

Peacebuilding Commission
Ambassadorial-level Meeting on the Central African Republic
13 June 2017

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

1. On 13 June 2017, the Central African Republic (CAR) configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting under the chairmanship of H.E. Omar Hilale. The purpose of the meeting was to follow up on the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA), with a focus on its first priority pillar, Promotion of Peace, Security and Reconciliation. The Government of Central African Republic was represented by H.E. Mr. Flavien Mbata, Minister of Justice and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Central African Republic addressed the Commission. Following the briefings, members of the Commission exchanged views on the situation in CAR and on the challenges and opportunities to advance the implementation of the RCPCA.
2. In his welcoming remarks, the Chair summarised the main points of the preparatory expert-level meeting that had taken place on 9 June 2017. He provided an update the four components of the first pillar of the RCPCA:
 - The Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation component (DDRR): The implementation of this component was on track but unlikely to start this year, since many armed groups, including the anti-Balaka, were not eligible for the program and were thus not willing to engage constructively. While the 5th meeting of the DDRR Advisory and Monitoring Committee (AMC) had reached no meaningful agreement, the attendance of all 14 armed groups was important.
 - Security sector reform (SSR): The SSR texts had been promulgated. The reestablishment of the Central African Armed Forces continued, also due to support to the formation of two battalions by the EU Training Mission (EUTM) despite equipment issues. Police and gendarmerie forces were receiving support, and the campaigns for new recruits were underway.
 - Justice reform and combatting impunity: The Special Criminal Court was being set up, with the appointment of the prosecutor and international and local positions underway. The publication of the Mapping Report on serious violations of human rights law and IHL from 2003 – 2015 would guide the strategy of the Special Criminal Court. The amnesty issue continued to be divisive, but it was essential to recall the Bangui Forum provisions that stipulated that there would be no amnesty for serious crimes.
 - Reconciliation and social cohesion, to enable to return of the displaced: Pending the development of a national strategy, projects were being implemented to rehabilitate displaced communities and facilitate return. The recent violence in May that displaced 80,000 was an important setback.
3. The Chair further underscored that the four components of Pillar 1 were intrinsically linked, and the success of Pillar was essential to that of Pillar 2 and 3. Financing remained the major challenge, with only 14% of the funds promised during the Brussels Donors Conference disbursed. The capacity of CAR institutions to absorb aid was another challenge; the strengthening of government institutions had to go hand in hand with the disbursement of funds. He appealed partners to ensure that the first pillar of the RCPCA

is fully funded in light of its impact on the stabilisation of the country and on the other two pillars.

4. The Chair concluded his words by emphasizing that the resurgence of violence in the east and south of the country, including community violence, gender-based violence and attacks on peacekeepers was alarming. In such a time, efforts by the national authorities to continue the political process should be supported by the international community. The EU initiative, to organize a high-level meeting in Brussels on 20-21 June bringing together all stakeholders of the mediation process was welcome. The role of the region was also paramount; the AU, ECCAS, ICGLR, Angola, Chad and the Congo should join forces to accelerate the peace process. Other mediation initiatives were also underway; he welcomed the African initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, the role of the sub region, and initiatives such as that of the Sante Edigio Community based in Rome. The Chair noted progress in areas of the RCPCA, including police, gendarmerie and justice; he commended the Government of CAR for this progress; he particularly welcomed the progress in the operationalisation of the Special Criminal Court.
5. SRSO Onanga-Anyanga noted that justice and impunity were at the heart of the crisis in CAR; he welcomed the Minister of Justice and commended his Government for the ongoing efforts to address impunity, including through the Special Criminal Court, which he considered as a strong signal of the country's commitment to the rule of law. He voiced his regret about the recent violent events that led to loss of life and the images that resembled the dark days of 2012. He cautioned that the situation in CAR remained fragile, and conveyed his condolences to Morocco and Cambodia for the loss of their peacekeepers in CAR. Humanitarian workers also suffered from violence directed against them, while trying to navigate in one of the world's most difficult theatres. On the other hand, Bambari had remained calm since robust measures were taken to enable the gradual restoration of State authority, including via close coordination between the Government and the UN. Thus, despite setbacks, he believed that if the international community remained committed to CAR and its people, if Pillar 1 could enjoy full support, and if the Brussels Plan could be financed, there was hope for the country to move forward. Despite difficulties, CAR had never been so hopeful, with international and regional support, the building of credible institutions, and a multi-dimensional force helping it to walk towards a better future. These were the messages he would reiterate within the UN, and also with his contacts with the US, EU and World Bank authorities in Brussels and Washington D.C. in the upcoming days and weeks.
6. SRSO Onanga-Anyanga added that enhancing the authority of the state and launching the national dialogue for reconciliation were the priorities. The SRSO regretted that armed groups were invested in predation of natural resources and that they didn't have genuine political grievances. He conveyed the SG's message on dialogue and mediation, underscoring the need to revitalize mediation efforts in CAR since the solution is political and not military. He reiterated the need for the UN to support dialogue efforts, the need for the region to remain engaged and reinforce the legitimacy of the Government and the need to launch national dialogue for reconciliation.
7. The African Peace and Reconciliation Initiative was an essential element to facilitate an inclusive national dialogue with the support of the sub-region. He talked about the importance of reforming the security sector, and the important work carried out by the EUTM. He mentioned the need for an ambitious program that would improve the

wellbeing of the displaced and facilitate their smooth and secure returns. Finally, the support of the PBC and the PBF to CAR was essential, in ensuring proper follow-up for the country's priorities and supporting it in times of need. He suggested that CAR would be on the right path if a) the international community sustained its engagement with the country, b) the UNSC committed to strengthen MINUSCA c) pledges made in Brussels in November 2016 were secured to ensure that the RCPCA is fully funded. He urged the international community to invest in CAR now; he noted that current funding for Pillar I was not enough to support critical programs; he further recommended to invest more in youth that represents 70% of the population of CAR.

8. Minister of Justice H.E. Mr. Flavien Mbata thanked the PBC for the continued support to CAR. He stressed that the First Pillar of the RCPCA was critical to success, and mentioned some of the recent positive developments including the attendance of 14 armed groups to the AMC meeting. However, violence had to stop and perpetrators had to be brought to justice. This was the only way to reach lasting peace; with this vision in mind, CAR had opted in June 2015 to enact the law for a hybrid criminal court that would ensure "zero impunity" for crimes. While the Special Criminal Court was an important step forward, there was still much to be done. The government had appointed the Court chief prosecutor in February, followed by the appointment of Central African and international judges, but it lacked staff and facilities. Operationalizing the Special Criminal Court in CAR was an historical step; in this regards, he thanked DRC, Burkina Faso, France and Canada for having proposed candidates (magistrates) for this Court; he encouraged other member states to propose candidates for the next round. He stressed that the publication of the report on 'Mapping human rights violations 2003 – 2015' would facilitate the work of the court, and further international support would be needed to ensure a smooth transitional justice process.
9. Ms. Mari Yamashita, Deputy Director of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) pointed out that the PBC meeting on CAR provided a platform to exchange views on how to best ensure coherence in the UN's support to the authorities and people of CAR, including through the implementation of the RCPCA. At the Donors' Conference of November 2016, the then Deputy Secretary General had announced a contribution of \$15 million by the PBF; PBSO was working with the SRSG and the UN system to develop peacebuilding projects under this contribution. These projects, together with the work of the PBC, would strengthen efforts to ensure a coherent approach to the implementation of the RCPCA, also bringing together international and regional organisations and actors. For instance, the new PBF support package included a project on dialogue and mediation, in support of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. The PBC was a good platform to help mobilise regional actors, and she encouraged the use of this space to engage neighbouring countries and regional organisations that have a key role in the African Initiative and in the stability of CAR overall.
10. Mr. Marc-Andre Franche, Chief of the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch at PBSO reminded the audience that PBF financing had helped CAR in the past in critical financial moments; such as supporting OHCHR to accelerate the deployment of human rights officers in 2013, and paying the salaries of police and gendarmerie officers in 2014. At the Brussels Donor Conference, the PBF had announced its contribution of 15 million \$ in support to the RCPCA, which would support:
 - An SSR Project in support of the overall 5 year plan developed by UNPOL,

- A project supporting gender and women's participation, at the national and community levels and supporting emerging leadership among young girls,
- A 'fight against impunity' project that would support the set-up of the special criminal court to ensure detainment of prisoners according to international standards, complementary with the ongoing efforts for the set-up of the Special Criminal Court
- A dialogue and mediation project to support the mediation capacity on the national and regional level is a joint initiative between MINUSCA and UNDP,
- An emergency plan for Bambari which aimed to contribute to Bambari's National Immediate Stabilization Action Plan through an integrated United Nations intervention on the restoration of state authority and reduction of community violence.

11. Following the briefings, members of the Commission exchanged views on the situation in CAR and on the challenges and opportunities to advance the implementation of the RCPCA. Delegates of EU, Canada, Belgium, Republic of Korea, Cameroon, Portugal, France, Germany, the USA, Norway, Japan, Indonesia and the OIF [Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie] took the floor. They highlighted the following points:

- Their concern with recent violence that resulted in the loss of life, their condolences for the victims and the Cambodian and Moroccan peacekeepers and over the security and humanitarian situation in CAR, as well as their support for MINUSCA's mandate, particularly its ongoing efforts to restore security,
- The need to support the implementation of the RCPCA, which brought forward an integrated and coordinated approach under the principle of national ownership, including through follow-up on the commitments of the Brussels Conference,
- The importance of reconciliation and the need to relaunch the political process in view of a political accord in CAR, and their support for various mediation initiatives on the basis of the Bangui Forum, and 14 armed groups joining the AMC despite no significant result,
- The significance of the Special Criminal Court in the fight against impunity, particularly the strong message it sends in the wake of the recent violence, and the positive value of the publication of the report on 'Mapping human rights violations 2003 – 2015', for the work of the Court, their commitment to support the Court, both in terms of capacity/expertise and funding.
- Their concern regarding proposals at the Administrative and Budgetary Committee to curb some security and rule of law related programs,
- The need to keep in mind resource mobilisation and disbursement, coordination and national ownership as key elements of peacebuilding in CAR

12. Concluding remarks by the SRSR, by the Minister of Justice and by the Chair of the PBC reiterated that it was unacceptable that armed groups block the development's agenda of the country and undermine the legitimacy of the State. They noted that the current situation puts economic recovery at risk; they called for the prelaunch of a political process. They noted that failure to help the Government deliver on the RCPCA would provide spoilers with arguments to justify their actions/violence. They also referred to the next visit of the Chair to Bangui in July and to the on-going annual meeting on Rule of Law organised by UNDP and that was featuring CAR. The Chair indicated that the next PBC meeting would focus on Pillar II and would also be an opportunity for the Chair to brief members on his visit of July to CAR.