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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2217 (2015), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to 30 April 2016 and requested me to report to the Council every four months. The report provides an update on the situation in the Central African Republic since my last report of 29 July 2015 ([S/2015/576](#)) and on the implementation of the mandate of MINUSCA.

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

2. Despite significant progress in organizing the elections intended to return the country to constitutional order, including a high rate of voter registration, attempts to destabilize the political transition took place over the second half of the reporting period, marked by an upsurge in violence, most notably in Bangui.

3. Three months after the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation in May, the first plenary meeting of its follow-up committee was organized on 7 August. Subsequent meetings revealed differences of opinion among the 25-member committee over the organization of its work, including its independence and financial autonomy. The committee submitted a report to the Prime Minister on 26 September, which reflected the limited progress made in implementing the Forum's recommendations.

4. The constitutional review process continued, with the support of MINUSCA. On 4 August, the Constitutional Court approved the draft constitution as amended by a constitutional review workshop in July. However, the revised version adopted by the National Transitional Council on 30 August re-introduced the establishment of a senate. The good offices of MINUSCA and other international actors prevented this controversial issue from blocking further work on the constitutional review. On 18 September, the National Transitional Council submitted a final draft constitution, including elements on the establishment of a senate, to the Transitional Authority and the National Electoral Authority for consideration ahead of the constitutional referendum.



5. Following the 30 July 2015 decision of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to extend the transition through 30 December 2015 to permit elections to be held by the end of the year, the Constitutional Court confirmed, on 14 August, that the decision was in compliance with the Transitional Charter. Subsequently, on 5 September, some 35 political coalitions, parties and independent politicians signed a joint declaration calling for a new, multi-year transition that would include the replacement of the Head of State, the Prime Minister and his cabinet and the National Transitional Council. On 13 November, members of this so-called third transition group as well as civil society and anti-balaka and former Séléka factions signed an agreement calling for the establishment of a new 18-month transition, and for elections to take place during that new transition.

6. The political and security environment in the Central African Republic deteriorated in late September in Bambari and Bangui, triggered by the killing of a Muslim man on 26 September (see para. 18 below), followed by intercommunal clashes between elements of the anti-balaka and former Séléka armed groups. Following this outbreak of violence, the Head of State of the Transition, Catherine Samba-Panza, cut short her participation in the General Assembly to return to Bangui on 30 September. Upon her return, she called for calm and denounced unnamed political actors for instigating the violence, accusing them of an attempted coup d'état. She decried the reversal of the advances made at the Bangui Forum and announced a likely postponement of elections. In an attempt to bring national stakeholders together and generate a new momentum towards ending the transition, on 12 October, she launched consultations with representatives of civil society, political parties, armed groups, community leaders and mayors of the districts of the city of Bangui. However, these efforts were compromised when, on 26 October, a delegation of the former Séléka Union pour la paix en Centrafrique faction that had travelled to Bangui to participate in the consultations was attacked by alleged anti-balaka elements (see para. 20 below). This incident further aggravated intercommunal tensions.

7. A reshuffle of the Transitional Authority took place on 29 October following the aforementioned consultations held by the Head of State with some national stakeholders. Changes to the Prime Minister's cabinet included two new ministers, the removal of three ministers and portfolio changes for five others. On 2 November, the Head of State addressed the nation and announced, inter alia, that she had instructed the Central African Armed Forces, gendarmerie and national police to join the international forces to address the violence. On 4 November, the President of the National Transitional Council participated in a peaceful march calling for the strengthening of the Central African Armed Forces in order to provide security for the population, in coordination with international forces.

8. Through my Acting Special Representative for the Central African Republic, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, along with my Special Representative for Central Africa, Abdoulaye Bathily, the United Nations continued to provide good offices aimed at supporting the conclusion of the political transition, including mediation among all political actors and the provision of strategic advice on modalities for reviewing the electoral calendar and ensuring the continuity of the Government until elected leaders are in place.

B. Preparations for the elections

9. Despite many daunting challenges, preparations for the constitutional referendum and combined presidential and legislative elections progressed during the reporting period. Consultations among key stakeholders, including political actors, civil society, transitional institutions and the electoral authority yielded a revised electoral calendar on 9 November. This calendar foresees the holding of the constitutional referendum on 13 December 2015, the first round of the presidential and legislative elections on 27 December 2015, a second round, as necessary, on 31 January 2016 and the proclamation of the final results by 24 February 2016. In line with the spirit of the Transitional Charter and in coordination with the Central African Republic's international Mediator, President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo, a summit, hosted by the ECCAS Chair, President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon, was held on 25 November, during which a final technical extension of the transition through to 31 March 2016 was endorsed. On 11 November, the Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la transition, a political platform that includes the political parties of Martin Ziguélé, Desiré Kolingba and Nicolas Tiangaye, who is the president of the alliance and former Prime Minister, issued a declaration indicating that the revised calendar was neither based on consensus nor in compliance with the electoral code.

10. Meanwhile, the population has demonstrated its keen interest in participating in the elections. Voter registration closed on 16 November, with more than 1,980,000 voters registered, representing approximately 95 per cent of the estimated electorate. In a related development, the National Electoral Authority began posting a provisional electoral list on its website in order to facilitate access throughout the country. At the same time, out-of-country registration of citizens of the Central African Republic in the diaspora and of refugees from the conflict, of which 198,000 are estimated to be eligible to vote in neighbouring countries, progressed slowly and unevenly. Registration did not take place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or in the Sudan, while efforts to register refugees in Cameroon, Chad and the Republic of the Congo, following the signing of tripartite agreements between the Central African Republic, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the respective host countries, were delayed in part by recurrent security incidents. There were also challenges with deploying sufficient logistical, financial and security support to register refugees. With the closing of the voter registration, approximately 53,500 refugees, or some 27 per cent of potential refugee voters, had been registered in the above-mentioned three countries.

11. The National Electoral Authority has adjusted its operational plan in line with the new electoral calendar and has implemented measures to address emerging operational and coordination challenges, especially in inaccessible areas. For example, in August, it completed the establishment of coordination centres for electoral operations. The centres, comprising national and international actors at the national, prefecture and sub-prefecture levels, have been effective in reinforcing their monitoring and operational capacity in the electoral process.

12. Institutionally, the stability of the electoral management bodies and the electoral process itself were challenged when the Vice-President and President of the National Electoral Authority resigned on 26 August and 8 October, respectively. On 28 October, the Authority elected a new three-member board with Marie-Madeleine N'Kouet Hoornaert, its former Rapporteur, as the new President.

13. The United Nations continued to provide technical, operational, logistical and security support to the electoral authorities amidst a challenging security and political environment, compounded by the onset of the rainy season. This included assistance with the distribution of some 200 tons of electoral equipment to the 16 prefectures, the return of 3,445 out of 3,498 registration kits (as of 15 November) from the countryside to Bangui and the establishment of the coordination centres mentioned above.

14. Significant efforts have also been made by the Transitional Authority and the United Nations to mobilize international support and funding for the electoral process, which is budgeted at \$36.6 million. Additional financial contributions from international partners were announced in August and September in response to my appeals for support. Contributions from Cameroon, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Morocco, the Republic of the Congo and the United States of America, and, most recently, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, as well as the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, have filled the financial gap in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-managed basket fund for the elections. I extend my gratitude for these contributions.

C. Reconciliation

15. As follow-up to the Bangui Forum, UNDP, in collaboration with MINUSCA and other United Nations and international partners, supported efforts by the Transitional Authority to implement its national reconciliation strategy as outlined in the Republican Pact for peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction (see [S/2015/576](#), para. 3). These efforts included the establishment of local peace and reconciliation committees at the prefectural level, drawing on existing initiatives, where possible, and in support of the already established 13 peace committees in different parts of the country. In addition, intercommunal reconciliation initiatives included a facilitated dialogue between the Muslim community in the third district of Bangui and the predominantly Christian community of the Boeing district on access by Muslims to their cemetery there. To support this initiative, MINUSCA and UNDP initiated income-generating activities and social cohesion projects in both areas.

16. Following the outbreak of violence in Bambari in August (see para. 24), representatives of the Ministry of Reconciliation, UNDP and MINUSCA assisted the Muslim and Christian communities in restarting the reconciliation process and intercommunal dialogue, including through the creation of a peace platform in Ouaka prefecture composed of local authorities and representatives from all civil society and religious groups. MINUSCA also established a still tenuous weapons-free zone aimed at reducing tension between the former Séléka and the anti-balaka in Bambari on 8 September. The visit of Pope Francis to Bangui on 29 and 30 November further validated the commitment of the international community to helping resolve intercommunal tensions.

D. Security situation

17. The security situation across the country remained tense throughout the reporting period. Clashes between opposing armed groups, particularly former

Séléka and anti-balaka, and heightened criminal activities continued. Despite a slight improvement during the month of August and through most of September, the situation rapidly deteriorated at the end of September, notably in the capital.

18. On 26 September, the discovery of the body of a decapitated young Muslim in front of a mosque in Bangui triggered a series of reprisal attacks in several neighbourhoods of the capital, resulting in at least 77 persons killed and more than 400 injured over the following four days, as well as the displacement of close to 40,000 people. During the violence that ensued, armed crowds took to the streets, erecting barricades to prevent the movement of people, as well as access to the airport. Segments of the population called for the resignation of the Head of State and the redeployment of the Central African Armed Forces. The violent demonstrations were accompanied by incidents of looting and attacks on local police stations, the gendarmerie headquarters, churches, mosques and the national radio station, as well as on residences and convoys of United Nations personnel and non-governmental organizations, including humanitarian partners and their premises. In addition, on 28 September, 689 inmates escaped from the central prison in Bangui. These events paralysed the city for a week.

19. After the initial days of the crisis, gang-related criminal violence, chiefly associated with anti-balaka elements, as well as incidents led by Muslim self-defence groups, coupled with reported movements of former Séléka elements into Bangui, remained a cause of serious concern in the capital. Reprisal attacks by armed elements of both Christian and Muslim communities continued.

20. On 26 October, while visiting Bangui at the invitation of the Head of State for consultations with the Government, a delegation from the former Séléka Union pour la paix en Centrafrique faction in Bambari was attacked by armed elements, resulting in the injury of one member and the disappearance of two others, who are presumed dead. The attack on the delegation triggered a cycle of reprisal attacks between Christian and Muslim communities in Bangui's third and sixth districts, during which an estimated 26 people were killed, scores injured and a further 2,000 displaced; the destruction of property was severe.

21. Reacting to the events in Bangui since the end of September, a number of former Séléka Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique armed elements moved towards Bangui via Kaga Bandoro in early October, leading to the temporary displacement of some 10,000 people in Kémo-Gribingui prefecture. The movement culminated in a clash, on 10 October, with international forces — the French Sangaris force and MINUSCA — near Sibut, resulting in the death of at least 12 members of the armed group, reportedly including Oumar Younous, an individual under United Nations sanctions, and dozens of injuries among their fighters. In response to the movements of former Séléka forces, anti-balaka elements moved from neighbouring towns into Bangui. From 17 to 19 November, MINUSCA, supported by the French Sangaris force, launched an operation to guarantee free movement in the third and sixth districts of Bangui. Meanwhile, the former Séléka Union pour la paix en Centrafrique reportedly deployed additional elements in areas under its control around Bambari, allegedly in preparation for the seasonal movement of cattle herders along their predefined routes.

22. Armed groups also continued illegal activities in areas under their control, including mining. Anti-balaka factions remained active in Bangui and the western part of the country, while former Séléka elements largely continued to control areas

in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Reports of illegal arrests, detention and exactions by elements of armed groups continued. Civilians also continued to face threats from other armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army.

23. In the west, the security situation remained challenging, particularly in areas bordering Cameroon and Chad. MINUSCA provided armed escorts to commercial and humanitarian convoys along the main supply road from Cameroon to Bangui; attacks on convoys remained a persistent threat. Facing regular, lethal attacks on convoys, Cameroonian truck drivers have gone on several strikes, affecting the delivery of essential goods to Bangui and impeding the deployment of MINUSCA.

24. In the central part of the country, clashes among armed groups increased tensions. In Bambari on 20 August, anti-balaka elements reportedly killed a Muslim in retaliation for an earlier attack by the former Séléka Union pour la paix en Centrafrique. Three people were killed and five injured in reprisal attacks. In the eastern and northern regions, the two main former Séléka armed groups, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique continued to assert influence in their respective areas of control. Activities by the Lord's Resistance Army reportedly increased in the Yalinga area, Haute Kotto prefecture, where the population deserted some villages. In Bria, Haute Kotto prefecture, on 24 August, intercommunal violence resulted in five deaths and 10 injured, including an increase in the number of internally displaced persons.

III. Protection of civilians

25. In response to imminent threats of physical violence, the protection of civilians remained a high priority for MINUSCA, which continued to work closely with the protection cluster, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to identify and address protection issues. MINUSCA has witnessed continued tensions between and within armed groups in Bangui and the central part of the country. These tensions have adversely affected areas with mixed populations, in particular in Bambari, Batangafo, Grimari, Kaga Bandoro, Kuango, Mbres and Sibut, as well as Muslim neighbourhoods in western parts of the country.

26. MINUSCA developed a series of initiatives, including flashpoint matrices and a peacekeepers handbook that provides tactical guidance on the protection of civilians to contingent commanders. In Bangui and the prefectures, MINUSCA military and police continued to adapt their deployment to protection flashpoints. Outside Bangui, the Mission established temporary operating bases in Aibando, Kabo and Yalinga — areas where the local population had suffered from increased attacks by armed groups. MINUSCA also continued efforts to ensure the protection of minorities, including Muslims living in enclaves across the country, and deployed joint protection teams to communities at risk, including displaced Fulanis.

27. Bambari and Kouango continued to be high priority areas for the protection of civilians. Following clashes between former Séléka Union pour la paix en Centrafrique elements and anti-balaka in late August, MINUSCA deployed additional companies to Bambari in early September to enforce the withdrawal of elements of Union pour la paix en Centrafrique from the right bank of the Ouaka River and the establishment of a weapons-free zone. MINUSCA established a temporary operating base in early October in the Kouango area to address renewed

violence between the two groups. MINUSCA reinforced its Bangui-specific strategy to enhance coordination between civilian components, humanitarian actors and the Joint Task Force, fostering an integrated response to threats through early warning analysis, the mapping of priority areas and the streamlining of rapid response mechanisms.

28. The MINUSCA nationally recruited community liaison assistants played a key role in carrying out the Mission's protection of civilians strategy across the country. During the September crisis in Bangui and in Kaga Bandoro, Kémo and Nana Grébizi prefectures, they engaged with the local population, national authorities and security forces to identify needs and prevent and diffuse intercommunal tensions. Recruitment is under way for 28 additional community liaison assistants, who will be deployed across the country.

IV. Human rights situation

29. The human rights situation remained critical throughout the country. As of 15 November, MINUSCA reported 710 new verified incidents of human rights violations or abuses against a total of 1,178 victims, including 135 women, 29 boys and 31 girls. This represents an increase of 504 documented incidents and an increase of 938 victims over the previous reporting period (1 April-30 July 2015). Of serious concern are documented incidents of arbitrary killings (114), cruel and inhumane treatment (123), conflict-related sexual violence (26) and arbitrary arrests and detention (107) committed mainly by anti-balaka and former Séléka elements against civilians. Persons accused of practising witchcraft continued to be killed, buried alive or subjected to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.

30. In an effort to combat the pervasive impunity and lack of accountability that persists in the country, MINUSCA has initiated investigations into the gross human rights violations and serious violations of international humanitarian law committed during the recent violence that began on 26 September. Preliminary findings confirmed that armed groups of anti-balaka and former Séléka, self-defence groups and Central African Armed Forces elements committed grave violations, including targeted killings, rape, abductions and widespread destruction of property, particularly arson, pillaging and looting. MINUSCA also documented an increase in serious violations of the right to life committed by internal security forces (police and gendarmerie).

31. During his visit to the Central African Republic from 1 to 4 September, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights acknowledged the efforts made by the Transitional Authority to improve the human rights situation, emphasizing that long-term stability can only be achieved through the re-establishment of an independent and impartial justice system, founded on the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

32. MINUSCA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in partnership with the Transitional Authority, organized an international seminar on the fight against impunity from 2 to 4 September in Bangui. The more than 160 representatives of the transitional institutions, civil society and of human rights and other organizations who took part in the seminar recommended the development of a national strategy for the fight against impunity and the identification of resources for the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms.

A. Conflict-related sexual violence

33. During the reporting period, MINUSCA received 24 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence, of which 15 cases were investigated and verified to have been committed against 15 victims (6 women and 9 girls). All cases were committed by members of armed groups. The actual number of cases is believed to be much higher. Preliminary investigations following the violence in Bangui in September and October indicate that anti-balaka and former Séléka elements committed crimes of sexual violence, including assaulting victims in their homes during house-to-house searches. There are indications from health-care providers that there was a significant increase in the number of victims seeking services for rape and sexual assault, which is being verified by MINUSCA and relevant United Nations partners on the ground. MINUSCA, together with national and international partners, including UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund, undertook efforts to guarantee safe access to medical care for victims of rape and sexual assault and to implement prevention measures through the work of joint protection teams and outreach activities.

B. Child protection

34. From 1 August to 15 November, MINUSCA documented the killing of 28 children and 49 injuries due to conflict, with the events in Bangui causing 25 of those deaths and 31 of the injuries. In two instances, children were specifically targeted. During the crisis, some children participated in the hostilities by manning checkpoints, erecting barricades alongside armed groups and participating in looting. In some circumstances, armed elements affiliated with the anti-balaka forces used children as shields when attacking MINUSCA forces. MINUSCA also documented 13 cases of rape of children by members of armed groups, four of which were attributed to the former Séléka groups Union pour la paix en Centrafrique and Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, and nine to members of the anti-balaka forces. MINUSCA also recorded 38 incidents of denial of humanitarian access to children by armed individuals from different communities; 23 of these incidents took place during the violence in Bangui.

35. MINUSCA and UNICEF continued to co-lead the country task force on monitoring and reporting grave violations against children. As of mid-November, the anti-balaka and the former Séléka Union pour la paix en Centrafrique had released 638 children in the Basse Kotto, Mbomou, Ombella-Mpoko, Ouaka and Ouham prefectures, while 283 children demobilized themselves from the anti-balaka forces in Ouham prefecture. All the children were reunited with their families or host families and referred to reintegration programmes supported by UNICEF.

V. Humanitarian situation

36. The recent violence in Bangui led to a new wave of population displacement that adversely affected many of the 2.7 million people already living in dire humanitarian conditions and set back progress achieved in promoting voluntary returns. As of the end of October, there were about 450,000 internally displaced persons in the Central African Republic, with more than 58,000 living in 32 sites in

Bangui. Violent attacks against national and international non-governmental organizations, most notably in the capital, continued to hamper humanitarian operations.

37. In early November, UNHCR reported that there were nearly 470,000 Central African refugees living in neighbouring countries. Humanitarian resources continue to be stretched. An estimated \$613 million is urgently required to cover the needs of 2.7 million people, including refugees, with only 46 per cent of the required funds received to date.

38. During his visit to the Central African Republic from 20 to 23 October, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator underscored the determination of the humanitarian community to deliver assistance to all those in need, especially to those displaced, until the conditions are sufficient for their voluntary return. He also underlined the need for national authorities to ensure the free movement of people, including those belonging to vulnerable groups and minorities at risk.

VI. Socioeconomic developments

39. The economy of the Central African Republic remained stagnant, with inflation at 5.7 per cent. The adverse security situation, including armed attacks along the main supply route and the strikes of transport workers, caused the disruption of investments and household consumption, as well as an increase in prices of basic commodities by 13 per cent, according to the Central African Institute of Statistics, Economic and Social Studies.

40. The Transitional Authority continued to face enormous difficulties in meeting its primary expenditures and in financing the country's development needs. In that regard, key international partners and financial institutions continued to work with the Transitional Authority on public finance management reforms to control expenditure and increase revenue. International partners, namely UNDP, the World Bank and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, continued to finance the salaries of civil servants, members of the Transitional Authority and the internal security forces (police and gendarmerie). The cumulative deficit for August through October amounted to approximately \$16 million, or 15 per cent of the total domestic revenue expected for 2015.

VII. Extension of State authority

41. MINUSCA, in cooperation with the United Nations country team and international partners, supported the deployment of approximately 1,000 civil servants across the country. These efforts aimed at enhancing the role of the State in the organization of elections, the provision of social services to the population, the undertaking of social cohesion activities and the protection of civilians. MINUSCA, jointly with UNDP, facilitated a series of workshops to support the Ministry of Territorial Administration in training administrative authorities and civil servants prior to their deployment.

42. On 23 September, the Head of State, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Territorial Administration signed a decree nominating 1,074 individuals, including

Muslims and Christians and 213 women, as members of “special delegations” to serve as municipal councils at prefecture and sub-prefecture levels. MINUSCA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and the Government of France, is providing training to the delegations.

43. MINUSCA, together with relevant United Nations agencies, also continued to support the deployment of national police and gendarmerie outside Bangui. MINUSCA continued to carry out joint activities with internal security forces in Bambari, Bangassou, Bangui, Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, Kaga Bandoro and Ndele, as well as with border and airport police.

VIII. Rule of law

A. Implementation of urgent temporary measures

44. The escape of nearly 700 prisoners, including some high-profile individuals, from Ngaragba prison on 28 September, and 50 other prisoners from a gendarmerie holding facility in Bouar on 29 September, marked a significant setback for the Transitional Authority in its efforts to restore law and order and to fight impunity. At the request of the Transitional Authority, MINUSCA has reinforced security at Camp de Roux in Bangui, where 12 high-profile inmates are detained, while also supporting the refurbishment of the Ngaragba prison through quick-impact projects.

45. MINUSCA provided technical advice to the national judiciary authorities on the handling of cases involving suspects who were arrested under the urgent temporary measures mandate, including cases that will fall under the jurisdiction of the Special Criminal Court, to ensure their efficient processing. Due to a lack of national capacity, additional MINUSCA corrections officers are needed to ensure that individuals arrested are detained in safe, secure and humane detention centres.

B. Special Criminal Court

46. MINUSCA and the United Nations country team continued to assist the ad hoc Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of the Ministry of Justice, MINUSCA, UNDP and bilateral partners, on the establishment of the Special Criminal Court, including the allocation of premises, the selection of national magistrates and the profiles of international magistrates and staff. The establishment of the Court will follow a phased approach in order to allow different parts of the Court to become operational as funds become available. Under the United Nations Global Focal Point arrangement, a team of experts was deployed for the month of August to support the work of MINUSCA and the United Nations country team to prepare a project document for the Court’s operation. This deployment was organized following the technical mission conducted in May that assessed the total financial costs and resource requirements of the Court, including measures for the protection of victims and witnesses and for a strong judicial response to sexual violence in conflict-related crimes.

C. Support to justice and corrections

47. MINUSCA, UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), working jointly under the Global Focal Point arrangement for police, justice and corrections, supported the Ministry of Justice by rehabilitating and reopening courts in Bouar and Bria as part of an overall strategy to extend legal authority and build national capacity across the country. MINUSCA and the United Nations country team also supported the first criminal court sessions held in Bangui since 2010. The court acquitted 15 individuals and sentenced 61 persons for various crimes, including manslaughter, murder, criminal association, illegal possession of weapons and armed robbery.

48. MINUSCA continued to coordinate international stakeholders and provide mentoring and technical support to five main detention facilities (Bimbo, Bouar, Bria, Camp de Roux and Ngarabga), as well as to various police and gendarmerie holding facilities, including improvement of security, the registries and the provision of food and basic health care.

IX. Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

49. MINUSCA continued to provide technical and logistical support to the efforts of the Transitional Authority to implement the Bangui Forum agreement on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation. Under article 4 of the agreement, which provides for the cantonment of armed groups by the Government with partners' assistance, MINUSCA continued to provide food support to some 1,500 former Séléka elements and families gathered in three camps in Bangui. A joint task force, composed of MINUSCA and the national High Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform of the office of the Prime Minister, undertook awareness-raising activities in Bangui and in the prefectures to explain the pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration concept as a preparatory stop-gap phase to encourage disarmament in exchange for food support in advance of the launch of full disarmament, demobilization and repatriation activities. MINUSCA and the Transitional Authority carried out 13 visits across the country to sensitize local authorities and armed groups about the terms of the agreement signed during the Bangui Forum.

50. MINUSCA, in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Project Services, carried out labour-intensive projects for former combatants worth \$2 million in support of initial disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation in Bambari, Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro. The United Nations and the World Bank explored collaboration in a number of areas linked to the security-development nexus, including the development of infrastructure, labour-intensive projects and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. With regard to community violence reduction, MINUSCA secured \$3.5 million from the Peacebuilding Fund to carry out projects in Baboua, Bossangoa, Bouar, Kouï and Nana Bakassa. MINUSCA launched pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations in Birao, Bria and Kaga Bandoro, including the registration of 299 combatants. While some armed groups remain reluctant to hand over weapons, MINUSCA continued to engage with armed groups in order to enhance their willingness to disarm and to ensure a safe environment for the upcoming elections.

X. Weapons and ammunitions management

51. During the reporting period, MINUSCA destroyed 18.3 tons of commercial explosives in Birao and retrieved 267 various explosive items and ammunition. Due to the recent violence in Bangui, MINUSCA received and safeguarded only 33 voluntarily-handed-over weapons. MINUSCA assessed the status of weapons and ammunition and their storage conditions for seven static posts, and supported the training of 18 members of the national security services in weapons storage management. The Mission also conducted 1,608 education sessions on the risk of weapons and explosives for 22,053 children and 15,530 adults at local markets, places of worship, camps of internally displaced persons and schools in Bangui and Kaga Bandoro.

XI. Security sector reform and vetting

52. MINUSCA continued to provide good offices to support efforts by national and international members of the Strategic Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform to implement relevant recommendations of the Bangui Forum. On 21 September, the Committee approved a road map for security sector reform developed by the technical committee, and on 12 November the Committee also approved plans for a national round table scheduled in early December 2015.

53. MINUSCA, in cooperation with UNDP and the Swiss Foundation of Demining, completed a project funded by the multi-partner trust fund that included the supply of medical equipment to military hospitals in Camps Kassaï and Obrou in Bangui. MINUSCA and the European Union Military Advisory Mission are working with the Ministry of Defence on the rehabilitation of the main military school in Bouar, which will be essential to the reform process through the recruitment and training of new personnel.

54. As of 15 November, MINUSCA, in cooperation with the European Union Military Advisory Mission and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, had assisted the Ministry of Defence in the simplified verification of 2,822 of the 7,300 registered Central African armed forces personnel. The simplified verification criteria include non-affiliation with active armed groups and non-violation of human rights and international humanitarian law standards, but fall short of international standards on vetting.

XII. Coordination of international assistance

55. MINUSCA, together with the United Nations country team, continued to strengthen international assistance coordination mechanisms to better align multiple approaches by international partners and Central African stakeholders. Together with the Transitional Authority, steps were taken to prioritize human security in national development strategies as part of a pilot project on social cohesion, conflict prevention and human security, supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

56. On 1 October, the Secretary-General co-chaired, with the Head of State of the Transition, a high-level meeting on the Central African Republic on the margins of the General Assembly to encourage sustained political support and mobilize additional funding for the most urgent priorities identified at the Bangui Forum. More than \$16.5 million in humanitarian assistance was pledged by international partners during the meeting.

XIII. Deployment of the Mission

A. Military

57. As of 15 November, MINUSCA had deployed 9,556 military personnel, or approximately 89 per cent of its authorized strength of 10,750 troops. This includes the deployment of 10 out of 12 infantry battalions, with the necessary enablers, including three engineering companies, one heavy transportation company, three level-2 hospitals, two signal companies and three helicopter units, including attack helicopters. Although progress was made by certain troop-contributing countries in upgrading the equipment of their contingents, gaps in contingent-owned equipment continued to pose a significant challenge for certain contingents that have yet to meet United Nations standards. The Mission maintained 52 operating bases, comprising 32 permanent and 20 temporary bases. Meanwhile, efforts are under way to accelerate the deployment of the remaining military and police units, as well as to temporarily augment MINUSCA forces through inter-mission cooperation arrangements, including the deployment of 250 troops from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

B. Police

58. As of 15 November, the MINUSCA police component comprised 331 individual police officers or 83 per cent of the authorized strength of 400 police officers, and 1,506 personnel of 11 out of 12 mandated formed police units deployed (including 99 women), which represents 89 per cent of the authorized strength of 1,680 formed police unit personnel. Of the 11 formed police units on the ground, eight formed police units and two protection support units are deployed in Bangui, and one formed police unit in Bouar. The deployment of police officers outside Bangui (14 per cent of the total strength) continued, with officers deployed in Bambari, Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, Kaga Bandoro and Ndele.

C. Civilian personnel

59. As of 15 November, 1,003 or 61 per cent of the posts for civilian personnel of MINUSCA were encumbered, including 575 international posts, 282 national posts and 146 United Nations Volunteers. Women comprise 29 per cent of the current civilian personnel.

D. Mission concept and revised component concepts

60. MINUSCA is finalizing a revised mission concept, taking into account new elements on the prioritization and phasing of tasks set out in Security Council resolution 2217 (2015) as well as the evolving situation in the country. In that context, the immediate priority of MINUSCA is to support activities that will conclude the political transition (phase III) and lead to long-term support for stabilization activities (phase IV), when a newly elected government is installed.

61. Following the violence in Bangui that began at the end of September, the MINUSCA military component assumed control of the Bangui Joint Task Force, which was previously under police command. The new command and control structure takes into consideration specific needs to protect civilians and supports the electoral process and the extension of State authority, including increased police patrolling and an initiative to establish a field office in Bangui.

E. Status-of-forces agreement

62. Despite efforts by Central African authorities, progress in ensuring respect for the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the Mission and its personnel has been slow. Outstanding issues include the imposition of a fuel tax, a registration fee on residential leases and a “tourist tax” imposed on MINUSCA personnel upon their departure from the Central African Republic. MINUSCA continues to work with the Transitional Authority to resolve these issues.

XIV. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

63. United Nations and humanitarian personnel continued to operate in conditions of insecurity, with an increase in criminality throughout the country. Following the outbreak of violence on 26 September, MINUSCA extracted close to 350 United Nations and humanitarian personnel under conditions of extreme risk between 27 and 30 September and transported some 230 humanitarian workers safely to M’Poko airport for evacuation. Outside Bangui, United Nations and humanitarian personnel and assets remained targets of attacks. Attacks on United Nations peacekeepers continued, with numerous incidents, resulting in 3 deaths and 10 injuries to peacekeepers during the reporting period.

XV. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

64. During the reporting period, 23 allegations of misconduct were reported, including 10 related to sexual exploitation and abuse, with four cases involving minors. MINUSCA followed up on reported cases, undertook risk assessment visits to military contingents and police compounds and instituted awareness-raising measures, including reinforcing the accountability of commanding officers. The Mission, in line with its zero-tolerance policy, organized induction training for incoming personnel on sexual exploitation and abuse as well as training sessions for military and police focal points. The Mission also established out-of-bounds/off-limits areas/venues and disseminated the Mission code of conduct and leaflets, including information about procedures on how to report misconduct. My Special Representative led a task force on sexual exploitation and abuse composed of senior staff from all Mission units and components.

XVI. Observations

65. Since my last report, the country has made tangible progress towards ending its transition. However, certain elements continue their attempts to derail the process through violence. The unprecedented registration of nearly two million voters demonstrates what can be achieved in the Central African Republic. It is a remarkable expression of the will of the people to resolve their differences through peaceful means, namely the election of leaders to represent their interests. Political actors who would seek to betray this hope and hold the public hostage to their narrow interests have no place in governing the country. I welcome, in particular, the efforts made to ensure that no group is disenfranchised, in particular the refugees who have fled since 2013, in order to contribute to the inclusiveness, local ownership and credibility of the process. In this regard, I call upon countries in the subregion to ensure that the Central African refugees hosted by them are allowed to exercise their democratic right to vote in the upcoming elections.

66. The holding of elections in the Central African Republic is the final step in concluding the transition phase and putting a democratic and legitimate Government in place. While elections will not resolve the country's longstanding problems, and carry their own risks, there can be no lasting stability without the establishment of inclusive institutions. The recently published electoral calendar must be adhered to as a further extension of the transition would only increase the risks of instability, with consequences not only for the Central African Republic, but for the entire region. I welcome in this regard the communiqué of the Heads of State of the Economic Community of Central African States of 25 November, in which a technical extension, through to 31 March 2016 was endorsed. I call on all actors to rally behind this objective and facilitate the free expression of the people's will in order to ensure that the State can be rebuilt with the legitimacy and means to address the root causes of the lengthy and devastating conflict. All national stakeholders, including the Transitional Authority, political parties, candidates and civil society members, as well as the media, are accountable for ensuring peaceful elections through compliance with and respect for the electoral code of conduct. Elected officials will have to represent the interests of all citizens of the Central African Republic and move the country forward towards peace, reconciliation and long-term sustainable development. With the end of the transition, a new page must be turned, away from divisive agendas and political and social intolerance.

67. The successful organization of credible elections will require that all citizens of the Central African Republic put the interest of their country above their own. It will also need the continued support of the international community. I welcome the pledges made at the high-level meeting held on the margins of the General Assembly, as well as the most recent announcement of pledges following the ECCAS summit on 25 November that have fully reduced the financial gap for the elections. I express my gratitude for these contributions and urge that all pledges be quickly fulfilled. The United Nations stands ready to play its part in support of a peaceful, inclusive and credible process.

68. The upcoming elections will take place in a volatile environment. The recent cycle of violence that began in Bangui in late September — so close to the end of the transition process — is a stark reminder that peace and security remain elusive in a country that has known little of either in recent years. I deplore the killing of more than 100 civilians, the injuries to over 400 and the displacement of some

40,000 civilians during the recent upsurge of violence in Bangui and other parts of the country. I strongly condemn those responsible for these acts, either directly or indirectly. I urge the Transitional Authority, as well as regional and international partners, to make a concerted effort to prevent the enemies of peace, both within and outside the country, from threatening the transitional process. MINUSCA will continue to adopt a robust posture to deter and counter anyone threatening the peace process. I am particularly disturbed by recent attempts to exacerbate intercommunal violence. I commend the subsequent efforts of the Transitional Authority to promote dialogue and advance preparations for free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections.

69. I am appalled by the continuing human rights abuses committed by anti-balaka, former Séléka, some elements of the Central African Armed Forces and internal security forces, self-defence groups and other armed groups and criminal elements across the country. MINUSCA is determined to continue using all necessary means to protect civilians, in support of the Transitional Authority, which bears primary responsibility for the security of all citizens of the Central African Republic. I deplore all attacks against civilians, including targeted violence against women and children, the destruction of property and the looting of humanitarian premises. I strongly condemn attacks against and the killing of United Nations peacekeepers, which may constitute war crimes. I call upon the Transitional Authority to investigate these attacks and to hold the perpetrators and their political backers accountable and bring them to justice. I call on all signatories of the Brazzaville agreement on the cessation of hostilities to abide by their commitments. I urge the Transitional Authority to sustain the political dialogue with the armed groups and to encourage them to join the pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities launched by MINUSCA.

70. The coming weeks will be a turning point for the Central African Republic. All citizens of the Central African Republic have an opportunity to choose peace and economic recovery over conflict. Elections will be an important milestone, but peace will take time to consolidate. The United Nations stands ready to support the Central African people and the new government, once elected, in moving the country forward. Following the completion of the transition, I urge all stakeholders to support the new government in undertaking reforms that reflect the aspirations of its citizens on governance, security, rule of law and sustainable development as outlined in the recommendations of the Bangui Forum. I also appeal to the international community to continue its generous support in the priority areas identified during the Forum.

71. The challenges facing the new government will be daunting, on many fronts. The task of rebuilding the social fabric of the Central African Republic while building a viable State will take time and determination. In the meantime, it will be crucial, in the months ahead, to maintain the momentum and continue addressing both the consequences and the causes of the conflict. Reconciliation and confidence-building measures between communities remain essential. I urge all national actors to promote reconciliation at all levels of society. The participation of women and young people in these efforts is of paramount importance in achieving long-term peace and stability. I applaud the efforts of religious and community leaders who stand against violence and whose work with communities in Bangui has helped to calm tensions. I welcome the visit of Pope Francis in support of peace and reconciliation. His message of forgiveness and tolerance, urging communities deeply divided by religious and ethnic differences, is a timely opportunity for

citizens of the Central African Republic to renew their commitment to lay down their arms and live together in peace and harmony.

72. The violent attempts to disrupt the transition process during the reporting period underscore the urgent need for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and for security sector reform, in line with internationally accepted standards. I am deeply concerned about the role of some elements of the Central African Armed Forces during the recent violence. The stability of the country will only be sustained if the national defence and internal security forces are transformed into professional, multi-ethnic and regionally balanced forces under the civilian control and oversight of a democratically elected government. I welcome efforts by the Transitional Authority to address this complex challenge through the development of a security sector reform road map based on the recommendations from the Bangui Forum and the holding of an inclusive dialogue on national security before the elections.

73. The recent crisis in Bangui and continuing insecurity in the countryside has highlighted the need to redouble efforts to reduce community-level violence. With the support of the international community, an elected Government will have to address the political and socioeconomic grievances that have repeatedly led segments of the population to take up arms. In this regard, I request donors to support the post-transition process as part of a holistic effort to foster stability, establish a legitimate functioning government and facilitate the gradual restoration of State authority.

74. I welcome the recent criminal trials that have taken place in Bangui. However, serious human rights violations, including acts of sexual and gender-based violence, continue to be carried out with impunity. The fight against impunity remains a key challenge. There has been some progress towards the establishment of the Special Criminal Court, however, the Court has yet to become operational due to a lack of funding and the challenge of maintaining a secure environment, which is essential to its effective functioning. I call upon the Transitional Authority to expedite the establishment of the Court. I urge international partners to provide the critical financial and technical support required for the Court to quickly assume its role as a key institution to strengthen the country's justice system and end the culture of impunity. Recurring prison breaks in the Central African Republic, compounded by the lack of national capacity, also have a negative impact on the fight against impunity. The most recent mass escape of detainees from the Bangui central prison demonstrates the urgent need for additional resources to strengthen the corrections sector.

75. The humanitarian situation remains critical. Unhindered and safe access for humanitarian actors must be secured to assist those in need. Across the country, almost half a million people, including those living in enclaves, as well as more than 450,000 refugees in neighbouring countries, have not been able to return home. It is deeply troubling that humanitarian organizations have been the target of looting and destruction in a country where 2.7 million people depend on humanitarian aid. MINUSCA stands ready to support the Transitional Authority in ensuring that those responsible for the violations of international humanitarian law are held accountable for their crimes. I reiterate the need for timely and sustained support to humanitarian operations and call on international partners to respond generously to the humanitarian appeal for the Central African Republic, which is severely underfunded.

76. I am outraged by the continued allegations of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, by MINUSCA personnel. I reiterate my unwavering commitment to ensuring that all United Nations personnel — civilian and uniformed — comply with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on misconduct, particularly sexual exploitation and abuse. The United Nations will continue to take swift action to ensure that thorough and prompt investigations into serious allegations involving peacekeepers are conducted by relevant Member States or the United Nations. Through its strategy for victim assistance, the United Nations, in coordination with in-country partners, is also ensuring that victims of abuse by United Nations personnel receive the assistance they need. I urge all troop- and police-contributing countries to United Nations and non-United Nations-led operations to ensure that such violations do not occur by taking preventive measures and promptly addressing allegations. I look forward to the report of the independent external panel I established to review the United Nations response to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and other serious crimes by members of foreign military forces not under United Nations command in the Central African Republic.

77. I am grateful to my Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for his tireless efforts, and to my former Special Representative, Babacar Gaye, for his dedicated service to the United Nations. I am deeply appreciative of the work by the personnel of MINUSCA and the United Nations country team in a dangerous and unpredictable environment. I reiterate my deepest condolences to the countries and families of United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers who have lost their lives in the line of duty in the Central African Republic. I am also grateful to my Special Representative for Central Africa, Abdoulaye Bathily, for his role in international mediation efforts in the Central African Republic. I thank the African Union, troop- and police-contributing countries, the ECCAS Conference, the European Union, the World Bank, international partners and multilateral and non-governmental organizations for their continued efforts to end the suffering of the population of the Central African Republic and work with them towards a better future.
