

## **Ambassador Hilale's intervention to the Security Council in his capacity as Chair of the CAR Configuration of the PBC**

*Non-official translation*

Distinguished members of the Security Council,

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of MINUSCA, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, for his detailed presentation on the situation in the Central African Republic and warmly thank him and all his team for their welcome and their support during our visit to Bangui, from February 11 to 14.

A detailed report of this visit was sent to you this morning, therefore I would limit my intervention to three elements:

1 /The elections

The next electoral deadlines, in this case the presidential, legislative and local elections planned to start from December 2020, will be crucial for the future of the country. All of my interlocutors as well HE the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the members of the Government, the Representatives of Central African institutions and those of the civil society expressed to me their firm commitment for the holding of free, transparent, credible and inclusive elections, within their constitutional deadlines.

However, the success of the elections will depend on several factors:

\* Election funding is managed by the UNDP Fund, which estimates needs at \$ 41.8 million. To date, almost 20 million dollars are missing. I thank the European Union for committing \$ 17 million while the UNDP and the Government have each disbursed \$ 2 million. Preparations for the proper conduct of the elections, while respecting the timetable established by the Constitutional Court, are underway but require urgent funds. I intend to continue my efforts by reaching out to CAR partners to inform them on the need to release funds as soon as possible. I am also pleased to announce that Morocco intends to contribute to the financing of these elections, as in 2015. The amount of its contribution will be announced shortly.

\*During my various meetings, I stressed the importance of inclusive elections, encouraging the Government to ensure the participation of IDPs and refugees. This call was well received by my interlocutors who are committed in this regard. The concern for inclusiveness also concerns women and youth, who are not sufficiently aware of the importance of this process. This translates into a low registration rate for this segment of the population, hence the importance of awareness-raising efforts.

\*MINUSCA finalized a security plan for the elections, which was submitted to the national authorities. Beyond the elections, the post-election period will be crucial. It should also be followed closely in order to consolidate the gains obtained.

## 2 / Implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR

The implementation of the Agreement is proceeding resolutely, despite the extent of the planned provisions which have yet to be implemented. Indeed, all stakeholders are aware that there is no alternative to the APPR-RCA. Important laws provided for in the Agreement such as those relating to political parties, decentralization and the status of former heads of state are being finalized and will be adopted shortly. The sectoral justice policy for the period 2020-2024 was also adopted.

Growing ethnic polarization, especially between Armed Groups, fueled by the use of hate rhetoric disseminated through social networks, radio and the print media, has become a worrying factor in the volatility of the security situation. Aware of this problem, MINUSCA is working closely with the Government to defuse this time bomb and calls for appeasement and scrupulous respect for the Peace Agreement.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Central African civil society, in particular the representatives of women and youth. Their thirst for peace and their commitment deserve to be highlighted. The same goes for the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. I was moved by the courage of these elected women, ready to take all the risks, due to the numerous checkpoints of the armed groups, to fulfill their mandates. One of the parliamentarians assured me that she was ready to ride a motorcycle to reach her constituency, braving all dangers, more than 600 km from Bangui, to raise awareness about the importance of participating in the next elections.

## 3 / National Peace Recovery and Consolidation Plan (RCPCA)

Significant progress has been made over the past year, with increased support from the World Bank, the IMF and the EU, but also from MINUSCA, the country team and CAR's bilateral partners.

We looked specifically at the rule of law aspect, given its importance for the population. In this regard, we would like to salute the verdict of the Bangui Criminal Court, which condemned the Bangassou militiamen for their crimes against the civilian population and blue helmets. Two of the leaders were sentenced to forced labor for life. The verdict demonstrates the progress made in strengthening the entire criminal chain in CAR.

The Special Criminal Court is continuing its investigations, with the aim of starting the first trials in early 2021, but faces difficulties in terms of recruitment and funding. These advances should encourage us to maintain our political and financial support to the SCC as well as the national judicial system. In this regard, the law creating the CVJRR (Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission) is also ready.

Finally, I take this opportunity to salute the exemplary work of the Peacebuilding Fund in CAR. During my various visits, I saw firsthand the positive impact of the projects funded by the PBF. What struck me during this last visit was the catalytic nature of the Fund, which is clearly apparent in CAR. Investments in projects on transhumance, support for mixed units, or even the participation of young people in political life, constitute a factor of appeal and encouragement to other donors, who have sometimes brought up to 100 times the amount originally disbursed by the Fund.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, allow me to share with the Security Council the following observations:

1 / The next electoral deadlines will be a historic moment and an opportunity to anchor the sustainability of peace in the country. It would be a shame if they could not be held in satisfactory conditions because of a funding shortfall, at the risk of calling into question the efforts and sacrifices made by the United Nations as well as the heavy investments made by the International Community until now in CAR. I therefore appeal to all the countries and partners of CAR to make their contribution with a view to closing the budget as soon as possible.

2 / MINUSCA needs the strong support of the Security Council and sufficient human and financial means for the implementation of its Resolution 2499, in order to be able to continue to secure the country and to support the Government for the elections as well as for the implementation of APPR-RCA and RCPCA.

3 / The monitoring mechanisms put in place for both the APPR-RCA and the RCPCA are very complex and exert strong pressure on the Government, whose capacities are limited. It would be advisable to simplify the monitoring processes and to further optimize the coordination of partners, in order to support the Government's efforts more effectively.

4 / The exemplary partnership between the UN, the AU and ECCAS symbolizes the potential of the partnership between the UN and regional organizations, in particular the AU, and should therefore be set up as a model. Partnership with international financial institutions is also crucial and will ultimately allow many structuring projects to materialize.

Finally, I would like to send a message of hope and a call for continued mobilization on behalf of the CAR. The international community has done a lot for this country. Although the people still do not necessarily feel the dividends of peace, the foundations for a return to stability are laid, provided that the current support is maintained. I am confident that the Security Council will continue to give full attention and political support to this country, whose people legitimately aspire to stability and peace.