



Security Council

Seventy-fifth year

8750th meeting
 Tuesday, 28 July 2020, 10 a.m.
 New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Heusgen (Germany)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
Dominican Republic	Mr. Bencosme Castaños
Estonia	Mr. Auväärt
France	Mr. De Rivière
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Niger	Mr. Abarry
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
Tunisia	Mr. Kabtani
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mr. Hunter
Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Letter dated 8 July 2020 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2507 (2020) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/662)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Letter dated 8 July 2020 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2507 (2020) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/662)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2020/738, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2020/662, which contains the text of a letter dated 8 July 2020 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2507 (2020) addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2536 (2020).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. De Rivièrè (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2536 (2020), which renews the sanctions regime concerning the Central African Republic for one year. In that regard, I would like to highlight three points.

First of all, I would like to express our satisfaction that the Security Council is demonstrating its unity on the Central African Republic issue. That unity is crucial to the support that we are providing to the Central African Republic at a time marked by the implementation of the peace agreement, preparations for the presidential and legislative elections in 2020 and 2021 and the fight against the coronavirus disease pandemic. From the beginning of the negotiations, we therefore chose to adopt a pragmatic approach and strived throughout to play the role of constructive facilitator. As such, I would therefore like to thank all the members of the Security Council for their flexibility.

Next, I would like to reaffirm the fact that the Security Council remains fully attentive to the legitimate concerns of the Central African authorities regarding the security of their country. That is why, from the outset of the negotiations, we took the lead in proposing to the members of the Security Council to work towards a further, limited easing of the arms embargo. Our objective was to meet a specific need of the Central African security forces based on a realistic analysis of the security situation in the country. To facilitate the equipping of those forces, the Security Council will therefore have authorized three relaxations of the arms embargo in almost a year. The Central African authorities also continue to benefit from the exemption procedures provided for and regularly granted by the sanctions committee.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I am delivering this explanation of vote on behalf of the United States of America, Germany, Estonia and Belgium.

We join the rest of the Council in the unanimous vote in favour of resolution 2536 (2020) today, which renews the sanctions regime in the Central African Republic, as well as the mandate of the Panel of Experts. Our Governments hope that the extension of the sanctions regime, especially the territorial arms embargo, will keep pressure on the armed groups that undermine peace and security in the Central African Republic by threatening its elected Government and its people. It is an important element to accompany the Government of the Central African Republic on its way towards stability and peace.

We welcome the Central African Republic's continued efforts to make further progress on key benchmarks pertaining to security sector reform,

programmes for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation of former fighters and the management of weapons and ammunition. We strongly encourage the Government of the Central African Republic to intensify such efforts, including in close coordination and cooperation with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and other international partners.

Without better management and tracking of the weapons brought into the country, we are concerned that changes in the sanctions regime will significantly increase the risk of the proliferation of rocket-propelled grenades, both within the Central African Republic and within the region. Rocket-propelled grenades are a common weapons system that can be easily stolen and smuggled if not properly stored. The widespread availability of small arms increases the lethality of conflicts in the region, and we remain committed to combating that scourge, including through the African Union's Silencing the Guns initiative. We urge the Government of the Central African Republic to take responsibility for ensuring effective control of all the arms it receives, acting to prevent any risk of proliferation.

Despite those concerns, we voted in favour of the resolution in response to the request from the Government of the Central African Republic. Our Governments want to see consensus and concerted action on this file, given the importance of stability in the lead-up to elections later this year. We have been and will continue to be collaborative partners with the Government of the Central African Republic. We strongly oppose any measure or action that would weaken the Government of the Central African Republic, provide support to armed groups or misrepresent the responsible actions of the Council.

That is why many of our Governments, either bilaterally or multilaterally, including through the European Union and its Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, have provided technical support to the Government to help it to improve its storage, management and tracking of weapons by both military and internal security forces, including any new weapons that may be brought in as a result of today's easing. We strongly support the return of the mandate cycle to 12 months, and we are hopeful that this will give the Government more time to achieve

necessary progress on the benchmarks, which we strongly encourage.

In closing, the unanimous vote to adopt today's resolution is indeed a positive step for the Council. Our Governments wish to thank the Permanent Mission of France for its sustained efforts to reach consensus. However, we would also urge all Council members, especially those providing bilateral security assistance, to work cooperatively with the friends of the Central African Republic to support the strengthening of State institutions in a transparent and coordinated way and to ensure that the December 2020 elections are free, fair, peaceful, transparent and inclusive. The Central African Republic needs unambiguous and coordinated support at this sensitive time.

Mr. Bencosme Castaños (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to congratulate France on its efforts to prepare and seek points of convergence among member States in order to reach consensus on the adoption of resolution 2536 (2020).

The Dominican Republic voted in favour of the resolution primarily for the following reasons.

First, the resolution maintains a balance by recognizing the efforts made by the authorities of the Central African Republic to achieve progress on the key benchmarks related to security sector reform, programmes for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation of ex-combatants, and the management of weapons and ammunition, which were established as a guide for the Security Council in reviewing, suspending or progressively lifting the arms embargo. The resolution also addresses the need for the authorities of the Central African Republic to be equipped in order to effectively combat the armed groups and maintain peace and stability in the country.

Secondly, the 12-month extension of the sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts, which standardizes the regime's cycle, will allow sufficient time for the authorities of the Central African Republic to fully implement the benchmarks, as well as for the Secretary-General and other actors on the ground to provide more comprehensive reports. Furthermore, it will prevent the renewal process from taking place in the middle of an electoral process, allowing the Central African Republic to focus its actions during the coming months on conducting peaceful presidential and legislative elections.

Thirdly, the Dominican Republic also hopes that the embargo will maintain pressure on the armed groups, discouraging them from committing crimes and violating international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Finally, the Dominican Republic calls on the authorities of the Central African Republic to continue to make progress on the benchmarks by effectively managing their weapons and ammunition, particularly rocket-propelled grenades, so as to prevent them from falling into the hands of armed groups and being used against civilians, complete the peace and reconciliation processes under way and lay the foundations for a possible eventual lifting of the embargo.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I would like to start by aligning myself with the statement made by the representative of the United States.

We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2536 (2020), renewing the targeted sanctions and arms embargo aimed at curbing the armed groups that continue to perpetrate violence in the Central African Republic. Such unity on a 12-month renewal is particularly welcome as we approach elections in the Central African Republic later this year. We thank France for its efforts to achieve this outcome.

We support the Government of the Central African Republic as it pursues security sector reform and the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process. We welcome the progress made so far in delivering on the benchmarks set by the Council in April 2019. Although we recognize and respect the desire of the Government of the Central African Republic to ease restrictions, we, like others, are concerned by the further easing of the arms embargo contained in the resolution. That risks contributing to the proliferation of rocket-propelled grenades within the Central African Republic and the wider region.

We therefore encourage the Government of the Central African Republic to accelerate its efforts to meet the benchmarks and to take responsibility for ensuring effective storage and management of weapons and ammunition. The Council's consensus on returning to an annual cycle for the renewal of these measures provides the Government with a clear window in which real progress can be made. Such progress is vital to improving security for the people of the Central African Republic, combating the risk of arms

proliferation and helping to ensure a peaceful, free and fair electoral process.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation supported the adoption of resolution 2536 (2020), extending the sanctions regime imposed on the Central African Republic. We were guided by the importance of pursuing coordinated international efforts to promote a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in that country.

We note the work of the French sponsors of the resolution, who succeeded in securing the support of all Council members. That was achieved not least by the decision to respond to Bangui's legitimate demands for the further easing of the sanctions regime. The simplified procedure for supplying grenade launchers for the needs of the Central African Republic, provided for in the resolution, is another small step in support of the Central African people.

At the same time, we would like to recall that the authorities are calling on the Council to fully lift the arms embargo, and, of course, they have every reason to do so. We are therefore determined to further review the Security Council's restrictive sanctions.

The arms embargo on the Central African Republic may have played a positive role in the early stages, but it is now effectively an obstacle to the rearming of the national army and security forces — the very institutions that bear the primary responsibility for upholding the security of their own citizens. Meanwhile, the saboteurs of the peace process continue to replenish their stockpiles of weapons through smuggling.

We call on the Central African authorities to continue to meet the benchmarks for the review of the arms embargo so that the Council has every reason to lift it in a year's time. We wish to assure the Council that Russia will continue to provide assistance to the Central African Republic, both in its process of national reconciliation and in the context of strengthening its security forces, with a view to normalizing the situation in the country and reaching a sustainable settlement to the armed conflict.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I am very pleased to be able to speak in Chinese today.

While we voted in favour of resolution 2536 (2020), China also believes that overall the political and security in Central African Republic is improving. All parties in the Central African Republic continue to be committed

to implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and are actively making progress in implementing the benchmarks for the arms embargo assessment. China commends those efforts.

China would like to stress that it supports the Government of the Central African Republic in continuing to meet those benchmarks. We support the Council in continuing to respond positively to the reasonable needs of the Government of the Central African Republic so as to lift the arms embargo against the Central African Republic as soon as possible. That will help the Government of the Central African Republic to strengthen its capacity to maintain national safety and security and facilitate the political settlement of the Central African Republic issue.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by extending my congratulations and thanks to all the members of the Security Council for the consensus that emerged around the text that we have just adopted. As Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic, the Niger also congratulates and thanks France, as penholder, for all its efforts to put forward a text that met with universal support during the constructive negotiations among our experts.

I also take this opportunity to welcome and reiterate my delegation's full appreciation and encouragement to the Government of the Central African Republic for the positive progress made in recent months in implementing the benchmarks and all its ongoing efforts to restore peace and stability in the country. In a security context that remains complex and marked by various challenges in implementing the February 2019

agreement due to the actions of certain armed groups, in particular the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation group, a new stage has just been entered with this latest 12-month sanctions regime and a further easing of the arms embargo.

Even if they do not fully meet the expectations of the Central African authorities, it is clear that the pragmatism of these two key provisions is a real cause of approval with regard to the upcoming elections and the need for a measured approach to strengthening the logistical capacities and arms management of the Central African Republic. In that regard, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and all Central African Republic's partners on the infrastructure and training provided in that area.

In January, we unanimously underlined that the sanctions regime should not represent an objective, but rather reflect our commitment to the country's firm transition towards stability and peace (see S/PV.8712). The resolution unanimously adopted today by the members of the Council affirms that momentum and is a significant step towards meeting the expectations of the authorities of the Central African Republic based on the progress made.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my delegation's appeal regarding the need to maintain and strengthen support to the Government of the Central African Republic, in coordination with all its partners, in its efforts to stabilize the country and promote its socioeconomic recovery, and to encourage the country's authorities to strengthen regional cooperation.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.