



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9476th meeting

Wednesday, 15 November 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Zhang Jun (China)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Stastoli
Brazil	Mr. Moretti
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Mrs. Onanga
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
Japan	Mr. Suzuki
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
Switzerland	Mrs. Chanda
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Almahmoud
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2023/863, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Russian Federation

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The draft resolution received 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2709 (2023).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation abstained in the voting on resolution 2709 (2023), drafted by France, on the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Despite a number of positive changes — first and foremost the long-overdue transfer of the Mission's tasks to facilitate the presence of the State as a matter of priority — the text

continues to include obsolete elements that no longer reflect the situation in the Central African Republic. In the course of the resolution's drafting, we described, frankly and in detail, our concerns, both to the French penholders and to other colleagues. We note with regret that our attempts to fine-tune the text to ensure that it would be a compromise that could be supported by the Russian Federation came up against the unwillingness to the French penholders to abandon their politicized approaches.

That was most starkly made clear in the categorical rejection of any mention of what is factual in form and clear for us all in terms of content, namely, the role of the Central African Republic's bilateral partners as part of the country's stabilization. At the same time, our French colleagues insisted on keeping France in the text of the resolution as one of the country's partners in facilitating the strengthening of national security structures. I will be so bold as to propose that that wording is obsolete and no longer reflects the actual situation. It no longer aligns with the consistent, years-long position of France in favour of maintaining an arms embargo against the Central African Republic. We also know that the lion's share of misinformation and disinformation that was proactively disseminated by global media outlets, including French media, focused not on the activities of the Mission, but instead on the host Government and bilateral partners.

Let us underscore that the resolutions of the Security Council cannot be used for interference in the internal affairs of States. Many objectives, including the demand to conduct night flights, need to be resolved by the Mission in close cooperations with the host country.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that Russia consistently supports MINUSCA's activities and its Head, Ms. Valentine Rugwabiza. We intend to continue our constructive cooperation with the Mission and our joint efforts to definitely stabilize the Central African Republic for the benefit of international peace and security.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I would like to thank France for its balanced approach in facilitating the renewal of this important mandate.

We voted in favour of resolution 2709 (2023) because the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) deserves the Council's broad support for its work contributing to peace and security in the Central

African Republic. Renewing its mandate reinforces the progress MINUSCA has made and empowers the Mission to continue serving as a key partner for the Government of the Central African Republic.

We also voted in favour because the resolution makes important progress in acknowledging the Mission's critical role, supporting the extension of State authority. That task is essential to the advancement of peace and stability in the Central African Republic. We are pleased to support the Government's request to elevate that task within the mandate. We welcome the fact that this resolution calls upon all parties to create an environment in which MINUSCA can operate free of obstruction or interference, which includes combating disinformation, hate speech and threats to peacekeeper safety.

Finally, I would like to underscore the resolution's call for the timely publication of the Mission's human rights report. Let me be clear that the United States understands "timely" to mean in advance of next year's mandate negotiations and no later than 15 October.

The United States strongly supports resolution 2709 (2023), and we remain committed to the Central African people and MINUSCA.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

The political and peace process in the Central African Republic, has continued to make positive progress. The Government has made substantial efforts to improve national governance, advance the peace process and maintain security and stability in the country. China applauds those efforts.

As the Central African Republic stands at a crucial stage in its transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) continues to be indispensable in its support for the country's peace, stability and development. We support its mandate renewal and voted in favour of resolution 2709 (2023).

Last month, Her Excellency Foreign Minister Sylvie Valérie Baipo Temon attended the Council's regular deliberations (see S/PV.9454), expressing her hope for a comprehensive review of the Mission's mandate for it to better respond to the needs of the situation on the ground.

The resolution just adopted by the Council calls for an independent strategic review of the Mission. It is our hope that the review process will absorb the concerns and aspirations of the Government and all sectors of society, taking into account the country's realities and needs, and come up with comprehensive, objective and pragmatic recommendations. The Council will then proceed on that basis, adjusting and optimizing MINUSCA's mandate, focusing on key priorities and deciding on a reasonable level of staffing and size. That will help the Mission better fulfil its mandate, improve its performance and more effectively contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

We note that a number of reasonable proposals put forward by some members during the consultations have not been included. We hope that in future, the penholder will encourage the Council to conduct thorough consultations so as to accommodate the concerns of all parties to the extent possible and strive for broader consensus.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Nzessioue (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for November. I also take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

The Central African Republic welcomes the renewal of the mandate of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). I wish to bear witness to the constructive and positive engagement of France, as penholder of resolution 2709 (2023), to ensure balanced consultations, which have led to this text, which, of course, is not perfect, but is acceptable to all.

We express our deep gratitude to all members of the Council for their flexibility. More specifically, we thank the three African members of the Security Council, the Russian Federation and China for their support and their tireless efforts, time and again, to understand the position of the Central African Republic.

The new mandate adopted today provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm here our full readiness to continue and step up cooperation with MINUSCA,

which is key to effectively consolidating the various gains made in recent years with regard to bolstering security by restoring State authority and implementing the Luanda joint road map for peace and the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

The Central African Republic is therefore delighted to see support for the restoration of State authority as a top priority and would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all the partners that have enabled the Central African Republic to take great strides forward in that regard, as the State now controls vast swathes of the territory. I thank the Russian Federation and Rwanda. We also thank the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations agencies, the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, UN-Women and others, as well as the United States and the European Union, which work daily to promote the implementation of the country's justice sector policy and its commitments to combat conflict-related sexual violence, as well as to bolster the ability of its defence and security forces on several fronts. Those partners and their support contribute daily to make the restoration of State authority an increasingly tangible reality for the people of the Central African Republic. My country would have liked those efforts acknowledged in the adopted resolution.

The fact that the Central African Republic has numerous partners means that it is vital to ensure coordination with the Government at all levels. My country is pleased that this important parameter is

taken into account in the new mandate, in terms of coordination of both security and the implementation of the status-of-forces agreement. The former will enable more efficient concrete and coordinated action and to develop synergies and complementarity between the defence and security forces and MINUSCA, and the latter is also key.

The Central African Republic once again reiterates its readiness to work together with the Secretary-General to review the status-of-forces agreement with a view to both facilitating the understanding thereof and facilitating its national ownership.

Evaluating the effectiveness of MINUSCA after 10 years on the ground in the Central African Republic was absolutely critical in order to assure the coherence and relevance of the mandate. We are convinced that such an evaluation, in line with the anticipated independent strategic review contained in the mandate just adopted, will make it possible to adjust the mandate to bring it in line with the realities and evolving situation in the Central African Republic and will allow us to usher in a transition that will ultimately enable the Mission's withdrawal. My country wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the independence of the evaluation and review.

Finally, we reaffirm our desire to continue working together with the Council to find ideal solutions and meet the many remaining challenges together.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.