



MINUSCA statement in response to articles on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic

Bangui, 17 October 2024 - The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has taken note of the articles published on 16 October 2024 on the websites of *The New Humanitarian* and *Le Monde* concerning allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic.

We note with regret that the articles, for which we have provided detailed information, mention contingents that were never deployed in the localities where the alleged incidents took place.

While the articles are mainly based on alleged testimonies from victims who, for various reasons, were either unable or unwilling to report the alleged abuse, MINUSCA recalls that it has put in place numerous preventive measures against acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. These measures include awareness-raising campaigns in the field and the broadcasting of radio spots and SMS messages.

The Mission has also put in place a system enabling victims to report incidents through a number of channels. It has set up a toll-free telephone line (4044), as well as 48 local prevention and response committees made up of over 1,000 men and women from local communities, who act as essential bridges between the communities and the Mission, even in the most remote areas where the Mission operates. Victims can also contact MINUSCA personnel directly, as well as UN agencies and partner NGOs on the ground.

In addition, providing assistance to victims is at the heart of our global strategy to prevent and respond to acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. Once their report has been recorded, victims are referred to service providers selected on the basis of their expertise in supporting victims of gender-based violence. These specialists ensure that victims are safe. In addition, they provide medical, psychological, legal and educational services, as well as basic material aid including clothing and food.

Within MINUSCA, a Senior Victims' Rights Specialist supports the monitoring and coordination of victim assistance, to ensure that their rights are upheld, including the right to dignity and to be heard.

Each allegation received by MINUSCA is rigorously investigated. When the facts are established, exemplary sanctions are imposed not only on the personnel involved but also on their hierarchical commanders and any other personnel who had knowledge of and failed to report the allegations. Disciplinary sanctions can go as far as the repatriation of entire contingents.

MINUSCA reaffirms that any form of sexual exploitation and abuse is unacceptable, and that providing multifaceted assistance to identified victims, while respecting their dignity, remains the Mission's priority.

MINUSCA remains firmly committed to implementing its mandate for lasting stability and peace for all Central Africans throughout the country.

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