

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic

Statement to the UN Security Council

23 October 2024

- Mister President of the Security Council,
- Distinguished Members of the Council,
- Ambassador Omar Hilale Morocco, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco and Chair of the Central African Republic Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission,
- Ambassador Marius Aristide Hoja Nzessioue, Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations

Mister President,

1. I would like to congratulate Switzerland for its presidency of the Council for the month of October. I thank you for chairing this session, which is of particular importance as we approach the vote, of this Council, on MINUSCA's mandate renewal. I am once more honoured to present you today the latest report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic and to inform the Council of recent political and security developments as well as this Mission main achievements in implementing its mandate, despite persistent operational challenges.
2. I will address the positive momentum and opportunities stemming from the dialogue between the Government and active armed groups, as well as the continuous progress made in the implementation of the Political Agreement, notably the organization of local elections, the strengthening of border management and extension of State presence and authority, with increased local ownership in support of peace and social cohesion.

Distinguished Members of the Council,

3. I am happy to report that the dissolution of the six armed groups and three factions of armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA, remained effective and resulted in the disarmament and demobilization of their combatants, with the integration of some of them in the national armed forces. However, it remains essential to strengthen the implementation of socio-economic reintegration activities for successful and sustainable transition of ex-combatants into their communities.
4. Engagements between the Central African Government and active armed groups continued towards their return to the Political Agreement. The decision taken by the “*Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique*” to withdraw from the “*Coalition pour le Changement*” and to renounce armed struggle, has been welcomed positively by the Central African Government with ongoing direct engagements towards a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process of their combatants.
5. On 28 August, the 8th Coordination meeting on the implementation of the APPR-RCA and the Joint Luanda Roadmap, which was chaired by the Prime Minister, underscored the unprecedented opportunity to accelerate engagement with the CPC coalition for a comprehensive and sustainable demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of remaining active combatants in Central Africa. As such, the Government has been forthcoming in engaging the CPC coalition for their return to the Political Agreement, in response to declarations made by some of the CPC political and military leaders indicating their willingness to cease violent struggles and hostilities. I call on regional and sub-regional organizations, in particular the guarantors of the Political Agreement and the ICGLR mediators, to further support the ongoing political momentum by facilitating engagement between the Government and the CPC armed groups leaders who expressed willingness to renounce violence and return to the political agreement, the sole political instrument for peace and reconciliation in the Central Africa.

Distinguished Members of the Council,

6. MINUSCA intensified its multifaceted support to the prefectural implementing mechanisms, which proved essential in fostering social cohesion and strengthening conflict-prevention. This support led to an increase of local initiatives to promote conflict prevention and a rapid response to protection of civilian alerts.
7. In this regard, series of conferences were convened across prefectures to promote peaceful and prosperous transhumance, as a follow-up to the decisions of the 13 May high-level national conference on transhumance. MINUSCA is supporting the implementation of these decisions through a programme of activities contributing to the prevention of conflicts, strengthening progressive security of transhumance corridors by internal security forces, as well as promoting cross-border cooperation.
8. On 8 August, the Minister of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Local Development, the Minister of Interior and Public Security, and myself launched the construction of the first multiservice border post in the Central African Republic, in the locality of Bembere at the border with Chad. This flagship project is part of the ten-year Action Plan for the implementation of the National Border Management Policy, and will accommodate civilian and uniformed services, enabling better management of movement of goods and people, thereby contributing to strengthening regional security and stability.

Mister President,

9. The preparations for local elections have continued to progress, following the promulgation of the Electoral Code on the 2nd of July, and additional financial contributions to the UNDP-managed Electoral Basket Fund. This momentum has been driven by the Government sustained commitment to the elections, fostered by MINUSCA multidimensional support, including through good offices and technical assistance.
10. Local elections are a key component of the Political Agreement and offer a unique opportunity for enhanced governance at local level. As Central Africans will be able to

elect their local representatives for the first time in almost forty-years, the Central African Government, MINUSCA and the UNCT strengthened their collaboration in mobilizing broad and meaningful participation of marginalized groups as voters and candidates, in particular women, and internal displaced persons.

11. Consequently, 30,000 birth certificates have been issued to vulnerable groups, enabling them to register as voters, during the electoral registration process, which is due to start next month. This marks a significant step towards an inclusive electoral cycle which will culminate with the general elections slated for the end of 2025. In this context, the completion of the upcoming 2025-2026 electoral cycle is paramount to reinforce institutional stability and will require MINUSCA's multidimensional assistance, which remains essential coupled with commensurate resources, to ensure inclusive, transparent, and peaceful elections.

Distinguished Members of the Council,

12. On the 30 September, the signing by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Representative of UNICEF and myself of the *“Handover Protocol for the protection and transfer of children associated with armed groups and forces to civilian authorities”* marked a significant development for the protection of children's rights in the Central Africa. This milestone is a testimony to the national authorities' commitment to enhancing a protective environment for children, especially in light of the increase recruitment and use of children by the AAKG/Azande militia in the Haut-Mbomou prefecture. Recent engagement by the Mission resulted in the identification and release of 73 children from the ranks of the Azande militia for reintegration programme and return to school.

13. MINUSCA maintained the expansion of its footprint in hotspots where the Mission had never been before, and in support to the extension of State authority. On 13 of July, the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reform with UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP Country Representatives, and myself undertook a field visit in the towns of Obo and Bambouti at the border with South Sudan. I am pleased to report that MINUSCA's

intervention in Haut-Mbomou in close cooperation with the Government led to the return of 2,000 Central Africans refugees from South Sudan, benefiting from improved security environment and enhanced access to basic services.

Distinguished Members of the Council,

14. MINUSCA continues to make significant progress in supporting the restoration of State authority throughout the country. During the reporting period, the Mission provided logistical support to the deployment of three governors, 14 prefects and 62 sub-prefects, while building the capacity of 2, 500 public servants in support of enhanced provision of basic services. Moreover, the Mission devoted considerable resources to creating acceptable working conditions for civil servants deployed in the deep field by building or rehabilitating 50 administrative facilities over the past two years.

15. The validation of the new national defence policy and strategy is a significant step forward in forging a republican army that reflects the Central African diversity. I commend the Government for its commitment in fulfilling its regalian functions to protect its population, and territorial integrity. MINUSCA will continue to support the Government's relevant security sector reform and governance strategic frameworks.

Distinguished Members of the Council,

16. I wish to draw your attention on the increasingly challenging operational environment resulting from a change in the national fuel import policy, which has disrupted fuel supply to MINUSCA. This jeopardizes MINUSCA's ability to continue to provide optimum support and maintain achieved momentum in the extension of state authority.

17. Effective implementation of MINUSCA's mandated priority tasks is intricately linked to addressing the immense access challenges in the Central African Republic and require additional engineering capabilities to enhance road accessibility and mobility. In the last two years, MINUSCA has constructed or rehabilitated more than 2, 000 km of road, 131 bridges, and 37 airstrips.

Mister President,

18. MINUSCA remains instrumental in facilitating the conditions for the advancement of the peace and political process, as well as enabling its implementation by development partners and UN specialized agencies and funds of their programmes in support of local communities and administrations; in protecting civilians; in supporting the Government to restore its authority throughout the country. Despite notable efforts and significant achievements since the start of the Mission, the risk of reversal remains. The tangible and transformational progress achieved in close collaboration with the Central African Government now requires expansion and consolidation and the role of MINUSCA remains critical. We therefore count on the continuous and concerted support of this Council to extend the mandate of MINUSCA for an additional year, and avail commensurate and timely resources for its implementation.

19. As I conclude, I wish to add my voice to that of the Secretary General and express my gratitude for the dedication of civilian, and uniformed personnel of MINUSCA as well as the United Nations Country Team in performing our respective mandates, often in a difficult context. I deeply appreciate the Mission's troop and police contributing countries and thank regional, multilateral, non-governmental organizations, and donor countries for their invaluable contributions to peace in the Central Africa Republic.

I thank you for your attention.