

Forum:	Security Council (SC)
Issue:	Situation in the Central African Republic
Student Officer:	Elif İpek Eryılmaz
Position:	President Chair

Introduction

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a country located in Central Africa bordering six other Member States, South Sudan to its east, Sudan to its northeast, Chad to its north, Cameroon to its west, Republic of the Congo to its southwest, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to its southeast.

Despite peace deals between the government of the Central African Republic and the presence of a United Nations Peacekeeping Force in the region, the central government's control over the territory remains limited and the humanitarian crisis and human rights violations continue. Although the recent conflict flared in the aftermath of Séléka seizing control of the capital Bangui and ousting President Bozizé, who was replaced by Djotodia, the region has been experiencing instability for significant periods of time in its 60 to 70 years history as an independent nation. Recognizing the repeating pattern of coups, insurgencies, military interventions, humanitarian crises, and peace deals that failed to produce lasting change is important in ensuring peace and stability in the region, as reflected by the theme "The Monopolies Turning the Wheels of History: Recognizing Circularity in an Ever-Changing World."

Definition of Key Terms

Coup d'état: Coup d'état, a French phrase literally translated to English as "blow to the state"—or simply referred to as a coup—describes a "sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group;" it differs from a revolution in the sense that a coup creates "a change in power from the top that merely results in the abrupt replacement of leading government personnel" whereas a revolution is carried out by a larger portion of the population with the goal of producing a significant change in the social, political and economic structure of a country ("Coup d'Etat").

Séléka: Séléka, meaning "alliance" in Sango, one of the two official languages of CAR, refers to the alliance of multiple militias ("I Can Still"). Although the full name Séléka CPSK-CPJP-UFDR includes three militias, namely Patriotic Convention for Saving the Country (CPSK), Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace

(CPJP), and the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR); other militias such as the Alliance for Revival and Rebuilding (A2R) are also thought to be a part of the coalition (“I Can Still”). Séléka forces were responsible for the coup d’état of 2013 (“Central African Republic: War”). Although President Djotodia announced the dissolution of Séléka and reintegration of the forces into the army in 2013, the control of the government and the military over the ex-Séléka forces remain questionable (“Central African Republic: War”). The group has been accused of human rights violations.

Anti-Balaka: An alliance of predominantly Christian militias. Although its roots can be traced back to militias that have emerged in the late 20th century and provided security in rural areas, Anti-Balaka became a major actor in the Central African Republic after the coup that replaced President Bozizé with President Djotodia. The group has been accused of atrocities against civilians in Muslim communities.

General Overview

The region that is now the Central African Republic came under French colonial rule at the end of the 19th century and was named Ubangi-Shari (also referred to as Oubangui-Chari or Ubangi-Chari) (Giles-Vernick et al.). Although there were uprisings by the people against French rule, French colonial presence remained for the first half of the 20th century. Ubangi-Shari “[became] a part of the Federation of French Equatorial Africa” in 1910 (“Central African Republic Profile”). It was later given representation in the French parliament and Barthélemy Boganda was elected representative in November 1946 (Giles-Vernick et al.). Boganda went on to establish the Social Evolution Movement of Black Africa (MESAN), a pro-independence political movement (Giles-Vernick et al.). His attempts at establishing an independent country through the unification of Ubangi-Shari, Chad, Gabon, Congo was, however, unsuccessful (Giles-Vernick et al.). Ubangi-Shari succeeded at gaining “self-government within French Equatorial Africa” (“Central African Republic Profile”). Boganda, who had been elected president, died in March 1959 (Giles-Vernick et al.). David Dacko, who claimed to be his nephew, became president and the Central African Republic as an independent country was established on 13 August 1960 (“Central African Republic Profile”).

In 1962 Dacko banned all political parties other than MESAN and was reelected president in 1964 in the elections in which he ran unopposed; however, facing “bankruptcy and a threatened nationwide strike”, he was removed from office in a coup that brought Jean-Bedel Bokassa to power (“Central African Republic Profile”). Bokassa attempted to change the name of the country to the Central African Republic and himself as the emperor in a coronation ceremony partially paid for by the French government (Webster).

Following a public outcry following “the massacre of 50 to 100 school children 8 to 16 years old,” France withdrew its support for Bokassa (Koven). It also provided its support for the coup that ousted Bokassa and brought Dacko back to power as the President of CAR (Koven). However, Dacko who had faced criticism in

his previous term as the president, faced opposition and was replaced by General André Kolingba in yet another coup, third in the country's 21 year old history of independence (Giles-Vernick).

Kolingba allowed political parties to be established and first multiparty elections were held in the country, in which Ange-Felix Patasse came ahead of Dacko and Kolingba and became the President ("Central African Republic Profile"). Economic difficulties have resulted in mutinies by military forces and were cited as a reason by the government for not holding local elections; Patasse was, nevertheless, reelected in 1999 (Giles-Vernick).

In 2003, Patasse was ousted in a coup led by General François Bozizé—former army chief dismissed from his role due to his support for an earlier coup attempt ("Central African Republic Profile"). The coup was followed by a redrafting of the constitution and Bozizé was elected president in 2005 (Giles-Vernick). The country was also affected by the conflict in the Darfur region, which resulted in an influx of refugees. The actions of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army also resulted in a further deterioration of the security in the region. Peace deals were signed between the government and different armed groups such as UFDR and the Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD), and an amnesty law was passed to complement the peace process; however, clashes between the militias and the government continued, ultimately resulting in the takeover of the capital by the Séléka in March 2013, replacing Bozizé with Michel Djotodia ("Central African Republic Profile").

Séléka forces were responsible for multiple human rights violations against civilians in areas they have captured. Anti-Balaka, a coalition of prominently Christian militias, intensified their fight with Séléka forces, even after the disbanding of Séléka by President Djotodia (*Making the Central* 1). Amid the increased fighting between the ex-Séléka and Anti-Balaka forces, France called for the United Nations to allow a military intervention by forces led by France and African Union, citing concerns that CAR was "on the verge of genocide" (Rice and Blas). The announcement that "1,200 troops to reinforce the 400 already stationed there" would be sent was made by the President of France, François Hollande in December 2013, and, marking the beginning of Operation Sangaris (Smith). The French Forces alongside with the The African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) attempted to quell violence (S/RES/2127). Shortly afterwards, President Djotodia, under considerable criticism by the leaders of other Central African states due to his perceived incompetence in stopping the violence, resigned, which led to the election of Catherine Samba-Panza as the interim president by the Transitional Council (*Making the Central* 1).

MINUSCA was established by the UNSC in April 2014 in response to the continuation of the conflict between the militias, and it officially took over MISCA in September (S/RES/2149). Despite attempted

ceasefires and peace deals, the situation regarding human rights deteriorated resulting in a widespread humanitarian crisis. Although the conflict is one between the different actors inside the country, some militias are thought to have links with Member States in the region, such as Sudan, Cameroon, and Chad (*Making the Central 1-2*). Wagner Group, a group of mercenaries with links to the Russian government, is thought to be responsible for human rights violations. There have also been allegations of China and Iran providing weapons for ex-Séléka groups (“Central African Republic Profile”).

On 6 February 2019, the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic was signed between the government and some of the militias active in the region. The agreement was preceded with a year of talks conducted by a team of the Economic Community of Central African State (ECCAS) with militias and the government of CAR. The parties to the Agreement—the 14 militias that signed the agreement and the government—came together between 24 January and 5 February in talks sponsored by the African Union and the United Nations (Murray and Sullivan). Although the signing of the agreement is a positive step towards the cessation of violence in the region, the progress made regarding the implementation of the agreement has faced criticism. The public’s view of the agreement is mixed, with some believing that it provides impunity for armed groups without achieving enough towards bringing peace to the country.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Central African Republic (CAR)

Despite the signing of the peace deal of 2019, violence and armed conflict continue to be pervasive in CAR. CAR has obtained assistance from the Wagner group towards strengthening its military capabilities in combating armed groups—a controversial issue, considering the accusations of human rights violations by the group. The humanitarian situation remains dire in CAR. Despite problems on the implementation of the Status of Forces Agreement, cooperation between CAR and the UN continues, most recently with the signing of an agreement between the two on ensuring the security of the upcoming elections (“UN Mission”).

France

France has deployed troops in CAR in what was called Operation Sangaris, to stop the fighting between rebel militias, namely the Anti-Balaka and Séléka. A majority of the forces were withdrawn with 350 left behind to assist MINUSCA (“France Ends”). However, the relationship between France and CAR has deteriorated as the Russian Federation and CAR started to collaborate on a larger scale. France has fully withdrawn its troops at the end of 2022 (“Last French Troops”). The withdrawal of French forces are cited by some as a factor that enabled the Russian Federation, specifically Wagner mercenaries, to fill the void.

Russian Federation

Russia has provided military and diplomatic support for the government of CAR. Russia is thought to be influential in the easing of UNSC sanctions targeting CAR, which made it possible for the government to obtain arms that boosted its fighting strength against rebel militias (Posthumus). Russia, China, and the three Member States from Africa at the time of the passing of the Resolution Russia is also thought to send military forces under the cover of providing military training for the CAR army (“Central African Republic: Abuses”). Wagner Group—a Russian private military contractor, alternatively, a paramilitary organization serving Russian interests—is thought to be fighting militias in the region, in exchange for access to the mineral resources., as part of a trend of growing Russian influence in Africa. Wagner Group has been accused of human rights violations in areas it captured from militias (“Central African Republic: Abuses”).

People’s Republic of China (PRC)

Although the influence China has in CAR remains much more limited compared to that of the Russian Federation, PRC maintains economic relations with CAR, such as an agreement on cooperation regarding the Belt and Road Initiative (Minney et al.). China was also among the five Member States—Russia, China, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya—who lobbied for the lifting of the arms embargo, resulting in an easing of the sanctions with Resolution 2648 on which they abstained (“Adopting Resolution 2648”).

African Union (AU)

The African Union has played an important role in the situation in CAR. It has facilitated the peace process in the region, most recently, assisting with the drafting of the peace deal between the government and the armed groups. AU has also coordinated a peacekeeping mission in the past before the task was taken over by the UN.

Timeline of Events

Late 19th Century	The region that constitutes a part of CAR came under French colonial rule; a dependency by the name of Ubangi-Shari was established
1958	Barthelemy Boganda becomes the prime minister after the region that was Ubangi-Shari is given “self-government within French Equatorial Africa” (“Central African Republic Profile”)

1960	The Central African Republic is established as an independent country, David Dacko, becomes president (“Central African Republic Profile”)
1962	Dacko bans political parties other than the Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa (MESAN), the party established by Boganda
1965	A coup d’état by the army deposes Backo and bring to power Jean-Bedel Bokassa
1976	Bokassa declares the name of the country to be the Central African Empire with himself as the Emperor
1979	Dacko, backed by French troops removes Bokassa from power
1981	Andre Kalinga replaces Dacko in a coup
1992	Multiparty presidential elections are held; however, the results are declared invalid by the Supreme Court
1993	Another presidential election is held and Ange-Felix Patasse became the President of CAR
2001	Kalinga attempts to remove Patasse from power in a coup, which is thwarted with assistance from “Libyan and Chadian troops and Congolese rebels” (“Central African Republic Profile”)
2002	General Francois Bozize, who was removed from his position due to his involvement in the coup attempt, tries to remove Patasse from power; however, he is stopped with the help of forces linked to Libya
2003	Bozize gains control of the capital and effectively removes Patasse from power

2005	Bozize is elected president
22 November 2010	The trial of Jean-Pierre Bemba, the “Commander-in-chief of the Mouvement de libération du Congo (Movement for the Liberation of Congo)” in the International Criminal Court begins (“Bemba Case”)
March 2013	Séléka gain control of the capital, removing President Bozize from power; Michel Djotodia dissolved the parliament
August 2013	Djotodia becomes president
January 2014	Djotodia resigns and is replaced by Catherine Samba-Panza, the interim president (“Central African Republic Profile”)
July 2014	Peace deal between Séléka and Anti-Balaka forces
15 September 2014	Official date for the transfer of authority from MISCA to MINUSCA pursuant to UNSC Resolution 2149 passed in April
February 2015	Faustin-Archange Touadera is elected president
April 2017	Uganda withdraws its troops, who had been there to combat Lord’s Resistance Army activity
December 2020	Touadera is reelected president

UN Involvement

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) was deployed in the region following the acceptance of Resolution 2149 by the UNSC on April 10, 2014. The African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA), a peacekeeping mission by the African Union was present in the region, which transferred its authority pursuant to the UNSC Resolution 2149. MINUSCA has faced problems in the region such as road

blockades by the militias and the killing of Peacekeeper troops, such as in the Anti-Balaka attack on the Grimari base of MINUSCA on March 15, 2020 or the death of three troops 3 October 2022.

There had also been previous peacekeeping operations in the region such as the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), which was active from April 1998 to February 2000 (“MINURCA”).

There is a sanctions regime in place in CAR. Resolution 2127 passed on 5 December 2013 established an arms embargo and a Sanctions Committee (S/RES/2127). The government of CAR has “argued for years that the requirement for advanced approval by the relevant UN sanctions committee for arms supplies to government forces posed a barrier to solving the country’s security crisis,” and later cited the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic as a reason for an ease in the sanctions (“UN Arms Embargo”). CAR, nevertheless, defends the full lifting of the sanctions. Following the acceptance of Resolution 2648 “Sylvie Baïpo Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic” has stated “the embargo is no longer justified — unless the Council wants to leave the country in the hands of extremists” (“Adopting Resolution 2648”).

Relevant UN Documents

- Resolution 2659 (14 November 2022 - S/RES/2659)

The mandate of MINUSCA was extended until 15 November 2023 with the affirmative vote of 12 members of the Security Council (“Security Council Extends”). People’s Republic of China (PRC), Gabon, and the Russian Federation abstained (“Security Council Extends”).

- Resolution 2648 (29 July 2022 - S/RES/2648)

The sanctions regime was extended until 31 July 2023, with the affirmative vote of 10 members and the abstention of 5, namely PRC, Russian Federation, Ghana, Gabon, Kenya (“Adopting Resolution 2648”).

- Resolution 2149 (10 April 2014 - S/RES/2149)

A Peacekeeping Operation, MINUSCA, was established with “up to 10,000 military personnel.”. The transfer of authority from MISCA to MINUSCA was expected to take place on 15 September 2014. French forces were authorized to assist MINUSCA in their efforts. The resolution also welcomed the establishment of the Transitional Government with Catherine Samba-Panza as the President and Andre Nzapayeke as the Prime Minister.

- Human Rights Situation in the Central African Republic - Report of the Independent Expert on the

situation of human rights in the Central African Republic (9 August 2019 - A/HRC/42/61)

The report by “the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic Marie-Thérèse Keita-Bocoum” provides information on the circumstances regarding human rights in the region from July 2018 to June 2019. It reports a decrease in the number of human rights violations in the region which can in part be attributed to peace talks and the subsequent acceptance of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic signed in February 2019.

- Security Council Press Statement on Attack against Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (5 October 2022 - SC/15055)

The press statement condemns the attack against MINUSCA that used an improvised explosive device (IED) and resulted in the death of three peacekeepers from Bangladesh.

- Letter dated 14 February 2019 from the Secretary General address to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/145 - 15 February 2019)

The letter has the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic enclosed, which was signed on 6 February 2019 between the government of CAR and the representatives of 14 militias (listed under XI. Final Provisions).

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

After the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, there were problems with the implementation of the Agreement and disagreements about the details of the arrangement. Following President’s “nominations of eight armed-group leaders,” the militias voiced their discontent with the number of nominations, which led to the holding of talks organized by the African Union and the President announcing that “13 ministerial-level posts for armed-group leaders in addition to several advisory and regional-level positions” (Murray and Sullivan). Even then, there were disagreements regarding the distribution of the positions between the militias (Murray and Sullivan). The agreement was criticized as being ineffective in stopping violence and the issue of whether the forces of the militias would be granted amnesty is a topic of disagreement between the government and the leaders of the armed groups (Murray and Sullivan). Impunity on part of the militias and the fact that they were given positions in the government has raised criticism by the public.

Although MINUSCA has been important in facilitating the UN operations in CAR, there have been violations of the Status-of-the-Forces Agreement (SOFA), impeding the ability of MINUSCA to operate in CAR

("February 2023 Monthly"). There have been cases of officials working for MINUSCA being detained—such as the arrest of French consultants on 10 January—violations of the freedom of movement of peacekeeping forces, and ban on night flights ("February 2023 Monthly").

The mandate of the Special Criminal Court was also extended on December 27, 2022 ("February 2023 Monthly"). However, impunity remains high for militia members accused of being involved in human rights violations.

Possible Solutions

Continuation of the diplomatic dialogue between the government of CAR and the Member States in the region is important. Considering that some of the militias in CAR have links with neighboring countries such as Chad or Sudan, efforts to reduce conflict between the armed forces of CAR and the militias would require cooperation between the government of CAR and the countries in the region (*Making the Central* 1-2). The United Nations or regional organizations such as the African Union and ECCAS could be influential in facilitating diplomatic dialogue.

Despite the signing of a peace agreement between the government and 14 militias, there are other armed groups active in rural areas. Thus, one possible solution could be facilitating local peace efforts that would lead to a cessation of violence in such rural areas or an implementation of a disarmament strategy (*Making the Central* 18).

Although the establishment of the Special Criminal Court and the recent renewal of its mandate is an important step in ensuring accountability for those accused of human rights violations, ensuring that the agreements between the government and the rebel groups do not result in impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations and that the Special Criminal Court carries out its mandate is an important step, on part of the government, in gaining the public's trust.

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