

# Policy Briefing

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## Central African Republic: Better Late Than Never

### I. Overview

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Over nine months, the weak Central African Republic (CAR) state has collapsed, triggering a serious humanitarian crisis, with 400,000 displaced and nearly half the population in need of assistance. The transitional government and the regional security force have failed to prevent a descent into chaos in urban areas, in particular Bangui, as well as in the countryside. After months of “wait-and-see” and following deadly clashes, the international community now realises it cannot afford another collapsed state in Africa. Unfortunately, the situation on the ground is deteriorating at a much faster pace than the international response is mobilising, and Bangui is vulnerable to a total breakdown in law and order. The UN Security Council should immediately provide a Chapter VII mandate to the new African-led International Support Mission in the CAR (MISCA), supported by French troops, to launch an operation to secure Bangui that should then be extended to other cities. Subsequently, religious reconciliation should be prioritised and stabilisation measures adopted.

The risk of the CAR becoming ungovernable that Crisis Group highlighted in June 2013 is now real. The Seleka, a loose coalition of armed groups that took power in a March 2013 coup, has splintered into multiple armed factions, whose thuggery has triggered violent reactions among the population. Further, the conflict has taken on a religious undercurrent between the predominantly Muslim Seleka and Christian self-defence groups.

The CAR faces a number of major challenges: in the short term, restoring law and order and providing immediate humanitarian aid; in the medium term, ensuring that the eighteen-month transition agreed to by the Seleka leaders and other political actors is managed in an effective and sustainable manner; and in the long term, rebuilding the state. Successful transition and reconstruction can only be achieved if minimum security conditions are met. Instability has already spilled over the Cameroon border, and the combination of religious tensions and powerless transitional authorities is the perfect recipe for further deadly clashes between local populations and the various Seleka factions, especially in Bangui.

The current stabilisation effort (deployment of an African Union peacekeeping mission, made up of troops from a 2008 mission) is not working. Following the UN’s technical assessment mission in October 2013 and France’s recent decision to increase its troops in Bangui, there is a growing consensus that a more robust, better-resourced emergency response is needed. The UN Security Council is preparing a resolution that needs to be adopted promptly.

*Concurrently, the following short-term measures are required:*

- ❑ The Security Council should authorise, under a UN Chapter VII (obligatory on all member states) resolution, MISCA, supported by French forces, to take all necessary means to help stabilise the situation. Its immediate and primary focus should be on restoring law and order, protecting civilians, providing humanitarian relief and documenting human rights abuses. Other countries should also provide logistical (including transportation) and intelligence support in coordination with France and the African Union.
- ❑ The AU-led forces under MISCA and French forces already on the ground should be reinforced immediately, and together with the very few effective national security forces, should restore law and order in Bangui, including by establishing control of all roads into and out of the city; and helping elements of the national police that have already returned to some police stations previously occupied by Seleka fighters.
- ❑ Once Bangui is secured, the AU-led forces under MISCA and the French should deploy to where fighting between Seleka and self-defence groups is occurring and where tension between Christians and Muslims is high. They should also secure the major routes, such as that connecting Bangui with the Cameroon border.
- ❑ The Security Council, after adopting the Chapter VII resolution, should work to ensure the rapid provision of additional resources – including logistics and the requisite capabilities to conduct night patrols – to ensure MISCA has full operational capacity. Simultaneously, the AU and EU should quickly agree on funding for the salaries of MISCA troops.

*The following mid-term measures are then required:*

- ❑ The UN and donors should support inter-religious dialogue and implement urgent reconstruction projects, particularly in cities where fighting has occurred and where Christians and Muslims are living separately.
- ❑ Other priorities are to launch the first phase – gathering and disarming – of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) program for Seleka combatants; to establish a team to investigate the plundering of natural resources; to support the mixed commission of inquiry set up by the transitional authorities; and to quickly deploy local reconstruction teams.

The Security Council should continue to follow the CAR situation closely, and give serious consideration to transition MISCA into an enhanced UN-led multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation when necessary and appropriate. Improving security in the capital and in the worst-affected provinces, returning to normalcy in the main cities and resuming road traffic and trade between Bangui and the provinces could pave the way for a successful transition in the medium term. For this to happen, as Crisis Group's June report recommended, a number of other steps remain relevant, among them the dispatch of a UN electoral assessment mission, security sector reform and public finance reform. But this is not today's concern: as CAR stares into an abyss of potentially appalling proportions, the focus must remain squarely on the quickest, most decisive means of restoring security.

## II. From a Phantom State to a Phantom Transition

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### A. *The Spiral into Anarchy*

Since December 2012, and following the March 2013 coup, the Central African Republic (CAR) has been sinking into anarchy, with dire consequences for its population.<sup>1</sup> According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in September 2013 there were almost 400,000 internally displaced people and about 65,000 new refugees in neighbouring countries. Humanitarian agencies have alerted public opinion to the critical situation, stressing that 2.3 million CAR citizens, half the population, are in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>2</sup> At the centre of this tragedy is the Seleka, a rebel coalition that was officially dissolved in September 2013 by its leader, Michel Djotodia, now president of the transition. However, Seleka combatants continue to terrorise the country, carrying out arrests and executions (including of members of humanitarian NGOs), acts of torture, sexual violence and looting.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1. The dynamics of violence: crime and sectarian conflict

The Seleka is carrying out a countrywide, criminal operation that has no other motive than personal gain. The combatants' ambitions are not new. Since the coalition was formed, it has always been an amorphous grouping of combatants from different movements, without a centralised chain of command or ideology. It had strictly limited objectives – overthrow Bozizé, take power and reap material benefits in the process.<sup>4</sup> What is happening today reflects the movement's very nature. Clashes between local populations and Seleka combatants in villages close to mining sites like Garga, 250km to the north west of Bangui, show how Seleka combatants are trying to plunder natural resources.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Seleka warlords have found a way of filling the power vacuum.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the crisis, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°203, *Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition*, 11 June 2013. Also see "Open Letter to the UN Security Council on the Central African Republic", International Crisis Group, 15 November 2013.

<sup>2</sup> See "Rapport de situation sur la Centrafrique n°30", Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 25 October to 8 November 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Dissolution of the Seleka was only symbolic. It allowed Michel Djotodia to distance himself from the crimes committed by combatants over whom he had lost control. See "Michel Djotodia dissout la Seleka, beaucoup de questions en suspens", Radio France Internationale (RFI), 14 September 2013. "Pillay warns violence in Central African Republic may spin out of control", press release, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 8 November 2013. On 7 September 2013, two humanitarian workers from the NGO ACTED were killed near their base in Bossangoa. "Two Central African humanitarian workers working for ACTED killed in the Central African Republic on 7th September", press release, ACTED, 9 September 2013. Many vehicles stolen in Bangui have been taken to neighbouring countries, especially Chad, using well-organised criminal networks. Crisis Group interview, military expert, Bangui, May 2013. For more details on atrocities committed by Seleka combatants, see "I Can Still Smell The Dead", Human Rights Watch, September 2013, and "Central African Republic, a country in the hands of Seleka war criminals", FIDH, September 2013.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the Seleka, see Crisis Group report, *Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition*, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> "Centrafrique: Le bilan des affrontements de Garga atteint près de 50 morts", *Jeune Afrique*, 10 October 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Colonel Abdallah proclaimed himself chief of the Bangassou area in the south east of the country, before being arrested by the authorities in early October. The general known as Ben Laden and his men still control the Bambari area, north east of Bangui. "Centrafrique: calme précaire après l'arrestation du faux colonel Abdallah", RFI, 7 October 2013 and "Congo-Brazzaville: visite de Michel Djotodia à Oyo pour préparer la réunion de Bangui sur la RCA", RFI, 7 November 2013.

In recent months, the problem has metastasised into another more dangerous conflict. In the western and central regions, clashes have taken on a sectarian character. The atrocities committed by Seleka Muslim combatants have outraged the population and led to the creation of self-defence groups called “anti-balaka”, which means “anti-machete” in Sango language. These groups have been quick to target Muslim families and orchestrate what the Archbishop of Bangui feared and described as a “return match”.<sup>7</sup> Seleka combatants have continued to fuel this spiral of violence by attacking Christians.

Sectarian violence between Muslims and Christians escalated further in September in Bossangoa, where fighting left about 100 people dead.<sup>8</sup> The dispatch of a detachment of the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central Africa (MICOPAX) of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) restored security but the town is now divided into two and communal tensions remain acute.<sup>9</sup> Despite mediation attempts by religious authorities in Bangui, local religious leaders continue to fan the flames of sectarianism and polarise public opinion.<sup>10</sup> Such violence led one of the UN Secretary-General’s special advisers to warn of the “risk of genocide”.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. The risk of an outburst of violence in Bangui

Insecurity is widespread and tension is high in the capital. In November 2013, angry residents clashed with Seleka fighters on many occasions.<sup>12</sup> Crime levels have increased in the capital, as shown by the recent upsurge in car theft, especially of NGO and UN vehicles, and looting of residential neighbourhoods.<sup>13</sup> MICOPAX units in Bangui no longer have a credible deterrent capability after losing out in a series of confrontations with Seleka fighters.<sup>14</sup> In the absence of an effective peacekeeping force, growing public exasperation has led to increasingly frequent clashes with Seleka combatants. Any spark might trigger an outburst of violence in Bangui. After months of repressive policies by the Seleka regime, Bangui residents are increasingly frustrated and willing to resist, including by violent means.

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<sup>7</sup> “Centrafrique: Djotodia déclare la guerre aux anti-balaka”, Afrik.com, 4 November 2013.

<sup>8</sup> For more details on the clashes in Bossangoa, read “Central African Republic: Human Rights Crisis Spiralling Out Of Control”, Amnesty International, October 2013.

<sup>9</sup> “Centrafrique: près de 100 morts dans les combats”, Reliefweb, 11 September 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Several initiatives such as the interfaith debate on peace organised by the NGO Mercy Corps in Bangui on 10-11 June 2013 brought together religious leaders in Bangui who publicly advocated reconciliation. See “Centrafrique, le débat interconfessionnel au service de la paix”, RFI, 10 June 2013. However, some local religious leaders have made fiery attacks on other communities. Crisis Group telephone interview, member of a humanitarian NGO, 14 November 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Adama Dieng, UN special adviser on the prevention of genocide, said, “my feeling is that this will end with Christian communities, Muslim communities killing each other”. He added, “there is a risk of genocide” in CAR. See the website of the French permanent representative at the UN in New York, <http://bit.ly/1dvKXHP>.

<sup>12</sup> The population actively protested at Seleka atrocities on several occasions in November in Bangui. Several districts of the capital such as Fatima, Miskine and Sica 2 were the scene of violent protests and clashes with the Seleka. These protests followed the killing of former soldiers of the regular army and judges such as the former president of the Bangui Higher Level Court. “Bangui, la magistrature endeuillée par la Seleka”, Radio Ndeke Luka, 17 November 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Several cars belonging to UN and humanitarian NGO personnel were stolen in Bangui in November 2013. Crisis Group telephone interview, humanitarian actor, 14 November 2013.

<sup>14</sup> In Bangui, two Seleka members opened fire on a MICOPAX patrol, wounding one of the mission’s police officers. “Bangui: un policier de la force africaine blessé par balles”, Agence France-Presse (AFP), 5 November 2013.

## B. *The Phantom Transition*

The authorities, unable to deal with the many challenges they are facing – including widespread insecurity, the provision of administrative and social services that has only just resumed in the provinces,<sup>15</sup> and difficulties to pay civil servants – have turned to the international community, which has only just understood that its initial security response was ineffective.

### 1. Powerless transitional authorities and political vacuum

Since the coup, the transitional authorities have focused mainly on setting up the transitional institutions and requesting foreign aid.

In accordance with the 18 April 2013 N'Djamena Declaration, the authorities have established several transitional institutions: the National Transition Council (CNT), which acts as a parliament;<sup>16</sup> the Constitutional Charter promulgated by Michel Djotodia on 18 July 2013, which provides for the counter-signing of regulations by the prime minister and relevant ministers; and the Constitutional Court, created on 16 August and headed by Zacharie Ndouba.<sup>17</sup> There was a minor reshuffle of the national unity government to include supporters of deposed President Bozizé's party, the Kwa Na Kwa (KNK). As Crisis Group previously recommended, the roadmap, which the authorities presented to the International Contact Group on 8 November, has four main components: restoration of security; consolidation of peace; humanitarian, political and governance assistance; and economic revival.<sup>18</sup>

Michel Djotodia was sworn in as president of the transition on 18 August 2013. He is trying to gain international legitimacy by visiting his African peers, in violation of African Union sanctions imposed following the coup,<sup>19</sup> and by a show of good-will. While Michel Djotodia tries to improve his international image and appear as an honest leader capable of rallying the country, he continues to fan the flames of conflict by systematically attributing acts of violence to Bozizé's supporters.<sup>20</sup> During French

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<sup>15</sup> Several new governors were appointed, showing a willingness, albeit timid, on the part of the authorities to redeploy personnel in the country. "Installation des préfets, restauration de l'autorité de l'Etat", Radio Ndeke Luka, 13 July 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Ferdinand Nguendet was elected president of the CNT in April 2013 and confirmed when the new CNT office was opened on 8 August 2013. See "Un nouveau bureau du CNT mis en place", Réseau des journalistes pour les droits de l'homme en RCA, 9 August 2013.

<sup>17</sup> The Constitutional Court has already begun work on several cases. "Centrafrique: les membres de la Cour constitutionnelle prêtent serment", RFI, 16 August 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Roadmap of the transitional government of national unity, Bangui, October 2013. The International Contact Group held its first meeting on 3 May in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. It is composed of the country's main bilateral and multilateral partners, including ECCAS members, regional organisations, France, the U.S., World Bank and African Development Bank. The group is a forum to discuss the practical details of international political and financial support for the transition.

<sup>19</sup> The AU has issued a travel ban for Michel Djotodia. However, his many visits abroad have shown that African governments are not willing to implement AU sanctions. Kenya, Sudan, Congo-Brazzaville, Chad, Gabon, Burkina Faso and Benin have all welcomed him. Nevertheless, the AU has managed to exclude him from some summit meetings, such as the one organised jointly with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the AU in Pretoria in early November 2013. Crisis Group interview, AU official, Addis Ababa, November 2013. Meanwhile, Paul Biya refused to allow Michel Djotodia to attend the summit of Gulf of Guinea heads of state in June 2013 in Yaoundé.

<sup>20</sup> François Bozizé undertook a tour of Africa that included a visit to Addis Ababa to seek support to regain power in Bangui. He created the Front for the Return of Constitutional Order in the Central African Republic (FROCCA), based in Paris and coordinated by Lin Banoukepa, a France-based

Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius's visit to Bangui, he reiterated that he would step down at the end of the eighteen-month transition. He also signed the Republican Pact presented by the Sant'Egidio Catholic community on 7 November<sup>21</sup> and, two days later, promulgated the new electoral code, which should pave the way for the appointment of the new national electoral authority.<sup>22</sup>

However, the transitional institutions are empty shells with virtually no margin for manoeuvre because of a lack of money – the state budget is extremely small – and security. External financial support is still required to pay civil servants; it used to come from Gabon's late president, Omar Bongo, and is now provided by Congo-Brazzaville's president, Denis Sassou-Nguesso.<sup>23</sup> In addition, no reform or restoration of state services is possible while the Seleka has a military advantage over the authorities. Michel Djotodia has no control over most rebel combatants and reconstruction of the security forces is still at an embryonic stage. There are very few gendarmes and police officers, and attempts to rebuild the army have come up against a lack of political will and refusal by Seleka elements to accept reintegration of the previous regime's soldiers into the new army.<sup>24</sup> The ultimate paradox is that, in the absence of national armed forces, Seleka units sometimes wear gendarme uniforms to contain the atrocities committed by other Seleka combatants.<sup>25</sup>

Despite relatively good intentions, the authorities are powerless to prevent the deterioration of the security situation. This was clearly shown on 20 August 2013 when many Seleka combatants ignored orders from Michel Djotodia and MICOPAX and launched a punitive raid under the cover of a disarmament operation on Boy Rabe, an allegedly pro-Bozizé residential district in Bangui. Many people were killed and homes looted during these operations.<sup>26</sup>

The transitional authorities are unable to restore law and order. Calls for combatants to return to barracks and operations to disarm Seleka fighters led jointly by MICOPAX, the police force and gendarmes have so far done little to reduce Seleka's nuisance capacity.<sup>27</sup> While state coffers are empty, the economy has stalled and tax revenues are insignificant, a donor conference is being organised to keep the CAR afloat.

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Central African lawyer. From Paris, the FROCCA has called on the Central African people to rise up and "support the anti-balaka groups". Crisis Group interview, FROCCA member, Paris, 18 October 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Following sectarian tensions, the Catholic community of Sant'Egidio presented a Republican Pact, which was signed by the president of the transition, the prime minister and the president of the CNT. By signing the pact, the transitional authorities agreed to reestablish security in the country, start a constructive dialogue between all sectors of society, fight corruption and ban violence as a means for achieving political power. "Centrafrique: Sant'Egidio obtient la signature d'un pacte républicain", Radio Vatican, 8 November 2013.

<sup>22</sup> The new electoral code repeats the ban on Michel Djotodia and members of the transitional government from contesting the next elections. It also states that members of the national electoral authority will have a seven-year mandate and are irremovable.

<sup>23</sup> "Centrafrique: la 2<sup>ème</sup> tranche des fonds accordés par le Congo est disponible", *Journal de Bangui*, 4 October 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Some Seleka elements have recently abducted and killed former members of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) in Bangui as part of a strategy to discourage former FACA soldiers who want to join the new national army. Crisis Group telephone interview, military expert, 18 November 2013.

<sup>25</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, military expert, 18 November 2013.

<sup>26</sup> "A Bangui, les seigneurs de guerre ont encore frappé", *Jeune Afrique*, 21 August 2013.

<sup>27</sup> In Bangui, only 130 weapons were seized during the disarmament operation mounted 4-14 September. "RCA: fin des opérations de désarmement", RFI, 16 September 2013.

## 2. Belated international awareness: Challenging the peace and security architecture

The promises made after the coup have not been kept. Neighbouring countries have not fulfilled their commitment to increase MICOPAX troops to 2,000 as they had agreed at the N'Djamena Summit. France chose disengagement and restricted itself to securing the airport – the key link between the country and the outside world. The response to the coup was purely diplomatic: members of the International Contact Group insisted that Michel Djotodia respect the principles set out in the Libreville agreement (an eighteen-month transition and a ban on members of the transitional government contesting future elections).<sup>28</sup>

With the upsurge of violence in the west and Bangui and the inefficiency of MICOPAX, the international community has come to realise the seriousness of the situation. The African Union was the first to react when it announced a new African-led International Support Mission for CAR (MISCA) in July.<sup>29</sup> At the end of August, President Hollande, alerted by French NGOs on the ground, evoked the risk of “Somalisation” and urged the AU and UN to act.<sup>30</sup> In the region, Cameroon was the first to suffer from the spillover of instability. As refugees crossed the border, an armed group leader and some Seleka combatants also entered Cameroon territory, resulting in violence and tightened security measures in the east.<sup>31</sup> The UN General Assembly in September put the CAR on the international agenda. Resolution 2121, adopted on 10 October 2013 and sponsored by France,<sup>32</sup> strengthened and broadened the mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA).

MISCA, which is just MICOPAX under a new name, has not been effective in reversing the deteriorating security situation. The mission suffers from institutional rivalry between the AU and ECCAS. Significantly, the official handover from MICOPAX to MISCA scheduled for 1 August was postponed until 19 December and ECCAS obtained all the management positions in the mission.<sup>33</sup> Although its mandate is well-defined, there is general agreement that it does not have the resources to fulfil its mission. Three months after its creation, it is still understaffed, its civilian component is extremely weak, its senior management team has only just been appointed and it

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<sup>28</sup> Crisis Group telephone interviews, members of the International Contact Group, May, June, July 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Much like MICOPAX's, MISCA's mission is to contribute to “the protection of civilians and the restoration of security and public order, through the implementation of appropriate measures; the stabilisation of the country and the restoration of the authority of the central government; the reform and restructuring of the defence and security sector; and the creation of conditions conducive for the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need”. Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Addis Ababa, 19 July 2013.

<sup>30</sup> “La France cherche à éviter la “somalisation” de la Centrafrique”, *Le Monde*, 29 August 2013.

<sup>31</sup> At the end of July, Abdoulaye Miskine, leader of the rebel Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC), was arrested in Cameroon. Several acts of violence were allegedly committed by CAR rebels on the Cameroon border in recent months. “Un policier tué dans un poste frontière avec la RCA”, *Cameroun Tribune*, 21 August 2013. “Cameroun-Insécurité transfrontalière: comprendre l'attaque de Gbiti à l'Est-Cameroun”, *L'opinion*, 20 November 2013.

<sup>32</sup> “Centrafrique: la France prête à s'investir”, RFI, 21 September 2013.

<sup>33</sup> “Appointment of the leadership team of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic”, press release, African Union Council for Peace and Security, Addis Ababa, 22 November 2013.

still does not have administrative resources.<sup>34</sup> For the moment, the only genuine change from MICOPAX to MISCA is the significant increase in the force's numbers, which makes the logistical deficit even more problematic. Under such conditions, its chances of succeeding in the first two tasks set out in the operational plan (restoring security in Bangui and the Bangui-Bouar-Garou-Bouali road by February 2014) seem very small.

Aware that MISCA alone is unable to do anything about the growing insecurity, France has changed its initial position from disengagement to military contribution, as announced by François Hollande on 20 November 2013 and confirmed by Jean-Yves Le Drian, France's defence minister, who said that French forces would be reinforced by almost 1,000 troops for a six-month period.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, the U.S. and UK are concerned about the increase in sectarian tensions and ECCAS and the AU have launched appeals for more support.<sup>36</sup>

### III. A New Strategic Partnership for Peace in the CAR

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The CAR faces three challenges: in the short term, restoring security; in the medium term, achieving the transition; and in the long term, rebuilding the state. Successful transition and reconstruction require a minimum level of security. Given MISCA's extreme weakness, there is a risk that the security situation, especially in Bangui, will continue to deteriorate more quickly than the African mission can be deployed. A three-stage intervention is needed. First, the remaining national security forces, MISCA and French troops must immediately secure Bangui to avoid an outbreak of violence. Secondly, MISCA must be reinforced by African troops, bilateral support, UN logistical assistance and European financial support. Finally, it must restore order in the high-risk areas and secure the country's main roads. Reestablishing law and order is a cornerstone of the transition and this alone requires redefining the current international partnership with regard to MISCA.

#### A. *The Priority: Reversing the Trend toward Deteriorating Security*

##### 1. First stage: Reestablishing law and order in Bangui

The security emergency means there is no time to wait for either a hypothetical reinforcement of MISCA or a UN operation that, at best, could only begin in spring 2014.<sup>37</sup> French troops and MISCA must launch an international operation to secure Bangui. French forces stationed locally should be reinforced by units based in Libreville and immediately deployed to help remaining national security forces reestablish order in

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<sup>34</sup> The African Union authorised a 3,652-strong force in July but MISCA only had 2,589 troops at the end of October. Communiqué of the African Union Council for Peace and Security, Addis Ababa, 19 July 2013. There are major logistical deficiencies and a lack of medical equipment and ammunition. For more details, see "Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic pursuant to paragraph 22 of Security Council Resolution 2121 (2013)". The AU has also recognised these deficiencies. Crisis Group interview, AU official, Addis Ababa, November 2013.

<sup>35</sup> "François Hollande appelle à agir en Centrafrique", *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 20 November 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, diplomat, London, November 2013 and Crisis Group email correspondence, analyst of the American Commission on Religious Freedom, October 2013. "Centrafrique: l'Afrique centrale augmente son investissement dans la Misca", RFI, 23 October 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Crisis Group interview, French foreign minister, Paris, October 2013.



the capital.<sup>38</sup> The French forces, MISCA and CAR police and gendarmerie should patrol Bangui together and disarm anyone in possession of a weapon and any armed group that has not returned to barracks. Patrols should comprise an officer of the judicial police able to make arrests. Peacekeepers deployed to protect BINUCA will help stabilise Bangui by securing the city centre and their number should be increased to secure the airport in order to relieve French troops of that task.

The operation should include the control of all roads into and out of Bangui and a coordinated redeployment of the CAR police force and gendarmerie. They have already regained possession of some police stations, and should receive support from the EU and UN Development Programme (UNDP).<sup>39</sup> This would allow CAR security services to fulfil their duties and assume responsibility for security in the city. In three months, with EU support, the city's security infrastructure should be reestablished.

*In practical terms, such an operation will require:*

- ❑ an official announcement by the transitional government and close coordination with city authorities (mayors, community and religious leaders, etc.);
- ❑ a UN resolution giving a Chapter 7 mandate to MISCA and authorising the French forces to help reestablish law and order;
- ❑ the creation of a joint command post that has authority over the French and CAR security forces under the aegis of MISCA and has an interface with local authorities;
- ❑ a plan to redeploy national security forces;
- ❑ a night patrol capability and adequate communications;
- ❑ the capacity to maintain law and order and deal with any rioting that may occur; and
- ❑ an increase in the planned number of UN peacekeepers.

With good institutional communications and close working arrangements between local authorities, this operation would restore the authorities' legitimacy in the eyes of Bangui residents and strengthen the security forces by getting rid of Seleka combatants. After being tested in Bangui, this military-police approach could be replicated in other violence-prone towns.

## 2. Second stage: Reestablishing law and order in tense areas and securing the main roads

After Bangui, the security forces should secure towns where the Seleka and anti-balakas have clashed and where tensions between Christians and Muslims are acute, as well as towns of economic significance, where public services are usually concentrated. Security operations will consist of disarming the anti-balakas and Seleka combatants and securing the roads between the towns in question. The following roads should be prioritised: Bangui-Cameroon border; Baoro-Berberati; Bangui-Bossemele-Bossangoa-Chad border; Bangui-Damara-Bambari-Bangassou-Bria; and Bangui-Damara-Sibut-Ndele.

Securing the road to Cameroon, the country's main trading route, was already part of MISCA's operational plan but other key roads should be secured as well. This

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<sup>38</sup> These numbered about 200 men in Bangui. Crisis Group telephone interview, civil society representative, Bangui, November 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview, member of the EU delegation to Bangui, November 2013.

operation should not follow MICOPAX's previous pattern of deployment in the rest of the country (ie, small detachments stationed at Ndele and Kaga Bandoro with no real operational capability). The security forces must be capable of securing the locations where they are stationed and patrolling the surrounding areas, so as to gradually increase the territory they cover.

*In practical terms, such an operation will require:*

- ❑ decentralisation of the force's command structure and operational capability;
- ❑ four infantry battalions, each responsible for a particular area and based at a location in that area, with secondary detachments deployed in the surrounding areas;
- ❑ substantial land transport capability including armed vehicles to act as a deterrent and deal with any deterioration of the situation; and
- ❑ a rapid reaction force and air transport.

In total, a 6,000-strong force will be necessary for a successful operation able to facilitate the regular supply of humanitarian aid, the return of internally displaced people to their homes, redeployment of administrative services and economic revival.<sup>40</sup>

### 3. Institutional partnership for an effective MISCA

The first stage of this intervention should buy time to strengthen MISCA, but that can only be possible with strong support from the soon-to-arrive French reinforcements and logistical support, which France was already providing to MICOPAX. There should be a rapid increase in support to ensure MISCA is properly operational.

The strengthening of MISCA should take place in two stages: its numbers should be increased to 3,600 as envisaged by the AU before being increased further to 6,000. The \$40 million promised by the U.S. to support MISCA could be used, among other things, to cover the costs of deploying the infantry troops that Burundi is contributing to MISCA.<sup>41</sup> Such immediate bilateral logistical support should be gradually replaced by UN logistical support, which is currently being debated in New York.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the EU, which has already funded most of the MICOPAX budget, and the AU should reach an agreement for the EU funds to be transferred to the African Union so that it can quickly pay MISCA troops.

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<sup>40</sup> The figure of 6,000 was put forward by the UN and tallies with Crisis Group's assessments. Crisis Group interview, military expert, Bangui, November 2013. "Centrafrique: l'ONU envisage d'envoyer 6 000 casques bleus", *La Presse*, 18 November 2013.

<sup>41</sup> Burundi offered troops for MISCA and the U.S. plans to contribute \$40 million to the mission. "Le Burundi se prépare à envoyer des troupes en Centrafrique", RFI, 28 July 2013. "Support for the African Union International Support Mission in the Central African Republic", John Kerry, Washington, 20 November 2013. Rwanda has also pledged troops to the AU. Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Addis Ababa, November 2013.

<sup>42</sup> In the report that the UN Secretary-General presented to the Security Council on the options for providing support to MISCA, four options involved the contribution of technical and logistical support and the final option provided for the deployment of a UN mission. "Report of the Secretary-General", op. cit.

## B. *Additional Measures for a Secure and Peaceful Environment*

### 1. Launching a second-generation DDR program

The transition authorities have included disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) in their roadmap, created an institutional framework for it and, with UN support, have already formulated an implementation strategy.<sup>43</sup> Based on a community approach, it proposes a three-stage DDR until the end of 2014 and includes two emergency measures: the cantonment of combatants and the creation of a special commission responsible for repatriating foreign combatants. Groups that have been disarmed by international forces and that are not in their area of origin will be eligible for cantonment. Members of local self-defence groups will instead be offered assistance with income generating activities. Foreign combatants should be invited to return home or be disarmed and handed over to their country's authorities. Pilot sites for barracks should be quickly designated – one in Bangui and the other in the rest of the country. UN peacekeepers should ensure the security of these sites and their numbers should be adjusted accordingly.

In order to quickly launch the DDR program, the institutional arrangements recommended in Crisis Group's previous report on the CAR are still relevant: co-funding by the EU and the World Bank, implementation and security by the UN, technical expertise supplied by France to the UN.

### 2. Supporting interfaith reconciliation

Following the violence between Muslims and Christians, several interfaith meetings have been organised and the Sant'Egidio community sponsored a Republican Pact. Under the aegis of the UN and with financial support from donors, interfaith dialogue initiatives (eg, creation of joint peace committees) and reconstruction projects should be launched in the affected areas, especially in towns where Christians and Muslims are currently living in separate zones. These reconstruction projects will bring the two religious groups together and benefit both, to facilitate community rapprochement based on mutual interest and avoid further sectarian strife.

### 3. Supporting the joint commission of inquiry and investigating the plunder of natural resources

International partners should provide the joint commission of inquiry set up in May 2013 with the resources to investigate in the provinces. In liaison with BINUCA, which has already been tasked with documenting atrocities, the commission should focus on human rights violations. Moreover, given strong suspicions of diamond and ivory trafficking,<sup>44</sup> the UN and donors should create a team to investigate the plunder of natural resources and, based on its findings, the Security Council should impose sanctions (embargo, targeted sanctions, etc.).

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<sup>43</sup> The transitional government has created a ministry for DDR as well as strategic and technical committees. Decree no. 13 268 on the organisation and operation of the DDR ministry, Bangui, 15 July 2013 and decree no. 13 338 on appointments to positions of responsibility at the DDR ministry, Bangui, 16 September 2013.

<sup>44</sup> "At least 26 elephants massacred in world heritage site", WWF, Yaoundé, 10 May 2013. The CAR was suspended from the Kimberley Process in May. See Crisis Group Report, *Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition*, op. cit.

#### 4. Deploying rapidly local reconstruction teams

The Seleka's advance on Bangui and the outbreak of local violence since March have completely destroyed basic infrastructure (water supply, schools, health services, administrative offices). As the government has planned to reestablish these services and has already redeployed some governors,<sup>45</sup> the rapid reconstruction of towns and simultaneous redeployment of public administration should be prioritised.

Under the prime minister's authority, a unit bringing together donors, the UN, relevant ministries, the security services, a representative of international forces and humanitarian actors should identify these locations, undertake a needs assessment and rapidly deploy reconstruction teams. The reestablishment of basic services will promote the creation of local jobs, assist the DDR program, embody the state's return and stabilise the country. It could be funded by the international trustee fund.<sup>46</sup> The UN could also launch an appeal for funds for a realistic reconstruction program based on the government's roadmap.

## IV. Conclusion

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The current situation in the CAR is a major test for the region's peace and security architecture. Although African organisations have deployed an armed force, it has not been able to fulfil its mission unassisted. It would therefore be appropriate to create an ad hoc and innovative partnership with the UN, EU, U.S. and France to act urgently in support of the AU and make up for this lack of capacity. More than ten years after the creation of the peace and security architecture, it has to be recognised that the African solution that everyone wants to see in the CAR requires more intensive and prompt external support.

**Nairobi/Brussels, 2 December 2013**

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<sup>45</sup> Sections 2 and 3 of the roadmap.

<sup>46</sup> Fund created by donors to the CAR for the transition.

Appendix A: Map of Central African Republic



## Appendix B: Reports and Briefings on Africa since 2010

### Central Africa

*CAR: Keeping the Dialogue Alive*, Africa Briefing N°69, 12 January 2010 (also available in French).

*Burundi: Ensuring Credible Elections*, Africa Report N°155, 12 February 2010 (also available in French).

*Libya/Chad: Beyond Political Influence*, Africa Briefing N°71, 23 March 2010 (only available in French and Arabic).

*Congo: A Stalled Democratic Agenda*, Africa Briefing N°73, 8 April 2010 (also available in French).

*Chad: Beyond Superficial Stability*, Africa Report N°162, 17 August 2010 (only available in French).

*Congo: No Stability in Kivu Despite a Rapprochement with Rwanda*, Africa Report N°165, 16 November 2010 (also available in French).

*Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic*, Africa Report N°167, 16 December 2010 (also available in French).

*Burundi: From Electoral Boycott to Political Impasse*, Africa Report N°169, 7 February 2011 (also available in French).

*Chad's North West: The Next High-risk Area?*, Africa Briefing N°78, 17 February 2011 (only available in French).

*Congo: The Electoral Dilemma*, Africa Report N°175, 5 May 2011 (also available in French).

*Congo : The Electoral Process Seen from the East*, Africa Briefing N°80, 5 September 2011 (also available in French).

*Africa without Qaddafi: The Case of Chad*, Africa Report N°180, 21 October 2011 (also available in French).

*Implementing Peace and Security Architecture (I): Central Africa*, Africa Report N°181, 7 November 2011 (also available in French).

*The Lord's Resistance Army: End Game?*, Africa Report N°182, 17 November 2011.

*Burundi: A Deepening Corruption Crisis*, Africa Report N°185, 21 March 2012 (also available in French).

*Black Gold in the Congo: Threat to Stability or Development Opportunity?*, Africa Report N°188, 11 July 2012 (also available in French).

*Eastern Congo: Why Stabilisation Failed*, Africa Briefing N°91, 4 October 2012 (also available in French).

*Burundi: Bye-bye Arusha?* Africa Report N°192, 25 October 2012 (only available in French).

*The Gulf of Guinea : The New Danger Zone*, Africa Report N°195, 12 December 2012 (also available in French).

*Eastern Congo: The ADF-Nalu's Lost Rebellion*, Africa Briefing N°93, 19 December 2012 (also available in French).

*Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition*, Africa Report N°203, 11 June 2013 (also available in French).

*Understanding Conflict in Eastern Congo (I): The Ruzizi Plain*, Africa Report N°206, 23 July 2013 (also available in French).

*Central African Republic: Better Late than Never*, Africa Briefing N°96, 2 December 2013 (only available in French).

### Horn of Africa

*Rigged Elections in Darfur and the Consequences of a Probable NCP Victory in Sudan*, Africa Briefing N°72, 30 March 2010.

*LRA: A Regional Strategy Beyond Killing Kony*, Africa Report N°157, 28 April 2010 (also available in French).

*Sudan: Regional Perspectives on the Prospect of Southern Independence*, Africa Report N°159, 6 May 2010.

*Somalia's Divided Islamists*, Africa Briefing N°74, 18 May 2010 (also available in Somali).

*Sudan: Defining the North-South Border*, Africa Briefing N°75, 2 September 2010.

*Eritrea: The Siege State*, Africa Report N°163, 21 September 2010.

*Negotiating Sudan's North-South Future*, Africa Briefing N°76, 23 November 2010.

*Somalia: The Transitional Government on Life Support*, Africa Report N°170, 21 February 2011.

*Politics and Transition in the New South Sudan*, Africa Briefing N°172, 4 April 2011.

*Divisions in Sudan's Ruling Party and the Threat to the Country's Stability*, Africa Report N°174, 4 May 2011.

*South Sudan: Compounding Instability in Unity State*, Africa Report N°179, 17 October 2011 (also available in Chinese).

*Kenya: Impact of the ICC Proceedings*, Africa Briefing N°84, 9 January 2012.

*Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation*, Africa Briefing N°85, 25 January 2012.

*The Kenyan Military Intervention in Somalia*, Africa Report N°184, 15 February 2012

*Somalia: An Opportunity that Should Not Be Missed*, Africa Briefing N°87, 22 February 2012.

*China's New Courtship in South Sudan*, Africa Report N°186, 4 April 2012 (also available in Chinese).

*Uganda: No Resolution to Growing Tensions*, Africa Report N°187, 5 April 2012.

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*Sudan: Major Reform or More War*, Africa Report N°194, 29 November 2012 (also available in Arabic).

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*Sudan's Spreading Conflict (II): War in Blue Nile*, Africa Report N°204, 18 June 2013.

*Ethiopia: Prospects for Peace in Ogaden*, Africa Report N°207, 6 August 2013.

*Sudan: Preserving Peace in the East*, Africa Report N°209, 26 November 2013.

### **Southern Africa**

*Zimbabwe: Political and Security Challenges to the Transition*, Africa Briefing N°70, 3 March 2010.

*Madagascar: Ending the Crisis*, Africa Report N°156, 18 March 2010 (only available in French).

*Madagascar: Crisis Heating Up?*, Africa Report N°166, 18 November 2010.

*Zimbabwe: The Road to Reform or Another Dead End*, Africa Report N°173, 27 April 2011.

*Resistance and Denial: Zimbabwe's Stalled Reform Agenda*, Africa Briefing N°82, 16 November 2011.

*Zimbabwe's Sanctions Standoff*, Africa Briefing N°86, 6 February 2012 (also available in Chinese).

*Implementing Peace and Security Architecture (II): Southern Africa*, Africa Report N°191, 15 October 2012.

*Zimbabwe: Election Scenarios*, Africa Report N°202, 6 May 2013.

*Zimbabwe's Elections: Mugabe's Last Stand*, Africa Briefing N°95, 29 July 2013.

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*Cote d'Ivoire: Securing the Electoral Process*, Africa Report N°158, 5 May 2010 (only available in French).

*Cameroon: Fragile State?*, Africa Report N°160, 25 May 2010 (also available in French).

*Cameroon: The Dangers of a Fracturing Regime*, Africa Report N°161, 24 June 2010 (also available in French).

*Guinea: Reforming the Army*, Africa Report N°164, 23 September 2010 (also available in French).

*Côte d'Ivoire : Sortir enfin de l'ornière ?*, Africa Briefing N°77, 25 November 2010.

*Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, Africa Report N°168, 20 December 2010.

*Nigeria's Elections: Reversing the Degeneration?*, Africa Briefing N°79, 24 February 2011.

*Côte d'Ivoire: Is War the Only Option?*, Africa Report N°171, 3 March 2011 (also available in French).

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*Liberia: How Sustainable Is the Recovery?*, Africa Report N°177, 19 August 2011.

*Guinea: Putting the Transition Back on Track*, Africa Report N°178, 23 September 2011.

*Côte d'Ivoire: Continuing the Recovery*, Africa Briefing N°83, 16 December 2011 (also available in French).

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*Mali: Avoiding Escalation*, Africa Report N°189, 18 July 2012 (also available in French).

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*Côte d'Ivoire: Defusing Tensions*, Africa Report N°193, 26 November 2012 (also available in French).

*Curbing Violence in Nigeria (I): The Jos Crisis*, Africa Report N°196, 17 December 2012.

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*Niger: Another Weak Link in the Sahel?*, Africa Report N°208, 19 September 2013.

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