

Peacebuilding Commission

Central African Republic Configuration Ambassadorial-Level Meeting

6 May 2024

Chair's Summary

On 6 May 2024, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Central African Republic Configuration (CAR) convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting to discuss the country's peacebuilding priorities, in particular those aimed at ensuring a concerted and unified approach in support to holding inclusive, credible, transparent and peaceful local elections in October 2024.

1. On 6 May 2024, **the Chair of the PBC Central African Republic Configuration, H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale**, convened an Ambassadorial-level meeting focused on the ongoing efforts to support alignment between the Central African Government and partners on priority areas for peacebuilding, including in holding inclusive, credible, transparent and peaceful local elections in October 2024. In his opening remarks, referring to his November visit to CAR, the Chair highlighted the Government's resolve to change the country's trajectory from a constant humanitarian assistance towards recovery, and durable socio-economic development. He underlined in that regard, the progress achieved so far and since the signing of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR), including in the area of DDRR and fight against impunity. He welcomed the development of a new National Development Plan (NDP) for the period of 2024-2028 and called for the international community, including regional and international financial institutions (IFI), to support its implementation. He stressed the significant impact of the Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF) support in the country, which he witnessed during his visit in the CAR. He further highlighted the momentum in engaging directly local populations in peacebuilding efforts, bolstering resilience, and nurturing national reconciliation efforts through dialogue. In that regard, he underscored the criticality of the upcoming local elections for decentralization, inclusivity, peace, and socio-economic recovery. He stressed, however, that their organization remains severely hampered due to the budget shortfall. He urged the international community, partners and PBC members to support of the Government's efforts in organizing these key elections which have not been held for the past 36 years.

2. **Mrs. Joanne Adamson, the Deputy Special Representative of MINUSCA**, echoed the Chair's appeal and the significance of holding the local elections as a way to solidify inclusive political solutions throughout the country especially since such elections were last held in 1988. She noted that within the framework of its mandate, MINUSCA has provided support to initiatives aimed at creating favorable conditions for inclusive and credible local elections, including strengthening of the legal framework through the development of a new Electoral Code, as well as supporting awareness-raising and civic education. As a result, a new electoral map and 300 voter registration centers have been established. Moreover, she underscored the ongoing efforts in promoting women's and youth participation in the electoral process. She reinforced the Chair's call for multilateral, technical and financial partners, to provide support for the local elections, particularly through the UNDP basket fund.

3. Mr. Ghislain Lavodrama, Chargé of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Local Development, informed of the Government's efforts in strengthening the legal framework for the elections. He acknowledged MINUSCA's support in establishing a committee responsible for elaborating the zero draft of the Electoral Code. He noted that a draft law had been developed and submitted to the Government's approval and subsequently handed over to the National Assembly, which adopted it with provisions and subsequently transmitted it to the Constitutional Council to ensure its alignment with the Constitution. He further informed that the law was currently being rewritten to ensure conformity with the Constitution and that it will be finalized in the coming weeks before being submitted to the Head of State for its promulgation.

4. The President of the National Electoral Authority (ANE), stressed the national authorities' unwavering commitment to holding peaceful, transparent and inclusive local elections according to the planned schedule. He welcomed the Government's and the multilateral partners' ongoing support, while underscoring the persisting challenges in addressing the significant budget shortfall to cover for the organization of these elections. In that regard, he stressed the urgency of mobilizing funds to cover for the budget deficit to allow the start of essential pre-electoral activities. In that regard he noted the importance to mobilize USD 8 million as soon as possible. Further, he informed of the efforts to update the voter's registration list, which is crucial for both local and upcoming presidential elections. Last, he reassured that the local elections will take place as planned, while underscoring the necessity for the international community's support.

5. Ms. Noura Hamladji, the Director of the Africa Regional Office at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), emphasized the particular importance of holding the local elections and described it as a once-in-a-generation opportunity for lasting and inclusive political solutions as well as strengthening local governance. She informed that the UNDP, in close collaboration with the Government and MINUSCA, is intensifying efforts to address the funding gap since only 20 per cent of the initial budget of \$18 million has been pledged to date. She underscored that the integrity of the electoral processes can be impacted due to the deficit and therefore called for the international partners' support.

6. Member States who took the floor welcomed the briefings and highlighted the following:

- They commended the national authorities' and stakeholders' resolve for continued peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts, including through the implementation of the APPR, the DDRR process, the political, institutional and economic reforms, as well as holding transparent, inclusive, transparent, and peaceful local elections.
- They welcomed strengthening the rule of law, including through the establishment of the Special Criminal Court, which indicates the authorities' political will to fight impunity.
- They acknowledged MINUSCA's critical role in supporting the country's peacebuilding and sustaining peace priorities, particularly the efforts on DDRR and electoral preparations.
- Credible, transparent and inclusive local elections are fundamental for durable peace, decentralization, social cohesion, inclusivity, stability, and socio-economic development.
- They called for international community's consistent political, financial and technical support to the country's peacebuilding priorities. In that regard, they commended the

development of the NDP 2024-2028 and encouraged multilateral partners, including the IFIs, to support the implementation of the plan through coordinated and coherent approach.

- The role of women and youth in peacebuilding, politics, and development is a prerequisite for durable peace. They called for their full, equal, and meaningful participation in the local elections.
- The PBF's support to CAR has been important in support of inclusion and localized approaches. They recommended that the Fund supports the holding of the local elections.
- They called on the international community to provide financial and in-kind assistance towards the organization of successful local elections.
- They underscored the Commission's continued support to the country and encouraged partners to redouble their efforts and support to consolidating peace dividends in CAR, in line with national ownership and priorities.

10. In his concluding remarks, **the Chair of the PBC Central African Republic (CAR) Configuration, H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale**, reiterated his call to the international community, particularly to PBC members, to support the holding of local elections, which are critical for promoting inclusivity and consolidating local democracy, good governance and peace dividends in CAR. Further, he announced his intention to visit CAR in July 2024 expressing hope that by the time, the international community would have already mobilized.

Chair's recommendations

- For the PBC to garner adequate and sustained financial support for the holding of credible, transparent, inclusive, and peaceful elections.
- For the multilateral partners, including the international and regional financial institutions, to redouble their efforts in support of the CAR's peacebuilding priorities, including through the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2024-2028.
- Advancing the meaningful participation and leadership of women and youth in peacebuilding, politics, and socio-economic efforts, particularly in the upcoming local elections.