. In this context, the Panel intends to investigate the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by all parties of the conflict, in cooperation with relevant authorities and organizations.

B. Violations against children

45. A summary of findings of the country task force on monitoring and reporting, co-chaired by MINUSCA and the United Nations Children's Fund, is included in annex 3. The Panel intends to investigate grave violations against children during its future visits to Central African Republic with a view to identifying the perpetrators of these serious crimes and those with command responsibility.

⁵⁰ Lizbeth Cullity, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Deputy Head of MINUSCA, statement at the high-level dialogue on the human rights situation during the forty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, 30 March 2022. Available at www.ohchr.org/fr/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-high-commissioner-expresses-concern-over-increasing. For information on the visit of the United Nations independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic on February 2022, see also MINUSCA, "Central African Republic: all stakeholders must act to end impunity, says UN expert", 18 February 2022.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² See S/2021/882, para. 65.

⁵³ Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, statement at the high-level dialogue on the human rights situation during the 49th session of the Human Rights Council, 30 March 2022. Available at www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/03/bachelet-updates-human-rights-council-central-african-republic.

⁵⁴ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Central African Republic: intercommunity violence", ECHO Daily Flash, 12 May 2022.

C. Food insecurity and attacks on health structures

46. The Panel has noted a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic during the reporting period. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot covering the period from April to May 2022,⁵⁵ 2.2 million people, or 45 per cent of the population, are projected to be acutely food insecure during the April to August 2022 period, falling into phases 3 and 4 of the Acute Food Insecurity classification of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.⁵⁶ Food security has worsened significantly in most sub-prefectures outside the capital Bangui due to ongoing conflict, consequent population displacement and high food prices. Over 638,000 people, or 13 per cent of the population, are estimated to be at risk of famine. Food prices are expected to rise even further, fuelled by supply chain disruptions and the lack of government financial resources to absorb the shocks of the market. By August 2022, the prices of commodities such as rice, meat, wheat flour, cassava and vegetable oil are expected to increase by 30 to 60 per cent.⁵⁷

47. The Global Hunger Initiative report of the non-governmental organization World Vision in March 2022 estimated that more than 214,000 children and 98,000 women will likely suffer acute malnutrition during 2022. The study included the concerning fact that more than 620,000 people are facing Integrated Food Security Phase Classification 4 (Emergency) levels of food insecurity.⁵⁸

48. Food insecurity is to a significant degree a consequence of indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population. The Panel plans to further document and ascertain responsibilities deriving from these violations.

49. According to international humanitarian law, health structures are inviolable spaces in times of war, but in the Central African Republic, incidents involving attacks against health infrastructure tripled in 2021. In his report on children and armed conflict, the Secretary-General stated that women have become the principal target of combatants through the rape of minors, which has become a weapon against non-combatants. Attacks targeting the health system in 2021 increased exponentially: from 28 in 2019 to 85 in 2021, depriving an important part of the population of their access to basic health care in Central African Republic.⁵⁹ These attacks involved 172 incidents against the health system, distributed as follows: 42 attacks against health personnel, 41 attacks against health structures, 36 attacks against equipment, 29 attacks against transport, 13 attacks against warehouses and 11 attacks against patients.⁶⁰

50. The Panel intends to work closely with relevant partners and survivors of the attacks to gather relevant information on these violations.

⁵⁵ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "West and Central Africa: weekly regional humanitarian snapshot", 26 April–2 May 2022.

⁵⁶ See www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/ipc-overview-and-classification-system/ipc-acute-food-insecurity-classification/en.

⁵⁷ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, "République Centrafricaine: analyse de l'insécurité alimentaire aigüe de l'IPC, avril–aout 2022", April 2022.

⁵⁸ World Vision, "Global Hunger Initiative: February 2022 Report", 2022. The Acute Food Insecurity classification provides differentiation between various levels of severity of acute food insecurity, classifying units of analysis in five distinct phases: (1) Minimal/None, (2) Stressed, (3) Crisis, (4) Emergency and (5) Catastrophe/Famine.

⁵⁹ Health Cluster, "République Centrafricaine", 2021 annual bulletin, published February 2022.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

D. Denial of humanitarian access and attacks against humanitarian workers

Explosive devices

51. The presence of improvised explosive devices limits humanitarian access to vulnerable people in a context already marked by access restrictions due to ongoing armed conflict and infrastructure constraints. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that at least 30,000 vulnerable people are cut off from humanitarian assistance in western Central African Republic owing to these devices (see paras. 29 and 30 above). According to the Office's information, humanitarian partners in Paoua, Bouar and Bocaranga have been forced to restrict their movement owing to the increasing threat of these devices.⁶¹ The Office's Humanitarian Needs Overview of 2022 reflects that the regions affected by explosive devices are also among those with the most severe humanitarian needs: several axes in the Nana-Mambéré, Mambéré-Kadéï and Ouham-Pendé Prefectures have been considered high risk owing to the suspected presence of explosive devices and remain impassable for humanitarian workers and civilians, notably between Gamboula and Amadagaza. The same situation prevails on the Yelewa-Sabewa axis, which has been inaccessible since January 2021.⁶² From January to April 2022, there were 52 incidents and 16 persons injured, including seven in Bangui, six in Bria and five each in Bambari and Batangafo.⁶³

52. This new danger in the communities and important regions of the country has a direct impact on the humanitarian assistance provided, complicating even further the situation of the most vulnerable segments of the population.⁶⁴

Attacks on humanitarian organisations

53. The Central African Republic is one of the most challenging countries in the world in which humanitarians work. Between 1 January and 15 April 2022, 52 incidents affecting humanitarian organizations were recorded, in which 16 aid workers were injured.⁶⁵ These security incidents hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance, on which more than half of the Central African population depends for survival.

54. Two recent attacks on humanitarian organizations by armed individuals on 7 and 9 April 2022 injured six aid workers and a health district worker on mission in the south of the country. The attack forced one of the concerned organizations to suspend its mobile clinics and its activities to improve access to clean water for 11,000 people in remote areas of the Basse-Kotto Prefecture, including many children and pregnant women.⁶⁶

⁶¹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Central African Republic: situation report", 1 June 2022.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ The number of attacks recorded in the first quarter of 2022 amount to nearly half of all attacks recorded in 2021. The most affected regions are the north-west and the west of the country, in which 82 per cent of all incidents and attacks took place, although an increasing number of attacks have also been registered in the country's centre in 2022. See video on the consequences on civilians at https://twitter.com/OCHA_CAR/status/1510970050320244736?s=20&t=robRFc9C-Rp1iTKee7HxUg.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "The Humanitarian Coordinator strongly condemns two attacks on humanitarian organizations in the Central African Republic", 20 April 2022.

55. The Préfectures of Ouham (19.2 per cent), Bangui (13.5 per cent) and Ouaka (13.5 per cent) remained the most affected during the first four months of 2022. Theft, robbery, looting, threats and assaults represent 38 of the 52 incidents (73 per cent). Interference and restrictions account for the remaining 14 incidents (27 per cent).⁶⁷

56. The violence against humanitarian workers increases the risk of a serious humanitarian crisis: during 2022, it is calculated that approximately 3.1 million people need humanitarian assistance and protection in the Central African Republic, or 63 per cent of the population, including 1.4 million children.⁶⁸ Of these, 2.2 million people with severe needs may not survive without the required assistance and protection.⁶⁹

57. According to confidential information received by the Panel, denial of humanitarian access to children is widespread in the Central African Republic, with more than 110 incidents verified, mostly in Ouham and Mbomou Prefectures. CPC groups, in particular FPRC and anti-balaka, were identified as the main perpetrators, followed by government and pro-government forces.⁷⁰ Humanitarian workers were physically assaulted or stopped at checkpoints and others killed and injured, leading some humanitarian organizations to suspend their operations. These incidents demonstrate how humanitarians struggle on a daily basis to provide life-saving assistance to children in a context in which more than half of the population survives on humanitarian assistance.⁷¹

58. The Panel plans to investigate further the incidents of denial of humanitarian assistance and to document the identities of those believed to be responsible.

E. Cases of rape and sexual violence against women, men and young girls

59. The statistics of the Gender-based Violence Information Management System cover only 52 per cent of the country's sub-prefectures, a fact that likely reflects the practical limitations of gathering information on the ground instead of the reality of the violations taking place. In 2021, 11,592 cases of sexual and gender-based violence were recorded, which represents a 26 per cent increase compared with 2020. According to the situation report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, cases of sexual violence recorded in the first quarter of 2021 increased fivefold compared with the last quarter of 2020, while the percentage of acts allegedly committed by those carrying weapons rose from 7 to 23 per cent.⁷² The conflict, which has intensified since late 2020, has weakened the protection of civilians, changing and amplifying the nature of threats to civilians. In this context, sexual violence is seen as the main security risk for women and girls, especially those who are internally displaced persons. In 2021, the Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements Technical Working Group on conflict-related sexual violence documented 587 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, a 235 per cent increase compared with 2020, and 211 per cent increase compared with 2019.⁷³

⁶⁷ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Central African Republic: situation report", 27 May 2022.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Confidential report, 6 May 2022.

⁷¹ See United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Central African Republic: overview of incidents affecting humanitarian workers", April 2022.

⁷² United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Central African Republic: situation report", 27 May 2022.

⁷³ Ibid.

60. The Panel intends to track this worrisome rise in conflict-related sexual violence. Increased militarization and the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons have contributed, among other factors, to fuelling widespread and systematic conflict-related sexual violence, even amid a global pandemic and a serious economic crisis worldwide.

61. The Panel is aware of the situation of children in Central African Republic as one of the most vulnerable sectors of society. According to information received by the Panel, more than 100 children, the majority girls, were abducted in 2021. FPRC, as part of CPC, was identified as the main perpetrator, followed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which remains active in Haut-Mbomou Prefecture. Adding to the serious breach of the rights of these children, most children were abducted with the purpose of being sexually abused or to be recruited and used, mostly in Haute-Kotto Prefecture.⁷⁴

62. The Panel is aware that the United Nations has 14 sanctions regimes, 8 of which now include conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence as part of their designation criteria. By resolution 2399 (2018), paragraph 21 (c), the involvement in sexual and gender-based violence became a separate designation criterion in the Central African Republic sanctions regime. The Panel intends to focus its investigations on sexual and gender-based violence with a view to proposing names to the sanctions list of individuals and entities.

63. As part of the implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, and the 2019 joint communiqué signed by the representative of the Government of the Central African Republic and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict,⁷⁵ the Government adopted two decrees in 2021: the first creating the strategic committee to fight against gender-based violence related to the conflict,⁷⁶ and the second designating a focal point for the presidency in the fight against sexual violence.⁷⁷ According to Bemaka Soui, presidential focal point in the fight against sexual violence, the strategic committee constitutes a consultative framework for the implementation of the vision of the President of the Central African Republic in the fight against sexual violence related to conflict.⁷⁸ As part of the fight against impunity for these crimes, the Government has encouraged the relevant authorities to judge the perpetrators of the crimes through the course of the current criminal session, to strengthen the operational capacities of the Mixed Rapid Intervention and Repression Unit for Sexual Violence against Women and Children,⁷⁹ to try to prosecute the

⁷⁴ Confidential report, 6 May 2022.

⁷⁵ Central African Republic and United Nations, Joint communiqué between the Central African Republic and the United Nations on the prevention and fight against sexual violence in conflict, 31 May 2019.

⁷⁶ Decree No. 21.308 on the establishment of a strategic committee on the fight against gender-based violence related to the conflict in the Central African Republic, 25 November 2021 (see annex 5).

⁷⁷ Decree No. 21.208 on the designation of a focal point for the presidency on the fight against sexual violence, 2 September 2021 (see annex 4).

⁷⁸ Interview and document facilitated by Josiane Lina Bemaka Soui, Minister Counsellor to the President on child protection and focal point for the presidency on the fight against sexual violence, 24 May 2022.

⁷⁹ Mixed Rapid Intervention and Repression Unit for Sexual Violence against Women and Children (Unité Mixte d'intervention rapide et de répression des violences sexuelles faites aux femmes et aux enfants). This special Unit for the fight against sexual violence carries out deterrent patrols, organizes awareness-raising activities, takes care of victims and prepares prosecution cases. See Géraldine Boezio and Christine Meta Mpinda, "L'UMIRR, une unité pour faire face aux violences sexuelles en République Centrafricaine", United Nations, 19 April 2018.

perpetrators of conflict-related sexual crimes and to recruit women in the Central African armed forces, police and gendarmerie to combat sexism.⁸⁰

64. The strategic committee is due to present a three-month work report on June 2022. The Panel will follow closely the activities of this recently created committee in its future visits to the Central African Republic.

65. On the question of the administration of justice regarding conflict-related sexual violence, the Panel was informed that the Government, in partnership with MINUSCA, finalized a diagnostic report on the judicial response to conflict-related sexual violence, identifying remaining challenges for law enforcement, the courts and the Special Criminal Court to investigate and prosecute these crimes. The report has been approved by the authorities and will form the basis of a national road map on the fight against impunity.⁸¹

F. Situation of internally displaced persons and refugees

66. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as at 30 April 2022, the total number of internally displaced persons in the Central African Republic was estimated at 658,265, comprising 163,551 people living in sites (25 per cent) and 494,714 people in host families (75 per cent).⁸² These humanitarian organizations reported that the month of April 2022 was marked by new waves of population movements, larger than the reported returns of internally displaced persons during the same month. This pattern was linked both to incursions by armed groups into villages and clashes between them, and to recent floods. The Population Movement Commission's partners reported 14,032 new displacements and 5,561 returns.⁸³

67. The areas with a high presence of displaced persons and those with significant numbers of returnee populations face significant acute food insecurity due to pressure on livelihoods. Most of these zones present signs of worsening security conditions and grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

68. In this context, the Panel welcomes the regional efforts by the Governments of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and South Sudan, in partnership with UNHCR, which culminated in the adoption of the Yaoundé declaration on solutions in the context of forced displacement related to the Central African Republic crisis.⁸⁴ Convening in Yaoundé on 27 April 2022, the regional ministers called for more concerted action to help nearly 1.4 million displaced Central Africans towards creating a positive regional dynamic in the search for solutions for Central African refugees.⁸⁵ The Yaoundé declaration marks the first step towards the establishment of a regional coordination mechanism for advancing solutions to one of Africa's largest displacement crises.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Interview and document facilitated by Alain Said Panguidji, member of the technical secretariat, executive body of the Coordination Committee in charge of Monitoring the Sanctions Regime on the Central African Republic, 29 May 2022. He is the focal point for the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights of the Central African Republic. See [S/2022/272](#).

⁸² United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Central African Republic: situation report", 27 May 2022.

⁸³ Ibid. See also Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Republique Centrafricaine refugies et demandeurs d'asile: dashboard", 30 April 2022.

⁸⁴ Available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/92342>.

⁸⁵ UNHCR, "States vow to step up support for solutions for those displaced by Central African crises", 28 April 2022.

UNHCR states that despite the challenges, opportunities for return exist: between 2017 and 2021, over 100,000 Central African refugees and 60,000 internally displaced persons returned to their homes.

69. The Panel intends to follow the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons in the country with a view to identifying those responsible for acts that violate international human rights law or international humanitarian law, according to paragraph 21 (b) of resolution [2399 \(2018\)](#).

G. Efforts of the authorities to hold accountable all perpetrators of grave violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law

70. A summary of the efforts of the Central African authorities in the administration of justice through the Special Criminal Court, the national criminal procedures, the special commission of inquiry and the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, is included in annex 7.

VII. Recommendations

71. The Panel makes the following recommendations:

To the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic:

(a) Consider designating those individuals, and in particular armed group leaders, who have been involved in acts meeting the sanctions criteria defined in paragraphs 20 to 22 of resolution [2399 \(2018\)](#) and extended under resolution [2588 \(2021\)](#), based on statements of case prepared by the Panel and its predecessors;

(b) Encourage the Governments of the Central African Republic, Chad and the Sudan, to strengthen bilateral relations through joint commission meetings meant to address border security;

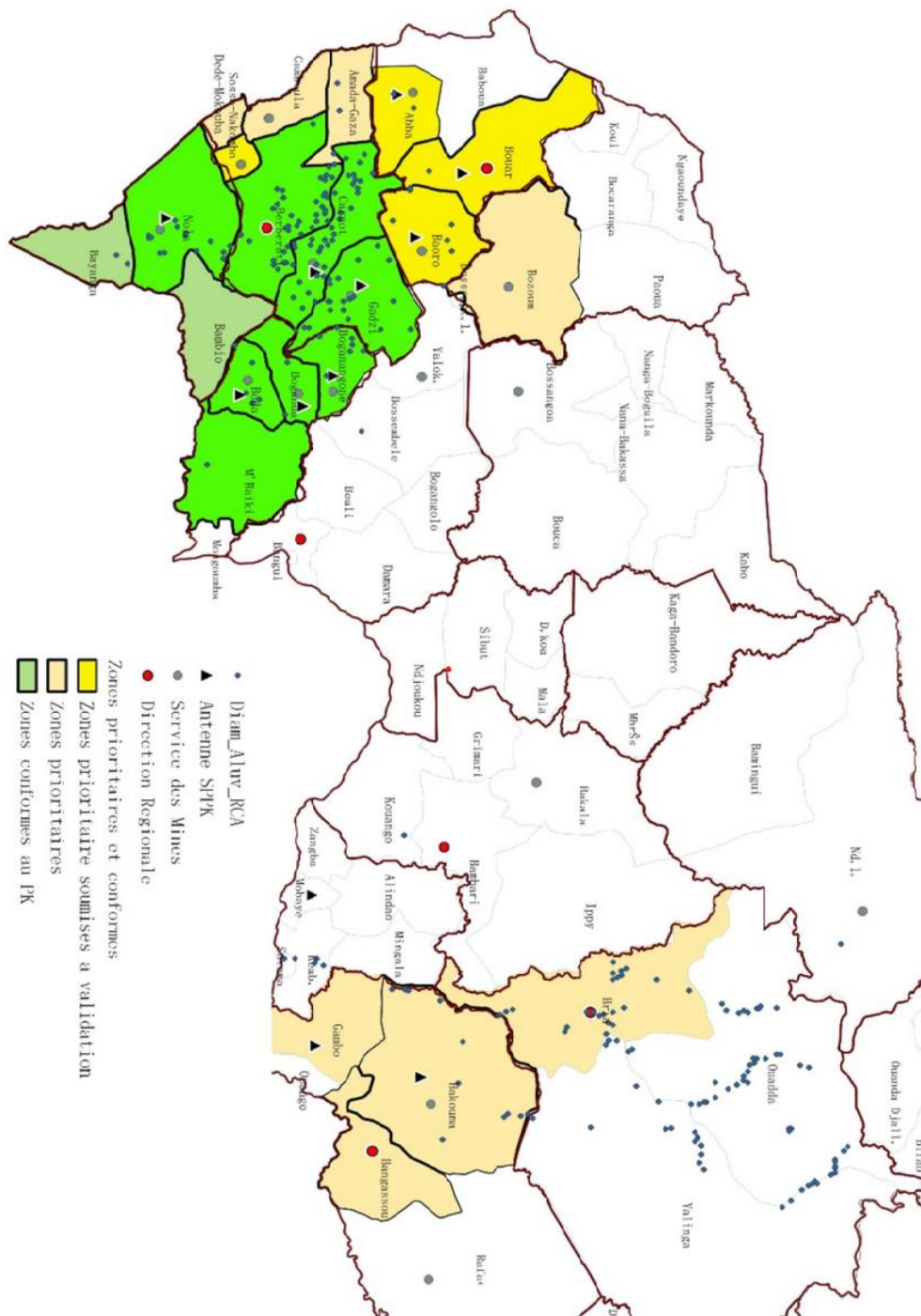
(c) Encourage the Government of the Central African Republic to engage in dialogue with all national stakeholders in the political stabilization and reconciliation process;

(d) Encourage the Governments of the Central African Republic, Rwanda and Angola; the Economic Community of Central African States and the African Union, as the regional guarantors; and MINUSCA as facilitator, to pool their efforts around a single architecture of peace and reconciliation process in the Central African Republic and to continue to hold regular monitoring and evaluation meetings;

(e) Urge the Government of the Central African Republic to provide access to the Panel to arms and ammunition seized from armed groups during military operations;

(f) Urge the Government of the Central African Republic to conduct independent investigations into all credible allegations of human rights abuses and international humanitarian law violations.

Annex 1: Map of Kimberley Process compliant and priority zones in CAR¹



¹ From https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00Z2SV.pdf, (accessed on 6 June 2022).

Annex 2: Gold mining activities near Gordil



Photographs obtained by the Panel from a confidential source on 6 June 2022



Annex 3: Violations against children

1. According to the fifth Report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict in the CAR of 15 October 2021 (S/2021/882), between July 2019 and June 2021, the country Task Force² verified 1,663 grave violations against 1,280 children (727 boys and 553 girls), namely, recruitment and use (845), killing and maiming (155), rape and other forms of sexual violence (249), abduction (116), attacks against schools and hospitals (72) and denial of humanitarian access (226). A total of 64 children were affected by more than one violation.
2. The country Task Force verified 261 grave violations that had occurred in previous periods: recruitment and use (253), killing (4) and sexual violence (4) against 261 children (187 boys and 74 girls).³ In the annexes to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2021/437)⁴, the FPRC, MPC and UPC as part of the former Séléka coalition are listed for a series of violations of international humanitarian law such as recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and sexual violence, and attacks against schools and hospitals.
3. Moreover, the local defence militias, known as anti-balaka, are listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and sexual violence, and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and sexual violence, and abduction. All of these armed groups are listed in the annex among the parties that have not put in place measures to improve the protection of children.⁵ The majority of the grave violations were committed by all perpetrators, including armed groups, the armed forces of CAR as well as other security personnel. The gravest violations against children were committed by armed groups (82 per cent) and five per cent by the armed forces of the CAR and bilaterally deployed and other security personnel. The remaining 13 per cent could not be attributed to a specific party to the conflict.⁶
4. More recently, the period from January-February 2022 was marked by the continued violence and clashes between armed groups and the national army and other security forces. This violence brought 1.4 million children to present complex and severe needs, putting their physical and mental well-being as being at risk.⁷

² Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, co-chaired by the MINUSCA and the UNICEF.

³ Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2021/882, 15 October 2021, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/292/67/PDF/N2129267.pdf?OpenElement>

⁴ See Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, A/75/873-S/2021/437, 6 May 2021, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/113/09/PDF/N2111309.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵ The violations outlined in the report were verified by the country Task Force.

⁶ Children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic, Report of the Secretary-General, 15 October 2021, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/292/67/PDF/N2129267.pdf?OpenElement>, para. 16.

⁷ Humanitarian Situation Report, UNICEF, January-February 2022, posted on 19 April 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/unicef-central-african-republic-humanitarian-situation-report-29>. On the aspect of mental health, the latest Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict affirms that “the experience of growing up in war-affected areas and of living in fear can result in high levels of distress and affect boys’ and girls’ social and emotional development” See Human Rights Council, A/HRC/49/58, 4 January 2022, para. 27.

5. According to a confidential report, during 2021 grave violations against children remained worryingly high in the country, recruitment and use and sexual violence against children were the most verified violations.⁸ According to this report, armed groups, notably the CPC, were the main perpetrators in 2021. Moreover, the document states that grave violations attributed to Government and pro-Government forces increased, marking a worryingly new trend compared to previous years: they were responsible for more than 16 per cent of violations. The recruitment and use of children affected more than 320 boys and girls in 2021, mostly in Haute-Kotto Prefecture. Children as young as 7 were used as combatants, informants, porters, cooks and for sexual purposes. The statement identifies the armed group Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) as the main perpetrator and jointly the anti-balaka and Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation (3R) as part of the CPC, followed by the Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique (UPC). Children were used by the national armed forces and by bilaterally deployed and other security personnel to man checkpoints, run errands and to gather intelligence.⁹
6. Sexual violence against children increased by more than two-fold in 2021 compared with 2020, which in the opinion of the Special Representative is alarming considering that this violation is constantly underreported. More than 200 girls were raped, including gang raped, and forced into marriage, mostly in Mbomou and Haute-Kotto Prefectures. In this case, CPC groups were the main perpetrators, notably the FPRC and 3R, followed by government and pro-government forces.¹⁰
7. Marking a number of positive trends, the Panel welcomes the appointment of a Minister Counsellor to the President on Child Protection, the promulgation of the Child Protection Code criminalizing child recruitment and use, and the convictions of 110 perpetrators of violations against children to prison terms ranging from three months to 10 years.¹¹

⁸Confidential report, 6 May 2022.

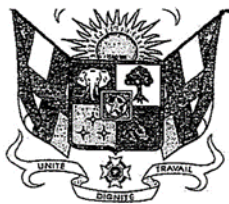
⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2021/882, 15 October 2021, para.55.

Annex 4: Presidential Decree No. 21.208 of 1 September 2021 designating a focal point at the Presidency of the Republic to fight against sexual violence

Présidence de la République



République Centrafricaine

Unité - Dignité - Travail

DECRET N° 21. 208

**PORTANT DESIGNATION D'UN POINT FOCAL DE LUTTE CONTRE
LES VIOLENCES SEXUELLES A LA PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE**

LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE, CHEF DE L'ETAT

- Vu** la Constitution de la République Centrafricaine du 30 mars 2016 ;
- Vu** le Décret n°16.0218 du 30 mars 2016, portant promulgation de la Constitution de la République Centrafricaine ;
- Vu** le Décret n°19.357 du 17 décembre 2019, portant organisation et fonctionnement de la Présidence de la République ;

DECRETE :

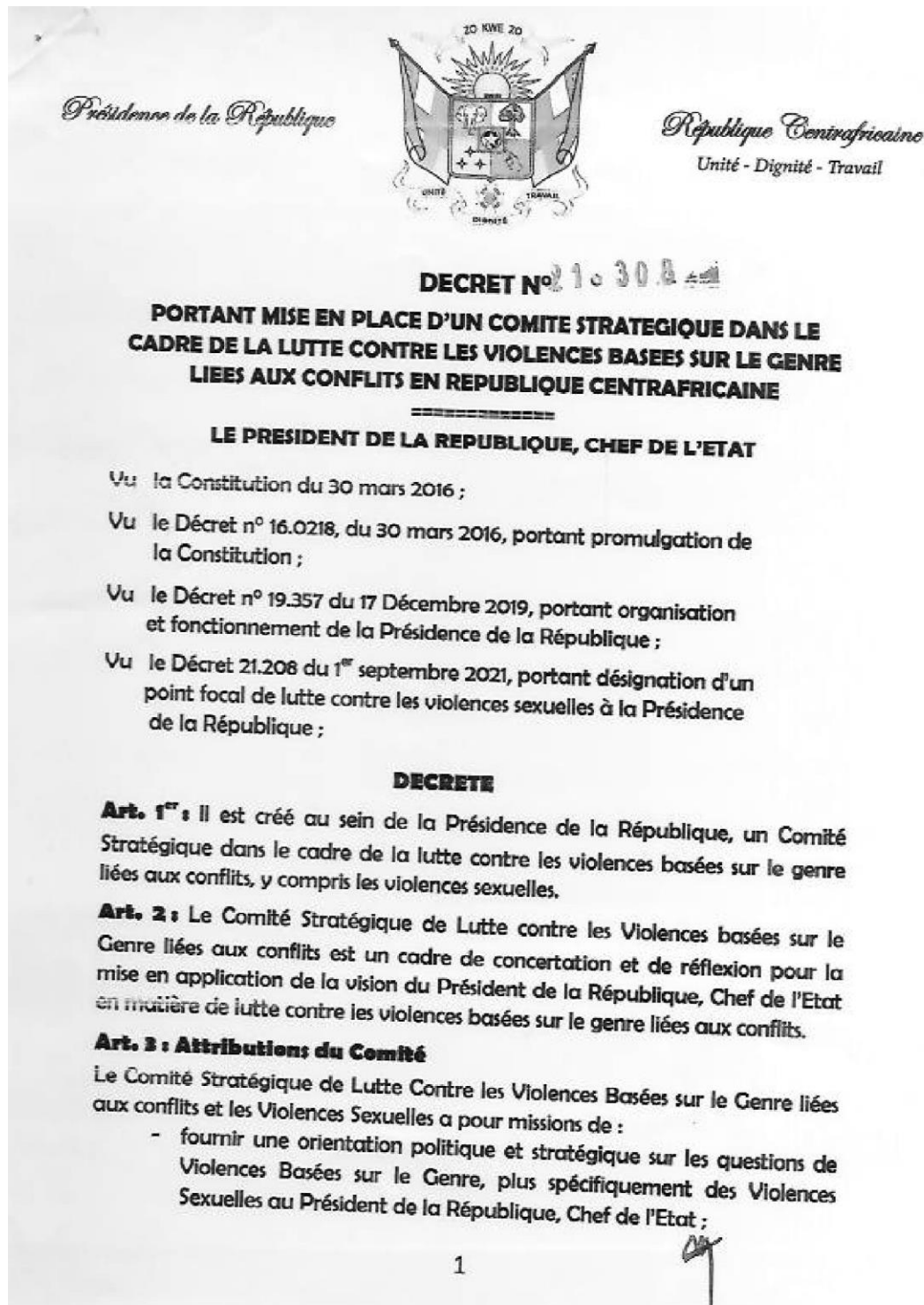
Article 1^{er}: Madame **Josiane Lina BEMAKA SOUI**, Ministre Conseiller en matière de Protection de l'Enfant, est désignée Point Focal en matière de Lutte contre les Violences sexuelles, à la Présidence de la République.

Article 2: Le présent décret qui prend effet à compter de la date de sa signature, sera enregistré et publié au Journal Officiel de la Présidence de la République .

Fait à Bangui, le 01 SEP. 2021

Pr. Faustin Archange TOUADERA

Annex 5: Presidential Decree No. 21.308 of 25 November 2021 creating a Strategic Committee as part of the fight against gender-based violence linked to the conflict in Central African Republic



- collecter de diverses sources et exploiter les données sur les Violences Basées sur le Genre liées aux conflits et en particulier les violences sexuelles ;
- fournir au Président de la République, Chef de l'Etat un rapport trimestriel ou ad' hoc à sa demande sur le sujet des violences faites aux femmes ;
- assurer la mobilisation des ressources financières ainsi que la coordination de l'aide et financement des Partenaires Techniques et Financiers des interventions en matière de genre et de la lutte contre les violences basées sur le genre, y compris les violences sexuelles ;
- contribuer à la mobilisation des divers acteurs en appui à la mise en œuvre opérationnelle des stratégies des départements ministériels en charge des questions de genre liées aux conflits et de violences sexuelles, permettant de garder la cohésion entre les entités ;
- Coordonner, en relation avec les ministères sectoriels pertinents, les rapports d'état de mise en œuvre des plans d'action des résolutions pertinentes des Nations-Unies auxquelles le pays a souscrit comme la Résolution 1325 ou la Résolution 1849 ainsi que les instruments juridiques régionaux et internationaux tel que le Protocole de Maputo.

Art. 4 : Des Moyens d'actions :

Pour permettre l'atteinte de ses missions, le Comité Stratégique de Lutte Contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre liées aux conflits y compris les Violences Sexuelles peut:

- commanditer des enquêtes avec des rapports pour éclairer ses réflexions sur des thèmes de son choix ;
- recevoir des ministères sectoriels en charge des questions de genre, de la santé et de promotion de la Femme, des rapports/informations à exploiter et à analyser à l'attention du Président de la République, Chef de l'Etat ;
- préparer, en collaboration étroite avec le Cabinet présidentiel, des manifestations publiques, notamment les conférences de presse ou autres cérémonies sur le thème des Violences Basées sur le Genre, en particulier les violences sexuelles.



Art. 5 : Composition du Comité Stratégique de Lutte Contre les Violences Basées liées aux conflits sur le Genre liées aux conflits

Le Comité Stratégique de Lutte Contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre liées aux conflits y compris les Violences Sexuelles est composé de :

A- Entités ministérielles :

- Ministre de la Justice, chargé de la Bonne Gouvernance et des Droits Humains ;
- Ministre chargé de la Promotion du Genre, de la Protection de la Femme, de la Famille et de l'Enfant ;
- Ministre Conseiller à la Présidence en Matière de Protection de l'Enfant, Point Focal Stratégique Violences sexuelles ;
- Directeur Général de l'UMIRR ou son Adjoint.

B- Organisation de la Société Civile (OSC) :

- Présidente de l'Association des Femmes Juristes (AFJC) ;
- Président(e)s des Associations des victimes/survivant(e)s des violences sexuelles ;
- Président (e) du Conseil National de la Jeunesse ou son Représentant ;
- Présidente de l'Organisation des Femmes Centrafricaines (OFCA) ou sa Représentante ;
- Coordinatrice de l'African Women Leaders Network National Chapters (AWLN) ;

C- Partenaires Techniques et Financiers et Organisations de la Société Civile (OSC) :

- Ambassadeur de la Délégation de l'Union Européenne (UE) ;
- Ambassadeur de l'Union Africaine (UA) ;
- Ambassadeur des Etats Unis d'Amérique ;
- Ambassadeur de la France ;
- Représentante Ajointe du Représentant Spécial du Secrétaire Général/Coordinatrice Résidente et Coordinatrice Humanitaire ;
- Représentant Pays d'ONU Femmes ;
- Représentant Résident du UNFPA ;
- Représentant Résident de l'OMS ;
- Représentant Résident de l'UNICEF ;
- Chef de Bureau de OCHA.

Art. 6 : Le Comité Stratégique se réunit une fois le trimestre sur invitation du Président de la République, Chef d'Etat ou à la demande d'un tiers (1/3) de ses membres. Elle peut se réunir en séance extraordinaire si les circonstances l'exigent.

Art. 7 : Le Comité Stratégique peut faire appel à toute personne ressource dont l'expertise est utile à la réalisation de ses missions.

Art. 8 : Les charges liées au fonctionnement du comité sont imputées au budget de l'Etat.

Les partenaires techniques et financiers apportent des appuis multiformes pour faciliter le travail du Comité Stratégique.

Art. 9 : Le Comité Technique National de lutte contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre et les Pratiques Traditionnelles Néfastes a un rôle consultatif auprès du Comité Stratégique et peut donner des avis techniques, à la demande du Comité Stratégique.

Art. 10 : Le présent Décret qui prend effet compter de la date de sa signature, sera enregistré et publié au Journal Officiel de la République Centrafricaine.

Fait à Bangui, le 25 NOV. 2021



Dr. Faustin Archange TOUADERA

Annex 6: Circular 16 April 2022 (Ministry of Defence): prohibition of children around military facilities

MINISTRE DE LA DEFENSE NATIONALE
ET DE LA RECONSTRUCTION DE L'ARMÉE

DIRECTION DE C A B I N E T

SECRETARIAT PARTICULIER

N° 108 /MDNRA/DIRCAB/SP



REPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE

Unité – Dignité – Travail

CIRCULAIRE

Il nous a été rapporté la présence constante des mineurs aux alentours des camps et bases militaires occupés par les forces de défense, de sécurité et les soldats de maintien de la paix en République Centrafricaine.

Cette proximité immédiate qui est de nature à compromettre la sécurité et l'éducation des enfants viole les règles de sécurité des installations militaires et de protection des civils.

Dorénavant, il est fait interdiction formelle à tout enfant d'errer aux alentours des infrastructures militaires.

Tout militaire qui autorise ou facilite l'accès des enfants aux alentours des infrastructures militaires opérationnelles s'expose à des sanctions disciplinaires sans préjudice des poursuites judiciaires.

L'inspection générale de l'Armée Nationale et l'Etat-Major des Armées sont respectivement chargés de la stricte application des mesures sécuritaires arrêtées et me faire tenir régulièrement les rapports de suivi.

Je tiens la main haute sur la stricte application des présentes prescriptions.

Fait à Bangui, le 16 AVR 2022


Le Ministre de la Défense Nationale
et de la Reconstruction de l'Armée
LE MINISTRE

Rameaux - Claude BIREAU

Annex 7: Efforts of the CAR authorities to hold accountable all perpetrators of grave violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law

The Special Criminal Court

1. The Special Criminal Court (SCC) is a hybrid court - staffed by both international and Central African judges and prosecutors – established to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the past two decades. The opening of the first trial of the SCC on 19 April 2022 represents significant progress in the challenging effort to see justice for serious crimes committed in the country. The case under the jurisdiction of the SCC involves war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in May 2019 in Koundjili and Lemouna by the suspects Issa Sallet Adoum, Ousman Yaouba, and Tahir Mahamat, members of the “3R” rebel group.¹²
2. On 30 March 2022, Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, updated the Human Rights Council on the Central African Republic¹³, referring to the urgent need for accountability for the numerous violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. In her statement, the High Commissioner reported that the SCC had received more than 230 complaints, with at least 12 files forwarded to investigating offices, 21 alleged perpetrators placed in pre-trial detention, and 25 arrest warrants as pending of execution. Some 305 victims and witnesses, including 24 women, have benefited from SCC protection measures.

National criminal procedures

3. According to information received by the Panel, as of 1 February 2022, 80 per cent of first instance and appeal courts in CAR were operational. In this respect, in March 2022 Mr. Arnaud Djoubaye Abazene, the Minister of Justice and Human Rights of the CAR, highlighted the gradual redeployment of the judicial, penitentiary, and civil administration over almost the entire national territory.
4. Regarding military jurisdiction, the Panel notes that the military courts of Bangui held correctional hearings during the months of February and July 2021; the criminal session of the court martial was held in September 2021.
5. Moreover, since May 2022, the Criminal Court of Bangui has ruled on a number of cases related to the violence that the country has experienced.¹⁴ Given the importance of these files entered in the roll, the Minister of State in charge of Justice extended the duration of the said session to three weeks.¹⁵ The Panel

¹² Human Rights Watch, Central African Republic: War Crimes Court’s First Trial, at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/12/central-african-republic-first-trial-special-criminal-court>

¹³ Statement delivered by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at 49th Session of the Human Rights Council - High-level dialogue on the human rights situation, 30 March 2022, at <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/bachelet-updates-human-rights-council-central-african-republic>

¹⁴ Interview and document facilitated by Mr. Arnaud Djoubaye Abazene, Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Central African Republic, 30 May 2022.

¹⁵ Ibid.

remains concerned about the fragile security context, which impedes the work of the judicial authorities on a continuous basis.

Special Commission of Inquiry

6. On 4 May 2021, the Minister of Justice published a decree to establish a Special Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of serious crimes and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by national armed forces and bilaterally deployed and other security personnel between December 2020 and April 2021,¹⁶ which was extended until 30 September 2021. Faced with the recurrence of allegations of human rights violations in connection with the conflict, the Special Commission of Inquiry, whose mandate was initially limited in time, was set up *mutatis mutandis* as a permanent body in order to interact with the MINUSCA's Human Rights Division and, above all, initiate judicial inquiries into the allegations of human rights violations which will be brought to the attention of the Government.¹⁷
7. According to a presentation of the Commission's synthesis report on 2 October 2021 by its President, public prosecutor Didier Eric Didier Tambo, Russian instructors, deployed under a bilateral agreement, have been among those implicated in abuses.¹⁸

Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation

8. The creation of the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation was recommended by the Bangui Forum in 2015 and included in the Khartoum Agreements of 2021. The Commission was aimed at combating impunity and promoting true reconciliation in the country.¹⁹ On 30 March 2022, during the Human Rights Council's high-level dialogue to assess the evolution of the human rights situation on the ground in the Central African Republic. Ms. Marie Edith Douzima-Lawson, President of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission of the CAR, stated that 87% of Central Africans believed that lasting peace depended on punishing those responsible for human rights violations, and that at least 80% were against any amnesty. The population also wanted to know the truth about all the painful events that had marked the country's history and wanted reparations to be granted.²⁰

¹⁶ Central African Republic, Order establishing the Special Commission of Inquiry, 013/21/MJDHGS/DIRCAB/PGCA.BGUI, 4 May 2021.

¹⁷ Interview and document facilitated by M. Alain Said Panguidji, Member of the Secrétariat Technique, charge du Suivi du Régime des Sanctions sur la République Centrafricaine, 29 May 2022.

¹⁸ See <https://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20211002-rca-le-rapport-de-synth%C3%A8se-de-la-commission-d-enqu%C3%AAtes-sp%C3%A9ciales-laisse-des-questions-en-suspens>, (accessed on 6 June 2022)

¹⁹ See Commission Vérité, Justice, Réparations et Réconciliation at <https://www.reconciliation.gouv.cf/projet/15/cvjr>

²⁰ See abstract of the Statement by Marie Edith Douzima-Lawson, President of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission of the CAR at <https://www.ohchr.org/fr/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-high-commissioner-expresses-concern-over-increasing>