

**Informal meeting of the Central African Republic
configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission**

Chairman's summary

16 May 2013

1. On 16 May 2013, the Central African Republic (CAR) configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) met under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Abdul Momen, Vice-chairperson of the PBC. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in CAR, Mrs. Margaret Vogt, was also in attendance.

2. In her briefing to the configuration, **SRSV Vogt** gave a detailed account of a series of ECCAS Heads of States (HoS) meetings which took place in the last few months. She focused on the principles that were agreed to chart a path out of the current crisis in CAR. She noted that while the African Union had imposed sanctions, including a travel ban and asset freeze on the leadership of Séléka, it continued to be involved in the discussions on resolving the crisis. The principles agreed to by ECCAS HoS in N'Djamena on 3 April included:

- The Libreville agreements remain the basis for any solution out of the crisis;
- Does not accept Michel Djotodia as Head of State, nor the proposed 2-3 years transition period;
- Rescinds presidential decree appointing Prime Minister Tiangaye, already appointed in January in Libreville by consensus;
- Reaffirms that the PM holds executive powers and cannot be removed by the President;
- Decides to establish an inclusive National Transitional Council (NTC) - to replace less inclusive National Assembly;
- Decides that NTC will elect a three-member bureau, the head of which would be the transitional president, recognized as the leader of the transition;
- Reaffirms that none of the members of the Government or the NTC bureau would be eligible to run for the presidential elections at the end of the transition.

3. After the Summit, the above conditions were relayed to Mr. Djotodia, who accepted all of them unconditionally. However, he continued to issue decrees, including one creating the NTC. Further to issuing that decree, Mr. Djotodia did not conduct wide ranging and inclusive consultations for the composition of the NTC. The NTC elected Djotodia as Head of the Transition by acclamation, and appointed an 8-member bureau, composed exclusively of Séléka supporters.

4. ECCAS HoS convened again on 18 April 2013 voicing their displeasure at Mr. Djotodia's failure to adhere to the principles laid out by the N'Djamena Summit, in particular the lack of inclusiveness of the NTC, and of the Government, which was composed by 75% of family members and cronies of Séléka leadership. Again, the letter and spirit of the Libreville Agreement, which had stipulated a partnership between ruling parties, opposition and the Séléka had not been honored.

5. As regards the **security**, Séléka has clearly failed to regain control over the situation. The 18 April Summit also decided to strengthen the capacity of MICOPAX from the current 700 troops to 2,000, and in this regard decided to expand the participation of countries other than just countries in the sub-region. The Summit also decided the creation of a Contact Group, and to enhance the capacity of the Libreville follow-up Committee. A meeting of the Contact Group was set for 3 May in Brazzaville.

6. Brazzaville discussed the roadmap presented by PM Tiangaye defining tasks to be done and a timeframe within which to accomplish them. These included the reconstitution of the NTC, the Government and the election of the bureau of the NTC. In particular, the reconstitution of the NTC - including the increase of its membership to 130 members - would have significant impact on the transitional bodies to be elected to run the transition, notably in the areas of SSR, DDR, Human rights, and socio-economic development. Furthermore, the EU stressed in Brazzaville that the democratic credentials of the transitional institutions would be critical for the resumption of any type of support. The democratic process needed to be more credible than that of the past 10 years under President Bozizé.

7. SRSG Vogt stressed that the international community needed to be clear in condemning the coup and affirm its readiness to impose sanctions. The international community could not sit on the fence in light of the gross violations of human rights, including wide-spread carnage, killings, looting and the re-recruitment of child soldiers, to name just a few. Individual sanctions would send a clear message to perpetrators that there are consequences to their actions. SRSG Vogt was forthright with asserting that if a fundamental security framework was not in place and functioning, the international community's support in any other area will be to no avail.

8. The role of a reconstituted government should focus on the following tasks:

- Restoration of democracy, leading to elections;
- Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of all forces;
- Human rights and justice, including transitional justice;
- Humanitarian access;
- Restoration of state authority;
- Rebuilding of the justice and prison system.

9. The representatives of **Chad, France, Canada, European Union, Belgium, Morocco, South Africa, World Bank, Indonesia, Nigeria, Malaysia, Egypt, US, Russian Federation, Croatia, Central African Republic**, and the **Organisation internationale de la Francophonie** took the floor. The representative of the **Peacebuilding Support Office** (PBSO) also made a statement.

10. They welcomed the timely holding of the meeting of the PBC and called for a more **active engagement** of the international community in resolving the current challenges faced by the country along the lines of the AU, which formally suspends a country's participation in its proceedings after a coup, yet continues to cooperate to identify a way out of the crisis.

11. Delegations also called for the immediate restoration of **security** for the people and their property. However, commensurate measures would be necessary to neutralize armed gangs and finalize their cantonment as well as that of the Séléka elements. Delegations welcomed efforts by ECCAS to strengthen MICOPAX, and some indicated their

readiness to support those efforts on the basis of specific requests. But while security was a physical necessity, it could only be achieved once state authority has been reestablished. Some suggested that more than the currently envisaged 2,000 ECCAS troops would be necessary to bring the situation under control. The threat to the stability of the sub-region was highlighted by a number of speakers.

12. Delegations noted that although the **State authority** in CAR has been traditionally weak, it has now entirely collapsed and needs to be reestablished, both in Bangui and in the provinces. Considerable support will be needed and delegations called for the international community to mobilize around it without further delays. The success of efforts in this field would of course be dependant on positive developments on the political front.

13. Support should also be given by the international community to the **political process** initiated and led by the sub-region, with an emphasis on supporting Prime Minister Tiangaye, on the basis of mutual accountability. Calls were made to refine the working methods of the Contact Group, as well as to define a clear roadmap with timeline to facilitate coordination of efforts to support next steps.

14. Recognizing the important role that the **PBC** can play in the current context, delegations called for the swift election of a new chair of the configuration. It was also suggested to add to the pressure on the new authorities to improve the security situation, including through issuing a PBC statement in support of the SRSG, and calling for concrete action by other relevant actors. The PBC could also look at new ways of fostering dialogue among the people of the country, and consider lessons learned from experiences elsewhere. Similarly, the PBC should assess whether its peacebuilding priorities are still relevant in the new context, and adjust them accordingly.

15. The continuous monitoring of the developing situation, including through regular briefings to the PBC in real time, would go a long way in allowing for the international community to reengage in those areas where security and other conditions are reestablished. As part of its mandate, the PBC should re-examine the root causes of the conflict and how to best address them, building on

improved coordination and partnerships as well as lessons learned from past experiences. It was further suggested that a needs assessment mission should be conducted as soon as security conditions would allow. Given the likelihood of a number of partners having to conduct individual assessments once the situation allowed, it was suggested to consider a joint assessment exercise including the United Nations, the World Bank, the African Union and the European Union.

16. Serious concern was expressed about the dramatic fiscal crisis, the mounting salary arrears, as well as the extended closure of many businesses and markets. Arrears to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) would ultimately compound an already strained situation. Many delegations indicated their willingness to scale up their support and called for others to do likewise. However, the restoration of security was stressed by all as a condition sine qua non.

17. The Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic, **H.E. Mr. Doubane** took the floor to thank the international community for its steadfast commitment to peacebuilding in his country. He called on the international community, in particular the African Union and the European Union, to support the Prime Minister by ensuring the swift formation of a new government and of a reconstituted NTC with a functioning bureau. He informed the membership that the Prime Minister had called for the appointment of a special rapporteur on the human rights abuses committed in CAR, and to ensure that those responsible be brought to justice. Other priorities included economic revitalization, and the reconstitution of national registries, all of which had been destroyed by the Séléka.

18. Responding to some of the comments made, **SRSB Vogt** stated that there was a lot to gain from partnering up in the post-conflict phase, and that a joint assessment conducted by UN, AU, EU and the World Bank would be critical once the security situation permitted. She also reiterated the call for the quick appointment of a new Chair for the CAR configuration to lend her support in her tasks on the ground, as well as a tool for mobilizing much needed resources for key critical areas during the transition.

19. Before adjourning the meeting, a representative of the **Peacebuilding Support Office** (PBSO) took the floor to express the office's and the Chair's sincere appreciation for the efforts made by the SRSG and her team to support the peace process and to periodically brief the PBC on developments in the country. He reiterated PBSO's commitment to helping in any way possible to maintain the attention of the international community on the Central African Republic.

20. The meeting was adjourned.