

Ambassadorial-Level Meeting of the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission

Update on the Electoral, Political and Security situation in C.A.R.

12 July 2021

1. On 12 July, H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations and Chair of the C.A.R. Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting focused on the latest developments in the electoral, political and security situation in C.A.R. The C.A.R. Ministers of Defence and Interior, as well as the Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister were also in attendance and the Minister of Foreign Affairs transmitted an audio message. The Chair noted that the security situation remained volatile, with violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and he condemned the attacks on civilians. The Chair outlined the following areas of focus for the discussion of the Configuration: (i) the maintenance of international attention and the mobilization of resources to support the collective efforts of the Government of the C.A.R. and its bilateral and multilateral partners as well as MINUSCA and to ensure these efforts are not undermined by the current instability; (ii) the National Plan for Recovery and Peacebuilding in the C.A.R. (RCPCA), and the partnership with International Financial Institutions to identify the new challenges in the implementation of programmes; (iii) the efforts to combat impunity, to which the Government has provided its commitments assured at the highest level, as an essential element in the restoration of peace and stability. In this regard, he welcomed the appointment of an international judge to assist the Chamber of the Special Criminal Court, as well as the appointment of eleven members of the Truth, Justice, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission.

2. Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA, acknowledged the organization of the presidential election in December 2020 as well as several legislative ballots in December 2020, March, and May 2021, and efforts of President Touadéra and the stakeholders to complete the electoral cycle, with the holding local elections scheduled for 2022. This commitment is in line with the advancement of democratic principles, particularly decentralized governance, and local development. It provides an opportunity to revitalize the *Accord Politique pour la Paix et la Réconciliation en République Centrafricaine* (APPR-the Political Agreement), a cornerstone of the dialogue and stabilization process in CAR. The continued support of donors to the APPR, as well as the joint approach of the UN, AU, EU and ECCAS to the agreement, are critical for the success of the peace process. However, the success of these collective efforts depends largely on political will of the APPR signatories. The political situation remains tense, due in particular to a disagreement over participation in the republican dialogue by the political opposition and the civil society, conditional on guarantees of inclusiveness and impartiality on the part of the Government. MINUSCA will continue its good offices by advocating for a truly inclusive political dialogue, to allow the participation of all segments of Central African society. Given the impasse of a military solution, the success of the dialogue is important to pave a way out of the crisis and ultimately relaunch the implementation of the APPR. He further pointed out that the humanitarian crisis, was being exacerbated by COVID-19, and the CPC as well as operations against it. At the moment, humanitarian actors are operating in one of the most dangerous contexts in the world, where 57% of the population need humanitarian assistance and more than 700,000 people are at risk of famine.

3. Mr. Mathias Morouba, the President of the National Electoral Authority (ANE), briefed on the electoral process and informed that the holding of the second round of legislative elections had resulted in 133 deputies out of 140 (including 17 women) being elected. The elections for the remaining seven constituencies will be held on 25 July 2021 to complete the establishment of the National Assembly. He acknowledged the substantial support of MINUSCA for security, logistics, financing and technical assistance, in accordance with the Security Council's mandate, which enabled the ANE to address the myriad of challenges in the process. The ANE's focus will be on ensuring the inclusivity of the local elections (last held in 1998) and ensuring the participation of the internally displaced and refugees who have returned to the country through the revision of legal provisions, the electoral cartography and registry. He emphasized the importance of local governance as a prerequisite to foster local and grassroots development. The budgetary gap for these elections is estimated at US\$10 million. Based on the positive dividends of previous investments, particularly with regard to the availability of certain equipment (ballot boxes and voting booths), the electoral costs can be revised downwards to US\$8 million.

The Commission welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:

- Welcomed the timely holding of the presidential and legislative elections and the formation of the new government. Emphasized the holding of credible, transparent and inclusive local elections, which will be a critical moment for peacebuilding and crucial for decentralization, cohesion, stability, resilience and sustainable development. The local elections should also provide a voice for women, youth, IDPs and underrepresented groups through the updating of the electoral registry. This would further enhance the legitimacy of the electoral process.
- Stressed that the revitalization of the Political Agreement is a necessity to ensure peace and stability in the country, especially with the involvement and support of the co-guarantors of the Political Agreement. The accompanying republican dialogue, which remains the only viable option, should be transparent and inclusive, with the full engagement of civil society.
- Condemned the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly the alarming rate of attacks against civilians, noting the need to combat impunity, and to ensure justice, oversight and accountability. In this regard, the Special Criminal Court and the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission needed to be operationalized. Expressed serious concerns about the disinformation campaign, hate speech and SOFA violations against MINUSCA.
- Noted that the joint high-level AU-UN-ECCAS-EU visit to C.A.R. (2-5 June), the field mission of the AUPSC (28 June-1 July) and the briefing to the Security Council by the President of Angola and Chairperson of the ICGLR (on 23 June) point to the regional efforts being undertaken to revitalize the Political Agreement, and underlined the necessity of cooperation and coordination of these initiatives by regional countries and organizations.