



## **Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

### **For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report -**

#### **Universal Periodic Review:**

## **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

### **I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND CURRENT CONDITIONS**

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a State party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as to the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. CAR has also ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) and the Great Lakes Pact.

CAR enacted a refugee law on 28 December 2007 and issued an implementation decree on 6 January 2009. The 2007 Law created the National Commission for Refugees, (*Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés*, CNR) as well as the National Coordination for the Protection of Refugees, (*Coordination Nationale pour la Protection des Réfugiés*, CNPR). The law provides that the Sub-Commission of Eligibility, (*Sous-commission d'Eligibilité* or SCE) is responsible for the examination of asylum claims and that the appeal board (*Commission de Recours*) is attached to CNPR.

#### **Political context**

Several coups d'Etat and armed conflicts have destroyed CAR's fragile State institutions, infrastructures, and economy since this country had gained independence in 1960. The Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme launched in the North-West of the country in 2011 has enabled the return of tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and approximately 11,000 Central African refugees from Chad and Cameroon.

In 2012, the political situation further stabilized with the signing on 26 August 2012 of the 2008 Libreville peace agreement by the rebel group *Convention Patriotique pour la Justice et la Paix* (CPJP). In September 2012, General Abdel Kader Baba Laddé, the Chadian rebel leader of the *Front Populaire pour le Redressement* (FPR), and his armed elements, who were operating in CAR since 2008, returned to Chad. However, the combination of slow implementation of the DDR programme in the Centre-North and North-East of the country, little governmental efforts to foster a dialogue with opposition parties, and, internal tensions within several rebel groups led

to the formation of a new coalition of armed groups under the name of Séléka (“Alliance” in the national language Sango). Séléka launched a military offensive against the Government on 10 December 2012 and occupied large parts of territory. Under the auspices of the Economic Community of the Central African States, the Séléka, the Government and political parties from the opposition signed a cease-fire and a political agreement in Libreville on 11 January 2013.

### **Internal displacement**

The estimated number of IDPs in CAR was 51,000 in October 2012.<sup>1</sup> However, the crisis that has been going on since December 2012 is believed to have generated fresh displacement of tens of thousands of people. The major causes of displacement are armed group activities, inter-ethnic tensions, and conflicts between herders and farmers. The majority of IDPs live with host communities or in their fields in the bush; only a minority live in IDP sites. The humanitarian crisis faced by the country adversely affects IDPs and their host communities.

### **Asylum-seekers and refugees**

As of December 2012, CAR hosted some 16,000 asylum-seekers and refugees mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Chad. The majority of them were recognized on a *prima facie* basis under the 1969 OAU Convention. More than 11,000 refugees live in refugee camps in rural areas located respectively in Lobaye (Batalimo camp), Haut-Mbomou (Zemio camp), and Ouaka (Bambari camp) prefectures. In these locations, CAR authorities provided refugees with land where they have settled and can farm. In Bangui, there are approximately 2,500 refugees and 2,500 asylum-seekers of various nationalities.<sup>2</sup> There has been no report of violation of the principle of *non-refoulement* in 2012.

Although some refugees have claimed to suffer discrimination based on their origin or refugee status, it is more the dire socio-economic situation of CAR that creates frustrations among the refugee population and exacerbates stigmatization of foreigners in general. Depending on their place of residence in CAR, refugees are likely to face specific protection risks. In urban areas, access to sustainable livelihoods for self-reliance remains a challenge for refugees even after a long stay in CAR, because of the socio-economic situation of the country and the poor quality of essential services. Gender-based violence, violence resulting from suspicion of witchcraft and traditional beliefs appear among the heightened protection risks that both refugees and host populations are exposed to.

## **II. ACHIEVEMENTS AND BEST PRACTICES**

### **Refugee protection**

UNHCR commends the Government and the people of CAR for their hospitality towards asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR welcomes the progressive steps taken by the Government to bring the national legal framework and administrative mechanisms in line with international protection standards. In 2012, the National Commission for Refugees or “*Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés*” (CNR) strengthened its presence in the refugee camps located in the rural

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<sup>1</sup> No updated statistics are currently available; however, the humanitarian community in CAR refers to “1.5 million people potentially affected by the conflict.”

<sup>2</sup> It is also worth noting that more than 170,000 Central Africans have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

areas, which contributed to the improvement of security and coordination within the camps. In September 2012, UNHCR and the CNR jointly conducted a profiling and verification exercise in Batalimo camp, which was an opportunity to update information on refugees (biodata, intentions relating to durable solutions, specific protection needs). Refugee children born in CAR have access to birth certificates issued by the Government registrars. Moreover, CNR issues substitute birth certificate to refugees who are not born in CAR. Refugees living in Bangui have individual ID cards confirming their status, while those living in camps receive a refugee attestation.

Following a joint government-UNHCR review of the asylum system in CAR in 2010, a profiling exercise of the urban refugees and asylum-seekers was carried out in 2011 and joint CNR-UNHCR Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) relating to registration, asylum procedures and data management were adopted in February 2012.

### **Internal displacement**

In 2010, CAR ratified the Kampala Convention. CAR is also a party to the Great Lakes Pact, which includes the Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons. A draft national legislation, a policy framework and a plan of action for IDPs were drafted in 2012. Three action plans to halt the recruitment and use of child soldiers, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005), have been signed by the CPJP, UFDR and APRD armed groups in 2007 and 2011.<sup>3</sup> The implementation of these Action Plans and the process of releasing children associated with the above-mentioned groups are ongoing.

### **Prevention of Statelessness**

Since 2010, UNHCR has been assisting the Government in the delivery of civil status documents and national identity cards to IDPs, refugees returning from Chad and Cameroon, as well as several minority ethnic groups. Nomadic or pastoralists are particularly exposed to the risk of statelessness. Efforts to reduce such risks target other groups as well. In 2011 and 2012, more than 51,000 birth certificates/surrogate birth certificates and 5,607 national identity cards were issued. The Government validated an action plan on birth registration during the National Forum on Birth Registration held in July 2011.

## **III. KEY PROTECTION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Issue 1: Access to asylum procedures**

Despite the existing national legal framework set up by the 2007 Law and 2009 Decree, processes relating to asylum (reception, registration and RSD) are not yet in line with international protection standards. The CNPR and *Commission de Recours* are not functioning and the *Sous-commission d'Eligibilité* (SCE) has not held any sessions since October 2009. As a result, approximately 2,500 asylum-seekers from various nationalities are awaiting the decisions on their asylum application and the backlog continues to grow.

### **Recommendations:**

- Revamp the national refugee policy to address the gaps identified in the handling of asylum claims and refugee cases, to ensure more efficiency and transparency;

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<sup>3</sup> UNICEF had facilitated the processes leading to these signatures.

- Establish and implement fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures to effectively respond to the situation of all persons in need of international protection.

### **Issue 2: Refugees’ access to rights and local integration prospects**

Whereas, the 2007 Law states that refugees and asylum-seekers have equal access to judicial, administrative and social services, this is in practice not the case for the majority of refugees, who are heavily relying on the assistance of UNHCR. Provision of support for access to alternative legal status including naturalization schemes and delivery of work permits is required for protracted urban refugees and those whose refugee status is being ceased. Convention travel documents are not compliant with ICAO standards, preventing refugees from traveling abroad with adequate documentation.

It is worth noting that CAR’s social indicators are amongst the lowest in the world, which may have a negative impact on local integration prospects. Outside of Bangui, the State institutions remain weak. The persistent lack of essential social services undermines the efforts of rural communities to become resilient. According to the humanitarian community, half of the CAR’s population (which is 4,450,000 persons) was in need of humanitarian assistance in 2012.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Implement its pledge made at Ministerial Meeting in December 2011 to enhance the protection of refugees in a protracted situation through the implementation of the following commitments: (a) guarantee the equal enjoyment by refugees in a protracted situation of socio-economic rights including access to property and to income-generating activities; (b) set up an alternative legal status and deliver free “foreigner ID cards”; and (c) facilitate access to naturalization for refugees who wish to locally integrate in CAR;
- Start issuing refugees with conventional travel documents that are compliant with ICAO standards;
- Ensure the effective decentralization of its administrative and social services (education and health in particular) to increase access to them by civilian populations outside of Bangui.

### **Issue 3: Access to civil status and identity documents and prevention of statelessness**

In CAR, access to civil status and identity documents remains of high importance for a wide range of population groups including IDPs, spontaneous CAR returnees from Chad and from Cameroon (around 11,000 as of October 2012), and nomadic/pastoralist people. The reasons which prevent these persons from acquiring their ID documents are: difficulties in accessing identification centers owing to isolation and distance; centralization of the ID card issuance process; unaffordable fees of national identity cards given the average monthly income; lack of required documents for specific categories of people to apply for IDs; absence of birth registration and issuance of birth certificates; and lack of education and awareness on the importance of civil status and identity documents. Often in rural areas, the populations are considered as Central Africans. However, due to a lack of resources or infrastructure they do not possess identity documents to confirm their CAR nationality. In 2010, the national childbirth

registration rate was estimated at 61%.<sup>4</sup> Until now, no comprehensive mapping and profiling exercise of persons at risk of statelessness has been carried out and consequently there is a lack of reliable aggregated data on the protection problems such persons face. In December 2011, the Central African Republic pledged to ratify the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness; to enable delivery of birth certificates and national identity cards to all people affected by conflict; to continue its initiatives to reform the Nationality Code, as well as to better manage migratory flows.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Proceed to ratify the aforementioned Conventions relating to Statelessness as soon as possible;
- Continue its current efforts which should enable the delivery of birth certificates cards to all peoples affected by the conflicts, with a particular attention to people at risk of statelessness;
- Continue its initiatives to reform the Nationality Code and bring it in line with international standards on prevention and reduction of statelessness.

#### **Issue 4: Adequate protection and assistance of IDPs**

The National Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region coordinated the drafting of an IDP law and national policy. The current draft provides for the creation of a National Permanent Coordination Committee for the Management of Internally Displaced Persons, (*Comité National Permanent de prise en charge des Personnes Déplacées Internes*) in addition to the National Committee in Charge of Internally Displaced Persons (*Comité National Permanent de Concertation et de Coordination pour la Gestion des Droits des Personnes Déplacées à l'Intérieur du Territoire de la République Centrafricaine*). Additionally, the draft law mostly refers to the Great Lakes Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons. It however lacks references to the Kampala Convention and to the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and does not take into account the audit of CAR's existing national legal instruments, carried out with the assistance of the Brookings Institute in 2011, which had identified gaps to be addressed in order to strengthen the protection of IDPs. The draft law therefore requires substantial review.

Besides these concerns relating to the framework, it is worth noting that IDPs in CAR are adversely affected by the frequent unrests. Many IDPs survive in the bush due to insecurity and because their houses were burnt, social and sanitary infrastructure looted or destroyed and their livestock stolen. Crucial needs include shelter, water, basic health and education. This situation affects some host communities as well. These violations are attributed to various armed groups, foreign armed forces intermittently operating in CAR, self-defence groups, armed herders, bandits (zaraguinas), and national armed forces.<sup>5</sup> The report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin, following its visit to Central African Republic in 2008, indicated that displacement in the North was caused

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Draft MICS 2010-UNICEF.

<sup>5</sup> These violations include murder, arbitrary arrests, forced recruitment (including children), gender based violence, restriction to freedom of movement, family separation, forced labour, village looting, house and plot destruction, illegal occupation of houses, extortion, and, discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities.

by violence “*linked above all to abuses committed against civilians and their property, including extrajudicial, arbitrary or summary executions and the burning of entire villages during security operations, forcing the population to flee for their own protection.*”<sup>6</sup>

The situation above is further exacerbated by a weak civil society, while the lack of humanitarian presence in areas of displacement hampers adequate protection and a sound human rights monitoring. Access to legal remedies and impunity are additional challenges, mainly because of reliance on the traditional justice system and the limited capacity of the Government to provide adequate protection and legal remedies to civilians. The State authorities outside of Bangui, especially law enforcement officers, the judiciary and administrative authorities are scarce, not adequately empowered and lack essential resources.

### **Recommendations:**

- Develop a national framework on the protection of internally displaced persons that domesticates the Kampala Convention. The Government may invite UNHCR and other partners to provide international expertise to support the review of the draft IDP law and national policy on the protection and assistance to IDPs to ensure that the draft instrument is consistent with the Kampala Convention;
- Continue to facilitate unimpeded access of humanitarian organizations to all areas of the country;
- Take urgent and adequate measures to respond to the current plight of IDPs and provide resources needed to that effect to relevant actors; paying special attention to the needs of displaced women, children, and other persons with specific needs affected by the displacement;
- Re-establish and strengthen the presence of the State at all levels in areas that are prone to conflict (particularly the North and the North-East) by restoring basic services in education, justice, the police and health care as a matter of priority and encouraging devolved and decentralized authorities to return to their localities;
- Complete the DDR programme and extend it to all armed groups as well, while requesting to that effect the support of the international community;
- Develop and maintain an adequate law enforcement mechanism at the local level across the country through a reform of the security, the judiciary, and the penitentiary sectors in order to address impunity.

### **Issue 5: Sexual and Gender-based violence**

In both rural and urban areas, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) remains a widespread problem. SGBV is largely rooted in the customs of the populations and exacerbated by a deep culture of silence and denial that is fueled by stigma. Mechanisms to identify, report and monitor persons at risk of SGBV or incidents remain inadequate. SGBV incidents are therefore seriously underreported. Prevention of violence against women and girls is also difficult due to the impunity of perpetrators of such crimes. In most rural areas, violence resulting from witchcraft and traditional beliefs leads to popular condemnation and serious threats to the physical integrity

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<sup>6</sup> Mission report available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G08/130/15/PDF/G0813015.pdf?OpenElement>

of the targeted persons, particularly old single women, including refugees. In 2010-2011, around 400 victims of witchcraft accusations were reported in CAR.

**Recommendations:**

- Reinforce prevention and response mechanisms to effectively address gender-based violence, with the assistance of the international community;
- Increase sensitization campaigns with the local authorities and judiciary to fight violence resulting from witchcraft accusations as well as traditional practices and socio-cultural factors which have significant deleterious effects on the behavior of people and endanger women and girls in particular.<sup>7</sup>

**Issue 6: Child protection**

Several armed groups continue to recruit and use children. Lack of adequate education facilities and poverty are factors that contribute to child labour, early marriage and pregnancy. The existing legal framework for the protection of children in CAR remains inadequate, as in the absence of an efficient child protection institution, child protection risks cannot be properly identified and addressed and no child protective environment fostered. Moreover, very few child protection units “*brigades des mineurs*” exist within the law enforcement and the specialized child protection sections in courts.

**Recommendations:**

- Accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.<sup>8</sup>
- In the context of negotiations with armed groups, ensure the immediate release of all children and take all measures required to prevent any future recruitment.
- Create or reinforce specialized institutions to deal adequately with the protection of children throughout the country.

**Human Rights Liaison Unit  
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UNHCR  
March 2013**

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<sup>7</sup> See also Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston\*, Human Rights Council: Fourteenth session, page 10, Available at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/14session/A.HRC.14.24.Add5.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic, 13 April 2011, S/2011/241, para. 59, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dbe869c2.html>

## ANNEX

### **Excerpts of Concluding Observations and Recommendations from UN Treaty Bodies and UN Secretary General -Universal Periodic Review:**

#### **Central African Republic**

We would like to bring to your attention the following excerpts, taken directly from **Treaty Bodies and UN Secretary General Concluding Observations and Recommendations**, relating to issues of interest and concern to UNHCR with regards to the Central African Republic.

#### **Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin<sup>9</sup>**

Addendum: Mission to the Central African Republic

A/HRC/8/6/Add.1

18 April 2008

#### IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

78. Following his visit, the Representative of the Secretary-General concludes that the Central African Republic is experiencing a grave protection crisis, highlighted by the very large number of displaced persons, and that the country is in an emergency situation. Many displaced persons are in urgent need of protection and assistance, in particular with regard to the enjoyment of their rights to housing, food and access to health care and education. He is of the view that if appropriate emergency measures are not taken, the protection crisis may well become a large-scale humanitarian crisis which will be difficult to overcome in a country already beset by serious underdevelopment.

79. In the Representative's view, the violence prevailing in the north of the Central African Republic is the main cause of the population displacement. This violence is linked above all to abuses committed against civilians and their property, including extrajudicial, arbitrary or summary executions and the burning of entire villages during security operations, forcing the population to flee for their own protection. According to information obtained from humanitarian agencies and the statements made by many displaced persons, these violations are mainly committed by security forces, and in particular the Presidential Guard. The actions of bandits and highway robbers also contribute to the climate of insecurity and are forcing the population to flee. He wishes to remind the authorities that the State has primary responsibility for protecting its citizens, and that it is incumbent upon it to take all measures to ensure the protection of the civilian population.

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<sup>9</sup> This document is available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G08/130/15/PDF/G0813015.pdf?OpenElement>



80. The Representative is worried about the situation in which displaced persons live, and considers it to be a cause for deep concern. Such persons are completely destitute and very often no longer have housing, drinking water or health care, while their children do not have access to education. In some cases, they live in considerable food insecurity and could rapidly become undernourished.

81. For fear of being stopped and brutalized by the members of the security forces, displaced persons do not dare to go to their villages in search of water or to urban centres for medical care. Often viewed by the security forces as rebels or collaborators, internally displaced persons, in particular young men, are also stigmatized, thereby exacerbating the constant sense of insecurity in which the population lives and limiting individual freedom of movement. Accordingly, the Representative shares the view of many displaced victims who consider that conditions are not yet ripe for a permanent return to their usual places of residence.

82. The Representative is especially concerned about the situation of children recruited by certain rebel factions, and he points out that the Guiding Principles (Principle 13) stipulate that in no circumstances shall displaced children be recruited by armed forces.

83. The Representative welcomes the fact that the various stakeholders, including the Government and representatives of the international community, have become aware of the seriousness of the problem of internal displacement in the Central African Republic. In order to provide a lasting solution to the issue and to protect and assist the victims, the Representative recommends a three-pronged strategy: continued political dialogue between the Government and the various armed groups in order to address the root causes of displacement; strengthened humanitarian assistance and protection from international organizations in order to facilitate the protection of the population affected by abuses; and implementation of a targeted development programme in the north of the country in order to attack the root causes of the crisis, which lie in the marginalization and underdevelopment of the region.

84. In particular, the Representative shares the opinion expressed by the President of the Central African Republic, who said he was convinced that dialogue was the sole means of ending the conflict plaguing the country and that recourse to arms alone was not a viable option. He welcomes the fact that the authorities have taken the initiative of starting a dialogue with certain armed groups, and encourages them to broaden the dialogue further by including all armed groups and the various sectors of civil society. He believes that, while political dialogue with the various armed groups operating in the country is essential to achieving a lasting peace, dialogue with citizens, including displaced persons, is equally important. Such dialogue and consultation with displaced populations must be open and constructive in order to restore the confidence which alone will make it possible to envisage their return to their homes.

85. In this context, **the Representative recommends that the authorities should:**

- a. When planning and carrying out security operations, respect the fundamental distinction between combatants and civilians and refrain from all acts prohibited by international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including attacks on civilian persons and objects, the burning of villages, summary and extrajudicial executions, and acts of torture and ill-treatment;**

- b. **Make an unambiguous statement at the highest level defining the role of the security forces and the limitations on their behaviour and reminding them of their obligations under international humanitarian law. At the same time, a proactive training and awareness programme in international humanitarian law and human rights for members of the security forces should be started without delay;**
  - c. **Given the many violations of international law attributed to some members of the security forces, in particular the Presidential Guard, effectively combat impunity by conducting inquiries and bringing to justice the main perpetrators of human rights violations, including arbitrary displacement. In this connection, the Representative welcomes the recent initiatives of the armed forces aimed at transferring officers responsible for human rights violations from the regions concerned. However, he stresses the fact that the removal of the personnel in question is not sufficient in itself, because it does not do justice to the victims and deprives them of their right to compensation;**
  - d. **Ensure that displaced persons have access to health-care services and education in areas under government control, for example by organizing protected convoys and promoting the use of mobile clinics;**
  - e. **Re-establish and strengthen the presence of the State at all levels in the north of the country by restoring basic services in education, justice, the police and health care as a matter of priority and encouraging devolved and decentralized authorities to return to their localities;**
  - f. **Ratify without delay the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the related protocols, in particular the Protocol on Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons, which the Central African Republic helped to draft, and revise national legislation on the basis of the principles and obligations of developed States in this regard;**
  - g. **Pay special attention to the needs of displaced children, and in that connection ratify as soon as possible the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict;**
  - h. **Continue to cooperate with the international community in its efforts to protect and assist displaced persons;**
  - i. **Make clear and complete information available to displaced persons so that they can take informed decisions on their future, and, if they so wish, facilitate their return to their localities of origin in security and dignity;**
  - j. **Address the root causes of the crisis, such as the marginalization of or discrimination against certain regions, which is evidenced in underinvestment and a concentration of wealth around the capital and in the south of the country. To do so, the authorities must ensure more equitable access to the country's resources, giving particular attention to the areas in greatest difficulty.**
86. **The Representative recommends that the armed groups should:**
- a. **Respect international humanitarian law. In particular, they should respect the fundamental distinction between combatants and civilians and refrain from all acts prohibited by international humanitarian law, such as making use of civilians to underpin their operations, recruiting children into their ranks and exposing the civilian population to the risk of reprisals;**

- b. **Embark without delay on the immediate disarming and rehabilitation of child soldiers, in close cooperation with international organizations which specialize in this area.**

**Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin<sup>10</sup>**

Addendum: Mission to the Central African Republic

A/HRC/16/43/Add.4

18 January 2011

IV. Conclusions et recommandations

79. La situation des déplacements internes reste très préoccupante en République centrafricaine. Près de 200 000 personnes sont toujours déplacées à l'intérieur du pays. Tout en reconnaissant les progrès accomplis dans le processus de paix, qui ont permis le retour de plusieurs dizaines de milliers de personnes déplacées, le Représentant est alarmé par les nouvelles vagues de déplacements importants qui pourraient compromettre la paix en République centrafricaine.

80. Les atrocités brutales et systématiques commises par l'Armée de résistance du Seigneur et les déplacements arbitraires qui en ont résulté dans le sud-est du pays n'ont pas fait l'objet d'une attention suffisante de la part de la communauté internationale. Dans le nord, les activités de certains groupes armés ainsi que des coupeurs de route bien armés menacent les populations civiles et empêchent leur retour dans leur foyer. Les forces de sécurité centrafricaines n'ont pas la capacité de protéger la population de manière adéquate. La réduction des effectifs de la petite présence militaire internationale et la démobilisation rapide des groupes armés risquent d'élargir le vide sécuritaire existant. En conséquence, **le Représentant recommande:**

- **Au Gouvernement centrafricain de poursuivre la réforme entamée en matière de sécurité et de renforcer ses capacités de protection des civils en demandant à la communauté internationale une assistance appropriée;**
- **Aux gouvernements de la région d'intensifier leur coopération de manière à sécuriser les zones frontalières et à lutter contre le banditisme transfrontalier, la contrebande des armes et les incursions des groupes armés;**
- **Que les États coopèrent avec d'autres membres de la communauté internationale pour la mise en oeuvre d'une stratégie régionale visant à protéger les populations civiles contre l'Armée de résistance du Seigneur.**

81. Tout en se félicitant d'une certaine réduction des cas de violation grave des droits de l'homme par les forces de sécurité de l'État, le Représentant a pris note d'allégations inquiétantes faisant état de nouvelles violations commises par l'État dans la préfecture de Bamingui-Bangoran.

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<sup>10</sup> This document is available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G11/102/18/PDF/G1110218.pdf?OpenElement> [Accessed 25/01/2013]

Please note that this document is only available in French. An English press release is available at <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10217&LangID=E> [Accessed 25/01/2013].

Certains groupes armés commettent également des graves violations du droit international humanitaire, notamment des exécutions sommaires ou des attaques contre les populations civiles, et continuent d'enrôler des enfants dans leurs rangs. Ces actes pourraient constituer des crimes de guerre ou, dans le cas des atrocités commises par l'Armée de résistance du Seigneur, des crimes contre l'humanité.

82. Il constate avec préoccupation que les officiers militaires et les dirigeants politiques soupçonnés d'avoir commis des violations graves continuent de jouir de l'impunité. En conséquence, le Représentant:

- **Demande aux forces de l'État de respecter les droits de l'homme et à toutes les parties au conflit de respecter le droit international humanitaire. En particulier, ils doivent respecter la distinction fondamentale qui existe entre les combattants et les civils et s'abstenir de se livrer à des attaques contre les personnes et objets civils, de mettre à feu des villages, de procéder à des exécutions sommaires et extrajudiciaires, de commettre des actes de torture et d'infliger des mauvais traitements ou de recourir à la détention arbitraire et illégale;**
- **Recommande au Gouvernement d'ouvrir des enquêtes, avec toute la diligence due et conjointement avec l'ONU, sur tous les cas de violations graves rapportés, de poursuivre tous les suspects qui auront été identifiés, quels que soient leur rang et position, et de les traduire en justice;**
- **Recommande aux groupes armés de respecter le droit international humanitaire, notamment concernant la distinction fondamentale qui existe entre les combattants et les civils, de permettre l'accès humanitaire libre et sans entrave et de s'abstenir de commettre des crimes internationaux;**
- **Si l'État n'a pas la volonté ou se trouve dans l'incapacité de mener véritablement à bien les enquêtes ou les poursuites dans le cas de crimes reconnus par le Statut de Rome de la Cour pénale internationale, ladite Cour devrait élargir ses enquêtes à la République centrafricaine et exercer sa compétence sur tous les crimes suffisamment graves commis pendant le conflit armé.**

83. Une grave crise humanitaire persiste qui touche surtout les personnes déplacées dans leur propre pays. La crise est exacerbée par l'engagement insuffisant des bailleurs de fonds et les difficultés d'accès dans certaines zones où règne l'insécurité. De ce fait, le Représentant:

- **Demande au Gouvernement et à toutes les autres parties au conflit de faciliter le libre passage de l'aide humanitaire, d'empêcher son détournement et de permettre aux personnes chargées de la distribuer un accès rapide, sûr, libre et sans entrave aux populations dans le besoin;**
- **Rappelle que c'est en premier lieu aux autorités nationales qu'incombent le devoir et la responsabilité d'apporter une aide humanitaire aux personnes déplacées dans le pays et recommande au Gouvernement de prendre des dispositions budgétaires et institutionnelles afin d'assumer cette responsabilité;**
- **Recommande aux bailleurs de fonds d'accroître de manière substantielle les programmes en faveur des personnes déplacées dans leur propre pays et des autres populations dans le besoin, et de permettre par leur soutien une continuité de présence des institutions spécialisées et des organisations oeuvrant dans ce domaine.**

84. Le Représentant salue le fait que le Gouvernement a entrepris de prendre des mesures en vue d'élaborer un cadre juridique et politique propre à assurer la protection des personnes déplacées.

**Il recommande au Gouvernement de:**

- **Mettre en oeuvre ses obligations et ses engagements conformément au Pacte sur la sécurité, la stabilité et le développement dans la Région des Grands Lacs et à son Protocole sur la protection et l'assistance aux personnes déplacées;**
- **Ratifier la Convention de Kampala;**
- **Élaborer, adopter et mettre en oeuvre une loi et une stratégie politique sur le déplacement interne en se fondant sur les recommandations arrêtées dans l'Atelier National sur la protection des personnes déplacées et le droit national en République centrafricaine (voir l'annexe du présent rapport).**

85. Très peu de personnes déplacées, y compris parmi celles qui sont déjà retournées, bénéficient de solutions durables. Certaines populations restent déplacées parce qu'elles craignent des représailles de la part des acteurs armés qui contrôlent leur zone d'origine. Par ailleurs, elles ne bénéficient pas d'un soutien suffisant pour permettre leur réinsertion socioéconomique. Alors que trop peu de projets de relèvement immédiat ont été mis sur pied, les retards dans la mise en oeuvre des recommandations du Dialogue Politique Inclusif sur le processus de désarmement, démobilisation et réintégration et du processus électoral ont fait obstacle au lancement de projets de développement à grande échelle. Le Représentant recommande au Gouvernement de prendre les mesures suivantes:

- **Mettre en oeuvre les recommandations du Dialogue Politique Inclusif;**
- **Continuer le dialogue avec les groupes armés qui n'adhèrent pas aux Accords de paix, tout en mettant en place des mécanismes de résolution des conflits au niveau communautaire;**
- **Protéger les personnes déplacées et les personnes qui retournent contre les attaques, le harcèlement, l'intimidation, la persécution ou toute autre forme d'action punitive et respecter leur liberté de circulation;**
- **Respecter le droit de toutes les personnes déplacées dans leur propre pays à bénéficier d'une solution durable et prendre des mesures pour mettre en place les conditions visées dans le Cadre pour les solutions durables pour les PDI (A/HRC/13/21/Add.4), qui a été adopté par le Comité Permanent Inter-Agences (IASC), y compris faire en sorte que toutes les personnes déplacées puissent participer aux prochaines élections;**
- **S'attaquer aux causes premières de la crise comme la marginalisation ou la discrimination à l'égard de certaines régions, surtout au nord du pays, et inclure, sur un pied d'égalité, les personnes déplacées dans leur propre pays dans les programmes destinés à établir des pôles de développement.**

86. Le Représentant se félicite de noter que la réinsertion des personnes déplacées est reconnue comme prioritaire dans la consolidation de la paix et recommande à la Commission et au Fond pour la consolidation de la paix de continuer à soutenir les mesures visant à aider ces personnes à trouver une solution durable.

**Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston<sup>11</sup>**

Addendum: Mission to the Central African Republic

A/HRC/11/2/Add.3

27 May 2009

**XI. Recommendations**

**87. The Special Rapporteur considers the following to be the essential measures that should be implemented to reduce extrajudicial executions, and to provide for accountability when they occur.**

...

**END THE KILLING OF “WITCHES”**

- **The Criminal Code should be reformed to abolish the criminalization of “witchcraft”.**
- **Educational efforts should be made to bring an end to arbitrary and unjustified punitive measures against those accused of witchcraft. The killing of “witches” should be prosecuted like any other murder.**
- **All violations of the human rights of those accused of witchcraft should be investigated and prosecuted.**

**Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston<sup>12</sup>**

Addendum: Mission to the Central African Republic

A/HRC/14/24/Add.5

19 May 2010

**XIII. Conclusion**

62. The Government deserves credit for having enacted some reforms in partial fulfillment of the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur, and for having reduced the number of killings perpetrated by Government forces. In particular, the high level of Government responsibility for security sector reform is to be commended, though it will be important to see this commitment translated into concrete action.

63. In relation to many of the other recommendations of the Special Rapporteur, the Government has failed to make sufficient substantive progress and, in some cases, has made no progress at all. Although killings by rebel groups and Government forces have greatly diminished, extrajudicial killings by both of these groups, as well as by bandits, self-defence groups, the Lord's Resistance Army, and the Chadian National Army, continue to threaten the lives of civilians throughout the country. Impunity for all killings, regardless of the perpetrator, continues unchecked. The Government neither protects civilians from abuses, nor prosecutes those who commit them. In the absence of serious Government steps to institutionalize or implement the many necessary reforms that have been identified, and significant international support for reform efforts, the pattern of abuse and impunity will continue.

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<sup>11</sup> This document is available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G09/135/36/PDF/G0913536.pdf?OpenElement> [Accessed 25/01/2013]

<sup>12</sup> This document is available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G10/134/66/PDF/G1013466.pdf?OpenElement> [Accessed 25/01/2013]

## Appendix

### Summary of follow-up to each recommendation<sup>13</sup>

...

End the killing of “witches”

- The Criminal Code should be reformed to abolish the criminalization of “witchcraft”.

*This recommendation has not been implemented.*

- Educational efforts should be made to bring an end to arbitrary and unjustified punitive measures against those accused of witchcraft. The killing of “witches” should be prosecuted like any other murder.

*This recommendation has been partially implemented.*

- All violations of the human rights of those accused of witchcraft should be investigated and prosecuted.

*This recommendation has been partially implemented.*

### **Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo<sup>14</sup>**

Addendum

A/HRC/14/22/Add.1

2 June 2010

#### **Central African Republic**

Appel urgent

64. Le **5 février 2010**, la Rapporteuse spéciale chargée de la question de la violence contre les femmes, y compris ses causes et ses conséquences, le Président Rapporteur du Groupe de Travail sur la détention arbitraire et le Rapporteur spécial sur la torture et autres peines ou traitements cruels, inhumains ou dégradants ont envoyé un appel urgent concernant la situation de **Mlle. A.N.**, une fille de 15 ans, qui aurait été accusée en 2007 de sorcellerie (« likundu » en sango) envers Mme. A.E.

...

Observations

71. The Special Rapporteur regrets that at the moment of finalizing the report, she had not received a reply from the Government of Central African Republic concerning the above mentioned allegations. She wishes to recall that violence done to women based on accusations of witchcraft is closely linked to the low status of women in society and unequal gender relations, and used as a tool of domination and control over women. In this regard, she wishes to remind the Government of Central African Republic that addressing impunity for acts of violence occurring in the private sphere – without invoking any custom, tradition or religious consideration- is also part of the due diligence obligation of the State. She also wishes to encourage the authorities in Central African Republic to adopt all appropriate measures, especially in the field of education, to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women and to eliminate prejudices, customary practices and all other practices based on the

<sup>13</sup> As contained in A/HRC/11/2/Add.3, para. 87.

<sup>14</sup> This document is available at <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/2900573.01521301.html> [Accessed 25/01/2012]

idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes and on stereotyped roles for men and women. She also wishes to refer to the section of report A/HRC/11/2 of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions devoted to the persecution and killing of individuals, particularly women, on accusations of witchcraft.

## **Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic<sup>15</sup>**

S/2011/241

13 April 2011

### **VII. Recommendations**

59. I am heartened by the commitment of the Government of the Central African Republic to protecting children, manifested by the signature, in June 2010, of the N'Djamena Declaration to end the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups, as well as by the signature, in September 2010, of the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. I encourage the Government to ratify the Optional Protocols and undertake the necessary reforms to translate their provisions into national law, including through the criminalization of underage recruitment. Furthermore, I urge the Government to undertake the necessary reforms of national law to bring domestic legislation in line with commitments made under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

60. I also commend the efforts of the Government to address the threat of LRA, in collaboration with States in the region, under the auspices of the African Union. I would urge the Government and its partners to follow up on the steps agreed upon during the African Union ministerial meeting on LRA, held in Bangui on 13 and 14 October 2010, including the establishment of a joint operations centre, the conduct of joint patrols on the borders of LRA-affected countries and the deployment of troops to facilitate access to, and protect, vulnerable communities.

61. The Government's ongoing efforts to build a protective environment and develop accountability for violence against children, such as the promulgation of the revised Penal Code and the process of revising the existing law on the protection of women against violence to include the protection of children and address sexual violence, are encouraging. I also urge the Government to ensure that grave violations against children, especially child recruitment, sexual violence and abductions, are addressed through the rigorous investigation and prosecution of those responsible for such crimes.

62. The collaboration between the Government and MICOPAX to support the Forces armées centrafricaines in their effort to protect civilians and regain control over conflict-affected areas is an important step towards protecting children. I underline the concomitant need for the international community to support the Government in its efforts to professionalize and strengthen the capacity of its defence and security forces, including its oversight mechanisms. With regard to the Government's activities in the areas of security sector reform, human rights and protection, I encourage further collaboration between MICOPAX, BINUCA and relevant

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<sup>15</sup> This document is available at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2011/241](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2011/241) [Accessed 25/01/2012]



child protection actors on training and capacity-building of Central African law enforcement and armed forces personnel, in the context of a holistic, nationally driven approach to security sector reform.

63. However, I remain concerned about the slow progress in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic (S/AC.51/2009/2), including those pertaining to the development of concrete and time-bound action plans to halt the recruitment and use of child soldiers by the parties concerned, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005). In this connection, I urge the Government of the Central African Republic to facilitate, as appropriate, the preparation of such action plans.

64. While I am encouraged by the separation of children from the ranks of APRD since June 2008, I call on APRD to ensure the comprehensive and definitive release of all remaining children. In this connection, APRD must prepare, without delay, an action plan that sets out a United Nations-verified process by which all remaining children will be permanently separated from its ranks. Only after the full implementation of an action plan can APRD be removed from the list of parties which recruit or use children, submitted annually to the Security Council. Similarly, I call on UFDR, FDPC and MLCJ to enter into dialogue with the United Nations to prepare and implement a time-bound action plan to halt the recruitment and use of children in its ranks.

65. I am deeply concerned at the lack of humanitarian access to areas under CPJP control in the north-east of the country, as well as persistent reports of grave violations against children in those areas. I encourage CPJP to engage in a dialogue with the Government towards the signature of the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement. I also call on CPJP to release, immediately and without preconditions, the children reported to be in its ranks, through the establishment of a concrete, time-bound action plan, and urge CPJP to allow humanitarian actors to deliver assistance to the displaced and other populations in need in the areas under its de facto control.

66. I remain gravely concerned at reports of the use of children by local self-defense militias, which are supported by local authorities. I call on the Government to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of all children associated with these groups. As an immediate priority, I urge the Government to issue clear orders, including at the local level, prohibiting the recruitment and use of children by local self-defence militias.

67. Security, logistical and capacity challenges have affected the full establishment and implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanism in the Central African Republic during the reporting period. In order to adequately address the child protection concerns in the country, regular meetings of the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting should be held to ensure the full commitment of the United Nations system to monitor and report on grave violations against children, and identify appropriate follow-up actions. In order to inform the deliberations of the Task Force, robust information networks should be strengthened without delay. To that end, I encourage BINUCA, as well as relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, to dedicate sufficient resources and capacity to the monitoring and reporting

mechanism. Donors are encouraged to support the functioning of the mechanism, including through the funding of child protection capacity and training for partners.

68. In order to ensure the durable separation of children from armed groups in the Central African Republic, I call on United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to support the Government in the development and implementation of long-term reintegration programmes for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups, in line with the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups.

69. I welcome the funds that have been specifically allocated for child reintegration through the Peacebuilding Fund, and call on the donor community to provide sustained resources to support child protection programmes. In this connection, I encourage donor support for the reintegration of children who will be released from armed groups listed in the annex to my annual report on children and armed conflict. In addition, psychosocial support and assistance to victims of gender-based violence, in particular to victims of LRA, is required.

70. The engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission with the Central African Republic, in particular its support for the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed groups, is noted with appreciation. I would encourage the Peacebuilding Commission to continue its commitment to children in the Central African Republic, including with regard to the socio-economic reintegration of former child combatants and the building of national capacity to protect children.

**Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army<sup>16</sup>**

S/2012/365

25 May 2012

A. Recruitment and use of children

2. Central African Republic

19. During the reporting period, the abduction of 102 children (64 boys and 38 girls), resulting from LRA attacks, were documented. Most of the abductions took place in Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou prefectures, in the villages of Sangarigou, Angou and Simango, and in Goughéré and Banangui, respectively. Most of the children were abducted while helping their parents in agricultural or pastoralist activities. In August 2011 the leaders of the Fulani pastoralist communities, in Haut-Mbomou prefecture, reported that families of herders were often held hostage by LRA and would be released only when “ransom” was paid. From July 2009 to December 2010, 70 children who escaped from LRA reported that they had been forced to participate in the attack of other villages and had been taught the languages of their captors. Nineteen girls interviewed in transit centres reported that they had been used as cooks and shared between commanders as sex slaves. The children reported to the United Nations that they had been used to carry looted goods and perform other support tasks, such as to shell stolen peanuts. They also confirmed the presence of other children within the ranks of LRA, but could not give exact figures, as the children were dispersed in small LRA groups.

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<sup>16</sup> This report is available at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2012/365](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2012/365) [Accessed 25/1/2013]

## B. Killing and maiming

### 2. Central African Republic

24. The Central African Republic saw an apparent decline in the number of children killed or maimed during the reporting period. From August 2010 to July 2011, 7 boys were killed during attacks on villages, compared to 145 children killed in 2008 and 63 in 2009. In addition, according to an unconfirmed report, only 1 girl among 12 released by LRA in August 2011 survived in the bush after a three-month trek in search of safety. The remaining 11 girls reportedly died of illnesses, hunger and starvation.

## C. Rape and other sexual violence against children

### 2. Central African Republic

30. All of the 19 girls of Central African, Congolese, Sudanese and Ugandan nationalities who escaped from LRA on the territory of the Central African Republic from July 2009 to December 2010 gave accounts of the sexual violence to which they had been subjected. One of the girls escaped while pregnant and later gave birth in a transit centre in Bangui; another girl escaped with her two-year-old baby. The girls all reported that they had been repeatedly raped and subjected to different forms of sexual assaults, and used by various commanders as “wives”. In 2011 one case of a 16-year-old girl was documented. She escaped from LRA in January, after two years in captivity, during which time she had also given birth to a baby, who later died.

## D. Abductions

### 2. Central African Republic

34. In the Central African Republic, most abductions took place in Haut-Mbomou and Mbomou prefectures, in particular around the towns of Zémio (Haut-Mbomou) and Rafaï (Mbomou). Of the 102 cases documented, at least 58 cases involved Fulani children who were abducted for ransom.

## E. Attacks on schools and hospitals

### 2. Central African Republic

38. In the Central African Republic, LRA attacks have not directly targeted schools and hospitals. However, many schools in localities in the south-east have closed down either because parents are afraid to send their children, or because teachers have been displaced, fleeing LRA attacks. It is estimated that some 3,000 children have been unable to go to school because of LRA attacks on education. In towns hosting displaced populations, such as Obo, Rafaï and Zémio, makeshift schools have been built for the children in internally displaced person camps. The schools all present serious pedagogic problems, as they are overcrowded and lack learning materials and qualified teachers.

## F. Denial of humanitarian access

### 2. Central African Republic

42. Insecurity created by LRA in the south-east Central African Republic constrained humanitarian access and the delivery of aid to LRA-affected areas, impacting an estimated 3,000 children. The security problem was heightened in September 2009 when the vehicle of an international NGO was attacked by LRA. LRA attacks have caused displacement of the population to bigger towns in the south-east and, according to humanitarian partners, there are

8,800 internally displaced persons in Haute-Kotto, 6,272 in Mbomou and 11,595 in the Haut-Mbomou prefecture, displaced by the threat of LRA. Some NGOs chose not to carry out activities outside security areas defined by local authorities, because of the requirement for a military escort and associated concerns about perception of neutrality. On 6 June 2011, LRA attacked the vehicle and killed the Health Regional Director of Mbomou prefecture and his driver, as they travelled to Obo on the Zémio-Rafaï road in Haut-Mbomou for a vaccination campaign against poliomyelitis. The vehicle was looted and burned, as a result of which 11,605 children were deprived of vaccination and have still not been vaccinated at the time of writing.

## **V. Observations and recommendations**

70. I am also concerned by the ripple effects of LRA activities. Two effects are worth noting. The weak presence of State security forces in the border region has contributed to the creation of self-defence groups in the Central African Republic and South Sudan. These unregulated armed groups have reportedly been responsible for exactions against the community and, in the case of the Central African Republic, are alleged to have children in their ranks. Separately, the Mbororo pastoralist ethnic group (also known as Fulani, or Peul), which is present in the LRA area of operations, has become vulnerable not only to LRA attacks — as manifested by the cases of abduction described in the present report — but also to stigmatization by other ethnic groups in the region, who presume their association with LRA as a result of their nomadic way of life. I urge concerned States to expand the rule of law to LRA-affected areas and encourage donors to provide support for such efforts, including through long-term peace building activities.

### **Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office that country.<sup>17</sup>**

S/2012/956

21 December 2012

#### **II. Political situation**

...

8. From 29 to 31 October, the Central African Republic-Chad Commission held its thirteenth session in N'Djamena. The Commission discussed security challenges during the transhumance period, taxation issues and the repatriation of 70,000 Central African refugees from Chad. Subsequently, the two countries signed 10 agreements on, inter alia, customs and movement of cattle. In addition, the Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization reported to the press that the repatriation of the special forces of Chad deployed in Bangui in 2003 to reinforce the Presidential Guard had been agreed upon.

#### **III. Support to national mediation efforts**

...

11. In October, the National Council for Mediation, upon instruction from the President, coordinated a Government plan to repatriate FPR combatants and their dependants from the Central African Republic. In the ensuing process, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) catered for

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<sup>17</sup> This report is available at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2012/956](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2012/956) [Accessed 25/1/2013]

the humanitarian needs of the families of the FPR combatants. The Government of Chad has reportedly announced a package of incentives to encourage the return of the remaining Chadian FPR elements. However, the latest reports indicated that a sizeable number of former FPR rebels have returned to the Central African Republic.

#### V. Lord's Resistance Army

18. There were consistent reports of an increased LRA presence in the southeastern region of the Central African Republic. It is alleged that they are coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. Thus far in 2012, 48 presumed LRA attacks were carried out, leading to 24 deaths and 85 abductions, some of the abductees being held for short periods of time to transport looted goods. As a result of LRA activities in the Central African Republic, there are 21,000 internally displaced persons and 2,400 refugees.

#### IX. Humanitarian situation

35. The Central African Republic is facing one of the world's most silent and most forgotten humanitarian emergencies. The ongoing chronic crisis has had substantial repercussions, which are being addressed through a three-pronged integrated strategy which includes the saving of lives, early recovery and development-related measures. Owing to the country's extreme level of structural vulnerability, people's lives are constantly at risk from the slightest disturbances, whether linked to natural disasters, economic issues or conflict. Nevertheless, improved security has led to a decrease in the number of internally displaced persons and an increase in the number of returnees. Humanitarian assistance continued to be provided to 65,533 internally displaced persons, of which 26,800 had been displaced in 2012, and 49,939 returned from within the Central African Republic or neighbouring countries. In addition, assistance is being provided to 17,623 refugees from the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Meanwhile, occurrences of resource-based conflict linked to transhumance pastoralism in the north-central (Kabo-Batangafu-Kaga-Bandoro triangle) and western regions were on the rise. The seasonal movement of cattle breeders in search of pastures often results in conflict with local farmers for resources, leaving homes destroyed and populations displaced. It is estimated that 10,000 people were displaced as a result of this form of conflict.

#### **XVII. Observations and recommendations**

62. The consensus that emerged on the revised electoral code is an important political breakthrough. The exercise was important in building confidence among the political stakeholders and in securing agreement on an election management body. I encourage the National Assembly to adopt the revised electoral code as accepted by all stakeholders. The United Nations will support the Government in implementing the approved electoral reforms.

63. The security situation in the Central African Republic remains precarious. I call on all parties to put an immediate end to hostilities and re-engage in dialogue towards the launch of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and ensure the effective implementation of the 2008 Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

64. I call on the Government to continue to work closely with the United Nations and international partners in addressing the remaining security challenges and in fostering social

cohesion. At the same time, the Government should take concrete steps to improve the rule of law and respect for human rights, particularly within the security and defence forces.

65. The further erosion of security throughout the country could impact negatively on humanitarian access to vulnerable segments of the population. The expansion of humanitarian assistance and operations in the Vakaga and Bamingui-Bangoran prefectures, which have witnessed an influx of returning internally displaced persons to their villages, is imperative. I take note of the efforts by the Government to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in the affected regions of the country. I am deeply concerned, however, about the persistent vulnerability of civilians, especially women and children, in the areas in which illegal armed groups continue to operate.

66. The persistent lack of essential social services continues to undermine the efforts of communities to become resilient to shocks and conflicts. It is important for the Government, supported by its partners, to invest in the provision of basic social services and in infrastructure development. The incidents of 2 August in Bangui demonstrate the significance of social issues and the need to address some of the root causes of social discontent. I call upon the Government to step up its efforts to improve the basic living conditions of the population.

67. I am encouraged by the Government's continued commitment to implementing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. I call on the authorities to demonstrate the same level of engagement on security sector reform. The adoption of a consensual and realistic national security sector reform strategy is critical to enabling international support in this endeavour. The strategy should include clear and consistent modalities for the integration of ex-combatants into the defence and security forces. The Government must make the adoption of such a strategy a priority. The United Nations stands ready to support the Government in this strategic exercise.

68. I commend the international community for its financial support to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. The successful completion of the reintegration component of the process will be instrumental in ensuring that the progress towards peace consolidation is irreversible.

69. The Government's commitment to the fight against LRA, in particular its participation in the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of LRA, is noteworthy. The persistent threat to the civilian population posed by the foreign armed group is a cause for serious concern. I urge international partners to continue to support the Central African authorities so as to enable them to implement a comprehensive national response, which not only encourages defections within the LRA ranks but also contributes to the socioeconomic development of LRA-affected areas.

70. Through the revival by the Governments of the Central African Republic and Chad of their joint commission, they have access to a useful platform for cooperation between States and achieving enhanced security along their common borders. I encourage the Government of the Central African Republic to revive similar instruments with other countries of the region.

71. I welcome the adoption of the national strategy to fight corruption and urge the national authorities to implement it effectively. I encourage international partners to assist the Government accordingly.

72. I should like to express my appreciation to regional and international organizations, including the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the African Union, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for their continued engagement, and to bilateral partners for their invaluable support to the Central African Republic. It is important that they show flexibility and provide the Government of the Central African Republic with the required technical and financial assistance, which is indispensable for the stability of the country.

73. The mandate of BINUCA will expire on 31 January 2013. In view of the important role that the Office is called upon to play in the peace consolidation and reconciliation process and of the need for continued United Nations integrated support for the Central African Republic in tackling peacebuilding challenges, and following consultations with the Government of the Central African Republic, I would like to recommend that the mandate of BINUCA, as welcomed by the Security Council in its presidential statement (S/PRST/2009/5) and renewed by the Council in its resolution 2031 (2011), be extended for another year, until 31 January 2014. In the coming year, BINUCA will continue to implement its mandate in close cooperation with national authorities and partners of the Central African Republic, with a particular focus on reconciliation, political dialogue, completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, restoration of State authority throughout the national territory, security sector reform, promotion of the rule of law and human rights, gender equality and countering the LRA threat.

74. Finally, I should like to commend the staff of BINUCA for their commitment and hard work in a difficult environment under the leadership of my Special Representative, Margaret Aderinsola Vogt, and the United Nations country team for its dedicated and diligent efforts in support of peacebuilding in the Central African Republic.