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**OPENING REMARKS**

**Press Conference**

**Wednesday 6 May 2026**

Good morning to everyone. My name is Florence Marchal, and I am the spokesperson for MINUSCA.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this new MINUSCA press conference.

Whether you are here in this room in Bangui or listening to Radio Guira, you are most welcome.

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Today, we will review MINUSCA's achievements since its mandate was renewed for one year by the Security Council six months ago.

Halfway through the implementation of the tasks entrusted to us under Resolution 2800, what have we accomplished for the benefit of the Central African people, and how do we plan to proceed with our work between now and next November?

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Over the past six months, MINUSCA has focused the bulk of its efforts and available resources on three priority tasks under its mandate, within the broader framework of its mission to protect civilians: support for the 2025–2026 electoral cycle, support for the implementation of the Peace Agreement, and support for the extension of State authority.

First point: Elections

**MINUSCA is currently concluding its mandate to support the electoral cycle.**

Our multifaceted support, namely: technical, logistical, financial, security-related, and through good offices, enabled the peaceful and orderly holding of the elections of 28 December 2025 and 26 April.

On April 26, all 3,435 polling stations opened, allowing Central African men and women to exercise their right to vote without coercion or fear, including in all the sub-prefectures of Haut-Mbomou, particularly in Bambouti, where voters had been unable to cast their ballots last December due to violence.

This outcome is the result of exemplary collaboration between MINUSCA and the Central African Defense and Security Forces, which implemented the Integrated Elections Security Plan (PISE) throughout the country in a complementary and coordinated manner.

As highlighted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Valentine Rugwabiza, 10 days ago as well as at the end of December, the *“Mission has fully and successfully implemented its mandate,”* an assessment shared by all members of the Security Council during the February 2026 meeting on the situation in the Central African Republic.

To provide a complete picture of MINUSCA’s support to the April 26 elections, please note that MINUSCA facilitated the rapid repatriation of results to the National Election Authority’s results processing center, involving the transport of over 11 tons of equipment via special flights and secured road convoys.

MINUSCA also facilitated the return of more than 50 members of the internal Defense and Security Forces deployed as reinforcements to the prefectures of Haut-Mbomou, Mbomou, and Basse-Kotto. Additional rotations are currently underway.

I would like to remind you that the Mission was not involved in election observation and is not involved in vote counting or the announcement of results, which fall exclusively under the responsibility of the National Electoral Authority (ANE).

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Second priority task: **the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR)**.

Over the past six months, the Mission has continued to provide technical, logistical, financial, and security support to the Implementation Unit of the National Program for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, and Repatriation (UEPNDDR) by supporting several disarmament and demobilization operations following the return of the UPC and 3R armed groups under the Peace Agreement.

1,331 combatants, including 35 women, have been disarmed and demobilized since April 19, 2025, bringing the total to more than 6,500 since 2018.

MINUSCA's support for the Peace Agreement is also reflected in its backing of local conflict prevention mechanisms such as the CMOPs, prefectural implementation committees, transhumance working groups, and peace and reconciliation committees, which all play a vital role in preventing and resolving conflicts through dialogue.

For example, in March, the Mission supported 24 mediation and conflict resolution activities related to transhumance.

Finally, local elections which represent one of the provisions of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR), were held with MINUSCA's support for the first time since 1988, paving the way for accelerated decentralization through local authorities elected in their constituencies.

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Third priority task: MINUSCA's support for the **restoration and extension of State authority**, which has enabled all 20 prefectures and most sub-prefectures to be operational today.

The Mission has renovated or constructed and equipped buildings, housing public services and is continuously deploying civil servants to the field.

In addition to civil servants, MINUSCA deploys magistrates, with a presence of nearly 90% in the courts, along with elements of the Central African Defense and Security Forces to ensure an increasingly comprehensive security coverage across the Central African territory.

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The cumulative and combined effect of these actions and activities carried out by MINUSCA are contributing to visible political, institutional, and security stability in the Central African Republic.

**Against this backdrop of positive progress, MINUSCA's role is expected to evolve gradually toward a phase of supporting the Central African authorities in order to consolidate the gains made in terms of security, peace, access, and State authority.**

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This evolution is guided both by the current situation in the Central African Republic and by our mandate, which explicitly refers to it.

**It is within this framework that MINUSCA is currently conducting its reconfiguration.** We are adapting our physical presence on the ground and our modus operandi to current realities without altering or diminishing our commitment to lasting stabilization and peace in the Central African Republic.

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In practical terms, we are in the process of reorganizing our presence on the ground. All components of the Mission, whether they are military, police, and civilian, are involved, with one guiding principle: strengthened operational agility and mobility to enable rapid responses whenever necessary.

We will keep you informed of the ongoing implementation of this reconfiguration, which is the natural evolution of a peacekeeping mission.

This reconfiguration reflects the Mission's adaptation to its local environment considering the progress made over the years, as well as the broader context marked by the financial constraints facing the United Nations and peacekeeping operations, which in turn affect MINUSCA.

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I cannot move on to the question-and-answer session without paying tribute to you in connection with World Press Freedom Day, which was celebrated on May 3.

On that occasion, the UN Secretary-General stated that all freedom depends on press freedom.

Here is the exact quote from an excerpt of his message:

Without press freedom, “there can be no human rights, no sustainable development. Without it, there can be no peace.”

“On this World Press Freedom Day, let us protect the rights of journalists and build a world where the truth – and truth-tellers – are safe.”

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